

12 August 2010

The Research Director
Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane Qld 2000

Dear Ms Stone

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the local government electoral system in Queensland.

By way of introduction, LGMA Qld is the peak body representing the interests of local government officers in Queensland. Our membership derives from CEOs and managers in local government throughout the state and we currently represent over 500 individuals. As you are aware, many of these members have extensive experience in the conduct of local government elections and can provide insights into the dynamics of the process in this state.

As a body representing senior officers, LGMA Qld does not propose to comment on the political issues associated with elections or on the democratic principles governing electoral legislation. However, on behalf of our members, we would like to comment on the administration of elections and respond, in particular, to the issues raised in relation to the *Conduct of Elections* as follows.

Issue 7

Should a determination be made that the ECQ conduct future local government elections, LGMA Qld recommends that there be flexibility in the process to recognise the diverse nature of local government areas. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the ECQ to contract the role of returning officer to the CEO of the local government. However, in other cases, it is not appropriate for the CEO to be the returning officer and there should be options for alternative people to be appointed.

In all cases, local government CEOs will be able to provide advice to the ECQ about local conditions that should be taken into consideration by the returning officer in the conduct of the election.

Issues 26 and 27

Again, due to size and distance issues, postal votes should be permitted based on the needs of the area. In remote regions, postal votes may be the only practicable and convenient means for many residents to register their votes. In these cases, an automatic postal ballot may be suitable (for example Burke, Richmond, Northern Peninsula Area).

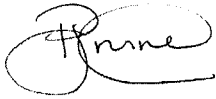
Candidate Requirements

We note that the Issues Paper discusses the candidate nomination process but is silent in relation to candidate training. LGMA Qld is of the view that indented candidate training is critical as many local government candidates have insufficient understanding of the requirements of Councillors and Mayor prior to making their decision to stand and, in fact, in some cases even when they are elected. In the 2008 election, intending candidate training was conducted and this should continue and be strengthened for future elections.

These are the only issues that we wish to make direct comment on at this time but we note that the Committee has arranged a series of public meetings around the state which should allow you to gain greater understanding of more specific local issues.

We wish you well in your deliberations and if LGMA Qld can provide any assistance or information to the committee, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peta Irvine', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Peta Irvine
Chief Executive Officer