

QUOTA NOTES

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PRSA Inc. submission to the JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2025 Federal Election

PRSA Inc's 22-page [submission](#) to the above Inquiry was accepted by the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Matters, and appears as No. 261 on its [web page](#). The Society made five recommendations, which were as follows:

1. That the House of Representatives be elected by multi-member districts of three or five MPs using the single transferable vote.
2. That the Commonwealth Parliament expand in size to achieve as near as practicable the principle of one vote one value by increasing each states' Senate entitlement to 18, increasing each territories' Senate entitlement to 5 and subsequently increasing the size of the House to around 223 MPs.
3. That savings provisions be expanded to reduce disenfranchising nearly 2% of voters by counting as formal ballots where - but for a break in numbering - the intention is clear.
4. That ballots electing multiple MPs or Senators adopt the "Robson" vertical ballot rotation to eliminate "safe seats" in multi-member districts.
5. That [How-to-Vote cards](#) be required to include clearer messaging on them only being guidance and that stronger restrictions be placed on how much material and how many partisan volunteers can be at each polling place.

PRSA Inc. submission to the Tasmanian JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2025 Election

PRSA Inc's 7-page [submission](#) to the above Inquiry was accepted by Tasmania's Joint Select Committee on Electoral Matters, and appears as No. 6 on its web page.

A major theme of PRSA Inc's submission was that Tasmania's Hare-Clark electoral system once again enabled the election to its House of Assembly of the types of member, and the number of members of each type, that Tasmania's voters had showed they wanted there. PRSA Inc's submission strongly refuted the self-serving criticisms of certain mainland and major party commentators that were analysed in [QN2025C](#).

The television program "Civic Duty" told of some virtues of Australia's electoral systems

A summary of the [above program](#) series, produced by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and compered by Annabel Crabb, could prompt viewers to access the full 3-part series using [IView](#).

Her series gives a good, and entertaining, account of some of the reforms and improvements that have benefited the electoral systems for Australia's federal, state, and territory legislatures, and have helped to raise their standing compared to many other electoral systems in the world.

As stated in a later article in this issue of *Quota Notes*, a PRSA Inc. member that commended the program noted that it unfortunately lacked any reference to the Hare-Clark systems used in the smaller jurisdictions of Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

The sad saga of the public elections in England and Wales for Police and Crime Commissioners

The [above elections](#), which were held in May 2024, were the fourth and last occasion at which the positions involved were filled by public election rather than by Government appointment, following the decision by the Starmer Labour Government to revert to the Government appointment method.

With voting being voluntary, the turnout percentage never rose much above the 34% reached in 2021 under Boris Johnson's Conservative Government, even though the elections were always held concurrently with municipal elections.

If low turnout was partly due to the [supplementary vote](#) count used, it fell again after Boris Johnson's Conservative Government [replaced](#) it by the even worse [plurality](#) counting for the 2024 elections.

Year	2012	2016	2021	2024
Prime Minister	David Cameron	David Cameron	Boris Johnson	Sir Keir Starmer
Party	Conserv.	Conserv.	Conserv.	Labour
Opposition Leader	Ed Milliband	Jeremy Corbyn	Sir Keir Starmer	Rishi Sunak
Party	Labour	Labour	Labour	Conserv.
Turnout	18%	27%	34%	c. 30%

Table 1: Details of the UK's four polls for Police and Crime Commissioners

Elon Musk's criticisms of the system by which the European Commission elects its President

[Elon Musk](#), the CEO of 'X', the company formerly known as Twitter, and by far its largest shareholder, has [been reported](#) as voicing his objections to the above electoral system. He has argued that the [President of the European Commission](#), currently Ms Ursula von der Leyen, should be directly elected by the citizens of the European Union.

At present, that President is elected ultimately by the European Parliament. Ms von der Leyen is the 13th President of the European Commission, and she is the first female in that role. She was re-elected to that position in [December 2024](#) by a 51% vote of the Parliament, so the unfortunate lack of any form of [transferable voting](#) in the system used to elect her, did not, in this case, affect her election.

By contrast, Mr Musk has not been reported as being one of the great number of Americans that have voiced public criticism of the long-established system used to elect the President of the United States. As [QN2020C](#) reported, a great many Americans are very much aware of the major and chronic deficiencies of the USA's electoral college used to elect both its President, and its Vice-President.

