

PERCENTAGE PRIMARY VOTE AND SEATS GAINED

VOTES INTO SEATS

The inequalities of the system over a period of six elections can be seen from the following tabulations. The figures show the percentage of first preference votes received by the major parties compared to the seats gained in the House of Representatives expressed as a percentage, State-by-State and for the Commonwealth. The "Other" column contains the Australian Democrats vote for 1980 and 1977, and the DLP vote for 1975, 1974, 1972 and 1969 as its major component:

	1980	1977	1975	1974	1972	1969
Votes:	45.3%	45.7%	45.5%	45.5%	45.5%	45.5%
Seats:	55	51	40	21	21	21
%	39.0%	44.0%	31.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%
Votes:	45.5%	41.5%	45.1%	45.5%	45.5%	45.5%
Seats:	57	37	38	30	30	30
%	53.6%	45.4%	20.4%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%
Votes:	47.0%	43.4%	44.8%	45.5%	45.5%	45.5%
Seats:	58	45	40	30	30	30
%	47.2%	52.8%	33.8%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%

For 1980, and in the 1977 election, Labor outperformed the Liberal Party when we compare these percentages. In 1975 Labor got 45.5% more votes than the Liberals but got 3 seats less, the Democrats got 6.6% of the votes against the ALP's 4.9% but got no seats compared to 28 seats for the ALP.

In the 1974 election, Labor outperformed the Liberal Party when we compare these percentages. In 1974 Labor got 45.5% more votes than the Liberals but got 28 seats less.

Similarly in the so-called "hung parliament" of 1972, Labor got 45.5% more votes than the Liberals but got 21 seats less than the Liberal Party.

As much for our democratic voting system. Only in 1972 and 1974 did Labor get a higher seat representation than the Liberal Party, and even then not to the extent of the Coalition's

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AUSTRALIA

		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	45.1%	46.3%	37.4%	8.9%	8.6%
	Seats:	51	74	54	20	0
	=	40.8%	59.2%	43.2%	16.0%	0%
1977:	Votes:	39.6%	48.1%	38.1%	10.0%	12.2%
	Seats:	38	86	67	19	0
	=	30.7%	69.3%	54.0%	15.3%	0%
1975:	Votes:	42.8%	53.1%	41.8%	11.3%	4.1%
	Seats:	36	91	68	23	0
	=	28.4%	71.6%	53.5%	18.1%	0%
1974:	Votes:	49.3%	45.7%	34.9%	10.8%	4.9%
	Seats:	66	61	40	21	0
	=	52.0%	48.0%	31.5%	16.5%	0%
1972:	Votes:	49.6%	41.5%	32.1%	9.4%	8.9%
	Seats:	67	58	38	20	0
	=	53.6%	46.4%	30.4%	16.0%	0%
1969:	Votes:	47.0%	43.4%	34.8%	8.6%	9.7%
	Seats:	59	66	46	20	0
	=	47.2%	52.8%	36.8%	16.0%	0%

The bias, and undemocratic nature of the system is highlighted when we compare these statistics. In 1980 Labor polled 7.7% more votes than the Liberals and got 3 seats less. The Democrats got 6.6% of the votes against the NCP's 8.9% yet got no seats compared to 20 seats for the NCP.

Even in the bleak 1977 election, Labor outpolled the Liberals by 1.5% - yet the Liberals got 29 more seats.

Similarly in the so-called holocaust of 1975, Labor got 1% more votes than the Liberals, but got 32 less seats than the Liberal Party.

So much for our democratic voting system. Only in 1972 and again in 1974 did Labor get a higher seat representation than its votes, and even then not to the extent of the Coalition's disparity.

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N.S.W.

