



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on the Integrity
Commission and Statutory Office
Holders

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the operation of the 2024 ACT Election and Electoral Act 1992

Submission number: 016

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From:
To: [LA Committee - Integrity](#)
Subject: Inquiry into the operation of the 2024 election and Electoral Act 1992.
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter. I am happy to have my name published with this submission.

TOR 3 (c): 'Voting Instructions as provided by the ACT Electoral Commissioner':

The instructions to voters in the pre- election guide/booklet state: "Number 5 boxes from 1 to 5 in the order of your choice, you may then show as many preferences as you wish by writing numbers from 6 onwards..."

This 'number 5 boxes' narrative was cherry picked by journalists and commentators at the 2024 election, such that it dominated the election coverage. Clearly this favours major parties, with 5 candidates per column, and puts independents and minor parties at a disadvantage due to a vote becoming 'exhausted'. The fact that each electorate elects a total of 5 candidates further confuses the ill-educated voter as they equate '5 per electorate' with '5 boxes to tick'.

As each voter only elects ONE candidate, I believe the wording in the guide (and on the ballot paper) needs to change, to reflect more accurately what the voter is required to achieve under the Hare Clark system, and to dispel confusion and unintended consequences. I propose deleting mention of '5 candidates elected in each electorate' altogether (in the instructions section), and amending instructions to perhaps numbering 10 boxes in order of preference. This would provide a more level playing field for all candidates, including independents and minor parties.

Voters by and large would also benefit from a little further education on how preferential voting works. It's not a difficult concept, but is nevertheless widely misunderstood. A paragraph or 2 in the election guide would be a great boost to voting literacy and outcomes.

The 100 metre exclusion zone:

This rule, which prohibits any electioneering within 100m of the BUILDING housing a polling booth, creates difficulties for some voters. I worked for a candidate on pre-polling for several weeks in 2024 and had countless people with limited mobility complaining to me when they discovered they had finally managed to make it to the How To Vote crowd, only to discover they had AT LEAST another 100m to walk, often back in the direction they'd just come from. The distance needs to be reduced to 50 metres or less.

Corflutes:

There are too many! Voters become fed up and disengaged. They are also unsightly. The numbers of corflutes per candidate need to be severely curtailed. Perhaps a limit of around 30??

Thank you
Jude Dodd