
From: Lynn Kelly
Sent: Friday, 11 January 2013 5:59 PM
To: Electoral Reform
Subject: Retain compulsory voting

Dear friends,

The document on the Qld government website outlining proposed changes to the electoral system is dense but seems well-considered. The issue I feel most strongly about is compulsory voting. While you may hear from many people who would prefer not to be forced to vote, I believe that compulsory voting is a key strength (maybe the key strength) of democracy in Australia and it would be a terrible tragedy if voting were made optional.

I speak from experience in the voting operations of the USA (I'm a dual citizen, living in Brisbane since 2004). Compulsory voting makes it difficult for interest groups to corner the market in votes - this is more important than you can imagine. For many years the religious right in the USA put their issues on every state ballot, even when it made no sense, in order to get their followers to the polls. An anti-tax movement could (and has in the US) voted down necessary taxes to balance budgets, leaving governments with increasing debt.

Please don't mess with success. Just because Australia is the only country that makes voting compulsory doesn't mean we're behind - it means we're ahead!

Sincerely,
Lynn Kelly