

ELECTORAL AND PARTY/CANDIDATE FINANCES

As I am not an accountant I feel ill equipped to comment in detail on the financial section of this paper.

Added to this is the fact that if major changes are introduced it is possible that the finances will change substantially as well so I suggest that finances are dealt with after other changes(if any) are implemented.

TRUTH IN POLITICAL ADVERTISING

I strongly support truth in political advertising and, in addition to untrue statements of any sort during an election campaign it should apply to any misleading statements made by parties or individual members.

How to vote cards

As well as the possibility of having misleading how to vote cards on election day there is another problem from time to time.

Some people who hand them out do so with an overbearing attitude especially when either they or the candidate or both are novices at electioneering.

Some elderly people find such an attitude frightening at times.

To avoid this, how to vote cards should be scrutinised by the ECQ (say immediately after nominations close)

Approved cards become the authorised card for that candidate or candidate/party and also the cards listed on the ECQ website

They can then be put in a stand at each polling booth, clearly marked with the candidate's/party's details and electors can select from these stands the how to vote card of their choice or none at all .(self service in other words)

If this is accepted, the only staff needed by candidates are people who top up the stands.

Unauthorised cards can be recycled via ECQ rubbish receptacles prior to commencement of voting. Dealing with how to vote cards in this way allows voters to consider their vote with or without a card and without any stress or duress.

Proof of identity

The fact that there is no need for proof of identity in Australian elections is probably the reason why there are accusations of numerous people rising from their grave in order to have a say in the State's future at every election possible.

Proof of identity should be a requirement to avoid this and stop practitioners of the " vote early and often" philosophy.

Granted with some elderly people who have surrendered their driver's licence, photographic ID may be difficult to produce but in these cases a seniors card or pension card should suffice.

Enrolment on polling day

Subject to the stringent security procedures suggested in the paper I can see no reason why people who enrol on Election Day cannot cast a provisional vote as long as substantial penalties are

provided in either the electoral act or the Criminal code (Chapter14) for any attempt at enrolling fraudulently.

Electronic voting

When there are untold examples of how either criminal intent or stupidity can interfere with the accuracy of a range of electronic activities, I cannot agree with electronic voting.

I might change my opinion after I see the Health Department payroll system working flawlessly for say 2 years.

Postal voting

Having postal voting reinforces my view on there being no need for electronic voting.

I see no problem in including the 2 amendments made to Commonwealth legislation in 2010

As for the need to sign the application for a postal vote, I see no valid reason to delete this requirement.

Compulsory voting

In a democratic country people should be free to vote or not vote and the argument that voting is a compulsory civic duty is in my view a load of nonsense.

The objective of an election is to select the best leaders to manage the State or Country to the best of their ability.

Obviously to achieve this objective, electors should at least have some knowledge of the candidates and policy and understanding of our political system.

Forcing political illiterates to participate in elections is not likely to achieve this objective, quite the opposite in fact.

One item needs to be kept in mind however if compulsory voting is done away with.

If a substantial number of people do not vote, their vote could be cast by others who are keen to see their candidate elected even if it is by illegal means.

This is another reason why provision of identification is an essential part of an election.

Voting system

I strongly support the full preferential system for the simple reason that it is the fairest system.

With first past the post in an election with say 5 candidates it is possible for a candidate with 25% of the vote to win.

A strange win when 75% did not want him or her.

The optional preferential system leaves it to the elector to decide if they want to give a second preference.

Again using the 5 candidate example it is quite possible to win with only 35% of the vote if only a few voters allocate preferences.

With the full preferential system, all voters show their order of preference and they are distributed according to the voter's wishes until one candidate has a total of 50% plus 1.

This winner may not be either the person with 25% or 35 % but it it will be the person least disliked by the largest number of voters.

As for preferences, we need to get rid of the fairy story which suggests that parties and candidates allocate preferences, they do not.

They can make recommendations but the only person who can allocate preferences is the elector.

Nevertheless parties and candidates talk about how they allocate preferences.

The other reason for supporting the full preferential system is the fact that the optional system creates confusion when we have a Commonwealth election which uses the full preferential system.

While not in the paper, I should like to comment on one other area, the lack of an Upper House in Queensland.

Under the present system once a party has a majority in the House, it can best be described as a dictatorship when it should be democratic Government.

This is not a derogatory comment aimed at any party it is simply a statement of fact.

Queensland's recent history is littered with initiatives taken by the Government of the day which were not included in their policy platform, were not supported by the electorate but, as there were no checks or balances were rammed through to become law.

A State as rich in assets and resources as Queensland should have a substantial surplus of funds. Instead we are in debt up to our eyebrows.

We need a stabilising factor to avoid this and have the State work towards getting out of debt, with funds to create opportunities for its citizens.

Because of this I suggest that Queensland follow the example of all other States by having an Upper House.

No doubt there will be many who will say that we cannot afford more politicians and I fully agree, we need to keep costs down.

However we also cannot afford to continue the way we are.

Perhaps there is a solution which would achieve a fully functioning Upper House at very minimal cost.

We have 89 seats in the Lower House at present so if we create one seat out of 3 present seats for all seats except 2 in the north where 2 seats are merged into one, this will give us 30 seats.

If we elect 2 lower house members and 1 upper house member in each seat we will have a total of 90 members an increase of one member to get an upper house.

The chamber is already there and in working order I understand, so we will need a few staff but of course the lower house does not need as many with 29 less members.

Upper house members should be elected to serve a double term before having to stand again except the first election where half the upper house members are elected for a single term and the other half for a double term.

This will produce stability and sensible well thought out legislation which can get Queensland out of the mire

From individual electorate's points of view, the concept of 3 members in one electorate working hard to retain their seats should provide substantial benefits for the electorate.

A government willing to implement it would be seen as one that truly has Queensland at heart and wishes a return to democracy.

The combination of better service to electors and a return to democracy would certainly create popularity for the Government which they would not normally achieve.

That in turn would ensure that they would remain on the treasury benches a great deal longer.