

**From:** webmaster@parliament.qld.gov.au  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 14 July 2010 11:51 PM  
**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) See 5 below

2) See 5 below

3) See 5 below

4) The decision as to whether Councils should be divided or undivided should not be determined either by Councils themselves or the Government of the day. It should rest with the independent Local Government Change Commission (see Local Government Act 2009). Councils and the Government could make submissions to the Commission, but the Commission should have the final decision.

5) Divisions can foster parochialism. Councillors need to take a broader view of their constituency. Unless there are compelling reasons for the institution of divisions (such as population size), councils should be undivided.

**Conduct of elections (Question 6 and 7):**

6) The Electoral Commission of Queensland should be resourced to take primary responsibility for the conduct of elections.

7) It should be consistent with what is in place for State elections.

**Conduct of elections (Question 8 and 9):**

8) Eight weeks seems very lengthy. Does such prescription exist for State and Federal elections? Is there scope for reducing this period, perhaps to four weeks? Together with a public education campaign, this may encourage more people to ensure they are enrolled to vote.

9) Four-year terms are too long. Prior to their introduction in 2000 electors were not consulted on whether they agreed with longer terms for local government. While the arguments in favour of four-year terms are not strong, the passing of time has meant that the 'horse may now have bolted' on this issue. Nevertheless, the onus is on local governments more than ever to ensure that they do not take their electors for granted simply because there are now four years between the time they are held accountable at the ballot box.

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

10) The nomination process should be consistent with requirements for State MPs.

11) There will only be a diverse range of candidates standing if they think they have a chance of being elected. Proportional representation may be a solution to this.

12) If this is a requirement for State MPs, then yes. Otherwise, no.

13) As above.

14) No

15) Consistent with the Westminster tradition under which State MPs operate, yes. This will avoid the emergence of 'presidential' mayors, a phenomenon that is more in tune with the American political system than Westminster. Direct election of mayors can result in councils being riven with conflict when mayors and councillors are of a different political

persuasion (for example, such as occurred in Brisbane City Council during Lord Mayor Campbell Newman's first term). Direct election of mayors also gives such office holders a political legitimacy that even premiers and prime ministers do not have.

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

16) These requirements should be consistent with State MPs.

17) As above

18) As above

19) As above

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

20) These requirements should be consistent with State MPs.

21) As above

22) As above

23) As above

24) As above

**Voting (Question 25):**

25) Yes

**Voting (Questions 26 to 30):**

26) No, as it could lead to a perception that the election is not important and that they do not need to vote.

27) No, this should be considered on a case by case basis.

28) No, the criteria should generally remain but amended to include provision for people who are going to be away from their division but still in the State on polling day.

29) Not in the main. Ideally, people should vote in their enrolled area. If they are going away, they may apply for pre-poll voting.

30) If the Electoral Commission is running local government elections, shouldn't absent voting matters be consistent with State requirements?

**Voting (Questions 31 to 35):**

31) No. The same rules which apply to the State and Federal spheres should apply to local government.

32) No. The same rules which apply to the State and Federal spheres should apply to local government.

33) No. The same rules which apply to the State and Federal spheres should apply to local government.

34) No. The same rules which apply to the State and Federal spheres should apply to local government.

35) NA

**Voting systems (Questions 36 to 38):**

36) OPV has been described as a form of FPTP (Wanna, J., 2004, Democratic and Electoral Shifts in Queensland: Back to First Past The Post Voting. Source: [http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au/search\\_keyw\\_frm.htm](http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au/search_keyw_frm.htm)). While CPV is preferable to both OPV and FPTP, PR is even more preferred as it enables a diverse range of views to be elected and minimises the opportunity for political parties to become entrenched in local politics.

37) There should be a common voting system across all local governments.

**38)** Yes, for reasons noted above including that it enables a more diverse range of views to be elected and minimises the opportunity for political parties to become entrenched in local politics. As to the particular PR model that could be used, this should be the subject of further consideration. Whatever model is settled on it would need to be easily understood by voters and easily administered by the Electoral Commission.

**Other (Question 39):**

**Other)** If the Local Government Change Commission is the independent umpire for determining issues relating to local government boundaries, names and electoral representation, should the appointment of casual commissioners to the Commission should be a matter for the Electoral Commissioner rather than the Minister of the day? (see Local Government Act 2009)