

**Submission  
No 5**

## **PREFERENCE COUNTING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN NSW**

**Organisation:** Port Macquarie-Hastings Council  
**Date Received:** 26 September 2017

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council supports the terms of reference of the Joint Standing Committee ("Committee") and provides a written submission to support the Committee in its aims. The submission will focus on the terms of reference.

In preparation of drafting this submission Port Macquarie- Hastings Council contacted Committee Manager, Leon Last, which directed Council to Antony Green's blog post ("the blog post") of January 13, 2016.

1. The current system of 'random selection' in the counting of preferences in local government elections: It would appear, based on the blog post, there are a number of points that raise the question as to whether the current random selection system is still the most appropriate system:

- Random selection is prone to random and non-repeatable results. A number of examples were provided of this.
- It is a method that is very difficult to understand
- The system is archaic and was developed some time ago.

The advances of computing now enables other systems to be used.

Furthermore, a different system is used for the NSW state elections.

2. Whether this system delivers fair results in all cases for candidates:

As noted above, the blog indicated non repeatable results using the current random selection. In which a random selection of the "overflow" votes are collected and their preferences are counted. This would appear not to be fair as not all voter's preferences are considered.

3. Whether there are any alternative methods of ballot counting which would produce more accurate preference flows:

What would appear to provide a more accurate preference flow is the fractional transfer method. With the fractional transfer method all votes and their preferences are counted (with a percentage or fraction applied), therefore, this would ensure all voters preferences are considered and not a random selection of voters.

4. Any other related matter. No further comments.