

Submission to “Ministerial Expert Committee On Electoral Reform, June 2021”

The “Terms of Reference” of this enquiry identify that the present system of Preferential Voting gives the possibility of a candidate being elected with almost zero First preference votes (0.2%).

At the same time there is an obvious lack of fair representation of even major parties in a number of the Regions.

This problem is very much the same situation as was identified in New Zealand.

The NZ situation was resolved after a series of events including Committees and Referendum.

The history of the NZ journey is detailed at <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/fpp-to-mmp>

Criticism of the unfairness of the first past the post (FPP) voting system intensified after the 1978 and 1981 general elections. On each occasion the Labour Opposition actually secured more votes overall than National, but National won more seats in Parliament and remained in government.

During the 1981 and 1984 campaigns, Labour promised to set up a Royal Commission to look into a wide range of issues relating to the electoral system. Following Labour's victory in 1984, a Royal Commission on the Electoral System was established in early 1985.

The Royal Commission's report, completed in December 1986, was surprisingly radical. It recommended New Zealand adopt the German-style mixed member proportional representation (MMP) system, in which each elector would get two votes: one for an electorate Member of Parliament (MP) and one for a Party.

The size of their Parliament would increase to 120 MPs:

- half would be elected in single-member constituencies (as before);

- the other half would be selected from party lists so that,

 - in general, each party's share of all 120 seats would correspond to its share of the overall Party votes.

Assessing MMP

As the Royal Commission and pro-MMP campaigners had predicted, Parliament has certainly become more diverse and representative of modern New Zealand society.

The pre MMP 2005 election, produce: 39 women, 21 Māori, 4 Pacific and 2 Asian MPs in 121 members.

The post MMP 2020 election returned 58 women (48% of MPs), 25 Māori, 11 Pacific and 8 Asian MPs among 120 members.

The MMP system gives much broader representation which means a wider range of ideas have to be accommodated by discussion and negotiation, leading to better decisions for more people.

Recommendation:

That the Committee recognise the success of the NZ MMP electoral system in providing electoral equality for all citizens entitled to vote, and **produce a plan for WA on a similar MMP model.**

This Electoral System allows **the Voters to determine their Party preference with their Second Vote**, so No Distribution is required.

I wish you wisdom, compassion and grace in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,
Mauarice Ball,

