

Voter's Choice Amendment Bill 2019. Submission : Andrew McDonald

When the Attorney General, Ms D'Ath introduced the change to CPV in 2016, the Attorney General claimed that it would reduce the Informal Vote.

From Hansard April 21 2016 : "These amendments **are about reducing the number of informal votes** that we see at state and federal elections and to create more consistency between state and federal elections. **There were 56,000 informal votes at the last state election. We should be doing everything possible to reduce these informal votes.** "

The subsequent increase in the Informal Vote at the 2017 Election is concrete evidence that a reverse reduction has happened – an increase. There were **122,672 Informal votes** at the 2017 election.

The Informal Vote percentage for the last four state elections are :

Year Total Redcliffe (AG seat)

2017 4.34% 4.66%

2015 2.11% 1.99%

2012 2.15% 2.39%

2009 1.94% 1.97%

At the 2017 election the Informal Vote increased by 105% and the increase in Redcliffe was 134%. The result has disenfranchised many voters. This is wrong.

When questioned about this increase Ms D'Ath has used the imprecise position that 'there are many reasons for people voting Informal'. Maybe, but being disenfranchised for ticking 1 only is not one of them.

My research confirms that the change to CPV has disenfranchised thousands. Below is my evidence.

**Mr Antony Green** (ABC Election Analyst) in response to my question.

**"It is without doubt that the increase in informal voting at the 2017 Queensland election was due to the re-introduction of full preferential voting.**

From informal vote reports in every state and for the Commonwealth, we know that a quarter to a third of informal votes under full preferential voting are due to '1' only votes. Usually around half of informal votes are caused by ballot paper numbering issues." In addition, the ECQ has provided an analysis of three seats.

#### **Redcliffe: total informality rate: 4.66% (1,498 votes)**

- Intentional informal ballot papers – 71.65%
  - Blanks – 17.88%
  - Marks, slogans, pictures and writing other than candidate's name – 53.77%
- Unintentional informal ballot papers – 28.34%
  - Marked according to the Optional Preferential Voting (OPV) system – 22.22%
  - Non-sequential numbering – 1.14%
  - Ticks and crosses – 4.84%
  - Identifying the elector – 0.14%

#### **Bundamba: total informality rate: 8.24% (2,337 votes)**

- Intentional informal ballot papers – 53.18%
  - Blanks – 15.64%
  - Marks, slogans, pictures and writing other than candidate's name – 37.54%

- Unintentional informal ballot papers – 46.82%
  - Marked according to the OPV system – 34.92%
  - Non-sequential numbering – 4.77%
  - Ticks and crosses – 7.13%

**Maiwar: total informality rate 2.40% (785 votes)**

- Intentional informal ballot papers – 53.77%
  - Blanks –14.43%
  - Marks, slogans, pictures and writing other than candidate's name – 39.34%
- Unintentional informal ballot papers – 46.23%
  - Marked according to the OPV system – 34.87%
  - Non-sequential numbering – 1.53%
  - Ticks and crosses – 9.32%
  - Other – 0.51%

The ECQ analysis of three seats aligns with Mr Green's response. The ECQ can provide the same analysis of all seats if required.

As a concerned citizen, I want to be confident that all voters are given the best opportunity to make their vote count.

Political parties should not game the system to suit their political interests,

The OPV system worked well. It has consistently produced a relatively low Informal vote. It is in the interests of all constituents that OPV be restored. This Amendment will do the job. It is important that evidence supports the change.

I'm sure a vast majority of the voting public will support the change.

Andrew McDonald

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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