

[REDACTED]

March 1, 2013.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached my submission to the Electoral Reform Discussion Paper 2013.

My submission relates only to Part B of the discussion; and I would like this submission be treated as confidential in its entirety.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Royce Wilson

SUBMISSION BEGINS – RESPONSES RELATE TO PART B OF DISCUSSION PAPER

Should truth in political advertising legislation be introduced in Queensland?

I believe such legislation should be enacted in Queensland, and along similar lines as the South Australian legislation

Just as the Trade Practices Act prevents the false, misleading or deceptive advertising of commercial goods and services, Truth in Political Advertising would (hopefully) prevent false, misleading or deceptive political statements.

I am of the belief that “Truth in Political Advertising” legislation would indeed restore accountability to politicians, improve the standard of discourse by elevating political discussions above mere attacks or criticism of opposing candidates, for the reasons outlined in the discussion paper.

2 If so, should it extend beyond advertisements to other inaccurate and misleading statements?

No, I do not believe it should. The scope for abuse or political points scoring if such legislation was applied to (for example) comments reported in a newspaper, made at a function or presented in reports is great and has the potential to stifle free speech and the exchange of ideas as well.

Should how-to-vote cards be subject to increased regulation? If so, how?

Yes, they should be subjected to increased regulation. I strongly support the discussion paper’s Option D, banning them.

As a voter I find “how to vote” cards being handed out at a polling place to be pointless. It is my honest belief the vast majority of people have already decided who they will vote for long before they reach a polling place and as such

Certainly, I am perfectly capable of putting a “1” next to the name of the candidate I prefer on a ballot paper without being given instruction on how to do so from a third party with a vested interest.

“How to vote” cards are, as the discussion paper notes, extremely wasteful and resource-intensive. I am concerned by the amount of paper required to print what is basically ephemera.

Given this, I also support Option A, namely publishing “how to vote” cards electronically – allowing those who wish to access them to do so (possibly even with a smartphone or tablet whilst queueing up to vote, for example) without forcing them on others (such as those who have already made their minds up on who they will vote for.)

Should voters be required to produce proof of their identity on polling day?

No, I do not believe they should. Doing so would cause problems for people who had left their driver's licence/ID at home or did not have one, not to mention considerably increasing the already long queue times at polling booths while election officials check literally thousands of driver's licences or ID documents,

Should voters be permitted to enrol on polling day?

Yes; there are countless people who, for whatever reason, have been unable to enrol prior to the election. I see no reason why they should be prevented from enrolling on the day, especially as it would encourage people to vote and exercise their democratic responsibilities.

Should electronic voting be introduced in Queensland?

I have no strong feelings one way or the other on this as outlined in the discussion paper.

Are there any opportunities to improve the postal voting system?

I support expanding the grounds under which a person can apply for a postal vote, basically allowing a person to cast a postal vote instead of voting in person for any reason whatsoever.

Making it easier for people to vote should be a priority in any democracy and postal voting may be far more convenient for people working shifts or with other commitments on an election day.

Many people may not want to give up part of potentially their only day off to vote – but if they could lodge their vote by mail at a time more convenient to them (perhaps after work or during a lunch hour), they may be more inclined to engage in the democratic process – and take it seriously.

Should compulsory voting remain for Queensland State elections?

Absolutely not, largely for the reasons outlined in the paper in opposition to compulsory voting.

I believe compulsory voting turns elections into a statistical exercise based on and disenfranchises voters who support minority parties or candidates - because it means you could be seen as wasting your time turning up to vote if you do not support the incumbent (or popular candidate) in a "safe" seat.

Part of being able to exercise one's democratic rights to vote should also include the right to abstain from voting, especially if one does not feel *any* of the candidates in their electorate represent them.

Making voting optional would, I believe, encourage candidates to earn their votes by listening to their electorate– if the number of people who will vote is an unknown quantity

Should the voting system used for Queensland State elections be changed?

Yes – remove the ability for candidates to allocate preferences. If I vote for Candidate Fred Bloggs, I want my vote to go to *only* candidate Fred Bloggs and not John Smith, with whom Fred Bloggs has done a preference deal.

As an alternative, I would favour the information relating to preference deals to be prominently made available both before polling and at the polling place, to better allow voters to make an informed choice on where their vote is going.

Any other matter

Addition of a “None of the above” option.

I strongly believe there should be a “None of the above” option on all ballot papers. I have entered a polling booth in at least one election not wanting to vote for *any* of the candidates as I do not support their party or views, or believe they will represent me.

I am then forced to vote for the candidate I dislike the least rather than the one I believe will best represent me in parliament. Anecdotal evidence would suggest many others feel the same.

Therefore, I would like to see the option for “None of the above” added to ballot papers.

Ideally, if “None of the above” won a particular seat (highly unlikely), that would trigger a by-election with entirely new candidates. Realistically, however, I believe a “none of the above” option would provide a formal option for voters to indicate to political parties that none of the candidates are acceptable to them far more reliable data on how many people are unhappy with the candidates fielded in a given electorate.

I also believe such an option would greatly reduce the number of “donkey votes” if voting remains compulsory, as voters could simply “Vote 1 – None Of The Above” in lieu of casting a blank ballot or one which has been improperly marked.

If nothing else, such an option would cost nothing to implement and would provide some useful statistical data.

END OF SUBMISSION