

UNCHAIN AUSTRALIA
624 Bickley Rd
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8 June 2021

Submission to Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform

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

The phraseology compromises submissions by inferring that “electoral equality” (formerly “one man one vote”) is a worthy end. That is not the case. The former Speaker of the NSW Parliament, Hon Jim Cameron LL.M., said in 1977: *The goal of an electoral system should be a judicious balance between equality of representation and equality of access to representation.*

Western Australia’s capital-centric population and vast, underpopulated but highly productive regions require that “judicious balance” which is sublimely achieved by the present system, should not be changed.

In the Legislative Assembly, nobody should complain that WA Labor received 89.83% of the seats from 59.92% of the vote or that the Liberals received only 3.39% of the seats from 21.30% of the vote or that the minor parties (parties other than those holding seats in the Lower House) received zero seats from 14.78% of the vote.

In the Legislative Council, the proportional voting system did its job splendidly. The victorious ALP earned 61.11% of the seats from 60.34% of the vote. The Liberals and Nationals combined earned 19.44% of the seats from 20.47% of the vote, and the minor parties earned 18.18% of the seats from 19.19% of the vote. This is an excellent demonstration of how proportional representation should work.

Concerns about aberrant results are ill founded. A candidate listed as number four on an ALP ticket or number two on a Liberal ticket can in theory be elected with zero votes, and it would be appalling to suggest that such a person should be excluded. Any attempt to impose arbitrary minima will fail from complexity and will achieve nothing.

For the purposes of this discussion, all the minor parties should be grouped together as entities which are free to exchange preferences as they wish. Any attempt to constrain the free exchange of preferences among political parties will fail, especially when such an attempt is exposed as an attempt to provide advantage to the major parties.

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

No changes are required, nor should be contemplated.

Other Recommendations

Require photo ID for voting to minimise fraud

Reduce pre-poll voting to one day

Request

I seek leave to address the Ministerial Expert Committee.

Yours sincerely

Michael Darby
UNCHAIN AUSTRALIA