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MEDIA RELEASE

Inquiry into preference counting in local government elections in NSW

The NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is looking into the random selection aspect of counting preferences in local government elections. In particular, the Committee wants to find whether there are any alternative methods of ballot counting that would produce more accurate preference flows.

"A proper random ballot selection is a key factor in preference counting in local government elections", said Committee Chair the Hon Dr Peter Phelps MLC. "To ensure fairness to all candidates, there needs to be an unbiased random selection but this can be challenging in electronic counts."

"It is well known that randomness can impact some local government elections so we want to ensure that we have the best systems available. The robustness of our counting systems is vitally important to guarantee that people who are voted for are those who are elected to office."

The Committee will look into the current system in use in recent and forthcoming local government elections and canvass suggestions on how it can be improved.

The Committee is currently calling for submissions from a wide range of stakeholders and will hold a hearing in October.

The Committee welcomes submissions from anybody with an interest in this specialised area within New South Wales or other jurisdictions with similar processes.

The closing date for submissions is 29 September.

Further information about the inquiry can be found on the Committee's website at: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/electoral matters>

MEDIA: The Hon Dr Peter Phelps MLC – (02) 9230 3462