

Good morning,

Please find attached by submission to the reform committee.

Kind regards,

***Nick Wrenn***

Dear Committee members,

My submission targets the need (or lack of) to maintaining the below the line voting option and create a simpler voting system for our state's upper house.

In the 2017 state election, 95.4% of Western Australian's voted above the line<sup>1</sup>. Whilst I do not know this for certain, I have not seen any examples of below the line voting electing a member within a party who was below the voting ticket to a fellow party member who is above them and did not get elected.

Given that below the line voting is so ineffective and unpopular, why would we continue a system that increases anxiety and apathy when electors go to the ballot box?

Assuming that this committee will recommend removing group ticket voting, I would like to suggest going one step further, and abolish below the line voting and only have the names of parties (and eligible independents) on the ballot paper. The instructions on the ballot paper would then mirror the new federal system by asking electors to vote minimum 1-6 in order of their preference. This would significantly decrease the size of the ballot paper and allow a greater font size for ease of reading.

Relating to the terms of reference, making this change would achieve greater equality for citizens voting for Legislative Council members by giving them an easier pathway to have their preferences more accurately recorded. Currently they either have to vote a 1 above the line (and trusting group ticket voting) or every number below the line which can be time consuming, confusing and intimidating.

Regarding distribution of preferences, if most electors vote 1-6, the results will more accurately represent the will of the electorate and reduce the chance of micro-parties getting a seat with minimal votes. In a broader perspective, changing to a singular option vote with the removal of below the line voting would make it easier for electoral staff to count the votes and increase the speed of getting a result.

Thank-you for taking the time to read my submission.

Kind regards,



**Nicholas Wrenn**

<sup>1</sup>- Rates of 'Below the Line' Voting at the 2017 WA Legislative Council Election- Antony Green 10/03/2021

<https://antonygreen.com.au/rates-of-below-the-line-votes-at-2017-wa-legislative-council-election/>