

Electoral Reform,  
Strategic Policy, Legal & Executive Services,  
Dept of Justice & Attorney-General,  
G.P.O. Box 149,  
Brisbane, Q., 4001.

3-2-2013

### ELECTORAL REFORM

Regarding the ~~dept~~ department's discussion paper on Electoral Reform, I offer the following comments. As I do not have a computer or electric typewriter, I have had to make this submission by hand.

#### POLITICAL DONATIONS

I believe that donations to political parties or candidates should be unregulated, and entirely at the discretion of the donor.

Donations should also be tax deductible by the donor as many government decisions or legislation either directly or indirectly affect the income-earning capacity of tax payers, and therefore their obligations to pay more or less tax; or their capacity to claim rebates or concessions (e.g. Private Health Fund contributions or claims etc).

#### PUBLIC FUNDING FOR ELECTIONS

I consider that all political parties or candidates seeking election should not be publicly funded.

Successful candidates are quite adequately remunerated if elected to public office, and do not deserve to have their electoral expenses reimbursed in any way; they can claim costs as a tax deduction.

Political parties or supporters of successful candidates derive benefits either directly or indirectly as a result of a candidate's success, and likewise do not deserve support from the public purse.

#### ELECTION CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE

I consider that campaign expenditure should be unregulated and with no caps on expenditure. Campaign expenditure should be purely a matter for parties and candidates to determine.

#### TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

Difficult to determine. A party or candidate may make a claim or statement in good faith in the lead up to election, but

find after election that financial or practical constraints make it impractical to implement or fulfil their claims; or that they have to be deferred indefinitely.

Legislation to promote "truth in advertising" could be used for picking purposes or vendettas by people who are irrational or have an axe to grind.

Elector should make up their own minds either before or on election day as to whether advertising is true or not, and the effect on their vote.

HOW TO VOTE CARDS

A delegatable feature of elections as many (or most?) voters already know who they want to vote for, and do not really need a guide to help them.

How to Vote cards may have greater merit where there are a large number of candidates standing for election, and where preferential voting is involved. Don't ban them though.

PROOF OF IDENTITY

Has considerable merit, even more so if voting were to be optional or non-compulsory.

However I think of people who do not possess any form of photographic identification, and are unlikely to ever have it!

ID without a photo is of questionable value.

ELECTRONIC VOTING

I consider electronic voting to be rather suspect at this point due to system, hardware or operational weaknesses,

It could lead to a higher error or informal vote level especially where voters are elderly, afflicted or of ethnic origin.

Personal voting may reduce these problems. Electoral Office staff are on hand to give assistance to voters with problems.

I am very suspicious of the increasing level of "hacking" throughout the world in many areas, and the likelihood of it occurring in an electronic voting system; no matter what level of sophisticated safeguards are introduced.

POSTAL VOTING

I see no problems with it at the present time, and have used it myself in the past when travelling interstate or overseas with no problems or issues involved.

Let the system continue as is.

CAPPING OF DONATIONS

I consider that donations to political parties or candidates should not be capped in anyway, and should be tax deductible for donors as I have mentioned under the heading of Political Donations

COMPULSORY/NON-COMPULSORY VOTING

In the past when I was undertaking tertiary studies I formed the view that it may have been more democratic and practical to have non-compulsory voting, however my view has changed subsequently.

From my involvement in elections in various ways over the years, and by way of life experience, I consider that on balance, compulsory voting is more desirable and a very valuable privilege, and not an onerous chore as some may think.

PREFERENTIAL VOTING


After much consideration, I believe that "first past the post" voting is preferable to preferential voting. It is simpler and may lead to less informal votes.

I know of instances where very good political candidates who polled a majority of first preferences were defeated by second preference candidates who were standing purely out of spite to keep a first preference candidate out.

Preferential voting allows voters to have "two or more bites at the cherry", which I do not favour.

Should you wish to speak to me further on this matter, please call me on the phone number at the head of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

  
(Erik SCHUMANN)