

2024 Referendum

Do you favour a reduction in the number of Port Macquarie-Hastings Councillors from nine to seven, comprising the Mayor and six Councillors?

Vote Yes

to reduce Councillors from 9 to 7

- Fewer Councillors may improve cohesion and decision making for the benefit of the community.
- Reducing Councillor numbers is not unusual:
 - Central Coast Council to vote to reduce Councillors from 15 to 9 via referendum in 2024; and
 - Armidale Regional Council reduced Councillors from 11 to 9 effective September 2024.
- Along with state and federal members, electors in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region will have 11 representatives in total.
- Reduces Councillor Fee costs by \$60,322 per annum (\$30,161 per Councillor including superannuation and indexed annually) and other additional costs such as professional development and equipment costs.
- Fewer Councillors may increase advocacy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Vote No

to maintain Councillors at 9

- More Councillors may increase representation that improves decision making for the benefit of the whole community.
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Councillor numbers were previously reduced from 11 to 9 in the 2003 referendum.
- All but 1 Regional Local Government Area in NSW has at least 9 Councillors. The average is 11.
- A growing population may require more, not less Councillors to provide adequate representation.
- More Councillors may mean a greater diversity of opinion, knowledge, people, and representation from surrounding townships.
- A reduction in numbers may result in an increase in Councillor workload, reduced opportunities to engage with the Community, reduced quality of representation and reduced consensus building.

The Statistics

Note: Statistical information provided from 2021-2022 figures being the most current as available from yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au

Comparison to all other Office of Local Government Category 5 Local Government Areas

Name	Population	Councillors (No.)	Pop. per Councillor	Area (Sq km)	Sq km per Councillor	Maximum Councillor Fee
Shellharbour	76,443	9	8,494	147	16.33	\$27,050
Port Stephens	75,282	10	7,528	858	85.80	\$27,050
Coffs Harbour ⁴	78,738	9	8,749	1,174	130.44	\$27,050
Port Macquarie-Hastings ⁴	86,585	9	9,621	3,682	409.11	\$27,050
Maitland	90,553	13	6,966	392	30.15	\$33,810
Mid-Coast ⁴	96,425	11	8,766	10,054	914.00	\$27,050
Tweed ⁴	97,151	7	13,879	1,308	186.86	\$33,810
Shoalhaven ⁴	108,497	13	8,346	4,567	351.31	\$33,810
Newcastle	169,317	13	13,024	187	14.38	\$35,620
Lake Macquarie	213,967	14	15,283	649	46.36	\$33,810
Wollongong	214,657	13	16,512	684	52.62	\$35,620

⁴ Denotes Local Water Authority

Source: yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au

Comparison of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Statistics with 9 or 7 Councillors

Population	Councillors (No.)	Pop. per Councillor	Area (Sq km)	Sq km per Councillor	Max Councillor Fee
86,585	9	9,621	3,682	409.11	\$27,050
86,585	7	12,369	3,682	526	\$27,050

Comparison to other Nearby Local Government Areas

Name	Population	Councillors (No.)	Pop. per Councillor	Area (Sq km)	Sq km per Councillor	Max Councillor Fee
Bellingen ⁴	13,197	7	1,885	1,600	228.57	\$18,340
Nambucca ⁴	20,375	9	2,264	1,491	165.67	\$22,540
Armidale ⁴	29,332	11	2,667	7,809	709.91	\$27,050
Kempsey ⁴	30,816	9	3,424	3,376	375.11	\$22,540
Clarence Valley ⁴	54,180	9	6,020	10,429	1,158.78	\$27,050
Tamworth ⁴	63,652	9	7,072	9,884	1,098.22	\$27,050
Port Macquarie-Hastings ⁴	86,585	9	9,621	3,682	409.11	\$27,050
Central Coast ⁴	348,379	15	23,225	1,681	112.07	\$35,620

⁴ Denotes Local Water Authority

Source: yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au

* **NOTE:** Central Coast Council is conducting a referendum at the 2024 Local Government election to reduce Councillor numbers from 15 to nine. Should this reduction be carried the figures are reflected below.

Central Coast ⁴	348,379	9	38,709	1,681	186.78	\$35,620
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State and Federal Representation

Electorate	Division	Electors (No.)	Members (No.)	Area (Sq km)
State	- Port Macquarie	61,197 ¹	1	1,227 ¹
	- Oxley	62,990 ¹	1	9,325 ¹
Federal	- Cowper	129,887 ³	1	7,296 ²
	- Lyne	124,687 ³	1	16,099 ²

Source:

- ¹ elections.nsw.gov.au/elections/find-my-electorate
- ² aec.gov.au/Elections
- ³ aec.gov.au/enrolling_to_vote/enrolment_stats
- ⁴ water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/local-water-utilities/entities-that-carry-out-water-supply-functions