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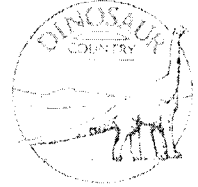
Law, Justice and Safety
Committee

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Submission 089

SHIRE OF FLINDERS



YOUR REFERENCE:

SMc.FM

OUR REFERENCE:

30 July 2010

Council Chambers,
34 Gray Street,
Hughenden, Qld. 4821

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

ljsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ACT REVIEW

The following submission is submitted by Council as part of the review Local Government Elections. It should be noted that Council has only provided comments on the questions that have an impact on its current operations -

1. No comment;
2. No comment;
3. No comment;
4. Should the mix of divided and undivided Council remain? If so, should the decision to divide a Local Government area remain with individual Councils?

Council agrees with having a mix of divided and undivided Councils with individual Councils having the ability to decide on divisions.

5. 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 the Council CEOs?

The Chief Executive Officer should be responsible for the Local Government Elections with the ability to delegate or contract the role out to appropriately qualified personnel if required;

7. No comment;

8. No comment;

9. No comment;

10. No comment;

11. No comment;

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, a candidate should live in their area to provide accountability, accessibility and availability to their local community members to be resident in the area.

14. Should a person be able to stand as a dual candidate for both Mayor and Councillor?

That the current system of separate candidacy for either Mayor or Councillor be retained as being matched and suited to the Queensland system of Local Government;

15. Should the new Act allow Mayors to be appointed by their fellow Councillors;

No. Council fully supports the current electoral process for the mayor position;

16. No comment;

17. No comment;

18. No comment;

19. No comment;

20. No comment;

21. No comment;

22. No comment;

23. No comment;

24. No comment;

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

Council fully supports the provisions for compulsory voting at local government elections;

26. No comment;

27. Should a full postal ballot be automatic for some Local Government areas? If so, why and for which areas?

Council does not support the notion of some Local Governments automatically being full postal ballots as Councils are best placed to make decisions about their operations in their communities.

Local Governments should be empowered to determine, after reasonable community consultation/engagement (a requirement entrenched in the local government principles), whether a full postal ballot, attendance voting or some mixture is best for their community.

28. No comment;

29. 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?

The new Act should not allow absent voting;

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?

The proposal that non-resident property owners have voting rights should be rejected completely.

32. No comment;

33. No comment;

34. No comment;

35. No comment;

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?

Council fully support First-Past-The-Post as being the most simple and easy to understand system for candidates and voters alike;

37. No comment;

38. No comment;

39. What other issues should the committee consider in relation to this inquiry?

Provision should be made for the large western Queensland Councils to have the option to increase Councillor numbers from 4 to 6 where the Councillors are not full time.

The current small number creates fewer ideas, less debate and less representation for the community;

Decisions can be more easily swayed/manipulated where a quorum of three (3) are able to make decisions on behalf of the community;

The corporate knowledge held by Councillors as a group has reduced; and

The work load on part-time Councillors (category 1) limits the quality of representation, ie successful business people find they cannot afford to be away from their businesses.

Yours faithfully



Stephen McCartney
Chief Executive Officer