

**Submission
No 9**

PREFERENCE COUNTING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN NSW

Organisation: Bland Shire Council
Date Received: 28 September 2017



Submission

Inquiry into Preference Counting in Local Government Elections in NSW

Bland Shire Council at its meeting held on 19th September 2017 resolved to make a submission to the Inquiry into Preference Counting in Local Government Elections in NSW.

Based on the Terms of Reference the following comments are made:

- a) Council is of the strong belief that the current system of 'random selection' in the counting of preferences in local government elections is unfair particularly when applied to the smaller rural councils within NSW.
- b) Council does not believe that this system delivers fair results in all cases for candidates particularly when applied to the smaller rural councils within NSW where the majority of candidates are not aligned to any political party and who have not nominated in a 'group'. Consequently, the majority of the candidates simply produce a How to Vote card with the No.1 placed next to their name and there is no indication of their preferences.
- c) Council believes that an alternative to the current system would be to have a 'first past the post' system in those councils with fewer than 10,000 population which would probably equate to having less than 5,000 eligible voters. It is a classic case of one size does not fit all and the current system is more applicable to the larger regional and metropolitan councils. In rural areas such as West Wyalong many of the voters are of the belief that by placing the numbers 1-9 on the ballot paper they have actually indicated their order of preference. However, with the random selection system this is not the case and one could argue that these voters have been misled by the system.

Council therefore submits a 'first past the post' system of voting, for councils with fewer than 5,000 eligible voters, whereby voters need only place a mark against the candidate(s) of their choice and the candidates with the most votes are elected accordingly.

- d) There are no other related matters that council wishes to raise.