A major obstacle to its reform is the USA's 18th Century procedure for altering its Constitution, which involves no voting by the USA's citizens, and makes significant alterations very unlikely.

US States have started gerrymandering federal districts for the mid-term elections

Texas begins it: A federal District Court in the US State of Texas made a ruling, on 18 November 2025, that would block the controversial mid-decade [re-districting](#) of Texas's electoral districts for the US House of Representatives that the Texas Legislature, where Republicans have a majority in each House, had enacted. Constitutionally required re-districting is usually conducted only once per decade, after the federal census held once each decade.

The Democrat minority in Texas's Congress claims that the Republican majority there were [gerrymandering](#) federal districts to increase the number of Republicans likely to be elected to the US House of Representatives at its mid-term elections, due in November 2026, from Texas's present number of 25 to 30.

Each US State's power to gerrymander its federal districts derives from [Article 1](#) of the US Constitution, which dates from 1789. Despite its gross distortion of voters' power, gerrymandering largely suits both major parties, so unfortunately its reform would seem unlikely.

Appeal to US Supreme Court: Republicans quickly managed to have the US Supreme Court hear their appeal against that District Court's ruling. The US Supreme Court [ruled](#), by a 6-3 decision, on 04 December 2025, against the District Court's finding and stated that the Texas court had, "... *failed to honor the presumption of legislative good faith by construing ambiguous direct and circumstantial evidence against the legislature*" in finding that the map was racially gerrymandered, and had "... *improperly inserted itself into an active primary campaign*" because it issued its ruling **after** the candidate filing period had begun.

It was not long before two other State Congresses with Republican majorities, Missouri and North Carolina, followed the lead of the Texas Congress.

Response by California: It is not surprising that the State with the most Democrat members in the US House of Representatives, California, soon followed the actions of the Texas Congress when it moved to gerrymander California's federal districts, by passing its pejoratively-named [Election Rigging Response Act 2025](#).

That Act initiated a referendum on Proposition 50 to bypass California's Independent Redistricting Commission, and approve partisan maps for gerrymandered boundaries. That referendum was passed by a 64% vote, but subsequent Republican [responses](#) to it, including a court challenge, have still to be resolved.

More states following: Virginia was the next Democrat-led State to undertake gerrymandering. Similar activity is [expected](#) in many of the remaining 45 States. Australia - at the federal, the state, and the territory level - has avoided significant problems with gerrymandering since its legislatures delegated redistributions and boundary setting, as well as the conduct of elections, to their relevant electoral commissions, and it is fortunately spared the US machinations above.

PRSA Inc's 2025 online Annual General Meeting

PRSA Inc. was pleased to welcome [Ms Ella Haddad](#), one of the two Labor MHAs for Clark, as the Guest Speaker of its 2025 Annual General Meeting. She is Tasmania's current Shadow Attorney-General, and has been a member of the House of Assembly for the State division of Clark since 2018.

Ms Haddad is a member of the Tasmanian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which recently began its [Inquiry](#) into the Conduct of the 2025 House of Assembly Election and the 2025 Legislative Council Election.

A graduate with degrees in arts and law from the University of Tasmania, she commenced her working life in politics in the electorate office of the former federal member for Denison, Hon. Duncan Kerr AO.

She has served on the boards of several Tasmanian community organizations over many years including the Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS), Women's Health Tasmania (then Hobart Women's Health Centre), TasCAHRD, and TasDeaf.

Ms Haddad commenced her address by thanking PRSA Inc. for its enthusiasm for the Hare-Clark electoral system. She spoke about the life and achievements of the [Hon. Andrew Inglis Clark](#), who was born in Tasmania in 1848. He was one of the official delegates that represented Tasmanians at the 1891 National Australasian Convention, the second-last constitutional convention prior to Federation.

Mr Clark is regarded as one of the framers of the Australian Constitution, known for his support for manhood suffrage, and also for female suffrage. Ella discussed the campaign to rename the seat of Denison as Clark from 2019. Mr Clark was the Attorney-General, in the Legislative Council, when he successfully [introduced](#) Hare-Clark for Tasmania's Lower House.

She said that the 1998 decision by the Parliament to [reduce](#) the number of members of the House of Assembly to five per division, seemingly to reduce the influence of the Greens Party, was a poor decision in terms of democratic standards.

