

**UNITED VOICE QLD**

ABN: 69 844 574 256

**Gary Bullock** Branch Secretary

**Nev Swan** Branch President

27 Peel Street  
South Brisbane.  
PO Box 3948  
South Brisbane BC 4101

Tel. (07) 3291 4600

Fax (07) 3291 4699

Toll free 1800 065 885  
Award, EBA & general enquiries

[www.unitedvoice.org.au](http://www.unitedvoice.org.au)  
[www.memberassist.org.au](http://www.memberassist.org.au)



Ref: SB;ml  
26 February 2013

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

To whom it concerns,

**Re: United Voice Queensland submission on electoral reform discussion paper**

United Voice Queensland represents 30,000 workers from a variety of industries and backgrounds. Although we are affiliated with the Labor party, our members, their welfare, rights and entitlements are our number one priority. It is for this reason that we feel compelled to make a submission on the Queensland Government's discussion paper on electoral reform. We feel many of the suggestions for reform in this discussion document are undemocratic, unfair and unjust. We support the submissions made by the Queensland Council of Unions but would like to take this opportunity to add some commentary of our own.

QCU has outlined in detail, the major concerns of the union movement on the suggested reforms in this document. However, for our members, a major issue relates to the proposal to aggregate the expenditure of a party with that of its affiliated organisations.

This proposed reform is not only anti- democracy but unfair especially to an organisation like United Voice. As far as our union is concerned, when the ALP make a decision which adversely affects our members we will oppose it, despite our affiliation. A classic example is our childcare campaign. Workers in the education sector account for over 50% of our membership, the majority of which are childcare workers. Our 'Big Steps' campaign aims to secure professional wages for these workers through federal funding. However for some time the Gillard Government and in particular Deputy Prime Minister Wayne Swan have refused to support our campaign. Therefore we targeted the Treasurer's electorate in Lilley, engaging in rallies, high visibility actions and door knocking in a bid to change Wayne Swan's mind about childcare funding.

While federal regulation would govern this expenditure, we have also run similar campaigns targeting State ALP MPs while in government. It would be outrageous to suggest this political expenditure critical of Labor should count towards Labor's spending cap.

It would create the unworkable situation where Labor was responsible for remaining within the spending cap, but not have the authority to limit expenditure that would be counted towards the cap.

It would also have the unintended consequence of limiting the capacity of unions to criticise the ALP, its decisions and policies – surely contrary to the interests of the public and the LNP who have initiated this process.

Surely, common sense would dictate that independently managed and run organisations must be able to independently manage their affairs, including their electoral expenditure.

Furthermore in the last State election, United Voice wrote to voters in Moggill, putting on record LNP candidate Bruce Flegg's honourable treatment of delegates who met with him to raise concerns, and his commitments to them. We felt it appropriate that where a politician, regardless of their party, genuinely helps members of this union, public acknowledgement is warranted. United Voice expenditure was not made on the Labor campaign in Moggill. While our union was criticised by some within Labor for that decision, Mr Flegg had genuinely committed to protect the jobs of United Voice members and therefore deserved our support.

It is for this reason the union also gave financial support to the Katter Australia Party candidate for Maroochydore, Mark Maguire. Again the proposed aggregation of spending caps would create the perverse situation where our campaign effort endorsing Mr Flegg in Moggill and Mr Maguire in Maroochydore would be taken off the ALP's spending cap.

We firmly believe the current electoral system is serving Queensland well and to change it would only impact adversely on the public. To adopt these proposals outlined in the discussion paper would set our state back.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Bullock', written in a cursive style.

Gary Bullock  
**Branch Secretary**