		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	46.4%	46.2%	35.7%	10.5%	7.5%
	Seats:	18	25	16	9	0
	=	41.8%	58.1%	37.2%	20.9%	0%
1977:	Votes:	42.4%	47.2%	35.9%	11.3%	10.4%
	Seats:	17	26	18	8	0
	=	39.5%	60.5%	41.9%	18.6%	0%
1975:	Votes:	45.5%	51.5%	39.7%	11.8%	3.0%
	Seats:	17	28	19	9	0
	=	37.8%	62.2%	42.2%	20.0%	0%
1974:	Votes:	52.7%	44.0%	33.4%	10.6%	3.3%
	Seats:	25	20	11	9	0
	=	55.6%	44.4%	24.4%	20.0%	0%
1972:	Votes:	51.9%	39.8%	30.0%	9.8%	8.3%
	Seats:	28	17	10	7	0
	=	62.2%	37.8%	22.2%	15.6%	0%
1969:	Votes:	47.7%	43.5%	33.7%	9.8%	8.8%
	Seats:	22	23	15	8	0
	=	48.9%	51.1%	33.3%	17.8%	0%

An analysis of the voting figures shows conclusively the single-member constituency almost invariably creates a distorted electoral result. It is true sometimes it operates in Labor's favour - almost exclusively it operates to our disadvantage.

There is often a bias to the Liberals. In 1977 Labor polled 6.5% more votes than the Liberal Party in New South Wales, yet they got one more seat. However, the Country Party got almost half the number of seats yet polled little more than a quarter of the actual votes.

The smaller parties too, are heavily disadvantaged as the comparison shows.

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VICTORIA

		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	45.5%	44.0%	39.1%	4.9%	10.4%
	Seats:	17	16	13	3	0
	=	51.5%	48.5%	39.4%	9.1%	0%
1977:	Votes:	37.2%	45.2%	39.6%	5.6%	17.6%
	Seats:	10	23	20	3	0
	=	30.3%	69.7%	60.6%	9.1%	0%
1975:	Votes:	42.1%	51.2%	42.3%	8.9%	6.7%
	Seats:	10	24	19	5	0
	=	29.4%	70.7%	55.9%	14.8%	0%
1974:	Votes:	47.9%	43.9%	36.4%	7.5%	8.2%
	Seats:	16	18	12	6	0
	=	47.1%	52.9%	35.3%	17.6%	0%
1972:	Votes:	47.3%	41.0%	33.6%	7.4%	11.7%
	Seats:	14	20	14	6	0
	=	41.2%	58.8%	41.2%	17.6%	0%
1969:	Votes:	41.3%	44.4%	37.6%	6.8%	14.3%
	Seats:	11	23	18	5	0
	=	32.3%	67.6%	52.9%	14.7%	0%

Only once in the six elections shown did Labor gain from the system, and even then it was at the disadvantage of smaller parties and not to the disadvantage of the Coalition who still got more seats than their votes deserved.

On the other hand, there has been massive disadvantages to the ALP - in 1975, and in 1969 when the distortion in Victoria possibly cost Labor the election.

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QUEENSLAND

		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	42.8%	49.1%	27.3%	21.8%	8.1%
	Seats:	5	14	7	7	0
	=	26.3%	73.6%	36.8%	36.8%	0%
1977:	Votes:	37.7%	53.7%	27.7%	26.0%	8.6%
	Seats:	3	16	9	7	0
	=	15.8%	84.2%	47.4%	36.8%	0%
1975:	Votes:	38.8%	59.3%	32.6%	26.7%	1.9%
	Seats:	1	17	9	8	0
	=	5.6%	94.4%	50.0%	44.4%	0%
1974:	Votes:	44.0%	54.1%	30.5%	23.6%	1.9%
	Seats:	6	12	7	5	0
	=	33.3%	66.7%	38.9%	27.8%	0%
1972:	Votes:	47.2%	45.1%	25.5%	19.6%	7.7%
	Seats:	8	10	6	4	0
	=	44.4%	55.5%	33.3%	22.2%	0%
1969:	Votes:	48.2%	44.5%	27.5%	17.0%	7.3%
	Seats:	7	11	7	4	0
	=	38.9%	61.1%	38.9%	22.2%	0%

Regionalism clearly works against the Labor Party in Queensland. In 1980 the NCP with half the number of votes compared with the ALP got two more seats. In 1977 with 11.7% less votes it got 4 more seats than the ALP.

