

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 24 November 2021 5:58 PM
To: DLGSC Act Review
Subject: Stronger local democracy and community engagement

Categories: Jen

Local Government Reform Stronger local democracy and community engagement

Dear Panel

I support the intentions expressed under the following headings in your summary about **Stronger local democracy and community engagement**.

Namely;

Direct election of the mayor or president,
Number of elected members to match population,
No wards for small local governments and
Reforms to ensure valid candidate and voter eligibility.

In addition I submit the notes below.

2021 Local Government elections

Predictably the 18th October 2021 Local Government [LG] elections produced many results which fail accepted democratic principles which apply in State and Commonwealth elections.

Questionable results

Local Government elections use the First Past The Post [FPTP] system. It is reliable in the only case of an election for one member in a contest between two candidates. In any other case the result may be questionable. Perhaps elected Councilors might have achieved the required votes under a different system but with FPTP that is often an unknown. Success within the same rules as State and Commonwealth elections would legitimize LG election results.

Low turnout

Coupled with election success from votes well below a majority or a quota is a LG election turnout rate hovering around the 30% mark.

To illustrate.

First a comparison with the 2021 State election when the turnout was 85.5% and for a candidate who succeeded with 50% of the vote that represents 42.75% of the community, a strong outcome.

Taking the example of the election of mayor in Bunbury, turnout was 32.49% and the successful candidate received 19.87% of the vote which represents 6.45% of the community.

Similar results were common elsewhere.

There is no basis for confidence that LG elections represent the wish of the community.

Accepted practice in Australia for vote marking and counting is preferential and for multi-member elections, proportional. And, voting is obligatory.

Here is a sample of LG elections showing failure in accepted democratic principles.

Perth - elect 4 Councilors

16 candidates, turnout = 28.57%

None achieved a quota of 20%

Nearest approach was 10.82% which represents 3.09% of the community.

Bunbury - elect mayor

10 candidates, turnout = 32.49%

winner = 19.87% which represents 6.45% of the community.

Bunbury -elect 6 Councilors

12 candidates, turn out = 32.55%

none reach quota of 14.29%

nearest approach = 11.25%

Albany - elect 1 Councilor

5 candidates, turn out =31.60%

winner = 26.64% which represents 8.42% of the community.

Kalgoorlie/Boulder - elect 7 Councilors

14 candidates, turn out = 29.25%

none achieve quota of 12.5%

nearest approach = 11.32%

Greater Geraldton - elect 7 Councilors

13 candidates, turn out = 27.11%

only one achieves quota of 12.5%

Source = <https://www.elections.wa.gov.au/elections/local>

Thank you for the opportunity to make a contribution.

Yours sincerely

Graham Hawkes

