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To: Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Subject: ONLINE SUBMISSION - Inquiry into a new Local Government Electoral Act
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Divisions (Question 1 to 5):

- 1) No - From the Issues paper I'm not sure where the power to decide if a council is to be divided or whole lies? Certainly I was not aware that this would change in the combined Townsville - Thuringowa since previously both councils had divisions (Townsville single councillor and Thuringowa - multiple councillor)
- 2) As above who makes the decision if a council is to be divided and if so if it is to be single or multiple member divisions? I cannot see why all councils are not like Brisbane divisions with one councillor per division? Why is Brisbane so different from the rest of the state?
- 3) No - the smaller the number of voters the greater the the effect of a disproportionate elector base i.e. if the average is say 200 per ward then you could have variations from 160 - 240 and thus a difference from 80 to 120 votes needed to win. I do understand that in small divisions it would be difficult to ensure fair boundaries particularly where populations change rapidly - but the Electoral Commission does need to justify it's existance and it is only every 4 years!
- 4) No and No as per comment above why should the democratic rights of an individual be different in different council? should crossing the street mean you are treated any differently? If it is good for Brisbane than it is good for the rest of us.
- 5) With undivided divisions having the "first past the post" method of voting - long since disгарdеd by state and federal elections you have councillors elected not because of their ability or connection to a locality but simply on the back of a political ticket (sure the same happens in stae/federal elections) but they still have to the majority vote for them! In the last election no councillor achieved the 50% mark i.e. most people didn't want any of them! First past the post is inherently undemocratic,

Conduct of elections (Question 6 and 7):

- 6) Yes - ALL elections for public office should be the responsibility of the Electoral Commission of Queensland.
- 7) Your issues paper does not specify what form of flexibility is suggested? Minus marks to the writers of the Issues paper - it needs to be stand alone, so now I have to look up the Local Government Act? Queensland Local Government Elections 2008 report referred to when down loaded appears to be corrupt and unreadable by the latest Acrobat Reader.

Conduct of elections (Question 8 and 9):

- 8) Yes so long as there is the 8 weeks between the closing of the polls and the date of the election, particularly if the state government of the day changes the election date.
- 9) They should be every 3 years - the state and federal elections are on a 3 years cycle why not local government. At a local level we should be able to throw up the underperforming and incompetent at least as often as we are able to do so at the state and federal level.

Candidates - requirements and conduct (Questions 10 to 15):

- 10) Yes, for the most part though why should a Local government employee be taken to have resigned if elected? Does this presume that councillors are full time positions with the requisite remuneration? If that is so then why does the legislation indicate that a councillor cannot be a employee of another or run or part a nusiness for the duration of their tenure in office? Just because you are a local government employee is no use to discriminate. If they have to forgo their job/career so should all councillors. Smae rules for all. Of course non local government employees will scream about this but whomsoever my employer is (even if I am self employeed) should not impinge upon my rights and ability to be a candidate.
- 11) Doubtful - how many non aligned councillors are elected? (By non aligned I mean not on a "ticket" of some sort wether openly political or hidden). I my experience it is those with the advertising dollar and the local media support that win irrespective of performance/experience - he/she who flings the most mud that sticks seems to get the votes

irrespective of the "truth".

12) Yes - how else do they know the issues?

13) Yes - if you leave you should be taken to have resigned immediately.

14) No - if elected has both a councillor and as mayor, for single councillor divisions (best and most democratic method of electing councillors), then this would require a by-election (the No2 in the division race should NOT be bumped up to the councillor's position EVER)

15) NO, NEVER EVER - have you ever seen "Rats in the Ranks"? The mayor is the representative of the whole community and responsible to the whole community so they should be elected by the whole community directly!

Candidates - requirements and conduct (Questions 16 to 19):

16) No - see below. Note ALL disclosure should be printed as a public notice in the same way the public notices for the election are printed two Saturdays before the election.

