

The Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform.  
Dear Committee

Re your notice in the "West Australian" 1/5/2021.

Thank you for the invitation for the general public to participate by submissions for Electoral Reform. I do so with a background of several years membership of a country branch of a major political party (3 years as president and 5 years as a delegate to the Forrest Divisional Council of that party) where I gathered the essential aspects of politics directly from the politicians.

After resigning my party membership, I spent nearly 30 years as a polling place O.I.C. for Federal, State and Local Government elections and am well aware of the need for Electoral Reform.

Regarding reform to the Legislative Council.

As I see it, voters who have always favoured one major party, will strongly oppose the policies of the other major parties on their ballot paper and will try to put as much distance between them as possible.

To achieve this, "minor" or "single issue" parties are given preference, which increases **their** chances of success, as votes left over after filling "quotas" are distributed. This is undoubtedly the main reason a candidate can win with only 98 votes. – So what to do?

Obviously very minor parties, although democratically entitled to nominate, are very unpopular and changes should be made to deter these publicity seekers from confusing the other voters.

Possible solutions: 1. A steep increase in nomination fees  
2. Requiring candidate's first preference to reach a certain minimum percentage.  
3. **All** boxes to be numbered either above or below the line.  
4. Ban "How To Vote" cards.

As most voters rely almost entirely on these cards, it becomes too easy for MPs to manipulate the results. There can never be fair election when voters are permitted to copy a party's instructions from H.T.V. cards onto their ballot paper.

It is illegal to verbally influence voters within 6 metres of the entrance to a polling place. Yet, H.T.V. cards do exactly that.

They are sneaky and dishonest, but many people follow them believing it is the only way to support their chosen candidate.

It is disgraceful that such manipulation is allowed under our voting rules and the fact that "preference deals" between parties happens, is absurd.

It means that Politicians don't ASK voters who their preferences are -- They TELL them !.

Regarding "one –vote – one value" as suggested for the Legislative Council, I make the following point:- Should the same apply Federally, W.A. would be reduced to having only about 4 Senators to cover the whole of the state.—Nearly one third of the country.

Fairness is the issue. Don't change the boundaries, just give each region fair representation according to - Inconvenience due to huge areas,- diversity of industries, - income from exports etc.

Careers for City based MPs should NOT be considered.

When voting, it is important that **ALL** boxes against candidates names are numbered, otherwise it becomes "optional" preferential voting which conflicts with our compulsory system.

This has been tried in the past and seems to be unsatisfactory as ballot papers can start formal, then become informal during the count, if only **some** boxes are numbered.

In effect each elimination followed by the distribution of that candidate's preferences becomes the equivalent of a smaller "election" and repeated until there is a winner.

However, as it is compulsory to vote in the first "election" it should also be compulsory to vote in the progressively smaller ones that follow.

Overlooking this fact caused one great mess in the last Senate election when only six numbers were required above the line. Don't let this happen in WA State elections.

Unfortunately, previous attempts at reform have been aimed at :

Making it easier for voters- easier for counting – faster at getting a result—and making more interesting T.V. coverage.

None of these issues are as important as having a system that is fair to everyone and encourages people to look closer into party policies. However no doubt they will still get preference over my suggestions.

let's go back to what our political forefathers intended when they devised the Australian preferential system.

It was the fairest and most efficient system in the world then and still could be if only we adhere to their original intention of mathematical accuracy – plus honesty.#