

From: CHESNEY John (NQ)
Sent: Wednesday, 28 July 2010 3:41 PM
To: Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Subject: support of A DIVIDED COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

Please receive my submission for consideration in support of A DIVIDED COUNCIL REPRESENTATION in Townsville for the local Government Elections.

UNDIVIDED COUNCIL SYSTEMS ARE UNDEMOCRATIC.

1. Undivided Council elections **DISENFRANCHISES THE RATEPAYERS** of their right to Elect a local representative:-
 - a. Of their own choice.
 - b. Who lives in there own area
 - c. Who has an affinity with the residents of the area.
2. If a Council recognizes that divisional representation is necessary it appoints any councilor to any division. **This does not guarantee meaningful or adequate representation.**
3. Council appointment of divisional representatives is open to political manipulation and bias as all of the committee members would appreciate.
4. The ratepayer and / or residents of the division have little to NO chance to address poor representation at the next election.
5. Undivided Councils discourage a diverse range of candidates due to the fact that is unrealistic for individual to "door knock" or contact all of the voters in the local council area.
6. Undivided Councils favor political parties and large interest groups.

UNDIVIDED COUNCIL ELECTIONS ARE UNECONOMIC

7. **Undivided Council elections are uneconomical and financially burdensome on both the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) and candidates.**
 - a. From EQC's point of view it is the task of unnecessarily counting votes.
 With no divisions
 50 candidates by 200,000 voters (voting for 10 councilors)= **2 Million votes**
2 Million votes at a base cost to ECQ of \$1 = \$ 2 Million
 - b. With a **10** divisional council.
 For **1 division** with 5 candidates by **20,000 voters with = 20,000 votes**
 with a combined council vote of 20,000 by 10 divisions = **200,000 votes**
200,000 votes at a base cost to ECQ of \$1 = \$ 200,000

A savings of 80% to ECQ.
8. Undivided Council elections are uneconomical and financially burdensome on prospective Candidates.

From a candidates point of view. To contest a undivided council election they have to:

- a. **Get their message out to around 200,000 people at an average of \$4 per information contact = \$800,000**
- b. **Man 45 voting booths and find at least 200 people to help.**
- c. With a **10** divisional council.

Get their message out to around 20,000 people at an average of \$4 per information contact = \$80,000

- d. **Man 5 or 6 voting booths and find at least 24 people to help.**
This campaign is 1/10 of the people therefore 1/10th the expense.

9. **Using the above example it is far more viable to Contest a Queensland State seat**
- Get the candidates' message out to around 20,000 people**
 - Man 7 voting booths and find at least 28 people to help.**
 - Considerably less expense for the same chance of being elected.**

10. **Re:- The issue of "the drawing of the candidates and their position on the ballot form."**

The inequitable, primitive, un-random, archaic way that the last selection was conducted using 19th century processes was embarrassing.

Placing the **Candidate names** in an **A4 envelope** and place these envelopes **in an A4 box** is ludicrous.

(The legislation according the returning officer does not state envelop size, box size or amount of movement the envelope could move when the box is shaken)

This resulted in "Better than even money" of consecutive team members being selected at the top of the ballot paper.

Even the occurrence at the drawing of consecutive team members did not prompt the Returning officer to re-shake the cardboard box thus giving a questionable result to many candidates.

Solution:- ECQ conducts ballots for numerous reasons therefore they would have the use for and could easily justify the cost of appropriate ballot paper selection equipment.



There are numerous fairer and better ways for ballot paper selection such as :- Two cages of marked balls

Cage 1 for Candidate number and Cage 2 for position on ballot paper

or using modern technology such as electronic number selection using independent computers is another option.

Such things as lotto and keno draws require specialized specific scrutiny yet selection of possibly future Representative is performed in a very nebulous way.

11. **Re:- Timing of local government elections.**

Timing of local government elections should be scheduled for first weekend in October - (brought forward for the next local election period)

Then quadrennial thus allowing the new councils time to form their own budget by the June

12. **Re:- State elections should also be quadrennial in October mid term to local council elections.**

Please find my responses to the listed questions.

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

NO

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

Similar representation as State electorates' ie 20,000 +/-5%

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

YES

4) Should the mix of divided and undivided councils remain?

NO

If so, should the decision to divide a local government area remain with individual councils?

NO

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

UNDIVIDED COUNCIL ELECTIONS DISENFRANCHISES THE RATEPAYERS OF THEIR RIGHT TO ELECT A LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THEIR CHOICE.

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?

YES – THE EQC HAS THE EXPERTISE

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

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?

TIMING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR FIRST WEEKEND IN OCTOBER (BROUGHT FORWARD FOR THE NEXT LOCAL ELECTION PERIOD) AND THEN QUADRENNIAL THUS ALLOWING THE NEW COINCIL TIME TO FORM THEIR OWN BUDGET BY THE JUNE STATE ECLETION SHOULD ALSO BE QUADRENNIAL IN OCTOBER MID TERM TO LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

10) Is the nomination process adequate? Why?

**NO – NOMINATION FEE SHOULD BE INCREASED TO \$500
“THERE ARE TOO MANY NUISANCE NON-GENUINE CANDIDATES”**

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

UNDIVIDED COUNCILS DISCOURAGE A DIVERSE RANGE OF CANDIDATES DUE TO THE FACT THAT IS UNREALISTIC FOR INDIVIDUAL TO DOOR KNOCK OR CONTACT ALL OF THE VOTERS IN THE LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

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?

YES

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

YES

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

YES

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

NO – THIRD PARTY ARMS LENGTH / PARTY DONATIONS SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT AND DISCLOSED

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

NO – NOT PRACTICAL

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?

YES

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

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?

YES

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 – 24 hours before

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 – DICTATED NUMBERS LOCATION AND DISTANCE TO POLLING BOOTH

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

NO

29) Does the restriction on voters to attend only polling booths in a division in which they are enrolled adversely affect voters?

NO

If this were altered what impact would that have on the administration of the elections in that local government?

**NOT RESTRICTING ON VOTERS TO ATTEND ONLY POLLING BOOTHS IN THE DIVISION
WOULD COMPLICATE COUNTING AND ADD ADDITIONAL UNNECESSARY EXPENSE TO ECQ**

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

NO

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WOULD COMPLICATE COUNTING AND ADD ADDITIONAL UNNECESSARY EXPENSE TO ECQ**

30) Should the new Act allow absent voting?

NO

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?

NO

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?

N/A – SHOULD NOT BE VOTING

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?

OPTIONAL PREFERENTIAL – BETTER REFLECT MAJORITY VOTER CHOICE

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?

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?

NO

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

39.1. PLEASE REFER MY COMMENTS STATED AT THE FRONT OF THIS SUBMISSION.

Many thanks - *John Chesney*