

**Submission
No 41**

2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE 2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Everyone Counts is pleased to present the following information at the request of the New South Wales (NSW) Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. Our response focuses on our areas of expertise and how these issues are relevant to electronic voting. The information provided below addresses items a, c, d, and f of the Terms of Reference.

OVERVIEW OF EVERYONE COUNTS

As the world's leading provider of electronic voting, Everyone Counts offers unsurpassed experience in providing electronic election solutions. Our team uniquely combines expertise in technology and election administration, ensuring a solution that can be trusted. We believe that the dedicated individuals that form our team — and our sincere commitment to achieve the highest level of contract performance and customer service — are unmatched.

Our solutions are field tested daily. This rigorous, real-world testing and the cumulative experience of millions of voters in hundreds of jurisdictions ensure our users have the most secure and most heavily tested solutions available today. We have proven that, by applying election knowledge with technology expertise, and worldwide experience with local understanding, every voter will have secure access to a ballot, reliably counted.

Everyone Counts was established in 1996, in Melbourne, Australia, with corporate offices in Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and India. We have provided the same secure and accessible voting systems to governments, political parties, major corporations, and private organizations worldwide since 1997.



Everyone Counts has enabled millions of voters in over 160 countries to participate independently and privately in local, state, and national elections by means of an accessible, secret ballot. Each ballot was securely delivered using best-of breed technology and leading edge election best practices. Elections that have used our eLect™ solution, the next generation election administration and voting system, have never been questioned, abandoned, or decertified for any reason. We have an unblemished track record with no election failures. The eLect solution is delivered using scalable, sustainable, and cost-effective software, or clients have the option to license their own stand-alone software solution.

(a) The costs of the elections

Everyone Counts' Response

Due to the scalability of electronic voting solutions, the higher the number of voters, the lower the cost per vote. If an electronic voting system like iVote were available for local government elections, significant savings could be realised by the local councils. As the actual cost per vote drops, some states in Australia and New Zealand that switched to postal only voting for their council elections may soon see that current technology available with electronic and telephone voting is clearly the most flexible and least expensive form of voting.

Everyone Counts is assisting our clients in realizing 20 to 50% reductions in the costs of traditional election systems and processes. For example, in the United States, we recognized the need for a solution to resolve the high failure rate of vote-by-mail for

military, overseas, or otherwise absentee voters. Our patent-pending eLect™ Transcriber solution was invented, using Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) hardware and software to provide a solution for multiple, live-binding elections throughout the U.S. Implementation of this solution resulted in significant cost savings and improvements to critical, Federally-mandated processes that election officials face when manually transcribing ballots.

ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES AND COST SAVINGS

A critical component of choosing an electronic ballot system is the election experience guiding the technology development and the implementation of the electronic election system. Streamlined processes and cost efficiencies result when election and security technology are coupled with election expertise. Having in-depth knowledge of election processes allows the online election supplier to smoothly integrate with existing election processes and voting systems. Everyone Counts' professional team has decades of unique, hands-on experience in government elections, election system integration, and computer and network security experience.

"By choosing Everyone Counts' secure, easy-to-use solution, we have saved significant time and money on this election by streamlining the administrative process and cutting over 50% of the costs for mailing and other expenditures."

– Joan Manke,
Executive Director, Honolulu
Neighborhood Board Commission

(c) Possible legislative changes to improve the efficiency of and participation in Local Government elections

Everyone Counts' Response

Our experience shows that projects such as iVote have brought many benefits and greater voter participation to State elections. Everyone Counts believes that iVote should be made available to any local government that chooses to implement it and realize the benefits to both election administrators and voters.

Everyone Counts employs several electronic voting solutions using eLect. Each solution

reduces cost, increases participation, and is easier to access and use than standard methods used in voting today. In addition to increasing security and convenience for all voters, eLect also enfranchises populations that were previously unable to vote, such as remote voters and voters with disabilities.

