

**INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT
(ELECTIONS) BILL 2025**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Without free and fair elections, democracy cannot exist. In recent years, the world has witnessed numerous, vexatious attempts to undermine or question the integrity of electoral processes. A good example being the efforts to overturn the 2020 US presidential election.

Noting this, I believe that the running of elections must be conducted by a body solely dedicated to integrity, honesty and transparency. I see no better candidate than the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC) and, therefore, I am strongly supportive of object (a)(i) in the bill's current form. The NSWEC is not profit driven and exists to serve the noble cause of electoral fairness.

As for the other provisions, I am deeply concerned by the proposed restrictions on voting, such as capping the maximum length of the early-voting period and the location of polling places. In a system with compulsory voting, it does not do well to impede people's access to complete civil duties. Furthermore, even if voting were optional (e.g. as it is for local government elections in Western Australia), the dangers of disenfranchising citizens with arbitrary limits is against the spirit of democratic participation. For these reasons, I personally oppose objects (a)(ii) and (a)(iii).

Lastly, since we are discussing the topic of reforming local government elections, I believe it is worth addressing another area of concerns. Currently, it is possible for people to vote in multiple council elections, based on property ownership. This policy, termed "non-residential voting", allows the wealthy to exert undue influence on local government policy, including the approval or blocking of new housing. The result is a system in which elections are free, but not fair. Thus, by my introductory sentence, local government elections are undemocratic. I strongly encourage the bill to be amended, such that non-residential voting is eliminated.

I thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.