

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL REFORM GREEN PAPER SUBMISSION:

ELECTORS OPINIONS

We hear of multi-million dollar bonuses being paid to public company Chief Executive Officers. Remuneration of company employees should not be capped. Rather the issue is whether they perform their duties well. The conundrum is what are their expected functions and duties.

Shareholders should have the capacity to set broad parameters with respect to the performance of the public company, considering it is shareholders money that is at stake. Collectively shareholders should indicate debt levels and profit expectations that they seek from a company over the forthcoming year. The board would need to take these expectations into consideration as they determine company activities.

Ultimately a shareholder that is not happy with the performance of a company has the option to sell their shares and invest elsewhere.

In my opinion parliamentarians should be paid much more than they are now. However we the people should have some say as to broad policy settings of a government. Like a public company the government manages our money.

There are hundreds of public companies of varying operational performance and growth strategies from which investors can choose to invest in. Shareholders have the capacity to elect, re-elect or not elect directors to a public company board, according to their experience and expertise annually. Shareholders are able to vote on some significant items at the Annual General meeting.

Voting for a government offers only a choice of two, with the elected government usually receiving less than 50% of the electorate first preference vote. Many parliamentarians currently sit on opposition benches and do not even participate in the government. We the people cannot initiate or determine any specific policy setting of a government. We cannot sell our shares in the government if we do not like it.

Item 1.20 of the Green Paper states that, “ the legislative regime governing local government in some states also makes provision for rate payers to initiate referendums on issues such as council borrowings, how the mayor or shire president is elected or on other issues handled by the council.”

It is time that at all levels of government, citizen initiated referenda provide electors with the capacity to determine parameters of government policy with respect to levels of debt, infra structure and services required.

Secondly when we vote we should also be able to vote on a separate ballot paper on broad policy settings we want from the new parliament. Voting on specific policies would allow us to select the best policies of all political parties.

A third form of public expression should be a formal method of signing petitions. The parliament house website should at anytime provide a series of short term petitions containing to political issues where all voters have access and can register their opinion easily and collectively. It is too

difficult for specific interest groups to be able to collect enough petitioners of which parliamentarians will take notice.

Governments are often elected using fear tactics with respect one or two specific issues. They then believe they have a mandate to impose all their ideological policies in all areas 'carte blanche', whilst electors have no redress but to wait for the next election.

There must be forums whereby we the electors, we the taxpayers can express an opinion on specific policies prior to government election and during the term of a government.