

Maranoa Regional Council Submission**A NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ACT:
REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

Submitted by;
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Council's responses to each of the questions posed in the issues paper are shown below in blue.

Divisions

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?* The provisions of the Local Government Act 2009 do not allow amalgamated Council to apply to the Change Commission for a change to divisions or the method of representation. There is no rational explanation for the distinction between amalgamated and un-amalgamated Councils.
3. *Are the error margins of 10% in local government areas with more than 10,000 and 20% in all other cases sufficient?* Yes
4. *Should the mix of divided and undivided Councils remain? Yes. If so, should the decision to divide a local government area remain with individual Council?* Yes and the distinction between amalgamated and un-amalgamated Councils must be removed.
5. *Are there other matters the Committee should consider in regard to Local Government divisions?* The opportunity for multi member divisions should be a decision for the respective Council.

Conduct of Elections

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?* Individual Councils should have a choice.
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?* Council has no response for this question.
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?* Change to September or October.

Candidates requirements and conduct

10. *Is the nomination process adequate?* Council has no response for this question.
11. *Does the current system encourage a diverse range of candidates to stand?* Yes
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?* Council has no response for this question.
14. *Should a person be able to stand as a dual candidate for both Mayor and Councillor?* Council has no response for this question.
15. *Should the new Act allow Mayors to be appointed by their fellow Councillors?* No

Campaign funding and disclosures

16. *Are the requirements for disclosure of campaign funding sufficient?* Yes
17. *Should candidates make disclosures before, progressively during and after an election period?*
18. *Should all disclosure requirements, such as values, disclosure periods and who must comply, be standardised?*
19. *Should particular fundraising activities for local government elections be prohibited?* Yes

Electoral signage and advertising material

20. *Should how to vote cards be free from promotional content?* No
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?* No
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?* There should not be any restrictions imposed.
23. *Should the placement and amount of election campaign material be standard across all local government areas?* No
24. *Should a media blackout period apply for local government elections? Why? For how long?* No

Voting

25. *Should voting remain compulsory for local government elections in Queensland?* It has long been the practice not to enforce the penalty provisions for the failure to vote largely due to the small penalty that applies. The number of penalty units should be increased so that enforcement is viable and then voting may be considered to be truly compulsory. In cases where the ECQ conducts the election then ECQ should also be responsible for any enforcement.

Postal voting, pre-polling and absent voting

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 for category 1 and 2 Councils. Category 3 Councils should be given the option of using a full postal ballot.
28. *Should the criteria for pre-polling and postal voting be abolished?* Council has no response for this question.
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?* Council has no response for this question.
30. *Should the new Act allow absent voting? If so should this be restricted to absent voting within a local government area only?* Council has no response for this question.

Property franchise

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?* No
32. *Should voting rights be extended to non resident occupiers (eg 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 (eg 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?* Not applicable.

Voting systems

36. *Which voting system is most appropriate for local government elections – Optional preferential, Compulsory preferential, First past the post or proportional representation?* First past the post is the preferred system. Council is strongly opposed to proportional representation in other than perhaps the largest Councils.
37. *Would different voting systems work better for different sized local governments? Why?* Proportional representation may work in the very large Councils but not in any Councils of category 5 or smaller.
38. *Should proportional representation be introduced for Queensland local government elections?* No *If so why and*
 - a. *Which model 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?*