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From: Geoff McKay [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 19 February 2013 12:24 PM
To: Electoral Reform
Subject: Electoral Reform

These are the issues that I think are important in this current review of electoral processes.

I strongly feel that the considerations and outcomes of the review should also apply to local government.

Political Donations

There is absolutely no chance of a level playing field when enormous funding disparity exists between candidates.

To mitigate against such disparity there should continue to be caps on political donations, and they should also apply to local government candidates.

Declarations of who has donated what should be stated in clear laymans terms.

Company directors, trustees, and business operators should be named so the ordinary voter knows who is actually supporting the candidate, with the declaration of donations lodged on an online register **before** the election - not weeks or months after the election when it's all done and dusted.

The online register should apply all throughout the term of government so there is not a "declared electoral donations period" to easily get around, and "in-kind" donations should be included.

Public Funding

If donation caps were applied to local government, the same arguments justifying public funding of state candidates due to donation caps would apply.

Public funding after achievement of a minimum threshold should be based on the number of votes a candidate actually receives.

How-To-Vote Cards

I am acutely aware that most voters are uncomfortable with how-to-votes being thrust upon them as they approach voting booths, that how-to-votes have very little last minute effect on swaying votes, and the only reason it's done is because the other side does it.

I believe to save paper and avoid voters discomfort on election days, how-to-votes should only be displayed online and inside voting booths on election day for the assistance of voters.

Proof of Identity

Absolutely yes - why is it we have to prove who we are for a myriad of public purposes such as drivers licensing, connection to public utilities etc, yet when it comes to voting, one of our most precious democratic rights, the electoral official simply ticks off a name against the electoral roll on a person's sayso.

Electronic voting

Where it is practical and cost effective to provide electronic means of recording votes at voting booths then it should be provided. Voting via internet should be a "no no" because of security risks.

Compulsory voting

Absolutely yes - if voting is not compulsory how can the victor ever claim they have a mandate from "the people" to action the policies they presented to the electorate during their election bid. To say you have a mandate when less than a possible 100% of the voters turned out to vote is hardly a mandate.

Many Australians have lost their lives defending our democratic way of life, and how can this sacrifice be reconciled against a less than full turnout of the people on election day.

In my opinion, the argument that democracy is only really served when one has a choice whether to vote or not is a copout. Every adult citizen has a basic responsibility to the society in which he or she lives to make a conscious considered choice of who they want to govern their community.

Voting system

For consistency purposes across all levels of government including local government I favour FPV (full preferential voting). This system more effectively enables the successful candidate who attains the 50% plus 1 to be reflective of the collective wishes of the voters.

Geoff McKay

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