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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 1 March 2013 4:56 PM  
**To:** Electoral Reform  
**Subject:** Electoral Reform Submission

Re: Submission on Electoral Reform

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on various electoral matters. Please be aware that the opinions expressed below are my own and not necessarily those of the Brisbane City Council or the Liberal National Party.

I wish to restrict my comments to the following two matters:

#### 1) How to Vote Cards

It is my view that How to Vote cards have an important roll in the democratic process, however, the current method of mass distribution on Election Day is wasteful and unnecessary.

Nevertheless, I believe that How to vote cards do help to reduce voter confusion in Queensland caused by the different voting systems at a State and Commonwealth level (ie optional preferential voting vs compulsory preferential voting). I have scrutineered at many elections since the 1990s and have noticed many voters just voting "1" in federal elections as a result of confusion between these two systems. Although these voters are expressing a clear intention to support a particular candidate, unfortunately their votes are treated as informal and do not count. This confusion can potentially mean the difference between victory and defeat in a close election.

I believe How to Vote cards have a positive influence by reminding people of the voting requirements at different elections. Furthermore, they also provide clear instructions for people wishing to support an particular candidate or party.

My key concern with How to Vote cards is that the current method of delivery is very wasteful. The highly competitive nature of elections means that candidates and parties will naturally strive to place a How to Vote card in the hand of every voter. This means that parties/candidates each tend to print at least one How to Vote card per voter. For example in a Brisbane City Council election with, say 700,000 eligible voters, the major parties will print at least 1.4 million How to Vote cards. Minor parties and independent candidates also add to this amount.

A far more efficient and environmentally friendly way of distributing How to Vote cards would be to simply place copies of each registered card on a the wall of the polling booth so that voters can refer to it if they choose.

#### 2) Proof of Identity

I believe it is a national disgrace - and a sign of apathy - that there is no requirement for voters to prove their identity when voting. In fact, it is ironic that when Australians are called on to advise other nations on best practice for running democratic elections, we always advise that strict measures are implemented to prevent electoral fraud and multiple voting. Other nations are advised to use heavy duty padlocked metal ballot boxes, while Australia uses flimsy cardboard boxes. Some nations require voters to dip their finger or thumb in long-lasting ink at the polling booth so they can't vote more than once.

Meanwhile in Australia, there is nothing to prevent voters turning up and voting at multiple booths

on election day. Most State electorates have upwards of 10 to 15 polling booths and a person seeking to commit electoral fraud can potentially vote at every booth. While checking electoral rolls after the election may pick up potential cases of multiple voting, there is no possible way of determining which way multiple votes are cast. In other words, electoral officials may be aware that an individual has voted many times, but these votes cannot be identified and excluded from the count.

Furthermore, there are real opportunities for dishonest candidates to carryout organised multiple voting without detection. The reality of a mobile population means that the electoral roll is never 100% accurate or up-to-date. With many people moving from one home to another, and many people passing away each year, there is an unavoidable lag in updating the electoral roll. The evidence of this lag is available whenever a mailout is carried out using the names and addresses contained on the electoral roll. As an elected representative, I regularly conduct such mailouts and it is not unusual to receive large numbers of "return to sender" mail. In many cases this mail is being returned because the elector no longer resides at their enrolled address, or is deceased. Many elected representatives, including myself, are quick to bring these inaccuracies to the attention of the electoral commission, however, it is also possible for this information to be misused. Given the large quantity of pre-election mailouts by candidates, it would be very easy to compile a list of hundreds or even thousands of enrolled voters who no longer reside in a particular electorate. The absence of any identity checks means that this information can be used for fraudulent voting purposes.

In short, I believe that some form of voter ID should be required at the polling booth. Obviously, the preferred form of ID should include a photo -such as a driver's license - however, even lesser forms of ID such as a credit card or medicare card would be an improvement on the existing situation.

Not only would ID help in reducing electoral fraud, I also believe it would assist ECQ booth workers to quickly find a voter's name on the electoral roll. Rather than voters having to literally spell out their surname and first name at the polling booth (which I have seen happen repeatedly, particularly with non-European names), ID will make it easy for ECQ staff to quickly match the name on the ID with the corresponding name on the electoral roll.

Thank you, once again for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely,  
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