

11<sup>th</sup> August 2010

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

**SUBMISSION ON THE INQUIRY INTO A NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ACT:  
REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM (EXCLUDING BCC)**

We the undersigned individuals wish to make a submission on the inquiry into a new Local Government Electoral Act – review of the Local Government Electoral System.

**Electoral divisions**

We strongly support the continuation of the divisional system. In any large council area, the community receives better representation through local divisional councillors who are directly involved in community issues and answerable to local residents.

**Candidates**

Candidates for local government should be resident in the council area (although not necessarily within the division they represent). Candidates should also be able to nominate for both the position of councillor and mayor; we believe that would encourage more candidates to nominate for mayor, giving voters greater choice. We do not support the selection of mayor by councillors instead of by public election, as we believe residents are entitled to have a say in who leads the council.

**Funding and disclosures**

We believe disclosure of campaign funding must be mandatory for all donations over \$1,500. Candidates should be required to disclose significant donations before and during campaigns as well as providing a complete disclosure of all funding after the campaign. This would reveal to voters which candidates may be backed by particular interest groups such as the development industry, which may have a strong vested interest in council decisions.

**Electoral signage and advertising**

The imposition of a 'media blackout' is no longer appropriate now that there are so many electronic alternatives to mainstream radio and TV (Twitter, Facebook etc). However, street signage should be kept to a minimum in the community and the maximum number of allowable signs should be capped. No large signage (eg on car trailers) should be permitted.

**Voting**

We fully support the availability of postal, pre-poll and absentee voting (within the local government area) for local government elections on the same basis as state and federal elections.

**Property franchise**

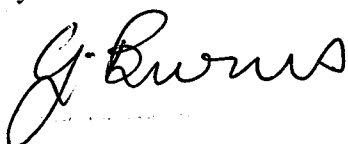
We strongly oppose the extension of eligibility to vote in local government elections to non-resident property owners. We believe it is inappropriate for those who can afford and choose to own investment property, to be given the right to vote in more than one local government election – whether multiple divisions within one council, or in different councils. The justification for this suggestion would support giving Rupert Murdoch 20 votes in every state election in Australia because of his investment in this country.

While non-resident owners and investors certainly have a financial stake in the area in which they own property, including being subject to council rates and decisions, their interests may be very different to those of residents. Investment interests may directly conflict with those of existing residents – for example, the nature and rate of new development.

To allow non-resident owners to vote in multiple council elections would deny the principle of 'one person, one vote' and potentially lead to councils being controlled by business interests instead of the community.

Yours faithfully

Glenn Burns



Judy Burns

