

**BURDEKIN SHIRE COUNCIL**

**SUBMISSION**

**TO**

**LAW, JUSTICE AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**A NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ACT:  
REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL  
SYSTEM  
(EXCLUDING BCC)**

**Issue Paper Questions**

1) Are the procedures for the division of councils adequate?

No comment

2) If the procedures for the division of councils are not adequate, what changes are required?

No comment

3) Are the error margins of 10% in local government areas with more than 10,000 electors and 20% in all other cases sufficient?

No comment

4) Should the mix of divided and undivided councils remain? If so, should the decision to divide a local government area remain with individual councils?

Yes. Yes.

5) Are there other matters the Committee should consider in regard to local government divisions?

No comment

6) Should the Electoral Commission of Queensland be responsible for the administration of the quadrennial local government elections or should this responsibility remain with Council CEOs?

The Electoral Commission of Queensland should be responsible for the administration of the quadrennial local government elections, subject to it meeting the necessary standards (see the next comment).

7) If the ECQ is to be responsible for local government elections should the new Act allow more flexibility in regard to the conduct of the quadrennial elections than the current Act does? If so, how?

No. The ECQ should be able to conduct elections in accordance with the legislation. Councils have always achieved this, so the ECQ should be able to manage it, too.

The ECQ may want flexibility so it can standardise its processes for ease of administration. That is the tail wagging the dog. Local governments have huge diversity of size and population distribution. One system does not suit all councils, and the ECQ must be able to conduct suitable elections in each area.

8) Is the time for the close of the rolls and the date of the elections appropriate?

Yes.

9) What changes, if any, should be made to the timing of local government elections?

None

10) Is the nomination process adequate? Why?

Yes.

11) Does the current system encourage a diverse range of candidates to stand?

Yes.

12) Should a candidate be required to live in the local government area in which they stand for election?

Yes.

13) Should a councillor be required to live in the local government area for their whole four year term?

No. Personal circumstances can change and a councillor may be forced to live outside his or her local government area. The councillor can decide whether he or she continues as a councillor.

14) Should a person be able to stand as a dual candidate for both mayor and councillor?

No.

15) Should the new Act allow mayors to be appointed by their fellow councillors?

No, mayors should be elected by the people.

16) Are the requirements for disclosure of campaign funding sufficient?

Yes.

17) Should candidates make disclosures before, progressively during, and after an election period?

After the election period.

18) Should all disclosure requirements, such as values, disclosure periods and who must comply, be standardised?

Yes.

19) Should particular fundraising activities for local government elections be prohibited?

No.

20) Should how-to-vote cards be free from promotional content?

Yes.

21) Should how-to-vote cards be standard for all candidates? If so, should these be provided in all polling booths and postal vote packs by the Electoral Commission of Queensland?

Yes. Yes.

22) What promotional material, such as bunting (continuous signage) and coreflutes, should be allowed during the campaign period and at polling booths on election day?

It should be restricted.

23) Should the placement and amount of election campaign material be standard across all local government areas?

Yes.

24) Should a 'media blackout' period apply for local government elections? Why? For how long?

Yes. The media blackout period should be similar to the rules in state and federal elections.

25) Should voting remain compulsory for local government elections in Queensland?

Yes.

26) Should the option of a postal vote be extended to all voters in every area?

Yes.

27) Should a full postal ballot be automatic for some local government areas? If so, why and for which areas?

Yes. A full postal ballot should be automatic for remote areas.

28) Should the criteria for pre-polling and postal voting be abolished?

Yes.

29) Does the restriction on voters to attend only polling booths in a division in which they are enrolled adversely affect voters? If this were altered what impact would that have on the administration of the elections in that local government?

No comment.

30) Should the new Act allow absent voting? If so, should this be restricted to absent voting within a local government area only?

No.

31) Should the right to vote in Queensland local government elections be extended to non-resident property owners within an area? If so, should this apply to overseas investors?

No.

32) Should voting rights be extended to non-resident occupiers (e.g. commercial lessees such as business owners who lease premises within an area but live outside of it)?

No.

33) Should multiple persons be able to claim non-resident voter eligibility for one property (e.g. two or more non-resident owners or lessees of a property)?

No.

34) Should people, based on the number of properties they own, be entitled to more than one vote per division?

No.

35) Who should be responsible for the creation, verification and maintenance of a non-residents' electoral roll?

The ECQ.

36) Which voting system is most appropriate for local government elections - Optional Preferential voting, Compulsory Preferential voting, First-Past-The-Post or Proportional Representation? Why?

First-Past-The-Post.

First-Past-The-Post is easy for the voters to understand. Other voting systems encourage candidates from political parties and groups. Local governments work better without party politics and anything that encourages party politics into local government should be resisted.

37) Would different voting systems work better for different sized local governments? Why?

No.

38) Should Proportional Representation be introduced for Queensland local government elections?

No. It is complex, few community members understand it, and it leads to disharmony on the council.

If so, why and

(a) which model/s should be implemented?

(b) how would this be implemented in divided and undivided councils?

(c) should it apply for all councils? If not, which councils should proportional representation apply to?

39) What other issues should the Committee consider in relation to this inquiry?

No further comment.