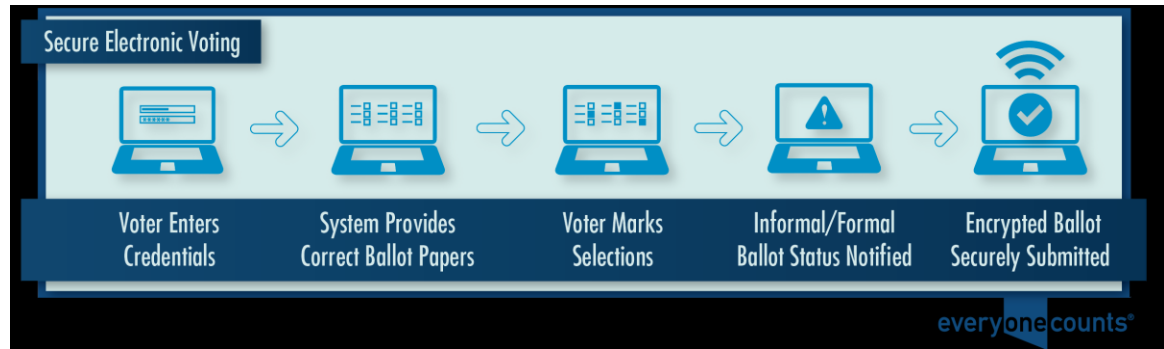
From our vast experience with electoral bodies and with the New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC) in particular, internet voting has proven to be more reliable than paper voting with much lower rates of informal votes and disenfranchisement. In the 2011 NSW General Election, only 75% of people who applied to use a postal vote because they were interstate or overseas actually did cast a vote. In comparison, 97% of the people who applied to use iVote did actually vote.

For example, the New South Wales (NSW) iVote project included the provision of a remote internet and telephone voting solution for eligible voters in the 2011 State General Election. The complex above-the-line and below-the-line ballot papers were customized to the requirements of NSW with the goal of enfranchising electors with disabilities – in particular voters who are blind or those with low vision. Legislation was subsequently passed to extend the use of iVote to remote electors. Voter participation using these popular solutions increased fourfold from the originally estimated turnout. The project was an overwhelming success and iVote has since been deployed in the subsequent by-elections.

(d) Non-residential voting in Local Government elections

Everyone Counts' Response

The flexibility of Everyone Counts' eLect solution fits well with Australia's voting options for non-residential property owners in Local Government elections. Solutions such as iVote can seamlessly facilitate these voters using the same methods used for residents who are traveling out of the council area on polling day.



As an example, Everyone Counts streamlined the voting process for the Australian Election Commission (AEC) in the 2007 Federal Election for overseas military voters. We used the military's existing communication infrastructure to cast and transmit encrypted electronic ballots in minutes. As a result of implementing these proven methods, the NSW Electoral Commission estimates that approximately 30,000 additional overseas and interstate votes were cast in the 2011 elections due to the availability of remote electronic voting. This significantly increased number of voters who were able to securely cast their ballots and resulted in the largest dual-channel (Internet and Telephone) remote electronic voting project in history.

(f) any other related matter

Everyone Counts' Response

Everyone Counts submits the following information related to simplified electronic voting solutions and our observations about open source voting projects:

SIMPLIFIED ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS

Used in hundreds of elections each year, the Everyone Counts eLect solution is designed to provide a simple, easy-to-use process for all voters. Many verification schemes proposed by academia are not scalable to a real election. Their complexity would confuse the average voter rather than have them gain confidence in the process. Most of this confusion arises from attempts to provide verification without revealing the vote. There are more useful approaches to solve this problem, such as allowing a re-vote. This eliminates vote-buying and coercion and enables the verification process to confirm the actual vote preferences to the voter to avoid confusion. Using this process can enable voters to gain confidence without confusion.

ABOUT OPEN SOURCE VOTING PROJECTS

There are a number of open-source projects for electronic voting, most of which are developed and supported by academics. Each of these projects is in the realm of research and none have been used for a significant election. In contrast, many open-source software systems are in the technology mainstream today. Those that are in the mainstream have supporting organisations, such as Oracle (MySQL), and RedHat (Linux). These companies charge for their services. In addition, open-source projects such as these also provide common IT infrastructure rather than specialist applications. One of the challenges for an electoral commission considering the use of an open-source electronic voting project will be to obtain ongoing support for its use in real elections. There are likely very few electoral bodies in the world who would consider writing their own software system for electronic voting. The majority would likely prefer the benefits that an established election software company can provide.

CONCLUSION

At Everyone Counts, election solutions are our only business.

Voting technology has greatly matured over the past decade and is able to offer election administrators a secure, efficient, and cost effective means to vote. New solutions are working globally, as evidenced by Everyone Counts' expansive portfolio of safe, secure, voter friendly solutions.

Breakthroughs in technology have transformed many industries worldwide and our unique combination of technological expertise and election administration bring this state-of-the-art technology directly to elections. Greater accuracy, accessibility, reliability, security, and auditability can now be delivered for each phase of an election.