

INQUIRY INTO 2008 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Organisation: Bogan Shire Council

Name: Mr Ray Donald

Position: Mayor

Date Received: 29/05/2009

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RLD.CE

27th May 2009

**The Chair
Joint standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

Email: electoralmatters.committee@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir

Re: Submission for the Local Government Elections Parliamentary Inquiry

Bogan Shire Council would like to make the following submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the September 2008 Local Government Elections.

On behalf of the ratepayers of Bogan Shire, we raise the following five points for consideration:-

1. Have the elections conducted by Local Government with an independent Returning Officer.
 - Local Councils previously were able to carry out the Local Government Elections in each Shire in a way that was much cheaper than the way the recent election was conducted, a much earlier result was available and a greater emphasis on local interest and participation occurred as ratepayers felt far more ownership of electing their local Councillors. We acknowledge the need for an independent Returning Officer who could be sourced from a neighbouring Council.
2. The minimum number of candidates to be elected on the ballot paper be the same number as the number of Councillors on that Council.
 - Minimum confusion and maximum valid voting would occur when electors could easily identify with the fact that the number of Councillors on the Council was to be the number of candidates to be elected. This would not inhibit any candidates wishing to stand, but would simplify community

understanding as to how many candidates they needed to number on the ballot paper and elect.

3. Our submission vigorously opposes a change to postal ballots for Local Government elections.
 - It has been strongly mooted following the September elections, particularly from the State Electoral offices that a preferred means of carrying out future Local Government elections be to have all voting by postal ballot. We strongly believe this would be a disastrous means of conducting Local Government elections as the interface between candidates and their electors would be substantially diminished, particularly on polling day. Substantial changes to the way Councillors are elected must lead to a better situation than currently exists, and this would be a major back ward step in the process.
4. The current proportional representation system of voting for elections be changed to optional preferential so the candidates with the highest number of preferences are elected.
 - This would ensure that candidates who obtain the most support in the overall election process are the ones ultimately elected. A preferential system gives greater capacity for preferred choice as opposed to the current proportional representation system which has been proven to have candidates elected who did not receive initial preference but obtained final election.
5. Less cost if conducted by local Council.
 - A valid comparison of the cost of the elections previously conducted by Local Government compared to the recent elections conclusively shows that the elections were carried out much cheaper by the former system. A number of anomalies, some very substantial, have been exposed in the subsequent investigations carried out since the September 2008 elections in relation to initial costs and then revised costings. Local Government forever battle the need to fund the essential requirements of their communities and therefore do not need the exuberant increase passed on to them by the recent accounts from the State Electoral Commission.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL Donald', with a large, sweeping initial 'R'.

RL Donald

MAYOR