



## Huon Valley Residents & Ratepayers Association (Inc)

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Thank you for the opportunity of again contributing to this review of the Local Government Act (1993).

### *#7 Increase voter participation*

We maintain that the current voting system is flawed inasmuch as candidates have to decide in advance whether they wish to stand as Mayor or Deputy Mayor. If a candidate stands as Mayor but is not elected – say by a margin of one vote – they cannot be deputy mayor and a candidate with far fewer votes may get the position. We believe that the existing voting system should be retained but candidates should be able to nominate for one or both positions.

Voter participation can be increased by making voting compulsory as it is in Federal and State elections

### *#14 Require the disclosure of gifts and donations by all local government candidates received during the election period*

We maintain that all gifts and donations for the preceding 12 months should be declared and posted online in real time when nominating as well as those actually received during the electoral period. Most candidates will have decided well in advance and may well solicit and/or receive donations before the electoral period. In the last HVC election one candidate was advertising for at least 12 months prior. We recognise that there will always be those who find ways to hide donations but if a law exists then steps can be taken if evidence comes to light subsequently and appropriate penalties should be introduced including the possibility of their election being revoked. The potential for corruption when multi-million dollar developments can be dependent on one vote is obvious.

**Election spending:** there should be a limit on the total amount allowed to be spent on election advertising for the *12 months prior to the election* rather than simply during the electoral period.

*#19 Remove the requirements for public meetings and elector polls.*

We believe that these are important opportunities for communities to provide direct feedback to councillors and staff about contentious issues. They are called for and held so infrequently that, in the overall scheme of things, the cost is negligible. The argument that modern technologies render them unnecessary is flawed. It is completely different standing in public, in front of your peers within your community putting a case than it is commenting (often anonymously) online. It is true that the outcomes of any meeting or poll are not binding on Council (and we certainly do not feel that this should be changed) but during these public meetings councillors (and staff) have the opportunity to hear concerns that may never be raised in the reports prepared by council staff who, in many cases, do not reside in the municipality.

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We hope that these comments may be considered useful.

We have no objection to this submission being published.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick Syngé

*(Public officer - Huon Valley Residents & Ratepayers Association (Inc))*

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