

28 February 2012

Electoral Reform
Strategic Policy
Department of Justice and Attorney General
GPO Box 149
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Minister Blieje,

At Council's General Meeting of 27 February it was resolved that a submission would be made on the State Government's discussion paper on electoral reform in Queensland.

I hereby attach Council's submission with respect to this matter and on behalf of Council I thank the State Government for the opportunity to provide input into this matter of fundamental importance for all Queenslanders.

Should you require further information from Council, please contact our Corporate Governance Manager, Luke Wallace, who will be happy to assist.

Regards



Bill Lyon
CEO Redland City Council

Redland City Council

Submission on Electoral Reform 2013

To

Department of Justice and Attorney General

February 2013

SPECIFIC MATTERS

How to Vote Cards

It is Council's views that the distribution of how to vote cards at polling places (both pre-poll and on Election Day) should be discontinued. Current practices create unnecessary concerns for voters trying to get into the polling booth and can at times lead to disagreements between volunteers for respective candidates and between volunteers and voters. In addition there are obvious environmental impacts from the quantity of paper used and littering in and around polling places.

Council supports the provision of a standard how-to-vote card for all candidates appropriately positioned within all polling booths and incorporated into postal vote packs.

Electronic Voting/Postal Voting

Council supports a thorough review of the option of online voting. Whilst there are obvious security and access issues that need to be considered, there are several countries now successfully using this approach. Online voting has clear advantages in terms of the environment, cost savings, convenience for all stakeholders, faster tabulation of results etc.

The sheer size of many QLD local government areas magnifies some of these benefits making the option even more attractive.

In lieu of electronic voting being fully implemented at some future time, Council supports the option of a full postal vote being available, at least for local government elections. Section 45(1) of the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* provides for a local government to apply to the Minister for a poll to be conducted by postal ballot if the local government's area includes a large rural sector, large remote areas or extensive island areas. The Minister has the discretion however to restrict the extent of the postal voting to a particular part or division within the local government area.

As with electronic voting there are cost, convenience, environmental etc advantages to postal ballots so Council believes this option should be made available in the short to medium term whilst options for full online voting are explored.

Compulsory Voting

Council supports the retention of compulsory voting in all Queensland elections (State and local). The democratic right of citizens to choose who will represent them in State Parliament and in local government is a privilege that our forbears fought and died to preserve and it should be maintained.