

To lacdjsc@parliament.wa.gov.au

SUBMISSION TO: The Inquiry into the Administration and Management of the 2017 State General Election

My submission relates to the operation of Polling places.....

I have worked for many State, Federal and semi Government organisations over the last fifty years. Including three Federal Elections and the last W.A. State election.

Last year I managed a large part of the State for the 2016 Census, 687,000 square kilometres, with some 90 staff.

With the last W.A. Election along with the previous Federal Elections, I have been staggered by the archaic staffing arrangements, which in my mind, negate all modern Occupational, Health and Safety Rules!

Staff are expected to arrive at Polling Booths from 0630 hours and remain until final counting, cleaning and delivery to Returning Officer Base.

Some staff can have around an hour or more of travel prior to and after close of work.

By the close of Polling some staff have been on the job for close to twelve hours, then there is approximately an hour for a reconciliation of used voting forms together with unused Forms. Then the actual counts need to be performed and tallied again and checked against original counts.

Last State Election confusion further reigned as an electronic spreadsheet was distributed the previous day, this did not follow the same format as the paper based record. The paper based work book is also confusing and difficult to follow, similar to many other public service produced forms, it does not follow accepted accounting procedures, and requires much reading and head shaking to work out what is required. Then late in the evening we were told to fill out the work book manually as well. Our counting, cleaning and packing was completed by 2300 hours, SIXTEEN and a Half hours after start time. We then drove all Votes, and unused forms to the Returning Officer accommodation. There we waited a further

three hours, whilst staff from other booths handed over their returns. We finally left for home after 0200 hours NINETEEN and a HALF hours from start time. All in all a total of twenty two hours from arising to getting back to bed.

I believe this type of work practice is totally unacceptable and leaves people in a tired state, leading to errors in completing work, and poor judgement when driving motor vehicles.

May I suggest, ten hours on the job is acceptable, maybe it can be pushed to twelve hours. The care and security of ballot papers needs to be the responsibility of one team prior to and during voting, but once the initial reconciliation has taken place, and all forms are accounted for, I see no reason why another team of less people cannot take over and do the necessary counts, pack & clean and return to Returning Officer.

I am more than happy to discuss this further, if members of the inquiry need further clarification.

Regards

David Burch