

Submission 086

**RECEIVED**

30 JUL 2010

Law, Justice and Safety  
Committee

Your reference  
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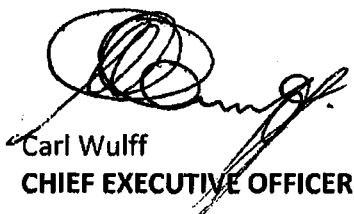
30 July 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

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

Please find **enclosed** Ipswich City Council's submission in response to the June 2010 Issues Paper.

Yours sincerely



Carl Wulff  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Encl



## RESPONSE TO ISSUES PAPER REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM

### 1. Introduction

Ipswich City Council is pleased to respond to the Issues paper presented by the Law, Justice and Safety Committee in relation to the current local government electoral system under the Local Government Act 2009 and on alternative systems and practices.

Ipswich City Council ("ICC") has sought input from Councillors and Senior Officers and has used such input in developing the response to the review questions. Please note that individual Councillors may still wish to make further submissions to the Committee on their own behalf.

ICC response to the issues paper, follows the order of questions

### 2. Review Questions

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

#### Discussion

ICC support the mix of divided and undivided Councils. Further, the decision to divide a local government area should remain with the individual local council.

- (b) *Should the Electoral Commission of Queensland be responsible for the administration of the quadrennial local government elections or should this responsibility remain with Council CEO's*

#### Discussion

ICC supports an independent electoral system for local government elections in Queensland. Consideration should be given to appointing the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to conduct all local government elections as the AEC has a network of permanent Divisional Offices across Queensland which the ECQ do not.

- (c) *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 that the current Act does? If so how?*

### Discussion

While ICC submit that flexibility is needed, any changes to the electoral process should be uniform across Queensland.

- (d) *What changes, if any should be made to the timing of local government elections?*

### Discussion

Consideration should be given to an October Poll date, with the close of the rolls 1 month prior to the election.

- (e) *Should a candidate be required to live in the local government area in which they live?*

### Discussion

Yes

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

### Discussion

Yes

- (g) *Are the requirements for disclosure of campaign funding sufficient?*

### Discussion

ICC submits that the requirements for disclosure are sufficient, however, consideration should be given to making the obligations of disclosure for candidates align (to the maximum extent possible) with that of councillors e.g. whether or not a candidate is a member of a political party.

- (h) *Should candidates make disclosures before, progressively during, and after an election period.*

### Discussion

ICC submits that disclosures should only be made after the election period.

- (i) *Should all financial disclosure requirements, such as values, disclosure periods and who must comply, be standardised?*

### Discussion

Yes

- (j) *Should particular fundraising activities for local government elections be prohibited?*

Discussion

ICC submits that fundraising activities should not be prohibited and that consideration should be given to public funding of election campaigns.

(k) *Should how-to-vote cards be free from promotional content?*

Discussion

No. Candidates should be allowed to promote themselves as they see fit on how-to-vote cards.

(l) *Should how-to-vote cards be standard for all candidates?*

Discussion

No. For reasons stated above.

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

Discussion

All of the above should be allowed.

(n) *Should a "media blackout" period apply for local government elections? Why? For how long?*

Discussion

No. As with State elections, whether or not a media black out applies is a matter for the Federal Government.

(o) *Should voting remain compulsory for local government elections?*

Discussion

Yes

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

Discussion

This should be up to the discretion of the individual local council.

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

Discussion

No for reasons stated above.

- (r) *Should the criteria for pre-polling and postal voting be abolished?*

Discussion

No.

- (s) *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 elections in that local government.*

Discussion

ICC believes the restriction does adversely affect voters and that the restrictions should be abolished. ICC believes that any alteration to this effect would not have a significant impact on the administration of elections in the ICC area.

- (t) *Should the new Act allow absent voting? If so, should this be restricted to absent voting within the local government area only?*

Discussion

ICC submits that absent voting should be allowed and should not be restricted to the absent voting within the local government area.

- (u) *Should the right to vote in Queensland local government elections be extended to non-resident property owners within an area?*

Discussion

No

- (v) *Should voting rights be extended to non-resident occupiers?*

Discussion

No

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

Discussion

No

(x) *Which voting system is most appropriate for local government elections?*

Discussion

Optional Preferential Voting.

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

Discussion

No, optional preferential voting should remain as the voting system. Proportional representation could possibly lead to fractured Councils.