Proportional
Representation
Society of Australia

VICTORIAN BRANCH

SUBMISSION TO THE BOARD OF REVIEW OF THE
ROLE, STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN VICTORIA

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PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIAN BRANCH)

SUBMISSION TO THE BOARD OF REVIEW OF THE ROLE, STRUCTURE AND
ADMINISTRATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN VICTORIA.

1.1 THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SOCIETY.

Although Australia is advanced in its electoral procedures compared
with the rest of the world, unsatisfactory methods of election still
in use mean that many people do not have effective representation in
the bodies that govern them. The Proportional Representation Society
of Australia consists of people who believe that democratic government
must be based on the use of the quota-preferential method of proportional
representation for the election of all representative bodies.

The Society has branches in Victoria and New South Wales and collaborates
with the Electoral Reform Societies in South Australia and Great Britain
and the Municipal Reform Group in Tasmania. All of the officebearers
of the Society work in an honorary capacity.

1.2 INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Several members of the Victorian Branch of the Society have been
involved in Local Government. Mr. J. H. Morris, O.B.E. served for
23 years as a councillor and was twice mayor in the City of Coburg;
Mr. A. R. Hutchinson was a Camberwell councillor from 1970 to 1975.
The immediate past president of the Society, Cr. T. F. Kirby has
been on the Croydon City Council since 1965, while the president,
Mr. Geoffrey Goode, was during 1970-3, a councillor for the City
of Sandringham. The secretary of the Municipal Reform Group, Mr.
Ron Excell, is an alderman of the City of Hobart. Many other members
take an active interest in local affairs, some regularly undertaking
poll clerk duties.

2. MAJOR POINTS:

2.1 THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

A glance at the various State Yearbooks indicates that the functions
of local government in Australia are more restricted than in some
other countries, this tendency being a result of strong, central
administration developing in the early coastal settlements when the
continent was virtually empty. By the 1850's some powers had been
devolved to local authorities, many of these consisting of members
elected by a local community.

Today, in Australia, each Council is charged with the task of providing
many of the services necessary for the organisation and welfare of the
community which it represents.

The 'representative' aspect of local government is now taken virtually
for granted in that, in all states, the Councils are directly elected
by the people. However, although the widening of the franchise is a
necessary condition for obtaining democratic representation of the
people, it is not a sufficient condition. There is evidence in Victoria
that many citizens are alienated from local government even though they
have the right to vote.

The role of local government should be to effectively represent the
ratepayers and citizens so as to understand better their needs and
desires and hence be more likely to implement policies which have
widespread community support. In this context, a study of local
government electoral systems is central, as it can be shown that a
positive correlation exists between the type of electoral system used
and the responsiveness of local government to the citizens.

2.2   THE ELECTION OF A DELIBERATIVE BODY.

The object of voting in local government elections is to SET UP A
BODY FIT TO MAKE DECISIONS ON BEHALF OF THE VOTERS, in other words,
to elect a representative, deliberative, or policy determining body.

The principles of democracy require that the decisions made in a
deliberative body should be made by majority voting. In Victoria
this principle is firmly upheld and practised within the Council
chambers.

However, the principles of democracy by no means require that the
council itself should be made up by majority methods. In electing
a council, each member's right to a seat should rest on his being
the choice not of a majority of all the voters represented, but
merely a sufficient share of them. As Ernst Neville, the eminent
Swiss publicist, wrote in 1865, "In a democratic government, the   1.
right of decision belongs to the majority, but the right of repre-
sentation belongs to all."

This distinction, one of the most important in the whole field of
political thinking, is not put into effect within the structure of
local government in Victoria. Majority methods are appropriately
applied to the passing of measures by councils but are inappropriately
applied to the election of the councils.

It is appropriate to use a voting method which, on all measures,
divides the councillors into the successful majority and the unsuccess-
ful minority. It is inappropriate to use the same method to divide
the voting citizens into a represented majority and an unrepresented
minority.

What is required in local government elections is a system which makes
it possible for voters to choose from a wide range of candidates and
have a high probability of being represented by their preferred candidates.

In Victoria, nearly all municipalities are divided into a number of
wards or ridings, each with three councillors. One might think that,
with three councillors per ward, there is provision for both majority
and minority representation; that at elections voters would be able to
choose from a wide range of candidates and hence nearly all would
succeed in electing candidates they prefer out of those offering.
Unfortunately this is not the case. The practice of having annual
elections and electing councillors in rotation means that only a single
vacancy is to be filled in each ward. Having reduced our council elections
into a series of single-member contests, we have nothing left to do, of
course, but let each ward elect its member by majority vote. But not all
the people who live inside an arbitrary ward boundary agree. They cannot
be represented, therefore, in any true sense, by a single person. So
many people who sleep inside an arbitrary line on the map - that is
not the sort of constituency that ought to be condensed into a spokesman.
It should be - so many people who want the same spokesman. Each quota
should be unanimous.

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1.   In La Patrie et les Partis, Geneva, 1865. Quoted in Hoag & Hallet
Proportional Representation, N.Y. 1926, Johnson Reprint Corporation,
1969.

We have argued that the present system in Victoria, where only one
person is to be elected from a ward at any one time can give effective
representation to only one group of voters in each ward. However, there
are a number of political consequences of single member electoral
systems which have a bearing on the responsiveness of the deliberative
body to both majority and minority viewpoints.

