

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO THE TASMANIAN ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION

My submission is related to EXHAUST votes which ultimately deny preferences in the determination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Local Government Elections.

Now I believe this issue could be considered in Point 1, 3 and 4 point 3 in the Terms of Reference ...

As an elected member for 9 years in Local Government I have personally experienced the positives and negatives of preferences in voting.

In addition as an appointed Scrutineer in both Legislative Council and Local Government elections I have witnessed first hand the vagaries of preferential voting and believe that I am well placed to make informed comment.

From the Legislative Council website ... under Electoral System

‘The Legislative Council uses the partial preferential system where voters express their First, Second and Third preferences to register a valid vote and further preferences are optional.’

In Local Government currently a valid vote can be recorded for both Mayor and Deputy Mayor by simply by placing Number 1 in a single square.

For those voting in this manner, voting does NOT indicate further preferences of the said voter and thus after the Primary votes are counted the votes are EXHAUSTED and so no longer are in play in the count.

Legislative Council elections use the above mentioned partial preference system, voting at least 1, 2 and 3 to record a valid vote with further preferences optional.

In the 17 recent elections and by-elections in the Legislative Council since 2009 where contests had 3 or more candidates ELEVEN were decided by preferences. Of the other 6 contests, TWO were won by members receiving more than 50% of the Primary vote:

- PEMBROKE (2013) Hon. V. GOODWIN 51.1%
- DERWENT (2009) Hon. M. AIRD 51.6%

TWO members were elected unopposed:

- APSLEY (2010) Hon.T. RATTRAY
- MURCHISON (2011) Hon. R FORREST

In the other 2 contests there were only 2 nominations and election was decided by a simple majority.

- ROSEVEARS (2014) Hon K. FINCH
- WESTERN TIERS (2012) Hon. G HALL

Thus Preferences played a vital role in determining the successfully elected members in 11 of the 17 Legislative Council elections or by-elections.

In contrast I have researched the results of the 2014 Local Government elections.

Where a valid vote can be recorded with a single Number 1 there were increased numbers of Exhaust votes and this limited or restricted the power of the numbered preferences.

In the 58 contests for Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 29 Councils, EXHAUST votes were greater than the final winning margin in THREE Mayoral contests and EIGHT Deputy Mayoral contests.

It is my contention that a number of these results may have been different if it had been mandatory to use partial or additional preferences as used in Legislative Council elections.

### MAYORS

- Glamorgan-Spring Bay (3) Final margin 79 Exhaust votes 119  
KENT behind by 145 votes after Primaries.
- Hobart City (5) Final margin 892 Exhaust votes 1165  
HICKEY behind by 4votes after Primaries.
- Huon Valley (3) Final margin 125 Exhaust votes 432  
COAD ahead by 193 votes after Primaries.

## DEPUTY MAYORS

- Central Coast (5)                      Final margin 465      Exhaust votes 497  
BROAD ahead by 497 votes after Primaries.
- Devonport City (8)                      Final margin 1057      Exhaust votes 1202  
ROCKLIFF behind by 125 votes after Primaries.
- Flinders (3)                                  Final margin 1              Exhaust votes 23  
COBHAM ahead by 2 votes after Primaries.
- George Town (6)                          Final margin 4              Exhaust votes 307  
HARRIS behind by 260 votes after Primaries.
- Hobart City (11)                          Final margin 1521      Exhaust votes 3001  
CHRISTIE behind by 484 votes after Primaries.
- Launceston City (5)                      Final margin 99              Exhaust votes 1476  
SOWARD behind by 56 votes after Primaries.
- Tasman (4)                                  Final margin 82              Exhaust votes 124  
SPAULDING ahead by 73 votes after Primaries.
- Waratah- Wynyard (5)                      Final margin 76              Exhaust votes 391  
DUNIAM ahead by 176 votes after Primaries.

## SUMMARY

There would seem to be strong similarities between Legislative Council divisions and the Mayors and Deputy Mayors in Local Government as they are in fact 'single member electorates'.

Then as an extension the voting procedure for those who vote in Mayor and Deputy Mayor elections could be the same as for Legislative Council.

In elections with 3 or more candidates for Mayor and Deputy Mayor the voting intention for those voters who simply put a 1 would be extended as they would be required to vote for at least THREE candidates and have the opportunity to add further preferences.

Listing additional preferences would provide wider representation of voter intent in the election and in my opinion be a fairer and more accurate reflection of those voting.

Provide Electoral consistency and parallels between the Legislative Council and Local Government Mayor and Deputy Mayor elections in electing ONE candidate.

Preferences play a significant function in voting for Aldermen/Councillors and by requiring voters to add more preferences for Mayor and Deputy Mayor voting becomes more uniform and consistent.

For these reasons in my opinion the provision on the Ballot papers that permits a valid vote to be cast with a Single 1 in Mayor and Deputy Mayor elections should be discontinued.

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Would welcome the opportunity to  
speak to this submission.

Frank Nott