



Denis O'Connell

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Law, Justice and Safety
Committee

Submission 044

27th July 2010

*The Research Director
Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD .*

Firstly, I consider the existing arrangement for the election of candidates under the present electoral system satisfactory, particularly the retention of the existing divisional system.

As a councillor or candidate being an active member in your local community and being well acquainted with it, the people's needs and attitudes should be well known to you.

Also this simpler form of voting is much more popular to the voter.

As a divisional councillor you are still responsible for providing opinions and assisting in decisions when voting on all matters within your whole council area. This is also applicable when representing matters that concern your division.

The election of a Mayor...

As a former Mayor of the Gold Coast, I feel this is the most important aspect of the L.C. E System that should be seriously considered. During my term as an Alderman from 1970 until my ascent to the role of Mayor in 1982, I experienced the changes in which the mayor was elected by popular vote and ultimately by the council.

The change from popular voting for Mayor to election by council itself came about as a result of the sacking of the council in 1978 which was instigated by regular disunity and lack of majority of members supporting the Mayor. This system continued until 1985 when it was once again changed.

Before I became Mayor, I had done what you may call 'my apprenticeship' and filled the position a lot more responsibly and knowledgeably than what I have seen in the case of popular elected Mayors of recent times who have filled the position with no previous experience of Local Government.

In the case of the Gold Coast, the problem was not as profound because most Mayors elected since the change in 1985 had previously been councillors.

The position of PM and Premier is determined by the same procedure. Citizens within the community of all levels of finance have the opportunity of becoming Mayor having only to gain an election to their division and the confidence of their fellow members.

I believe political ideologies have no place in the Local Government and the system of Popular Vote does encourage the entry of position to local government.

The pertinent word is "Local"

In the event of retirement of the Mayor, council could select a replacement without a by election. The division opening caused by this event could be filled by appointment or by election.

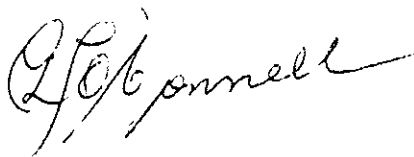
The Mayor having extra responsibility of representing his division as well is as easily arranged alike to one of State and Federal leaders.

Upon having the support of his or her fellow councillors a working team can be successfully established. In political terms he or she must have the numbers or he or she would not be Mayor. Simple equation.

Also under the former system, if there was disunity and the council is not operating in the best interest of the community the Mayor could be removed. Such a position requires a person with a strong sense of dedication to their community and a notable amount of enthusiasm.

I thank you for the opportunity to make this short submission expressing my views based on practical experience.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. O'Connell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Denis O'Connell