



**Animal
Justice
Party**

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Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform
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4 June 2021

**Re: System used for the election of members to the Western Australian
Legislative Council.**

To whom it may concern

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Ministerial Expert Committee review of the WA Electoral system for the election of the Western Australian Legislative Council.

This submission has been prepared by the Animal Justice Party WA on behalf of the Animal Justice Party (AJP) with the approval and the endorsement of the Board of Directors. The AJP was established to promote and protect the interests and capabilities of animals by providing a dedicated voice for them in Australia's political system, whether they are domestic, farmed or wild. The following submission is underpinned by our core values of kindness, equity, rationality and non-violence and the AJP Position Statement on Democracy¹.

Summary of recommendations

- **Remove region boundaries to create one whole-of-State electorate for the WA Legislative Council, to achieve electoral equality for all citizens entitled to vote**
- **Remove group voting tickets and implement a semi-optional (mandatory minimum) preference system in the WA Legislative Council**

¹ Animal Justice Party (2020) Position Statement: Democracy.
<https://animaljusticeparty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Democracy-position-2020.pdf>

Please find the Animal Justice Party WA's (AJP) comments as per the recommendations being sought in the terms of reference:

Recommendations as to how electoral equality might be achieved for all citizens entitled to vote for the Legislative Council

The AJP supports preferential, proportional representation by single transferable vote (STV) for the Legislative Council in WA. This system would properly reflect the views of the electorate, *i.e.* a party receiving 10% of the vote (after preferences) should win 10% of the seats. This would ensure that all voices and opinions are fairly represented, with a diversity of perspective greatly enhancing the Upper Houses' role of review.

For this reason, the AJP supports the 'whole-of-state' electorate model used in New South Wales and South Australia, which ensures that every elector's vote is of equal worth.

Recommendations for the distribution of preferences in the Legislative Council's proportional representation system

The AJP acknowledges the issues inherent in the group voting ticket system, and will support their removal as proposed in the discussion paper. This will bring WA into line with most States, along with the Federal Senate election system.

In the instance where group voting tickets are removed, the AJP would support changing to a semi-optional preferential voting that exists in other States and the Federal Senate system, with voters being required to number a minimum number of boxes – AJP would recommend at least six above the line or twelve below the line. This would ensure that, without group voting tickets, a sufficient number of preferences would still be distributed and minimise the risk of votes being exhausted, leading to results that more accurately reflect the will of the voters (even though it is acknowledged that there would likely be some amount of exhaustion).

We note that six above the line and twelve below would mirror the Federal Senate system, allowing voters to use the same system in both elections.

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On behalf of our committee and members