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Mr Stuart Wright
Committee Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Mr Wright

WRITTEN SUBMISSION ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE
TASMANIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

While the Council does not have any comment on the resourcing available to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, it would like consideration to be given to updating the Electoral Act to allow for some form of electronic voting. As the number of candidates for elections increase this can cause in some elections for a result not to be known for quite some time.

Electronic voting is used around the world and it would be expected that Australia should be considering some form of electronic voting in the near future. It is acknowledged that there are security issues around some forms of electronic voting systems, but there should be avenues to allow for the provision of stand-alone (or local area networked) electronic voting machines to be implemented rather than the more controversial use of internet-based voting systems. This would then allow complete physical control over the electronic voting system by electoral officials and therefore significantly reduce the risks of vote tampering that have been hypothesised around internet-based systems.

The system, similar to what was being looked at in Victoria, would require that what is put into effect has the capacity to produce a paper record of the vote. This issue has been highlighted in the implementation of electronic voting systems in the United States over a number of years, with calls for the introduction of 'voter verifiable' paper trails for each machine. These systems do not provide the voter with a receipt but allow the voter to physically observe a record of the vote, which can be manually recounted if disputes arise regarding the election outcome. There is always the option of undertaking a manual count of votes to verify the electronic results if needed.

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With this review it is an opportunity for Tasmania to look at updating its Electoral Act to allow the introduction of such electronic systems and to ensure a more expedient notification of results.

Yours sincerely



Sandra Ayton
GENERAL MANAGER