2.3.1 Majority Rule Uncertain.

The use of preferential voting in each ward nearly always results in
the election of that candidate who has the support of more than half
as against any of the others taken singly. However, there is no
guarantee of majority rule when considering the council as a whole.
The reason is simply that winning a district by a majority of two
thousand votes counts no more than winning it by two. Consider the
following example:

> Suppose a council has been deadlocked on, say, a zoning issue
> or some other issue where community feelings run high. The
> annual elections could be interpreted as a test of these
> feelings if the candidates standing take sides on the issue
> in all four wards. Suppose that the Ratepapers Association
> favours one course of action, while the Progress Association
> is opposed. The results of the election could be as follows:

	North Ward	East Ward	South Ward	West Ward	Total
Ratepayers Assoc. (in favour)	2000	2000	2000	3000	9000
Progress Assoc. (against)	2200	2200	2200	1200	7800
	Against	Against	Against	In favour.	

Clearly, the majority of seats in the council, and the control of it,
has been won by an association which has polled 1,200 fewer votes
than its opponents.

2.3.2 Injustice to Minorities.

The single-member district system, which gives no guarantee of majority
rule, fails also to guarantee fair representation to minorities. If,
in the West Ward in the example above, the voting had been the same
as in the other three wards then the Progress Association with 8800
votes would have all four seats while the Ratepayers Association with
8000 votes would have no seats. There are far too many municipalities
around Melbourne, some of them notorious, where the dominant group or
party has either a complete monopoly on the Council or the minority
holds but one or two seats.

Although neither the majority nor a substantial minority is assured
it rightful share of the representatives by the single-member district
system, there is a greater probability of the second injustice pre-
vailing, viz. the majority being considerably over-represented.

2.3.3 Lack of real choice.
When a municipality is divided into a number of
single-member wards for the purposes of an election, one consequence
is that the voter is given very little real choice due to the limited
range of candidates offering. In the 1978 elections there was a 7 per
cent drop in the number of candidates and in the metropolitan area, of
the 91 single-ward contests, in only six wards could the voters indicate
preferences for more than three candidates.

No. of candidates per ward	7	6	5	4	3	2	Uncontested
Frequency of occurrence	1	1	1	3	28	57	More than 30?

(Source: The Age   14.8.78)

Oakleigh voters had the widest choice in that three of the wards had respectively 7, 6 and 5 candidates standing. The four candidate contests occurred in Fitzroy, Prahran and South Melbourne. (Altona, where voters also had the choice of six candidates, is not included in the above table as it is the only metropolitan municipality which is not sub-divided into wards.)

In addition to the fact that most wards had only two or three candidates standing there were many wards where no elections were held. In Box Hill, for example, all three councillors were 'elected' unopposed. The listing in the Age shows 8 municipalities in which only one ward was contested and 10 in which two wards were contested. These figures indicate that in at least 31 wards no elections were held. (31 is a conservative estimate obtained by assuming 3 wards per municipality 8 x 2 + 10 x 1 + 6 = 31 wards) The procedures used for simultaneous extraordinary elections also limits the voter's range of choice. In Auburn ward (Hawthorn) the voters had two vacancies to fill but were forced to consider the four candidates in two separate elections. There are 6 possible ways of selecting two councillors from four candidates, but the separation of the elections means that two of the combinations are not permitted even if preferred by the voters.

Related to the lack of choice between candidates and the number of uncontested elections is the fact that many wards are safe for one group or another. In some councils the result is determined by the outcome of a preselection battle in a party or other organization beyond the control of the voter.

2.3.4   Landslides possible.

In municipalities where the wards are not safe for a particular group a slight drop in support for sitting members can result in each ward going to a new candidate.

Some would argue that the use of overlapping terms prevents landslides because by the following year the chances are that the electoral pendulum would have swung back again. However, the stability of councils should not be a matter of chance. If the period of oscillation of the pendulum is greater than two years the landslide may run its course and by the third election every experienced councillor may be defeated, with no member of the new council having more than two year's experience. Such landslides are possible with a swing as small as 2 per cent from 51:49 to 49:51 for two competing groups. Landslides are generally due to the distorting effect of the single-member electoral system failing to give adequate representation to significant minorities. If a complete turnover should occur over a few years, one can be confident in saying that both the old and the new councils are about equally unrepresentative of the voters and that the community would be better served if both groups had always been represented in their proper proportions.

2.3.5. Gerrymandering and Malapportionment.

No one has yet devised a completely fair method of drawing single-member electorate boundaries, as those who have championed "equal electorates" are beginning to discover. * Equal electorates do not guarantee equal

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*   J. F. H. Wright and E. W. Haber, 'Equal Electorates, Unequal Votes - 1977 House of Representatives Election Aftermath' Australian Quarterly, Vol 50

representation because gerrymanders - intentional or accidental - are an inherent feature of single-member systems. If fair represent- ation of groups is achieved, it is only due to chance; the geographic distribution of differential concentrations of majorities happening to occur in wards in such a way as to give an apparently fair result. Such chance proportional representation still fails to secure adequate representation for significant minorities, in each ward and the pro- portionality can be easily lost by a subtle 'equalization' of the boundaries.

The fact that the outcome of an election depends not only on which group a voter supports but also on where he happens to sleep in relation to arbitrary boundary lines is sufficient to condemn the single-member system as totally inappropriate for the election of Councils.

2.4 UNSUBDIVIDED MUNICIPALITIES.

There are 30 municipalities in Victoria which are not sub-divided into wards. One third of the Council is elected at large each year by the majority-preferential system.

The majority-preferential system was used in all N.S.W. municipalities in 1968 but subsequently many Councils had the method of election changed by poll from majority-preferential to the quota-preferential method of proportional representation. A comparison (and description of these two methods is contained in Appendix A.

