

# Assessing Electoral Systems

*How are we to compare them?*

# Assessing Electoral Systems

## ➤ *Impact on the system of government*

- 1 stable and effective government
- 2 electoral accountability
- 3 parliamentary check on government
- 4 fair representation for parties & groups
- 5 democratic political parties

# Assessing Electoral Systems

## ➤ *Impact on individual voters*

- 1 appropriate choice
- 2 identifiable representative
- 3 encouragement to participate
- 4 equality of the vote

# ***Stable and effective government***

Does the system produce governments that can make hard decisions and survive to implement them?

How often are elections held?

Is stable government really unchecked government?

# *electoral accountability*

How important is it that an electoral system produce the kind of party competition that makes elections about the choice of governments?

Is coalition government unaccountable?

Is it necessary that voters be able to vote for against a particular candidate?

# *parliamentary check on government*

Is there a democratic deficit that giving MLAs a bit more freedom to vote as they choose would fix?

Is parliamentary scrutiny of governments compatible with effective government?

How do different electoral systems shape the practice of party discipline?

# ***Fair representation for parties & groups***

Do all votes count equally?

Are some votes wasted?

Do parties win their fair share of seats?

Does the system help members of all groups have equal representation?

# *democratic political parties*

Do democracies need political parties?

What kind?

How many parties are necessary? . . . are  
reasonable?

Should some be excluded? On what basis?



# *appropriate choice*

What choice does the voter have?

- Candidate and/or party
- Ranking their preferences
- Weighing their vote

What are the consequences for parties and parliaments of different systems of choice?

# *identifiable representative*

Are voters choosing representatives or parties?

What is the basis for representation?

What happens if there are no local representatives?

# *encouragement to participate*

Do some electoral systems make it easier to vote?

Do some systems give voters more reason to vote?

Why does everyone vote in Australia?

# *equality of the vote*

Are some voters privileged by the electoral system?

How do different systems deal with the problem of counting all voters equally?

# ***Our electoral system's trade-offs ??***

**GOOD**

**POOR**

stable government

parliamentary scrutiny

electoral accountability

democratic parties

fair representation

Identifiable MLA

encourages  
participation

maximum choice

equal votes

# *OR ?*

**GOOD**

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**POOR**

stable government

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