

SENT BY EMAIL

The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Electoral Reform
Strategic Policy
Department of Justice and Attorney-General
GPO Box 149
BRISBANE QLD 4001

RA & VB Beatty

Email: electoralreform@justice.qld.gov.au

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Dear Jarrod,

Congratulations for initiating the Electoral Reform Discussion paper January 2013. It is important that voting procedures are continuously reviewed to ensure they are relevant to current technologies and social requirements.

We note your final comment: "The options outlined in the paper are not intended to be exhaustive. If you think there are other options for improving Queensland's electoral laws, please include these in your submission." Our preference is to canvas the following discussion for your consideration:

DISCUSSION.

1. Ethical Voting

The most recent federal elections were analysed in my report "*Vote Early & Vote Often*" Analysis - *Federal Elections 2007 and 2010* available at www.bosmin.com/ICS/FederalElections07-10.pdf. Conclusions from that report also have State implications. One of the more disturbing findings included:

"The complete information available on multiple voting for the 2007 and 2010 elections, as detailed (by the Australian Electoral Commission AEC) at Reference 1.1 and 1.10, there were 20,633 letters posted to people who were recorded on the rolls as having voted more than once in 2007 and 29,920 in 2010, an increase of 45%. The AEC does not separate out those voting three or more times."

This conclusion carried severe implications for the cliff hanger seat of Corangamite in the 2010 election, and consequently the final outcome of that election. Voting fraud is the greatest threat that a system of democracy can face short of a full foreign invasion. The report shows "multiple voting" was more prevalent in the left side political electorates and would have been influential in the Senate outcome. Section 3 **Proof of Identity** is of critical importance for eliminating fraud from voting, and should preferably be associated with electronic voting as discussed below.

2. Electoral Rolls Updated In Real Time

There is an urgent need to change the way voters are registered, and votes recorded. Dependable vote recording must be conducted in real time and lodged against a live data set designed to prevent the registering of multiple votes.

Currently available information technology offers opportunity to dramatically improve the efficiency and accuracy of voting. It is technically possible to vote online without having to attend a voting booth, or lodge an absentee vote. Individual polling stations within a ward can be connected by a suitable area network, which would eliminate the opportunity for multiple voting.

Similar procedures are adopted at company annual general meetings where absentee votes are reliably logged together with attendee votes.

3. Electronic Voting

We note from section 5.1 **Options – Electronic voting** “*the risk of interception of voting information/passwords in bulk mail outs; internet stability and security;*” It is ironic that Australia should be spending unknown billions of dollars on an NBN system if it is not possible to reliably program or secure the facility. We are convinced that a reliable vote recording system is readily available, which is all that is initially required to eliminate major voting fraud. Interpreting preferential voting results is more complicated but does not need to be attempted in the first instance.

4. Eliminate Postal Voting

The issue of **6 Postal voting** disappears if electronic voting is introduced enabling votes to be recorded over the internet.

5. Referenda

Electronic voting also raises the possibility of introducing referendum monitoring of critical community issues. This would be a major contribution to modern democracy, improve the image of politicians, and be very effective in reducing politically inspired trauma within the community, as the Swiss system has proved.

6. Residential Record Keeping

Recording voter residential locations and movements could be most effectively stored by Australia Post. AP has the capacity to maintain these records and is a default destination for electors who are changing residences. This effectively reduces the need for those people to independently notify the AEC, which can be problematic. AP registration also reduces the opportunity for fraudulent registration at non residential property locations. **Section 4 Enrolment on polling day** would not be an issue if Australia Post were tasked with maintaining the electoral rolls.

7. Political Honesty

The non compulsory voting proposal is a major change to historic procedures in Australia and needs to be carefully reviewed with the long term implications fully considered. Terminating compulsory voting would reduce community involvement with the political process and therefore have a negative consequence. Under section 7 **Compulsory voting**, our preference is for more community involvement through regular referenda (preferably with a citizens’ initiated option) rather than less community involvement. **Section 1 Truth in political advertising** could also be monitored and corrected as required, if a citizen initiated referendum mechanism was available. Electronic voting facilitates the referenda proposal in that it is less costly to conduct.

8. Voting Privilege

Voting should always be regarded as a privilege rather than an automatic right. The privilege aspect would be enhanced by ensuring only voters with a registered tax file number were eligible to vote. The tax file number provides a unique registration identity which could serve as the user ID when registering to vote. The logic in this procedure is *"If you do not register to pay tax, you should not be involved in how the public money is spent"*

We are happy to enlarge on any of these thoughts, if required.

Your sincerely,



for Robert and Verity Beatty