The 1975 election highlights the unfair bias, and undemocratic nature of the single-member constituency. The ALP polled 12.1% more than the NCP but the NCP got 8 times more seats.

Even in 1972 with 27.6% more votes on a State-wide basis, the ALP only had 4 more seats than the NCP. The Coalition with 2.1% less votes got 2 more representatives than the ALP.

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<u>S.A.</u>		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	44.5%	45.9%	44.5%	1.4%	9.7%
	Seats:	6	5	5	0	0
	=	54.5%	45.5%	45.5%	0%	0%
1977:	Votes:	42.6%	45.8%	45.0%	0.8%	11.6%
	Seats:	6	5	5	0	0
	=	54.5%	45.5%	45.5%	0%	0%
1975:	Votes:	42.6%	49.8%	49.3%	0.5%	7.1%
	Seats:	6	6	6	0	0
	=	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%
1974:	Votes:	48.6%	40.7%	36.6%	4.1%	10.7%
	Seats:	7	5	5	0	0
	=	58.3%	41.7%	41.7%	0%	0%
1972:	Votes:	50.6%	43.5%	41.3%	2.2%	5.9%
	Seats:	7	5	5	0	0
	=	58.3%	41.7%	41.7%	0%	0%
1969	Votes:	52.4%	42.4%	42.4%	0%	5.2%
	Seats:	8	4	4	0	0
	=	66.7%	33.3%	33.3%	0%	0%

In South Australia, the ALP gains from the popular vote - preference distribution always increases Labor's share of the seats above the voting average. The lower Country Party vote apparently plays a significant part in this process as does the heavy industrialisation pattern of development in South Australia.

However, any shifts in representation with proportionality would involve a change in only one seat, if that.

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<u>W.A.</u>		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	42.0%	48.9%	46.6%	2.3%	9.1%
	Seats:	3	8	8	0	0
	=	27.3%	72.2%	72.7%	0%	0%
1977:	Votes:	32.6%	52.7%	48.7%	4.0%	14.7%
	Seats:	1	9	9	0	0
	=	10.0%	90.0%	90.0%	0%	0%
1975:	Votes:	40.1%	58.6%	53.6%	5.0%	1.3%
	Seats:	1	9	9	0	0
	=	10.0%	90.0%	90.0%	0%	0%
1974	Votes:	46.3%	52.1%	41.4%	10.7%	1.7%
	Seats:	5	5	5	0	0
	=	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%
1972:	Votes:	46.1%	47.6%	39.3%	8.3%	6.3%
	Seats:	4	5	3	2	0
	=	44.4%	55.6%	33.3%	22.3%	0%
1969:	Votes:	50.0%	42.5%	36.1%	6.4%	7.5%
	Seats:	6	3	1	2	0
	=	66.7%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%	0%

The absurdity of the single-member constituency system is clearly seen by analysing the 1975 Federal election result. Here Labor got 40% of the vote and only 1 seat - 10% of the representation.

Only once in 1969 when Labor got 50% of votes did it get more than its share of the seats and that was on a primary vote count. The Country Party on a 1/16th vote basis got nearly ¼ of the seats. The Liberals also suffered heavily at that election in a similar way as did Labor in later elections.

PERCENTAGE PRIMARY VOTE AND SEATS GAINED

TASMANIA

		<u>ALP</u>	<u>COALITION</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>NCP</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
1980:	Votes:	46.1%	51.9%	51.9%	0%	2.0%
	Seats:	0	5	5	0	0
	=	0%	100.0%	100.0%	0%	0%
1977:	Votes:	42.1%	54.6%	54.6%	0%	3.3%
	Seats:	0	5	5	0	0
	=	0%	100.0%	100.0%	0%	0%
1975:	Votes:	43.5%	55.4%	54.1%	1.3%	1.1%
	Seats:	0	5	5	0	0
	=	0%	100.0%	100.0%	0%	0%
1974:	Votes:	55.1%	44.4%	44.4%	0%	0.5%
	Seats:	5	0	0	0	0
	=	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1972:	Votes:	58.9%	34.8%	34.8%	0%	6.3%
	Seats:	5	0	0	0	0
	=	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1969:	Votes:	52.7%	36.2%	36.2%	0%	11.1%
	Seats:	4	1	1	0	0
	=	80%	20%	20%	0%	0%

A comparison in Tasmania shows in the clearest possible way, the contrasting unfairness of the existing electoral system.

