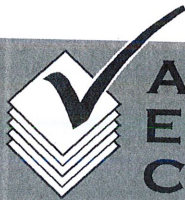


PREFERENCE COUNTING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN NSW

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24 September, 2017

The Hon Dr Peter Phelps MLC
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Cc Mr Leon Last
A/Committee Manager
Legislative Assembly Committees
Parliament of New South Wales
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Re: Electoral Matters Committee- Inquiry into preference counting in local government elections

Dear Dr Phelps,

We perceive that the random sampling approach for distribution of preferences was implemented originally to simplify a manual counting process. It is in a similar vein to deferral of surplus distributions and bulk exclusions in other proportional count methodologies.

We also speculate that some of the smaller NSW Councils who conduct their own Elections may still undertake manual counts.

With an electronic count, it would not be difficult to consider all papers containing a further preference, rather than taking a random sample; and this would be a fairer approach.

It would involve legislating amendments to Schedule 5 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 and this would increase the degree of difficulty for any Council conducting manual counts.

The flow-on from legislating any pertinent amendments, would be that our count software (as well as that utilized by the Electoral Commission, New South Wales), would need to be amended and possibly re-certified.

We assert that a proportional count system is the best methodology for Councils to use, but implementing any of the other variants (e.g. Senate) would have the same issues as mentioned above.


Yours sincerely



Richard Kidd

Director and Principal

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