

Guide to Submissions

A list of 80 submissions of 4 or more pages on electoral systems

Navigating the 1603 published submissions is a difficult task, even with access to the web and improvements to the software for displaying the submissions. The list of abstracts given to members will help members get an idea of the range of ideas presented to the Assembly, but it is still an unwieldy list.

For those with access to a computer, the Excel file on which the list is based can be searched but only the abstracts and not the whole content of the submissions. For those with access to the internet, the search facility on the website is useful for finding material anywhere in the submissions, but searching for MMP, for example, may provide too many results to be helpful.

Some members have already provided helpful lists of 'top submissions' and it is hoped that most members will make an effort to familiarize themselves with most submissions.

Another approach

The attached list of 80 submissions is another way of searching for information which may help members in their deliberations. It is based on the length of submissions and is intended to extract those submissions which have an extended discussion of an electoral system for British Columbia. This includes submissions with discussions of the nature of an electoral system as well as those with detailed electoral schemes for the province. Those on the list:

- are listed as having 4 or more pages; and
- deal with a particular electoral system (even if other material is included).

The list excludes submissions which have 4 or more pages but which do not deal with material that falls within the Citizens' Assembly mandate, or that do not focus on a particular electoral system.

The characteristic of having 4 pages is an arbitrary one—there are many excellent submissions of 3 pages, 2 pages or even 1 page which fit the other criterion—but the idea is to provide a manageable list of submissions which gives

an idea of the range of electoral systems proposed by members of the public. It may also provide a pool of ideas from which members can draw to refine their own thoughts about desirable electoral systems for British Columbia.

To set out the advantages and disadvantages of an electoral system in some detail, and to design an electoral system for British Columbia both require a substantial effort by the person making a submission. While the expressions of opinion in shorter submissions are a vital component of the information available to members, these longer submissions have a special role to play.

The list

The list is ordered alphabetically on the 'Electoral System' column. This column describes the electoral system proposed by the submission and adds notes, where appropriate, to indicate some of the key details of the system. The addition of notes usually indicates that the submission goes into the details of the proposed electoral system.

The systems dealt with are listed below (all systems are supported by one or more submissions):

- Anti-MMP (as title; see MMP below)
- Alternative Vote (AV) sometimes called preferential voting or instant run off voting (IRV) in the US (voters rank candidates and, if no candidate gains a majority, the second (and subsequent) preferences of the least successful candidates are redistributed until a candidate gains a majority)
- Approval voting (voters vote for as many candidates as they like)
- Borda count (candidates are ranked and points assigned, say, 3 points to the first ranked candidate, 2 to the second and 1 to the third. The points for all candidates on all the ballots are added up and the winner is the candidate with the most points)
- Contingent voting (listed under AV; voters cast 2 votes—a first and second choice), the second vote is counted only if no candidate gains a majority)
- First past the post (FPTP), plurality voting
- For and against voting (voters can cast positive and negative votes)
- Mixed Member Proportional voting (MMP). There are many variations of this system. It can be combined with AV or FPTP for riding seats, and province wide or regional PR for the list seats in varying proportions (see

the variations in the table); sometimes 'list' seats are selected by the 'best losers' of a party in riding seats.

- None of the Above (NOTA). This is not really an electoral system but a component of ballot design. It can be used in combination with any electoral system or be part of a scheme to avoid elections by making random choices
- Proportional Representation (PR). In this context it refers to PR-List where candidates are elected from a party list in proportion to the votes won by the party. This can be used as an electoral system on its own, modified by other rules, or combined with MMP schemes.
- Single Transferable Vote (STV); a quota preferential system of proportional representation