



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson (Deputy Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into 2020 ACT Election and the Electoral Act

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Inquiry into the 2020 Election and the Electoral Act

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to present the following material as a supplementary written Submission please.

The purpose of this supplementary Submission is to summarise improvements that could improve the chance of one or more Independent or minor Party candidates being elected. Some or all of these were discussed during my appearance before your Committee. However I feel that it is worthwhile recording them in one place for your information and consideration please.

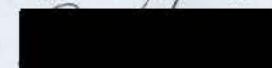
I wish to stress that my strong recommendation is for the Assembly to make fundamental improvements to the ACT's electoral system to provide Independent and minor Party candidates with a realistic chance of being elected and to provide the ACT with an actually contestable democracy – for example by returning the ACT to 3 electorates, and introducing 9 Members per electorate.

However if the Assembly cannot agree to make fundamental improvements, it should make other improvements such as the following:

- 1) explain the effect of the ACT's 'single transferable vote' system, including clear wording on the ballot paper that voters are only electing one person.
I consider this improvement would help dispel some voters' impression they are electing 5 candidates (possibly including one Independent), and encourage voters to focus on whether (or not) they wish to elect even one candidate from outside the three main Parties;
- 2) provide a central publicly available website (for example, ACTelections) where all candidates (but particularly non-party candidates) can place information as soon as the candidate has reporting obligations.
I consider this improvement would provide non-party candidates with greater public exposure, and inform community organisations (which often hold pre-election forums) with greater understanding of which candidates are contesting the election;
- 3) reduce the public space where visual advertising (including coreflutes) is allowed, for example by limiting it to a designated area at each shopping centre.
Coreflutes are expensive to produce and (unfortunately) prone to wanton damage. I consider that (only) having one area for their display in each suburb (with appropriate rules to ensure equal access) would still allow voters appropriate access to such information;
- 4) provide a separate column on the ballot paper to any non-Party candidate who is nominated by at least 100 electors
I consider this improvement would treat non-Party candidates similarly to candidates nominated by a political Party (which requires 100 electors to register, and then receives a separate column for its candidates provided at least 2 candidates are nominated).
As the Committee would be aware, there is precedent for this improvement – namely in Tasmania, which has an electoral system similar to the ACT's electoral system.

I am happy to discuss the above and/or any other matters with the Committee.

Regards



Bruce Paine

25/6/21