

Submission to the Electoral Reform Discussion Paper

In making this submission I wish to state that I do not belong to any political party and/or any political association eg a trade union, lobby group etc.
I am an enrolled voter in the state seat of Beaudesert.

Political Donations.

My submission on this subject (option a& b) is to continue the cap on ALL political donations not just those donations made during the "capped expenditure period". This would ensure that all donations are transparent and would not allow any donor to provide funds to a political party and/or a candidate without disclosure and would inhibit any undue influence over that political party and/or a candidate.

Allowing undeclared donations before a "capped expenditure period" is open to abuse by those who seek to gain influence.

My submission to Option C is to include this as part of legislation. This option would prevent undue influence by organizations and/or lobby groups. Adopting Option C removes any requirement for Option D.

If Option C is not taken up then I submit that under Option D all industrial organizations and corporations should seek approval from their members and/or shareholders on an annual basis via a secret ballot to gain approval to make a political donation for the purposes of an election campaign.

My submission on Options E, F & H is no change to current rulings.

Public Funding of Elections.

My submission is that Option A should be the preferred method of public funding as this is open and transparent and not subject to any form of abuse of process.

Elections Campaign Expenditure.

My submission is to maintain caps as outlined in Option A.

My submission on aggregation of funding is to adopt Option C.

The current definitions in the Act are too narrow in describing an "associated entity" as this totally excludes any "affiliated organisation" such as registered trade organisations which in the past have outspent political parties on specific issues, expenditure which should be included in the cap for the political party the organisation is preferring.

My submission for Option E is to clarify the definition of electoral expenditure and include parts of the NSW Act to broaden the area of expenditure as outlined in this discussion paper and along the lines of section 87(4) of the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981* (NSW).

Section 199 of the current Act seems to go beyond what is intended and should be removed.

My submission for Option F, Volunteer Labour is no change due to the difficulty to separate those who volunteer on a "no pay basis" and those who are placed into a campaign to act as a volunteer but are being paid as an employee of an affiliated organization. It is well known that affiliated trade organizations have used their paid officials to assist on a full time basis candidates with their campaigns. This type of labour skews the volunteer ethos.

Truth in political advertising.

I don't believe that legislation to cover this topic will ever be effective due to the time constraints imposed by an election campaign. I believe the electorate is well aware of the type of "misleading" advertising that some political parties and candidates have used in the past and have rebutted such claims vigorously via various methods available.

How to vote cards.

My submission is to adopt Option A.

My submission is to adopt Option B.

There seems to be little point if the ECQ approves the how to vote card by ensuring it is correctly authorised but has no power to refuse the card if it is going to be deceptive or misleading.

Option C is worthy of review given the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters suggestions to the AEC.

My submission for Option D is no change.

Proof of Identity.

Given that we do not have in Australia a national identity card the idea of Proof of Identity at a polling station is not a workable proposition.

Previously the ECQ would mail out to enrolled voters a confirmation of their enrolment and request them to present this to the polling officer as a means of assisting the smooth flow at the polling station. I would suggest that until we are required by law to carry a government issued Identity Card, then this current mail out from ECQ should continue.

Enrolment on Polling Day.

My submission to this option is to have a well advertised cut off day for enrolments, be it 7 days or 1 day before polling, so long as ECQ can provide to each polling place an accurate list of the electorate.

Enrolling on election day at the polling place will certainly cause delays and unnecessary work for the ECQ officials at the polling place plus additional work after the polls close with ECQ then having to verify the bona fides of the person who enrolled that day. The current advertising by ECQ is more than adequate to alert the electorate of the rolls closing date.

Electronic Voting.

I am not sure that any form of Electronic voting is going to be of any assistance with those voters with a disability as stated in the options. One would assume that a vision impaired voter has no additional advantage using an electronic voting device as opposed to a paper ballot, hence their current need for a trusted assistant to help them cast their

ballot. As there appears to be no push to alter this well used arrangement why complicate the issue with another form of voting.

Voters who live outside a 20 km range from a polling place have adequate access via postal voting.

Given the difficulty of one government department to pay its employees I would hasten to add the obvious problems that could arise from electronic voting for all enrolled voters.

My submission would be to leave the current arrangements stand.

Postal Voting

My submission on Option A is no change to the current regulations.

My submission On Option B is to offer the online application but the application must abide by the cut off time advised by ECQ. It is a flawed thought that online applications will prevent delays in delivery of the ballot paper if a reasonable cut off time is in place.

My submission on Option C is in agreement with the proposal to bring forward the deadline.

Compulsory Voting

My submission is to maintain the current compulsory voting system as it has served this state well since its introduction in 1915. We take it as a democratic right to vote so why would we now contemplate a change to the compulsory act of voting as we could end up with some unintentional consequences that could arise from this change. There are too many examples in governments where changes are made to court certain sectors of the electorate, which have delivered poor processes and result in "unintentional consequences".

If it's not broken then don't try to fix it !

Voting system

My submission on the voting system is no change to the current OPV.

This system gives a clear choice to the voter as to how they cast their vote.

Other matters

I would submit that consideration be given to a change of the Electoral Act to include the following.

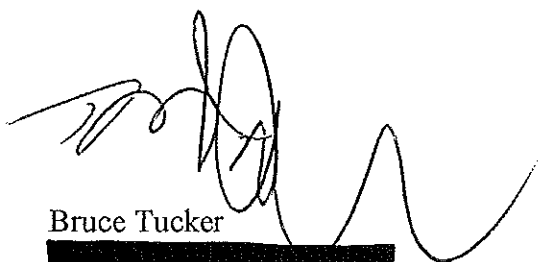
"A candidate endorsed by a political party who is subsequently elected as the representative of the seat must remain a member of that political party for the duration of the Parliament. If the member decides to resign from that political party then he/she should also resign from the Parliament, thereby causing a by-election, at which the resigned member can then contest as an independent or an endorsed candidate of a different political party. Additionally if a candidate is elected as an Independent then the same rule should apply in that he/she remains an independent for the duration of that parliament."

I raise this issue as I have lived in an electorate where an endorsed candidate of a political party resigned from that party some months after being elected to parliament. Over the duration of this parliament this person then proceeded to establish another political party and then changed again to join a third political party. At no time did the member canvas the electorate about his intentions and in effect he stole my vote along with many other

thousands of votes by his actions. This would have to be the most undemocratic action of a member of parliament and should not be allowed to happen again. Sadly this action has been repeated in the current government and I am sure that the voters affected will believe that their votes have been hijacked for personal gain by those members who were elected as their party endorsed candidates.

If members of parliament feel they no longer fit in with the party that endorsed them then resignation from the parliament is the honourable course of action so they can then stand again in a by-election and test their credentials with the voters. If they are good and decent candidates then surely the voters will return them to the parliament as their member, but at least the voters would have been given the democratic opportunity to do so.

I appreciate this opportunity to submit my views to this discussion paper.



Bruce Tucker

[Redacted]

15th January 2013.

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