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**From:** Rob Melloy  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 January 2013 2:32 PM  
**To:** Electoral Reform  
**Subject:** Comment on the review of the electoral process

These comments are intended to provide input into the review of the electoral act for Queensland.

**Background to suggestions:**

I had arranged a sailing holiday in the Caribbean when it was announced that the Local Government Elections were to take place. As it happened I left Australia on the morning of the opening of the pre-poll voting and arrived home the day for final receipt of postal votes. I wrote to the electoral commission pointing out the situation and asking for advice on action so that I would not be fined for not voting. The reply indicated that I should add my name to a "Cannot Vote Register." I did this, but still received a show cause as to why I should not be fined for failing to vote.

I am a firm believer in Compulsory voting, but am sensitive to the beliefs of others who for many reasons find themselves unable to vote. I believe that the requirement to vote is the same as the requirement to have a license to drive or to not exceed the speed limit. Freedom does not give a right to any and all behaviours.

I also believe in full preferential voting and do not favour "vote 1 for the party" style votes as it leads us closer to a presidential style of government.

Before an election we receive a letter in the mail suggesting that we should take it to the polling booth to speed up the process of marking us off the electoral roll. I have never had any electoral officer use this letter or ask for any form of identification. (I recognise identification is not a requirement of the current act)

Electronic communication is pervasive in society today. It somewhat amazes me that we can pay bills by the internet, phone banking etc but cannot exercise our vote in a similar way.

**Suggestions**

1. A register should be created of persons unable to vote and this register used before sending show cause notices.
2. The register be widely promoted and a list of valid reasons for listing include reasons such as "conscious objection", "remoteness", "physical or mental inability"
3. All eligible adults must either vote or place themselves on the "Unable to Vote" Register.
4. A letter be sent to all eligible voters with a pin which identifies the voter. (Ideally this should be by e-mail as well when available.)
5. The Voting process should be by website, mobile app, phone or at an official booth where assistance can be given to use the on-line voting software. When voting, the elector would need their full name, address and PIN. No paper votes should be necessary. (note this also means I could have voted in the recent local elections from the Caribbean.)
6. The electronic voting timeframe should be widened to Friday 8am to Saturday 6pm with polling booths retaining the traditional time. The result could be announced at 6:30pm on closing day. (Thus allowing for more flexibility in timing of one's vote (particularly for those with a computer at work but not at home) and to ease pressure on infrastructure.) There may still, however be a need for pre-poll voting (electronically) but no need for postal votes as these could be done by phone.

**Comments**

- The cost of software development would be a major cost here, however if the specifications were drawn up and a license given to the private sector to sell the software to other jurisdictions, the cost can be minimised.

- The costs of phone voting could be offset by savings in pre-poll voting locations and fewer officers required at polling booths.
- The hardware and network infrastructure is already in place in schools and if not then this would be a worthwhile investment!
- There will be a huge saving in electoral officers with the elimination of the need to count and recount votes and the delays in finalising the result.
- It may be useful to encourage voters to register their physical postal address and their electronic e-mail address.
- An electronic voting system if designed correctly could draw attention to an invalid vote and ask for correction or for inclusion on an "Informal" Register or the "Unable to Vote" register.

I would be happy to elaborate if the above is unclear.

Colin Robert (Rob) Melloy