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Sent: Saturday, 1 October 2005 4:24 PM
To: LCARC
Subject: Voices & Votes Response Form



SUBMISSION FROM

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SUBMISSION

What could the ECQ do better or differently to get its message across to young people?

The ECQ could consider a advertising 'blitz' (TV, radio, internet advertising on youth sites, newspaper and youth oriented magazines) campaign to target young people and reinforce the fact that enrolment and voting are in their best interests so they have a say in what happens in their communities. Relate it back to the concerns of young people which could be established through focus group/polling etc.

How could the ECQ make it easier for young people to enrol and become registered to vote?

Have 'enrol to vote days' at universities and in schools where the ECQ goes to the location assists young people with completing forms and then takes the forms away and processes them. This way it becomes far easier for young people to register as it is virtually effortless.

How could the ECQ make it easier for young people to cast their vote?

ECQ could open up polling booths on Fridays for students at schools and uni's. Effectively students could go down and cast votes at lunchtime/in between classes or could have a lesson off on voting day. Some year 12 students are 18 years old and so are eligible to vote and again this takes the perceived 'effort' out of voting.

Do you think more young people would vote if they could do so at any time in the week leading up to an election, without having to meet any special conditions to do so?

Yes but a week may not even be necessary even the friday before election day might be enough.

Do you think young people could be disadvantaged if there was no opportunity to enrol after an election is called?

I don't think this particular rule disadvantages young people, if the effort was put in in the leadup to the campaign being called it would certainly be enough to get as many as possible enrolled.

Do you think improved civics education is a worthwhile reason for government to consider a change to fixed term elections?

Yes fixed dates would not only allow a higher level of practical civics education but also improve perceived government accountability.

Do you think young people would be more likely to vote if the voting system was changed so that candidates running on certain issues of particular interest to young people were more likely to get elected and have a voice in parliament?

Yes but by lowering the voting age to 16 youth affairs would take a more prominent role as candidates try to capture the 'younger' vote.

Should the voting age be lowered to 17 or 16 years? Why or why not? If the voting age is lowered, should voting at the lowered age be compulsory?

The voting age must be lowered to 16 for reasons that people under 18 are expected to file tax statements and so effectively pay for governments they cannot elect.

FOR STUDENTS : What worked well and what did you enjoy when you learnt about or experienced democracy in your school? What more could schools do to encourage you to value democracy and prepare you so that you are well informed and confident about engaging in democracy? **OR FOR TEACHERS :** How does your school approach civics education and practice democracy? How could students be better prepared to engage in democracy? I enjoyed hearing of how democracy has developed in Australia over 200+ years, the key events like the Federation conventions and shepherds' strikes and the women's movement for voting.

How can political parties encourage young people's engagement in democracy?

Lowering the voting age will make youth policies more pressing concerns at elections.

How can politicians themselves restore the faith of young people in democracy?
 Speak more about youth affairs and the problems facing young people at all levels of society.

Have you used any of the government opportunities to voice your opinions about issues? How effective was it?
 I found it very effective, being on the Queensland Youth Council, attending and speaking at the regional forums and using these submission activities to voice my opinions has been a rewarding and beneficial experience.

How do you think government should involve young people in the decisions it makes? What methods work best for you – face-to-face, web based/online methods or written?
 face to face, web based and community forum style I feel are all equally effective however young people tend to be highly computer literate and so utilising the 'new' technologies is a fantastic way to engage youth.

Which of the following activities have you carried out, or would you like to carry out?

Volunteering - Have done
 Initiating or participating in a local youth project - Have done
 Initiating or signing a petition - Have done
 Attending a rally or protest - Would like to
 Taking part in a strike - Would like to
 Being a member of a political party - Have done
 Being a member of a trade union - Would like to
 Being a member of a student union - Have done
 Being a member of a non-government organisation which lobbies government (e.g. The Wilderness Society, Amnesty International, Greenpeace) - Have done
 Contacting a politician or local government councillor - Have done
 Participating in a Youth Parliament - Would like to
 Being involved in a Youth Council - Have done
 Being involved in an organisation which seeks to represent the views of young people (e.g. Young Australian Rural Network) - Have done

What assistance or encouragement do you need from government to take action about the issues you feel passionate about?
 A higher level of progressive leadership is needed at all levels of government. Politicians should not be afraid to take principled or conviction lines, and political parties need to encourage the 'conscience' vote.

What role can families and friends play in getting young people active and involved with democracy?
 There is a limited role for families, usually in encouragement and assistance with activities initiated at a government level (in the form of transport, joint-participation, moral support and encouragement etc.)

What role can non-government foundations or community organisations play in getting young people active and involved with democracy?
 All groups in society need to encourage active participation in politics in any way. Joining a party, protesting, petitioning, entering submissions like these are all important steps to take.