The use of the majority-preferential system in unsubdivided municip- alities does prevent gerrymandering, gives the voter a wider choice of candidates and generally results in majority rule. However, minor- ities can be more severely disadvantaged and landslides more devastating than under the single-member ward system. The majority-preferential system divides the voting citizens into a represented majority and an unrepresented minority and so is inappropriate for the election of Councils.

The majority-preferential method was used for Senate elections from 1920 until 1946. In that period, it gave a majority of the seats to parties with only minority support on 3 occasions, and gave no seats at all to parties supported by nearly half of the voters on 3 occasions. In no case was the representation of the parties even approximately in line with the support of the voters for party candidates.

Whatever might be the Board's view of our final recommendations, it is important that the use of the quota-preferential method of proportional representation be substituted for the majority-preferential method when more than one vacancy is to be filled.

3 LESSER POINTS.

3.1 STAGGERED TERMS.

The use of majority voting methods has made the use of staggered terms necessary in an attempt to reduce the wild fluctuations likely to be produced by such systems. It has been argued above that any desirable outcome brought about by the use of staggered terms is due largely to chance and that staggered terms offer no protection against the possibility of a complete changeover in the Council as a result of a small long term swing.

If majority systems be replaced by proportional systems, security of tenure is assured for the capable councillors and when voting support for groups changes, the composition of the Council will change correspondingly. The political 'landslide' is unknown with proportional representation so staggered terms are unnecessary; indeed they merely serve to upset the proportionality.

3.2. ANNUAL ELECTIONS

With the abolition of staggered terms there is little virtue in
continuing with annual elections. Three year terms appear to be
generally accepted by the community, although the use of terms up to
nine years in the N.S.W. Legislative Council is noted.

Current practice in Victoria, with local government elections every
year, discourages Councils from taking a long term view and the
annual change in Council membership disrupts the establishment of
satisfactory working relationships between the members. Many
observers comment that Councils tend to work to an annual budget
rather than attempting to formulate a coherent longer term programme.
This often results in the inefficient use of resources.

Annual elections are of little value to the voter. The frequency of
elections, coupled to the fact that the voter can pass judgement on
only one sitting councillor, leads to voter fatigue. A two year break
between elections is sometimes welcomed but the fact that this implies
a six year term for the sitting member is often overlooked. Finally,
annual elections are unnecessarily expensive. The cost of holding
annual staggered elections is estimated to be well over three times
the cost of trienniel elections at large. The hidden costs of short
term planning are probably more significant.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

4.1. THE NEED FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The introduction of the quota-preferential method of election is
recommended for all Councils. The quota-preferential method guarantees
the proportional representation of significant groups or bodies of
opinion. The quota-preferential method gives the voter a greater
range of choice among the candidates nominated and ensures that nearly
all voters see their preferred candidates elected.

In common with party list forms of proportional representation, it
secures to all political parties a share of the seats nearly proportiona
to their popular support and prevents the result from being drastically
altered by small changes in the votes or by alteration of ward boundarie
(See Appendix B). Unlike the party list systems, it gives the same fair
representation also to groups that are not organised as parties, and
ensures that the individual men and women elected are those whom the
voters prefer.

The quota-preferential method would remove the uncertainties and chance
outcomes inherent in the majority preferential system and render
staggered terms with annual elections unnecessary.

Three sets of rules for conducting elections by the quota-preferential
method are included as Appendix D. The rules published by this Society
and those used in Tasmanian local government elections are superior to
those used in New South Wales. Even the latter would be far superior
to current methods used in Victoria.

4.2. DETAILED PROPOSALS

It is recommended that the entire Council be elected at large by the
quota-preferential method of proportional representation for a fixed
three year term. It is desirable that there be an odd number of
Councillors.

As a transition measure, a less satisfactory procedure would be to
retain a ward system and use the quota-preferential method to elect
three councillors per ward at triennial elections.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

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ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

N S W LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, 1974

A COMPARISON OF THE MAJORITY-PREFERENTIAL METHOD
AND THE QUOTA-PREFERENTIAL METHOD OF PROPORTIONAL
REPRESENTATION.

Prepared by a Sub-Committee of the N S W Branch of the Society

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THE 1974 NEW SOUTH WALES LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the 1971 Local Government elections in New South Wales, an analysis of the results was prepared by the Proportional Representation Society of New South Wales. It was based on replies from Municipalities and Shires to a questionnaire, replies being received from 34 Councils. The response to a similar questionnaire following the 1974 elections was much greater, with 62 of the 133 Shires and 50 of the 90 Municipalities responding.

Four of the Councils which replied failed to give the information requested, seven others had not held polls in 1974, and twenty Councils returned the questionnaire but did not include result sheets. Several replies were not sufficiently detailed or were too difficult to interpret to be used in all aspects of the survey.

The replies received are representative in respect to distribution between Municipalities and Shires and ward sizes. The details are shown in Appendix B.

2. AIM OF THE SURVEY

The aim of the survey was to examine the performance of the majority-preferential method of election and to compare it with the quota-preferential method of proportional representation. Where the majority-preferential method was used, the returns have been re-examined to determine what the results would have been with the quota-preferential method. Where appropriate, information relating to the 1965, 1968, and 1971 elections has been used.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

THE FOLLOWING ABBREVIATIONS HAVE BEEN USED

ALDERMAN means Alderman or Councillor.
WARD means Ward, Riding, or undivided Municipality or Shire.
MP means the majority-preferential method of election.
PR means the quota-preferential method of proportional-representation.
   (See Appendix A for descriptions of MP and PR.)