In 1969, 1972 and 1974 Labor profited by the system but large numbers of voters were as unrepresented then by the single-member constituency system as the ALP is shown to be in 1975, 1977 and 1980.

It is a case of "winner take all".

It can be clearly seen that, while there are correlations occasionally struck, the distortions abound. The NCP/CP/NP is the major recipient of the benefits of this distortion, having as it does a regional base. In every case, that party has received more seats than its votes deserved on a proportional basis, sometimes to the extent of twice the amount. In a critical election, such as 1969, this has meant the difference between government and opposition! It could be argued that the NCP percentage vote could be higher if it fielded more candidates in Liberal electorates. But at the same time Liberal candidates could be expected to take votes from NCP electorates in a similar way, or alternatively if not, the Liberal vote would fall overall and thus increase the disparities between Liberal votes and seats gained. This problem in any case is simply overcome by looking at the figures for the combined conservative vote under "Coalition".

The distortions are highlighted by ludicrous situations such as Tasmania in 1980, 1977, 1974, and 1972 when one of the major parties was without representation after each election, and in Western Australia in 1975, 1977 and 1980 where the ALP's share of seats was severely underrepresented. It should also be noted that smaller parties are invariably disadvantaged.

Taken to its extreme, theoretically a party could gain government in Australia with less than 24% of the national vote - a majority of 50.1% in 63 selected electorates! The situation in Britain with the formation of a fourth party with some general support shows the possibilities of this becoming a reality: the next British Government could win office with a substantial minority vote.

Another element of the current system that becomes obvious from this table is its variabilities - the ALP is at the mercy of vagaries which more often than not go against it. For example, in NSW in 1974 despite nearly a 1% increase in the vote, the ALP lost 3 seats, and in 1980 despite an increase of 4% in its vote, Labor gained only 1 seat. In 1977 in Victoria the Liberals with a drop of 2.7% in their vote actually gained 1 extra seat!

These State-by-State vagaries combine to produce results which ensure the Labor Party is always disadvantaged on a national basis by an electoral system which has been cleverly devised and extensively developed by conservative forces.

But probably more destructive for the ALP is the sense of false hope that is engendered by these vagaries. A prime example again is the feeling of smugness in 1972 and 1974 over winning all 5 Tasmanian seats in the House, only to have this disastrously reversed by the three successive elections. Similarly in 1969, when Labor won a higher percentage of seats than of votes in four States, and when the national percentage of seats correlated with that of votes, yet through heavy underrepresentation in just two States, Victoria and Queensland, Labor was robbed of government. Nor should the ALP's continued overrepresentation in one State, South Australia, be allowed to influence a principled national approach, for not only would it be unprincipled but in a practical sense also very short-sighted.

As a comparison, the following table shows the percentage of preferred vote for the Senate in the two elections 1977 and 1980. There is a reasonable correlation State-by-State, but a fairly accurate correlation once the national figures are taken. The two-party preferred vote for the House for the elections 1977 and 1980 is also included for a further comparison to the previous figures.

1980	41.3%	(50%)	48.2%	(60%)	10.5%			
1977	42.6%	(50%)	48.5%	(60%)	8.6%			
1980	41.3%	(44.13)	47.4%	(44.14)	9.3%	(8.02)	8.02	(2.34)
1977	38.6%	(41.25)	47.6%	(52.95)	12.0%	(8.9%)		

(Preferred vote is estimated on a rough basis by distributing the vote of other parties and independents in a ratio consistent with their parties' primary vote.)

