

KENSINGTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Ms Margaret Wagstaff,
Independent Reviewer,
Independent Review of Local Government Elections,
7th floor, Roma Mitchell House,
136 North Terrace,
Adelaide, 5000.

The Secretary,
Kensington Residents' Association Inc.,
Mr A. Dyson,
42, Regent Street,
Kensington, 5068.
8 August 2007.

Re: Independent Review of Local Government Elections

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter of advising our Association of the review of local government elections. We were pleased to see that you were aware of our submission, of 6th November 2006, to the Minister for State/Local Government Relations expressing our concerns about the failure of the election for the Kensington Ward, following withdrawal of a nomination by one of the candidates.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the review and make the following comments and suggestions:

Withdrawal of Candidates

As we suggested in our letter to the Minister, upon withdrawal of a candidate for serious illness we believe it would be appropriate for the election to continue with the remaining candidates. An alternative approach to ensure residents are not left without representation would be a provision that allows for the existing Ward Councillors to continue in their positions until such time as a supplementary election is conducted.

This is an important issue for our Association as Kensington was left without representation for nearly four months during which time important decisions affecting Kensington were made. Obviously during the first months of a new Council many important decisions are made and members selected for various committees and boards, our representatives were denied participation in these processes and the opportunity to be members of these committees and boards.

Terms for Councillors

We suggest that consideration be given to reducing the term from the current four years to two. We believe that it is too much to expect most people to stand for a four year term as it is a very long commitment for what is essentially a voluntary position of service to the community. From discussions with our members it is clear that most people balk at the thought of a four year

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commitment. Shorter terms would increase the number of candidates prepared to put themselves forward.

Postal Voting

Our Association is opposed to the current system of universal postal voting. While it may result in a slight increase in participation, anecdotal evidence suggests that the system is open to abuse. We have heard of residents that are elderly, sick, have a poor command of English being pressured to vote for particular candidates.

Postal voting also places an unnecessary financial burden on the community.

We support the availability of postal or absentee voting upon application provided that the applicant has a valid reason for being unable to attend a polling booth on election day but otherwise we believe that the general method of voting should be by attendance at a polling booth on election day.

Compulsory Voting

Our Association is opposed to compulsory voting as we believe that persons with no interest in local affairs are unlikely to make an informed and considered decision when voting. There is also the very real danger that political party involvement will become more prevalent. We suggest that Councils should make themselves more relevant and answerable to the community to increase awareness and interest in local government and in turn voter participation in elections.

Political Party Involvement

We suggest that the involvement of political parties in local government matters and elections should be made illegal.

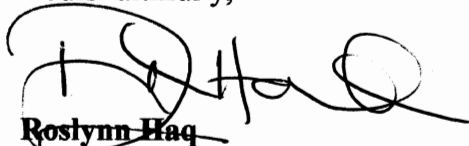
Property Franchise

We suggest that the property franchise should be abolished. We believe that the property franchise is an anachronism from the 19th century that gives multiple property owners an unfair vote and influence in local government matters. As for state and federal elections, everyone should be entitled to one vote for the council in which they reside, irrespective of the number of properties they own.


Conclusion

Again we thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this review and trust that our suggestions will be seriously considered.

Yours faithfully,



Roslynn Haq
President



Andrew Dyson
Secretary

cc Ms Vini Ciccarello, Member for Norwood
City of Norwood, Payneham & St Peters
Ward Councillors