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**From:** J Hodges [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 February 2013 3:25 PM  
**To:** Electoral Reform  
**Subject:** Submission to Review of Qld Electoral Act

Submission re: Voluntary Voting

Unlike all other major democracies, Australia continues to compel an sometimes reluctant citizens to attend the polling station: This constitutes a "democracy" based on threats and penalties, which simply cannot exist except in the realms of tautology: It is contrary to fundamental democratic principles and a contradiction in terms. Queensland should not blindly follow this nonsensical prescript.

The Right to vote has been so distorted as to become an Obligation to vote backed by sanctions.

Compulsion will no doubt be supported by many in that large and growing group who profit, directly or indirectly, from continuing the current compulsory provisions, so there appears to me to be some risk that the weight of numbers in a Review such as this could prevail against the views of folk who like myself have nothing to gain either way and are therefore less likely to express a view via a formal submission.

Most importantly, voluntary voting does not adversely affect any citizen's individual rights, except the right to be fined if you fail to show up on polling day!

Also the degree of commitment to compulsory voting in Queensland seems to vary with administrative convenience. For example, although voting is compulsory, absent voting is not available for Local Government elections: postal or pre-poll only is available. It is absurd that citizens who did not plan to be outside of their electorate on polling day (and hence arrange weeks in advance for pre-poll or postal votes), should be required to stay home to vote, or write an explanation to avoid a fine by the Electoral Commission. So we have degrees of "compulsion" which in the case of Local Government Elections are most confining to an individuals right to move freely within the State's jurisdiction. How absurd that voting in some elections is sufficiently compulsory that absent voting facilities are arranged, but not in others. If the case for compulsory voting rests even in part on degrees of compulsion determined by administrative convenience, then it must fail.

It is fundamentally important to individual rights in a democracy that "rights" should not become "obligations" when not one citizen's individual rights are adversely affected by removing unnecessary obligations.

Removing compulsory voting provisions from the Electorate Act would therefore be a positive outcome for all individuals' democratic rights: The only losers would be those who seek to punish others for failing to exercise their private democratic right to vote and those who advocate compulsory provisions for personal or political advantage.

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