

We wish to provide feedback on the *Electoral Amendment Bill 2019 - consultation draft* containing technical amendments to the Electoral Act to enable the election process to keep pace with rapid changes in technology, social media and community expectations.

The proposed amendments to address difficulties arising from delays in postal delivery times [Section 129(1) gives an 8 day allowance to request postal vote material. The changes to postal deliveries in the State especially to outlying areas of the far south, the west and east coasts we think would necessitate at least 10 working days to ensure the material was received and posted back in due time.

Does the system provide for email requests for postal votes - and if not should that be a consideration.

Although we have in the past supported the ban on newspaper commentary and reporting on Election Day, we realise that social media and television probably have more influence on voters than newspapers now and so accept the removal of the ban..

Furthermore, although this is not under current consideration, we hope that the Review will include the following matter which we consider of vital importance to good governance in Tasmania:

We acknowledge the governing principles of the review, namely:

- protecting freedom of speech, with note to Constitutional implications,
- and minimal cost to the taxpayer.

However, we believe there is a greater cost to the community and the budget in not restoring the Legislative Assembly to 35 seats. Our reasons for this:

- Inefficiencies arise because Ministers have too many portfolios and cannot keep up with the reading and workload.
- There has been an increase in political advisors who are not governed by regulations as are public servants, nor do they have any accountability to the electorate.
- It is preferable that advice be taken from an expert public service with corporate knowledge and which is accountable to the public.
- The Westminster system is based on the provision of frank and fearless advice to the government by a public service with no political alignment. Since the reduction in elected representatives, there has been a surge in unelected political advisors who are politically motivated and do not necessarily have the required expertise to give sound objective advice to their ministers.
- The Committee System which can give oversight and assist a government cannot work effectively or productively with the amount of reading and consultation required, when Members are sitting on numerous committees. It also limits reports being completed thoroughly in a reasonable time. Reports often end up being superficial to meet a deadline.
- A larger Parliament could provide a wider representation of the community.

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