

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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KAMLOOPS PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 17 JUNE 2004  
AT THE COAST CANADIAN INN

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION TO THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON ELECTORAL REFORM. IT ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE THE KEY ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS THAT WERE PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING. IN SOME INSTANCES, THE PRESENTER HAS ALSO MADE A SUBMISSION TO THE ASSEMBLY AND THIS IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE WEBSITE AT [WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA](http://WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA) BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

# Cameron Murray

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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In general I support the concept of Proportional Representation (MMP model), but with reservations about how the party lists are derived.

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## KEY THEMES

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Cameron Murray explained that he had been a canvasser during the Proportional Representation Initiative campaign in 2002. He described the disengagement of young people from the political process as a tragedy and argued that the current system as not in tune with the thinking and values of British Columbians. Mr Murray criticized the current First Past the Post electoral system for its adversarial nature, the slavish adherence to party discipline and the disproportionality of election outcomes. He opposed the introduction of a preferential ballot or the Single Transferable Voting system as too cumbersome and time consuming, and having sometimes led to plumping in municipal elections.

Mr Murray supported the introduction of MMP because it combines the direct local representation of the present system with the capacity to include representation from a number of political viewpoints across the political spectrum. He discussed the criticism of MMP as leading to minority governments and questioned whether this was really a negative outcome when many progressive reforms have been achieved during the tenure of minority governments. Mr Murray advocated the use of an open rather than a closed party list in an MMP system. He argued that closed lists take away voter choice and are not as democratic. He acknowledged that open lists demand more effort on behalf of the electorate to become more knowledgeable about candidates, but argued that if citizens can cope with numerous ballots involved in local body elections they are capable of using open lists. Mr Murray proposed flexible lists, where voters would be free to accept list as presented by the party or to exercise the option to rank candidates within the list.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Cameron Murray recommended the introduction of MMP with flexible party lists.

*Quote: "Under MMP a voter can directly elect an MLA to represent his or her interests locally, at the same time as voting for a party which most closely represents his or her political philosophy."*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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There were two members of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

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| Q | What is your feeling on lowering the voting age to 16?  |
| A | I think it's a good idea. There is a brand new civics course being introduced in the curriculum this year, and politics is actually already covered quite a bit in Grade 11 |

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|   | and 12. I think it turns young voters off if they learn about the political system at school but then can't actually vote for another two or three years.   |
| Q | Do you think there is any solution for voter apathy?  |
| A | I would like to suggest that MMP would help, although I know that it's not a panacea. I also think that we criticize politicians too much and that if we write them off then we get the politicians we deserve. If we go around saying that politicians all want to feather their own nests then of course it turns people off. |

**Comment from panel**      There were no comments from the panel.

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**QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

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Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

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| Q | Do you think it would be a good idea for the Assembly to go to the schools?  |
| A | I understand from the assembly's website that it has already been quite involved with a number of schools.   |
| Q | What is your opinion on making voting compulsory?  |
| A | I don't support it, and not just because it's Australian. I think that it leads to some poor decisions at times, it doesn't necessarily lead to better government. |

**Comment:**      There were no comments from the audience.

**SUBMISSION: NO**