17) ALL disclosures should be made no later than 2 weeks before the election date and NO donations, gifts etc. can be made after that date. The electors have every right to know whom is supporting whom and to what extent BEFORE the election - local (and all forms of) government must be open and accountable. Since we cannot change our vote after an election we need to be fully aware of whom is supporting which candidate and make a judgement of the appropriateness of this type of patronage. For financial support in elections not to be open and accountable well before an election simply promotes corruption and distrust in elected officials. Candidate must also disclose how much of their own money and resources they have put into the election.

18) Yes - of course. Why should it not be standardised?

19) ? I'm not sure I know what is prohibited at a state/federal level but I would assume that the same would apply to the local level. Anything that suggests that you can buy influence should be banned i.e. \$\$ per head dinners with the candidates etc. is certainly suspect. Sausage sizzles and the like should be it!

Candidates - requirements and conduct (Questions 20 to 24):

20) Yes - elected officials are the employees of their electorate not their financial backers. The how to vote card should be about the candidate and what they stand for not those that support them - the electorate should already be aware of a candidate's backers via the disclosure (above)

21) Yes and Yes

22) Minimal and not with 50 metres of the polling booth itself.

23) Yes!!!

24) Same as in state and federal elections - why should they be any different?

Voting (Question 25):

25) Compulsory - participation is an obligation in a democratic society and presently a right use it or lose it. If you don't vote or miss the closing of the polls then you must be pay a fine - uniform across the state not subject to the local council's whim. (Exceptions for medical reasons not religious)

Voting (Questions 26 to 30):

26) Yes

27) Possibly - given the nature of some local government areas - say where the majority of electors live more than 10 km from the nearest polling booth.

28) Yes

29) Yes - in the modern age it would be very simple for the returning officer at a polling booth to have a digital copy of every voting form across that state (remember the Electoral Commission runs the show) and to be able to print out a form OR copy the names etc. in the correct order onto a blank form for the elector to vote (with all the signatures /initials etc)

30) Yes to the first and No to the second - see comment above.

Voting (Questions 31 to 35):

31) No - certainly not on both accounts.

32) No - but and given the issues raised in the Issues paper this could be a problem I think it would be fair to give such people a choice of where they vote i.e in the area/division in which they live OR in which they have a commercial interest.

33) No Never - One person = One vote end of story.

34) No Never - One person = One vote end of story.

35) No one since I don't think anyone can nor should have more than one vote. This would seem to be a retrograde move back to the rotten boroughs of the 18th/19th century in the UK. In the case of a financial interest (based on property etc.) or in the case of mine worker and fly in fly out such people could have a choice of where their vote is recorded but always - One person = One vote. In that case the rolls would be the responsibility of the Electoral Commission as it should be.

Voting systems (Questions 36 to 38):

36) If all councillors are to be single representatives for a division then the Optional Preferential voting system (as used in State/Federal elections) is the most fair method and thus the most appropriate. If Multiple member divisions are to exist or councils with no divisions then the Proportional Representation voting system - Single transferable vote (STV) system/Hare-Clark system is the most fair system - time consuming complexities is not excuse when it comes to getting it right!

37) No - consistency is needed and First past the post is the most undemocratic - why not just draw names out of a hat?

38) No - I think single councillor divisions with Optional Preferential voting is the best. If proportional representation was introduced then it must be Single transferable vote (STV) system/Hare-Clark system this is the fairest system, but only in undivided councils (which I think should not exist) or in multi councillor divisions (which I also do not think should exist). All councils the same in my opinion - but I can see that for largely rural councils then there could be a place for multi councillor divisions and if so all such councils should be that same.

Other (Question 39):

Other) The role played by third parties where an interest group runs a active campaign for/against a council ticket/mayor but not part of any campaign for office themselves nor aligned with candidates. We had this situation in Townsville where there was a strong campaign against the debt of the former Townsville council by a vocal/media savvy group comparing this to the "debt free" nature of the former Thuringowa council. Since then the facts seem to be that Thuringowa was not in debt because they didn't spend money/plan for the future and Townsville did, and the new debt to 4 times larger. On a positive the same group apparently plan to campaign against the current council as much as they did against the last! Ah democracy!