

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

---

SECHELT PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
5 JUNE 2004 AT THE DRIFTWOOD 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.

# Lynn Chapman

---

## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

---

My presentation will be my thoughts on the electoral process generally and the options considered by the Citizens' Assembly thus far.

---

## KEY THEMES

---

Lynn Chapman described a number of questions on electoral reform that have occurred to her during her experience as an elected school trustee. She explained that School Boards seats are allocated to geographic areas on the basis of population and candidates stand on the ballot without party affiliation and suggested that this system might be adaptable for the provincial level. Ms Chapman argued that there was some need for change because many people are dissatisfied with the quality of representation under the current system. She spoke in favour of a more interactive quality of democracy, where a range of perspectives are considered and the government seeks solutions that represent a wide range of views. She criticized the lack of consultation under the current system. Ms Chapman advised the assembly to consider whether any system they propose will create a more inclusive and accountable government and a more involved and satisfied electorate. She also asked the assembly to consider whether an electoral system can ensure that a majority of the people support the overall direction of a government once it has taken power, as well as producing a government that better reflects the diversity of the province. Her final suggestion for the assembly was that it consider the issue of the cost of being elected. She argued that cost should not be the determining factors in choosing our representatives, as this is discriminatory and contributes to the over-representation of high income, middle aged, Caucasian males. Ms Chapman also told the hearing that a number of people whose opinion she trusted and valued have told her that a mixed member proportional representation system similar to one in New Zealand would be best for British Columbians and that after hearing the earlier presentations at the hearing she is now even more convinced that this system would be the most appropriate for BC.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Lynn Chapman recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

*Quote: "I am hopeful that a new electoral system that brings together representatives of different political opinions with diverse beliefs and values may create a government whose plans and actions result in broader public support between elections."*

---

## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

---

There were no questions or comments from the panel.

---

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

---

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

Q	I was wondering, none of the presenters today seem to have presented a different system here today from MMP. Will there be any discussion of different PR systems.
A	Not by me!
Q	What sort of education is being given to children in our schools about our electoral system?
A	I actually believe right now that a number of schools have education about the democratic process of voting, especially with the federal election coming up. One of the main things we tried to do as a School Board was to promote the development of educated citizens.
Q	Are you concerned that if change is recommended that this system won't be in place until 2009?
A	Yes I am. I don't think we should wait forever. We need a mechanism that will make governments accountable really soon. We need our governments to think about the long term and behave responsibly.
Q	What are your feelings on whether limits should be set on campaign spending?
A	I understand that it takes money to be elected but the problem is that we elect people with money rather than electing a diverse cross-section of the electorate. We need an electoral system that will mitigate the problem of cost.

**Comment:** “In Grade Five and Grade Six students start to discuss the political system and they delve into it more thoroughly at the Grade Eleven level.”

**SUBMISSION: NO**