

SUBMISSION

I wish to submit my proposals towards electoral reform as follows.

1. Fixed Term Elections.

Based on long-standing discussion through the various media both by media presenters, public figures and the general public, I believe that there is overwhelming demand by the public for fixed term elections to eliminate the current “free for all” timing at the whim of the incumbent Prime Minister. This should also incorporate the exclusion of the use of the double dissolution threat outside of term through the failure of the passage of Government bills.

Furthermore, I would suggest that debate on fixed term elections also include the proposal for extension to four-year fixed term periods of government which I believe would give greater stability for elected governments to carry out the policies for which they have been elected.

2. Optional / Limited Numbering Preferential Voting.

I would like to see a major change to our present preferential voting system by elimination of the existing multiple numbering requirement on ballot papers which is confusing and serves no useful purpose. In principle, I support the benefits of preferential voting which provides voters for minor party candidates the option of choosing an alternative representative if their selected candidate is unsuccessful. However, I also believe that there is merit for the introduction of optional preferential voting but specifically on the basis that only the first and second choices need to be numbered (i.e. vote **1** and **2**) where there are multiple candidates on the ballot paper. Numbering beyond a first and second choice serves absolutely no useful purpose (at least in lower house elections) as only the second preference ever actually contributes to the outcome of the vote, and numbering beyond the second choice may only serve to confuse voters as well as leading to errors and informal votes. It can also generate annoyance in a certain percentage of voters resulting in deliberate spoilage of ballot papers and further increasing the proportion of informal votes.

3. How to Vote Cards.

I also propose that we should discontinue the use of “How to Vote” cards.

I suggest that these are, firstly, an insult to the intelligence of the majority of voters who are perfectly capable of deciding on the order of their selected first and second preferences. Furthermore, if the suggested optional preferential voting and limited numbering proposed above in 2) was adopted, “How to Vote” cards would become unnecessary.

I also believe that negotiations by political parties for positions on the cards may potentially influence voters on their second preference leading to a corrupt result of the ballot.

Finally, the use of these cards is environmentally unacceptable. It is an unnecessary waste of many tonnes of paper, the additional pollution from the chemicals used in printing, and further pollution from the need to transport the used cards for disposal (presumably for recycling) which is a further waste of energy and chemicals. Discontinuing their use would be ecologically beneficial.

4. Political Advertising.

There is heavy use of political advertising during elections so the parties with the largest campaign funds have the most advantage. I suggest that there should be a cap set on either the dollars allowed to be spent on advertising, or limits to the amount of time allowed for TV and radio advertisements and space in print media.