4. COMPARISON OF RESULTS WITH MP AND PR METHODS

4.1 VOTER SATISFACTION

The percentage of voters represented by their first preference candidates has been determined in each of 188 wards for both MP and PR. The level of voter satisfaction is much higher with PR than with MP, the number of wards with high proportions of voters represented by their first preferences being consistently higher with PR.

In the Municipalities, more than 50% of voters would have been represented by their first-preference candidates with PR in all (100%) of the 91 wards examined and these voters could be described as satisfied voters. With MP, representation was over 50% in only 79 (86.8%) of the 91 wards.

When higher levels of voter satisfaction are examined, PR substantially outperforms MP. For example, voter satisfaction was over 75% in 67% of wards with PR, but in only 23.2% of wards with MP.

4.1 VOTER SATISFACTION (continued)

Voter satisfaction at intervals of 5% representation is shown for the
Municipalities in Table 1 and Diagram 1 and for all Councils in Table 2
and Diagram 2.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">TABLE 1</td></tr>
</table>

TABLE 1

VOTER SATISFACTION, MUNICIPALITIES

Percentage of Satisfied Voters	Corresponding Percentage of Wards	
	MP	PR
35 or more	98.9	100
40 " "	96.7	100
45 " "	91.2	100
50 " "	86.8	100
55 " "	72.5	96.7
60 " "	58.2	93.4
65 " "	45.1	86.8
70 " "	30.8	80.2
75 " "	23.1	67.0
80 " "	11.0	48.4
85 " "	8.8	34.1
90 " "	7.7	26.4
95 " "	2.2	11.0

TABLE 2

VOTER SATISFACTION, ALL COUNCILS

Percentage of Satisfied Voters	Corresponding Percentage of Wards	
	MP	PR
30 or more	100	100
35 " "	98.9	99.5
40 " "	96.8	99.5
45 " "	93.1	98.9
50 " "	88.8	98.4
55 " "	79.3	94.1
60 " "	67.6	88.8
65 " "	53.2	80.3
70 " "	39.9	70.2
75 " "	28.2	56.9
80 " "	16.5	37.8
85 " "	10.6	23.9
90 " "	7.4	16.5
95 " "	1.6	5.9

DIAGRAM 1 - MUNICIPALITIES

LEGEND
MP PR

% WARDS

% SATISFIED VOTERS

DIAGRAM 2 - ALL COUNCILS

LEGEND
MP PR

% WARDS

% SATISFIED VOTERS
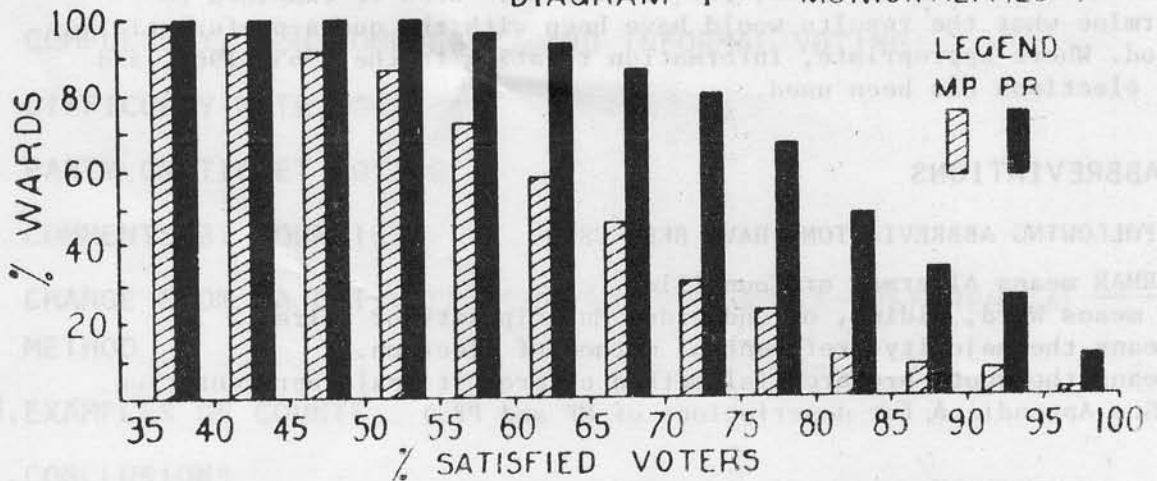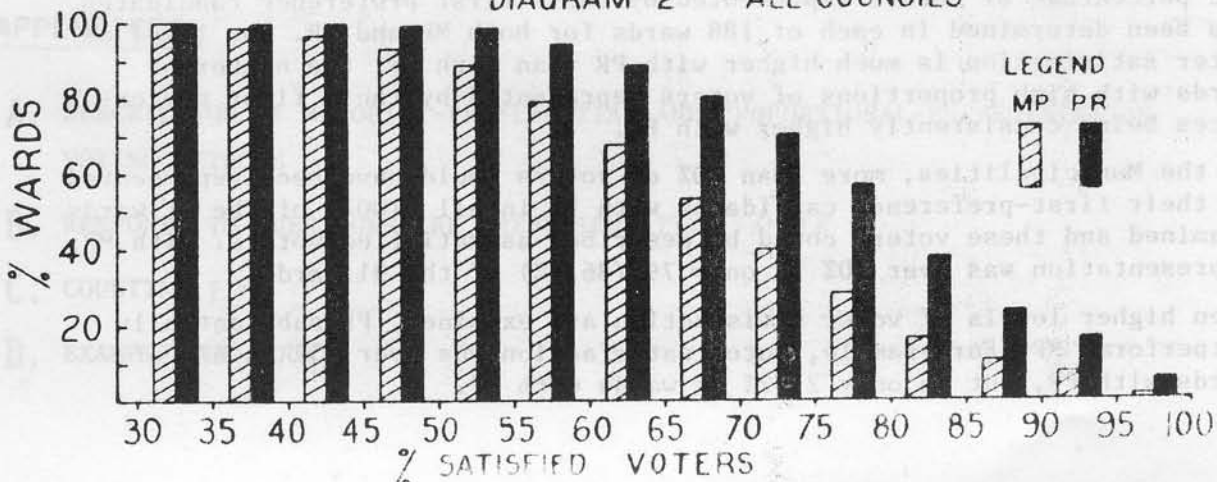
4.2 WELL-SUPPORTED CANDIDATES NOT ELECTED

The number of well-supported candidates who were not elected have been determined for both methods. Candidates who were considered 'well-supported' were identified by listing candidates in descending order of first-preference votes received until the number listed was equal to the number of vacancies. Only candidates with at least 20% more votes than the lowest in each list were classed as well-supported. The numbers of candidates in this category who were not elected are shown in Table 3 for Shires and Municipalities. There were very few cases of well-supported candidates failing to be elected with PR. With MP, there were 78 cases.

TABLE 3

	Number of wards examined	Well-supported but not elected	
		PR	MP
Shires	97	1	18
Municipalities	91	10	60

4.3 CANDIDATES ELECTED WITH FEW FIRST-PREFERENCE VOTES

With both MP and PR, candidates may be elected with few first-preference votes by transfer of preferences from high-scoring elected candidates. (See Appendix A for differences in methods.)

Any candidate who received less than 50% of the first preferences of the lowest candidate in the list defined in Section 4.2 was considered to have few votes. The numbers of candidates elected with few votes in Shires and Municipalities are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

	Number of wards examined	Elected with few first-preference votes	
		PR	MP
Shires	97	5	13
Municipalities	91	28	77

4.4 CANDIDATES ELECTED WITH FEW FIRST OR SECOND-PREFERENCE VOTES

After distribution of second preferences, candidates with few votes were identified as in Section 4.2. Table 5 shows the numbers of such candidates elected in Shires and Municipalities.

TABLE 5

	Number of wards examined	Elected with few first and second-preference votes	
		PR	MP
Shires	97	0	4
Municipalities	91	2	33

4.5 ELECTION OF LOW-SCORING CANDIDATES WHILE HIGH-SCORING CANDIDATES WERE NOT ELECTED

It is possible for low-scoring candidates to be elected while candidates with large numbers of first-preference votes are not elected. An indication of the extent of this kind of result has been obtained by calculating the ratio of the votes of the highest-scoring non-elected candidates and lowest-scoring elected candidates.

4.5 (continued)

For example, in a ward with the results shown in Table 6, the ratio for MP would be 1151/102, i.e. 11.3, and for PR, 154/102, i.e. 1.5.

TABLE 6

Votes	Elected	
	MP	PR
2030	E	E
1151		E
154	E	
102	E	E
64		
30		

Obviously, a low ratio is desirable. For the Shires, the average value of the ratio for MP is 1.55 and for PR, 1.02. For the Municipalities, the average for MP is 14.2 and for PR 3.2.

4.6   NUMBER OF WARDS WHERE PR AND MP RESULTS WERE DIFFERENT

The result with PR would have been different from that with MP in 37 of the 97 wards in Shires (38.1%), and in 69 of the 91 wards in Municipalities (75.8%). The differences are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Shires	Seats per Ward	Number of Wards	Number of Different Results	
			Wards	Aldermen
	2	53	9	9
	3	40	24	25
	4	3	3	4
	6	1	1	2
Totals		97	37	40
Municipalities	2	11	8	8
	3	52	37	37
	4	18	14	21
	5	6	6	9
	9	2	2	2
	12	1	1	3
Totals		91	69	82

The lower incidence of differences in the two and three-member wards in Shires as compared with Municipalities is almost certainly due to the numbers of candidates in the Shires being smaller and to there being less party or ticket voting in the Shires.

4.7   VOTER SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF SEATS PER WARD

As shown in Section 4.1, the level of voter satisfaction is consistently higher with PR than with MP. The level varies with the number of seats per ward. Table 8 shows the average percentages of voters represented by their first-preference candidates for wards of various sizes with both methods.

The percentages of satisfied voters are higher with PR for all ward sizes, the only case where this is not so being in the one Municipality with 12 Aldermen elected at large, where the number of candidates was unusually large and the percentages were equal with the two methods.
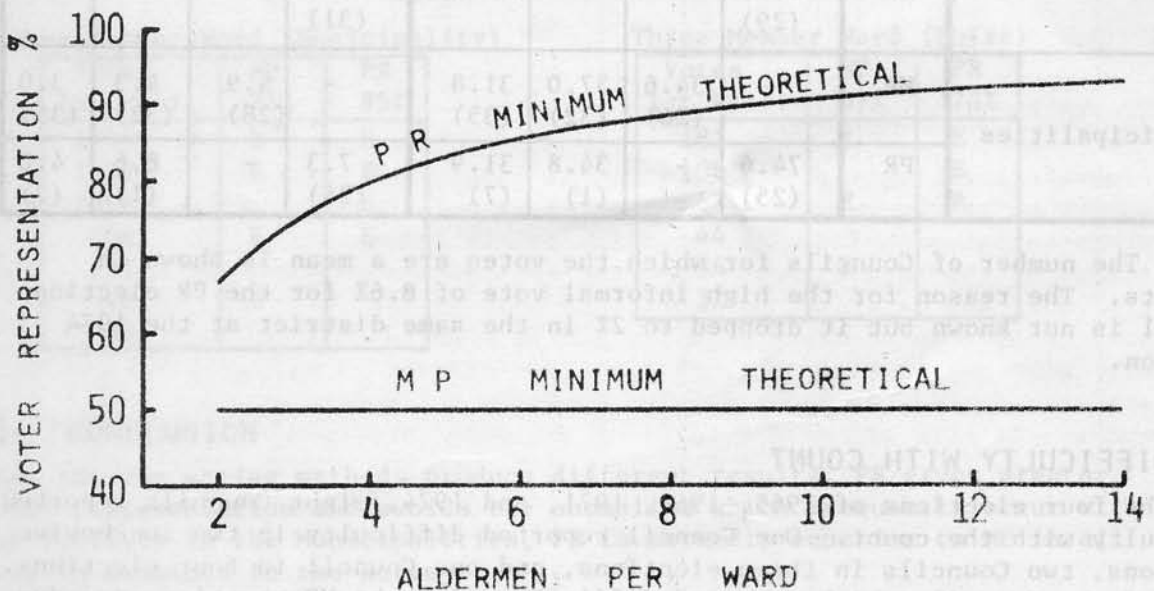
4.7 VOTER SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF SEATS PER WARD (continued)

TABLE 8

Seats per Ward	Shires			Municipalities		
	Number of Wards	Percentage		Number of Wards	Percentage	
		PR	MP		PR	MP
2	53	70.4	68.4	11	70.0	52.7
3	40	74.9	69.2	52	77.2	62.1
4	3	67.6	60.6	18	84.9	69.1
5				6	89.8	68.5
6	1	85.0	64.0	1	90.0	83.0
9				2	87.0	84.5
12				1	76.0	76.0

When preferences are taken into account, minimum voter satisfaction is
theoretically 50% with MP, irrespective of the number of seats per ward.
With PR, minimum voter satisfaction increases as the number of seats per
ward increases. For 5 member wards, minimum representation is 83.3%, and
with 7 member wards, 87.5%, as shown in Diagram 3. First-preference PR
votes generally follow these theoretical PR values.

DIAGRAM 3

4.8 COUNTING TIME

In some districts, considerable problems have been caused by excessively
long counts. Although there are other much more important considerations
than counting time in assessing the merits of an electoral method, it was
considered desirable to compare times for the two methods. In the districts
where figures were available, the numbers of man-hours required per 1,000
votes have been calculated for the elections of 1965, 1968, 1971, and 1974.
For 1974, figures were available from 47 Shires and 40 Municipalities.

In the Shires, the average PR count time was 10 hours per 1000 votes
(maximum 37 hours), with the average MP considerably higher at 16 hours
(maximum 108 hours). One 11-member Shire has exceeded 80 man-hours in the
last three MP elections, but required only 17 man-hours under PR in 1965.

4.8 COUNTING TIME (continued)

In the Municipalities, the average PR count time was 15 man-hours (maximum 38 hours) and the average MP much higher at 55 man-hours (maximum 209 hrs). MP counts exceeded the maximum PR count time on 35 occasions. 50 man-hours per 1,000 votes was exceeded 34 times and 100 man-hours was exceeded 16 times.

The relatively stable counting time with PR contrasts with the significant increase under MP as the number of seats per ward increases.   See Appendix C.

5. COMPULSORY, NON-COMPULSORY, AND INFORMAL VOTING

In the 1965 elections, with compulsory voting, 70% of those enrolled in the Shires voted. In the Municipalities, the proportion who voted was 75%. With non-compulsory voting in 1968, 1971, and 1974, the proportions voting dropped as shown in Table 9. The Table also shows percentages of informal votes in the four elections. The high informal vote in 1965 was almost certainly due to the compulsory voting provision. Informal voting was almost twice as high in the Municipalities as in the Shires.

TABLE 9

		Total Votes				Informal Votes			
		1965	1968	1971	1974	1965	1968	1971	1974
Shires	MP	–	42.3 (33)	43.6 (39)	40.1 (48)	–	2.2 (35)	2.3 (41)	1.7 (50)
	PR	69.8 (29)	–	–	–	3.4 (31)	–	–	–
Municipalities	MP	–	34.6 (26)	37.0 (32)	31.8 (35)	–	4.9 (28)	4.3 (32)	3.0 (35)
	PR	74.6 (25)	–	34.8 (1)	31.9 (7)	7.3 (26)	–	8.6 (1)	4.0 (7)

Note. The number of Councils for which the votes are a mean is shown in brackets. The reason for the high informal vote of 8.6% for the PR election in 1971 is not known but it dropped to 2% in the same district at the 1974 election.

6. DIFFICULTY WITH COUNT

Over the four elections of 1965, 1968, 1971, and 1974, eight Councils reported difficulty with the count. One Council reported difficulty in two successive elections, two Councils in three elections, and one Council in four elections. Seven of the Councils which reported difficulty gave the MP counting procedure as the cause of the difficulty. Four of these Councils are in districts which have since changed by poll to PR and another Council is considering a poll.

7. PARTY OR TICKET VOTING

With MP, any group which can win half of the votes is likely to win all of the vacancies. There is a strong incentive for candidates to form groups to improve their chances of election. With PR, the requirement for election is a quota of votes and there is no strong incentive to campaign in groups. Elaborate 'how-to-vote' tickets used in many MP elections contrast with the individual first-preference-only recommendations in Strathfield, which was one of the first districts to change to PR by poll.

8. COMMENTS BY COUNCILS

Five Councils were satisfied with MP but two of these did not consider MP satisfactory for wards over 5 or 12 members respectively. Four Councils favoured PR, one pointing out that with MP, the cost of the election was 40 cents per vote, compared to 10 cents per vote with PR.

One Council considered that there were not enough votes to warrant a poll, two Councils noted that results would be the same whether MP or PR was used and another Council was concerned mostly with ticket voting.

9. CHANGE FROM MP TO PR

Thirteen Councils which returned completed questionnaires have had the method of election changed from MP to PR by poll. At the time of preparation of this report, polls had been held in 19 districts, in 18 of which the decision had been to change to PR.

10. EXAMPLES OF COUNTS

These examples have been chosen to illustrate how results differ in the same election with the different voting methods, as shown in Table 10 below. Particularly evident with MP is the election of low-scoring candidates to the exclusion of high-scoring cnadidates, as well as lower voter representation. Additional examples in both Shires and Municipalities where different numbers of Aldermen were elected are given in Appendix D.

TABLE 10

Four Member Ward (Municipality)

Votes 1st Pref.	MP 72%	PR 95%
1700	E	E
1058	E	E
1029		E
208	E	E
122		
42	E	
40		

Three Member Ward (Shire)

Votes 1st Pref.	MP 57%	PR 73%
181	E	E
108		E
47	E	E
44		
36	E	
32		

11. CONCLUSION

When the two voting methods produce different results, PR gives greater voter representation and avoids the anomalies which frequently occur with MP. Particularly in the Municipalities, PR is markedly superior to MP in all aspects examined in the survey.

In some districts, both methods give the same results. With MP, a slight change in voter support and distribution of preferences could result in anomalous results as illustrated in the examples in Section 10. With PR, a swing of votes will only alter results in proportion to voter support.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Where not already in use, Proportional Representation should be introduced in all Councils.

2. All 1, 2, 3, and 4 member wards should be varied or combined to provide at least 5 vacancies per ward. This will ensure substantially greater voter representation.

APPENDIX A

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The method of election according to the principle of proportional representation used in local government elections in N S W is more precisely known as the quota-preferential method. For a candidate to be elected, he must have the support of a quota of voters. The quota is calculated so that it is just large enough to allow the formation of as many quotas as there are vacancies and no more.

For any number of vacancies, the quota is the whole number next above the result obtained by dividing the total number of formal votes by the number that is one greater than the number of vacancies. For example, in an election to fill three vacancies, with 100 votes, the quota would be 26. If any candidate has more than a quota of first preferences, he is elected. Votes surplus to the quota are transferred to the candidates shown by the voters as their next preferences. If the totals of other candidates are brought up to or above the quota by the transfer of surplus votes, they are elected. If there are still vacancies after all surpluses have been transferred, the candidate with the lowest total is excluded and his votes are transferred to the continuing candidates shown as next preferences. The processes of transferring the votes of excluded candidates and surpluses of elected candidates are continued until all of the vacancies are filled, each by a candidate supported by a quota of voters.

MAJORITY-PREFERENTIAL METHOD

The preferential voting method used in local government elections is more fully described as the majority-preferential method, to distinguish it from other preferential methods. The vacancies are filled one at a time, each being filled by the person chosen from the available candidates by the 'majority'. If any candidate has more than half of the first preferences, he is said to have an absolute majority and is elected. If not, the candidate with the lowest number of first preferences is excluded and his votes are transferred to the candidates shown by the voters as their next preferences. If this brings the total of any candidate to more than half of the votes, he is elected. If not, the candidate who now has the lowest total is excluded, and if necessary other 'lowest' candidates are excluded until one candidate has more than half of the votes.

After filling of the first vacancy, all of the voting papers are examined again, and papers that were marked first preference for the elected candidate are passed on to the candidates shown as second preferences. In effect, those whose votes elected the first candidate have another vote for the second vacancy. The same procedure as before is followed until again one candidate has more than half of the votes.

After his election, all papers are again examined. The papers that elected him are again passed on to the candidates shown as next preference, and 'lowest' candidates are excluded until one candidate has more than half of the votes.

All of the vacancies are filled in this way.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Ward Size	SHIRES				MUNICIPALITIES			
	Number of Councils	% of Total	Number of Replies	% of Replies	Number of Councils	% of Total	Number of Replies	% of Replies
1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
2	81	60	33	53	5	6	3	6
3	39	29	23	37	23	25	14	28
4	3	2	1	2	6	7	6	12
5	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	4
6	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
7	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	3	2	-	-	36	40	15	30
10	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	2
11	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	15	17	8	16
14	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	133	100	62	100	90	100	50	100

COUNTING TIME, MAN-HOURS PER 1,000 VOTES

Majority Preferential, Shires

Year	Ward Size					
	2	3	5	6	11	14
1965	-	-	-	-	-	-
1968	10 (14)	18 (16)	-	24 (1)	86 (1)	-
1971	10 (17)	13 (18)	20 (1)	23 (1)	90 (1)	-
1974	11 (24)	14 (19)	-	32 (1)	108 (1)	33 (1)
Mean	11	16	20	26	94	33

Proportional Representation, Shires

Year	Ward Size					
	2	3	5	6	11	14
1965	9 (13)	9 (15)	-	-	17 (1)	-
1968	-	-	-	-	-	-
1971	-	-	-	-	-	-
1974	-	-	14 (1)	-	-	-
Mean	9	9	14	-	17	-

Majority Preferential, Municipalities

Year	Ward Size							
	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	12
1965	-	-	21 (1)	-	-	-	-	124 (1)
1968	-	18 (8)	24 (4)	59 (1)	-	102 (4)	89 (1)	115 (4)
1971	-	13 (9)	21 (4)	85 (1)	61 (1)	79 (5)	-	116 (7)
1974	8 (1)	11 (10)	20 (5)	27 (2)	41 (1)	66 (7)	-	131 (7)
Mean	8	14	22	49	51	79	89	122

Proportional Representation, Municipalities

Year	Ward Size							
	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	12
1965	-	9 (8)	11 (3)	32 (1)	-	22 (2)	7 (1)	-
1968	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1971	-	-	-	-	-	24 (1)	12 (1)	-
1974	-	19 (1)	9 (1)	-	-	28 (3)	15 (1)	10 (1)
Mean	-	10	10	32	-	25	11	10

Note. ( ) indicates the number of Shires / Municipalities for which the man-hours are a mean.

MUNICIPALITIES

Three Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 60%	PR 91%
1251	E	E
202		E
158		
39	E	
34		
16	E	

Three Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 56%	PR 83%
1091	E	E
633		E
118		
114		
55	E	
52		
31		
17		

Three Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 55%	PR 82%
2351	E	E
1488		E
535		
342	E	E
175		
93	E	
91		

Three Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 46%	PR 72%
938	E	E
629		E
254		
221		
127		
17	E	E
17	E	
5		
5		

Four Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 54%	PR 96%
1225	E	E
525		E
522		E
31	E	
29	E	E
22		
17		
17		
14	E	

Four Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 61%	PR 81%
1634	E	E
1535	E	E
1202		E
446		
370		
134	E	
117		
95	E	E

Four Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 58%	PR 82%
1115	E	E
732		E
535	E	
345		
53		
42	E	
28	E	E
21		
20		
18		
15		
10		
7		

Four Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 72%	PR 85%
3426	E	E
823		E
476		
157	E	
157		
117	E	E
94	E	E
12		

Four Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 54%	PR 76%
1936	E	E
617		E
485		E
357		
280		
141	E	E
134		
101	E	
64	E	
35		
16		
15		

Five Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 40%	PR 94%
1927	E	E
1512		E
1356		E
56	E	E
54	E	E
40	E	
39	E	
35		
25		
21	E	
21		
20		
20		
13		
13		
12		
10		
7		
7		

Five Member Ward		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 70%	PR 98%
3737	E	E
1639		E
80		
72	E	E
67		
57	E	E
57	E	
24		
21		
15	E	E

SHIRES

Two Member Riding		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 62%	PR 78%
146	E	E
101		E
49	E	

Two Member Riding		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 52%	PR 65%
251		E
168	E	
159	E	E
50		

Two Member Riding		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 37%	PR 56%
2497		E
1728	E	E
1462		
1086	E	
435		
304		

Three Member Riding		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 62%	PR 77%
266	E	E
212	E	E
108	E	E
98	E	
46		
35		

Four Member Riding		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 56%	PR 76%
2812	E	E
2251		E
1430		E
1224	E	
831	E	E
518	E	
231		
156		
81		
81		

Six Member Riding		
Votes 1st Pref.	MP 64%	PR 85%
163		E
153	E	E
130	E	E
114		E
106	E	E
68	E	E
59	E	
37		
31	E	E

1975 REDISTRIBUTION OF TASMANIA INTO ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

Copies of Suggestions or Objections lodged with the Distribution
Commissioners pursuant to Section 21 of the *Commonwealth
Electoral Act* 1918-1973.

1

My submission **regarding** the new electoral boundaries is in the form of an
example.

There are 56 noughts and 44 crosses in the square. If we divide the square
horizontally, each **strip** containing 20 places, we find that noughts win in one
strip and loose in 4. If we divide the square vertically in 5 equal parts, noughts
win 5 : 0. If we divide the square in twenties as shown in figures III, IV & V,
we see that noughts loose 2 : 3 and win 3 : 2 & 4 : 1 respectively.

It is therefore fraudulent to claim that equal divisions of electorates makes for
just representation. Division into sections of common interest, even if unequal,
may give some justice, but multimember electorates make best for the numerically
just representation.

(Sgd.) J. K. LUKER
36 Southview Cr.,
New Norfolk
31.1.1975

(Figures in brackets are results if each division returns
7 members)

fig. I   1:4   (19:16)

fig. II   5:0   (20:15)

fig. III   2:3   (20:15)

fig. IV   3:2   (20:15)

APPENDIX C

UNSUBDIVIDED MUNICIPALITIES

CITIES

ALTONA

ARARAT

BENALLA

CASTLEMAINE

COLAC

EAGLEHAWK

HAMILTON

HORSHAM

MILDURA

SWAN HILL

TRARALGON

WANGARATTA

TOWNS

BAIRNSDALE

CAMPERDOWN

KYABRAM

PORTLAND

ST ARNAUD

STAWELL

BOROUGHS

EAGLEHAWK

KERANG

KOROIT

PORT FAIRY

QUEENSCLIFFE

SEBASTOPOL

WONTHAGGI

SHIRES

MIRBOO

MYRTLEFORD

PHILLIP ISLAND

PORTLAND

YEA.