PERCENTAGES OF PREFERRED VOTE & SEATS IN SENATE

		<u>A.L.P.</u>		<u>L/C.P.</u>		<u>DEM.</u>		<u>IND.</u>	
		<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>
<u>NSW</u>	1980	47.6%	(60%)	44.8%	(40%)	7.6%	-	-	-
	1977	44.1%	(40%)	47.3%	(40%)	8.5%	(20%)	-	-
<u>VIC</u>	1980	45.2%	(40%)	42.8%	(40%)	12.0%	(20%)	-	-
	1977	37.2%	(40%)	43.9%	(40%)	17.9%	(20%)	-	-
<u>QLD</u>	1980	39.2%	(40%)	50.6%	(40%)	10.2%	(20%)	-	-
	1977	36.6%	(40%)	53.3%	(60%)	10.0%	-	-	-
<u>SA</u>	1980	41.6%	(40%)	45.1%	(40%)	13.3%	(20%)	-	-
	1977	38.1%	(40%)	50.3%	(60%)	11.6%	-	-	-
<u>WA</u>	1980	39.9%	(40%)	50.5%	(60%)	9.6%	-	-	-
	1977	33.8%	(40%)	53.5%	(60%)	12.7%	-	-	-
<u>TAS</u>	1980	35.6%	(40%)	39.4	(40%)	3.2%	-	21.8%	(20%)
	1977	40.7%	(40%)	52.8	(60%)	6.6%	-	-	-
<u>ACT</u>	1980	52.6%	(50%)	38.4%	(50%)	9.0%	-	-	-
	1977	45.7%	(50%)	40.9%	(50%)	13.4%	-	-	-
<u>NT</u>	1980	41.3%	(50%)	48.2%	(50%)	10.5%	-	-	-
	1977	42.9%	(50%)	48.5%	(50%)	8.6%	-	-	-
<u>AUST</u>	1980	42.3%	(44.1%)	43.4%	(44.1%)	9.3%	(8.8%)	5.0%	(2.9%)
	1977	38.8%	(41.2%)	47.6%	(52.9%)	12.0%	(5.9%)	-	-

(The preferred vote is estimated on a rough basis by distributing the votes of other parties and independents in a ratio consistent with the major parties' primary vote.)

PERCENTAGES OF TWO-PARTY PREFERRED VOTE & SEATS IN LOWER HOUSE

		<u>A.L.P.</u>		<u>L/C.P.</u>	
		<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>
<u>NSW</u>	1980	50.5%	(41.8%)	49.5%	(58.1%)
	1977	47.6%	(39.5%)	52.4%	(60.5%)
<u>VIC</u>	1980	51.0%	(51.5%)	49.0%	(48.5%)
	1977	45.2%	(30.3%)	54.8%	(69.7%)
<u>QLD</u>	1980	47.1%	(26.3%)	52.9%	(73.7%)
	1977	42.0%	(15.8%)	58.0%	(84.2%)
<u>SA</u>	1980	50.0%	(54.5%)	50.0%	(45.5%)
	1977	48.4%	(54.5%)	51.6%	(45.5%)
<u>WA</u>	1980	46.8%	(27.3%)	53.2%	(72.7%)
	1977	40.0%	(10.0%)	60.0%	(90.0%)
<u>TAS</u>	1980	47.2%	(0%)	52.8%	(100%)
	1977	43.2%	(0%)	56.8%	(100%)
<u>ACT</u>	1980	58.6%	(100%)	41.4%	(0%)
	1977	54.1%	(50.0%)	45.9%	(50.0%)
<u>NT</u>	1980	48.8%	(0%)	51.2%	(100%)
	1977	47.5%	(0%)	52.5%	(100%)
<u>AUS.</u>	1980	49.8%	(40.8%)	50.2%	(59.2%)
	1977	45.4%	(30.7%)	54.6%	(69.3%)

(Figures are based on those supplied by Parliamentary Library Legislative Research Section.)