She pointed out the convenience and economies of the Federal divisions being co-terminus with the boundaries of the State divisions. She also mentioned the introduction of [Robson Rotation](#) in 1979, a system that she said 'make things a lot fairer'.

Ella mentioned that she was elected on her first time standing. She described in detail the 2018 election result, and discussed how the leaders of parties often have very high first preference votes.

She said, 'Most Tasmanian politicians feel very passionately about Hare-Clark'. Ella feels that Hare-Clark provides a very representative Parliament, and it keeps power in voters' hands.

Upsides to Hare-Clark: Ella mentioned that the upsides are that the system is much more representative. Because Ella is progressive, there can be people that are very progressive voting 1 for her, but not for the rest of the Labor candidates. She mentioned that [Hare-Clark](#) does give people the choice to direct their vote according to their wishes about individual candidates.

The voters are more likely to have someone that they gave a high preference to representing them. Ella pointed out that Tasmanian voters are also much more likely to vote *below-the-line*.

Downsides to Hare-Clark: As candidates, it does mean that we are campaigning against our own colleagues, and that can feel 'pretty nasty'. Those difficulties can remain once MHAs are elected.

She said the system does favour incumbent MHAs, or generally so. Ella mentioned that she wasn't well known, but did have enough time to become known, having been pre-selected about a year before the election. Hare-Clark, in her opinion, does not favour new candidates, and does favour incumbents when there are snap elections called (as in 2024 and 2025, for example).

In terms of long-termed governance, a big downside is that majority governments are harder to form. Democratically, that is a healthy thing for voters, but she sees it as a downside because at this time only Labor or Liberal are likely to form government, so voters are choosing a minority government of one side or another.

Questions from PRSA Inc. members: J Lawrence asked whether proportional representation helped to renew the political parties' MHAs. Ella's response was that [PR-STV](#) can allow parties to renew, but only in some circumstances. The renewal is not guaranteed, especially when snap elections occur.

She discussed the possibility of numbered tickets for Labor, like the Greens have, and said there are some advantages to that, but it has not been adopted. After the 2018 election, Labor asked whether it should move to a numbered ticket system. She opposed the suggestion. She feels that if there had been numbered tickets and that if that system was in place, she would have been Number 4 on the Labor ticket.

G Goode asked, "*Would you support, for the Senate, discontinuing above-the-line voting, and introducing Robson Rotation, so that voters have more real control over who is their senator?*" Ella's response was that her instinctive feeling is that she would, but she thought her party would be unlikely to support it.

J Lawrence asked, "*Is there a fundamental strength of Hare-Clark in that candidates have slightly different positions?*". Ella's response was that it does happen. She pointed out that sometimes the major parties don't pay enough attention to the electorate's diversity of opinions.

She also pointed out that people are tired of party politics, and gave the example of Peter George MHA, who is very well known on the issue of marine salmon farming. Hare-Clark does mean that people can express different views.

H van Leeuwen said the ABC television program, Civic Duty, had not mentioned Tasmania.

I Downes asked, *“Other than opposition from the major parties, what do you see as the major obstacles to transferring Hare-Clark to the federal sphere, and do you have any thoughts about campaign strategy in support of such a change”*.

Ella’s answer was that single-member electorates are so entrenched for the House of Representatives, that a complete overhaul of the House of Representatives would be just too hard, given for example, the extent of public fuss that occurs even when there is a relatively small proposal for boundary changes.

J Photakis asked, *“How might a change in the voting system change behaviours for campaigning at elections, and how might it differ from Federal elections?”* Ella said a candidate’s conversation at an elector’s door in single-member divisions is about voting either for the Labor candidate, or one from another party, but multi-member divisions involve more nuance, like talking about preference orders among the various Labor candidates, and talking about policies and personal values. She said that Hare-Clark has her working harder, listening more, and being more respectful of those she represents.

Ella pointed out that people are still mostly choosing ‘a flavour of government’ - a party.

Those present thanked Ella with applause.

At its first meeting after the 2025 AGM, the Council elected each of the following officers unopposed:

President:	Dr Jeremy Lawrence
Vice-President:	Geoffrey Goode
Secretary:	Dr Stephen Morey
Treasurer:	Bruce Errol