

# Winton Shire Council

GC:DM  
81:672  
27<sup>th</sup> July, 2010

Submission 066

**RECEIVED**

30 JUL 2010

Law, Justice and Safety  
Committee

The Research Director  
Law, Justice and Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Sir

Re: Review of the Local Government Electoral System (Excluding BBC)

In reference to the above matter Winton Shire Council wishes to present the following views:

*1-5 Divisions.*

Winton Shire Council does not operate under divisions. The number of electors currently totals some 950. Elected representatives are the mayor and 4 councilors. A major danger having divisions in councils with small numbers of electors is attracting sufficient numbers of suitable candidates for meaningful elections within all divisions. Whilst an arguable advantage of divisions is to ensuring there is appropriate representation across large tracts of diverse rural areas.

Further, a number of amalgamated local government units retained electoral divisions in an endeavor to maintain something of their previous identities. This appears to have had the effect of entrenching the old separate cultures rather than forming a new body with consolidated focus on a unity future.

Guidelines could be developed that only allow divisions within local governments with a minimum area to elector ratio. The following examples are rural Councils with and without divisions.

<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Area Sq km</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	
Winton Shire Council	53,935	1,519	36:1	Undivided
Boulia Shire Council	61,093	555	110:1	Undivided
Barcoo Shire Council	61,974	465	133:1	Undivided
Cloncurry Shire Council	48,112	3,890	12:1	Undivided
McKinlay Shire Council	40,885	1,017	40:1	Undivided
Longreach Regional	40,688	4,612	9:1	Divisions
Blackall Regional	30,489	2,248	14:1	Divisions
Murweh Shire Council	40,740	4,995	8:1	Undivided

\* Figures used are from the 2007-08 Local Government National Report



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The decision as to have divisions should be a matter for individual councils within the guidelines.

6-7 Elections administered by the ECO.

As the new LG Act makes the CEO even more directly accountable to the Mayor it would be more transparent to have the ECQ conduct the election independent of senior council staff.

8-9 Timing of the election and closing of the electoral roll.

Winton Shire Council believes the quadrennial election should be held on the last day of October with electoral rolls closing 30<sup>th</sup> June. The reason is to allow new councilors understand the local government system prior to formulating a budget.

10. Candidate Nomination.

The current candidate requirements are considered adequate. Additionally candidates should be able to stand for mayor and councilor to eliminate the possibility of losing good candidates from the candidate pool.

16-19. Campaign Funding and Disclosure.

Council believes there should be full and open disclosure of all campaign donations. Each candidate should establish a web site that registers all donations of cash and in kind support within 24 hours of receipt of the cash or pledge. Such disclosure should include the amount of the donations or pledge, the full name of the donor, the date and time the donation or pledge.

20-24. Electoral Signage and Advertising.

How to vote cards should be promotion free.  
How to vote cards should be standard sizes with prescriptive font and type size.  
How to vote cards should not be included in any postal vote packs.  
A media blackout period of 24 hours prior to the opening of polling booths should be prescribed. This would allow voters to crystallize their choices in contemplation without the pressure of zealous candidates. This is particularly relevant now that elected representatives are paid positions, the contests have an often reasonable financial incentive and there is often a political element to the contest.

25. Voting

Voting is to be compulsory.

26-30 Postal Voting.

Postal voting and pre-polling voting are essential options for rural local governments. The large areas and dispersed populations make these options cost effective and convenient. Full postal ballot could be automatic for western local governments with areas in excess of 30,000 square kilometers. For a change of voting methodology a reasoned submission to the Minister could be the option.

There should be no criteria for a pre-poll vote except the wish to make one.

Council is not in favour of absent voting outside local government areas.

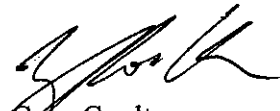
31-35 Property Franchise.

For ease of administration the state electoral role for the local government area should be the basis of the local government electoral role. This represents the people living in the area and directly affected by decisions of Council.

Voting System.

Council favours first past the post (simple majority).

Yours faithfully



Greg Coulton  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER