

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

---

WILLIAMS LAKE PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 19 JUNE 2004  
AT THE OVERLANDER HOTEL  
CONVENTION CENTRE

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.

# Tom Salley

---

## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

---

Proportional representation will better represent the people of BC.

---

## KEY THEMES

---

Mr. Salley expressed his support for proportional representation as a result of his own experience as an educator and a facilitator which necessitates practicing inclusion when dealing with groups of competing interests. According to Mr. Salley, when all members feel as though they are part of a group a synergy takes place that helps communities overcome crisis or obstacles to the groups common goals or concerns, while overlooking or even celebrating the differences between members. The presenter stated that when the feeling of inclusion is absent the synergy is lost as people withdraw and often begin to work against each other rather than striving for common goals. Mr. Salley argued that on a societal level, the economic cost of non-inclusion is huge. Low voter turnout particularly amongst youth, in Mr. Salley's opinion, constitutes a reflection of the dynamic of non-inclusion at work in Canada and BC. It is further reflected in the wild policy swings characteristic of provincial politics, and in civil unrest and disobedience as there is no-one to bring these voices to the legislature.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Salley advocated the introduction of proportional representation in order to promote an inclusive form of government. The presenter noted that the largest task lies in the education of an uninformed public of the attributes of PR against those who try to preserve the status quo.

*Quote: The best democracy is the one that gives voice and inclusion to its citizens. It is the form of democracy that creates healthy communities, communities of inclusion, synergy and understanding. The best form of democracy is one that facilitates a voice for everyone in the decision-making process.*

---

## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

---

- Q            Is it important for you to know your local MLA?
- A            I have a favoured form of PR but I haven't studied it in as much detail as the Assembly members. I believe in consensus making and I believe that 160

people who have been educated will come to a better decision than I could. I favour the New Zealand system of MMP in which you get two votes, one for a party and one for a local candidate. It is important to me to have regional representation. At the same time, I don't believe that regional representation under the current system is working for me. I feel that I am better represented by the MLA's in Vancouver than the local MLA here.

Q Under systems of PR you can either have a closed list or an open list, do you have a preference?

A I honestly haven't given that enough thought to make that decision. I can see attributes to each one. An open list would certainly give more power to the citizens.

Q With PR, we have to decide on an electoral threshold, what do you think should be the minimum percent for a party to gain representation?

A I would say 5% without having delved into this issue too far.

Q Given that under this system you get two votes, one for a party and one for a local candidate, do you feel that this system would increase the accountability of the local MLA by weakening party discipline?

A I think it could have that effect. If we had a system of PR and government would be more likely to be by coalition, it would demand politicians with better skills, particularly listening skills in order to come to decisions that more accurately reflect the will of the people.