

ISSUE 1725

“In Support of Progress”

# Newsletter

Date: 27 September 2017

## An Electoral Matter

### *An electoral matter*

The Premier is presently considering his options for filling at least one and possibly two Cabinet vacancies (see #1724). He has 6 people on the backbench, 5 of which are northern-based. (3 in Braddon, 1 in Bass, and 1 in Lyons). Braddon has one Minister only, so it is likely the first choice will come from that electorate.

While pondering his options, he may also like to consider an amendment to the Electoral Act to enable an expansion of the House of Assembly back to 35 members. It would have make his present task much easier by expanding the available pool. Already an amendment is required to normalise the present absurdity with two Legislative Council seats (McIntyre and Prosser (see #1722)

One simple amendment could be to change “5” to “7” ie to have 5 electorates of 7 members. However my favoured option is to have 7 electorates of 5 members, and I wrote the following in support of this matter some time ago, and it is now relevant to raise the matter again.

*Having 7 members to service an electorate is in many respects an “overkill”, and allows members to represent smaller constituencies within an electorate. The number of members (eg 5 or 7) determines the quota (16.7%, 12.5%), and some thought should be given to an appropriate minimum level of electoral support before a particular group can claim a seat in Parliament, especially when that person or group could hold the balance of power.*

In my view 12.5% is far too low a figure.

*The present electoral system is based on Commonwealth electoral boundaries. Under the Constitution a State shall have a minimum of 5 Federal seats. A variation worthy of consideration (for the Tasmanian State parliament) is to redraft boundaries to provide for 7 electorates, each with 5 members.*

*Such a structure goes some way to address the concerns mentioned above, maintains the present quota, and unlike the Commonwealth boundaries provides electorates with obvious and logical “communities of interest”. For example:*

- 1 NW (West Coast, NW Coast, Burnie and to the Leven R)
- 2 N (from Leven R, Devonport and to the Tamar R)
- 3 NE (Launceston -part, Eastern Tamar and the NE)
- 4 Middle (Midlands, E Coast and Upper Derwent)
- 5 East of Hobart (Clarence, Sorell and Tasman)
- 6 N of Hobart (North from the Waterworks)
- 7 S of Hobart (S. of the Waterworks, Kingborough and Huon).



Boundary arrangements could be done quickly – it need not be a long process, it could be resolved by the end of the year, and could even be in place in time for the next election. Could be.

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