

ELECTORAL AFFAIRS

Statement

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [5.35 pm]: Today I want to comment on the Electoral Amendment (Ticket Voting and Associated Reforms) Bill 2019 put forward by Hon Alison Xamon. I also want to let Hon Kyle McGinn know that I was in Leonora for the Leonora Golden Gift. I agree 100 per cent with him that it is a fantastic event and I pay tribute to all those people who put in all that hard work to organise an outstanding event.

However, looking at the bill and at the words that have been said —

The PRESIDENT: Member, I am going to interrupt to say that I hope you realise that you will have an opportunity to speak on that bill when it comes up again for debate at some point, if you wanted to save your comments for that time.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: No, I will have further comments to make then. Thank you, Madam President.

I refer to a couple of things that were said during the second reading debate today. Before I come to the actual bill, I want to mention a few things. During the debate there was mention that a Greens candidate did not get up in the South Metropolitan Region. The main reason for that is that Hon Aaron Stonehouse and Hon Simon O'Brien received preferences from Pauline Hanson's One Nation and that is what got them elected in the end. That is the main contributing factor for them being in this house now. That was not mentioned during the debate today in discussion about the South Metropolitan Region.

Let me also mention that when we are looking at electoral reform, many things need to be changed or improved. On election day the way that how-to-vote cards are handed out is very intimidating for people who are approaching polling booths. That comment is made by many people. Sometimes very few people are there and other times people feel intimidated by the mobbing and hounding group of people who try to get a card into voters' hands. This year at some polling booths there was even some violence against volunteers and some candidates. We need to make sure that that is never tolerated.

I have brought up many times with the Electoral Commission the issue of the removal of signs, which was very bad at both the last state and federal elections. I would also like to say that pre-poll voting running for three weeks creates a lot of problems and confusion, especially for minor and small parties. Most people who have been around for a while know that pre-polling takes place for legitimate reasons, but this year people were very confused about how long pre-polling was going for and what its purpose was. As we all know, the rules were still the same but perhaps the way that they were applied was a little lax this year. Pre-polling creates enormous pressure for many parties and people. People who volunteer for One Nation have jobs and are generally working so it is difficult for them to volunteer for three weeks to hand out how-to-vote cards at pre-polling booths.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Do you mean you do not pay them like Clive Palmer does?

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: No, we certainly do not.

It may be asking too much, and considering the way the AEC allowed the pre-polling to be conducted, a lot of people turned up, as we know. That has increased over the last couple of elections and I can see some problems. Why can how-to-vote cards not be on tables inside a hall? Every party could have its how-to-vote cards there and people could then pick up their cards without being hassled. That is one option. Can we also allow only legitimate parties? Hon Aaron Stonehouse talked about the fact that parties have to have 500 members. There should never be lobby groups, unions or businesses handing out other material in front of polling booths on election day. If they wanted to do that, maybe they could do it further away from the polling booth. It needs to be looked at, because it creates a lot of confusion. Why else would a group of GetUp! workers wear orange T-shirts? I will let members think about that.

Hon Simon O'Brien: They want to be in One Nation!

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Yes, that would be right!

As I said, parties' cards could be put on a table inside the hall, which would not put pressure on people coming to vote. We could even put posters on the wall showing who the local candidates are. I expect the Greens to back this idea 100 per cent: we could have re-usable laminated how-to-vote cards so they could be given back. That is for obvious reasons and I do not need to go on about that anymore.

Let us look at preferential voting in the Legislative Council. Hon Aaron Stonehouse is a libertarian. Considering his commitment to civil liberties and freedoms for the public, is it out of self-interest that he wants to deprive the public of its chance to select its own preferences? That is what I would ask if that is one of his strong beliefs. That is what this change proposed by Hon Alison Xamon is trying to help us to do. It would allow people to know where their preferences end up. Preferential voting in the Legislative Council can be difficult, especially because

so many people are not educated in the way it works, so we should not be making it more complicated, as in the previous system.

I would also like to mention that the vote counting for the recent federal election is still going on, so it is a bit premature to be making final decisions on this matter. We should be seriously looking at making final decisions when a government is interested, and it is interesting to hear that the opposition is interested. Really, we need to look at all the facts and figures before these vital decisions are made.

We have heard all about Glenn Druery, and I would be very happy to put him out of business.

Why do we use pencils in voting booths? There does not seem to be any real reason. No erasers are allowed, so if someone makes a mistake, the form gets changed anyway. Why not use pens so there is less chance of people getting up to some skulduggery and changing things?

Vote counting will take a bit longer in this new system, so maybe we need to look at that and assist the Australian Electoral Commission to address that issue in some way. The counting will now take a lot longer and the procedure will get a bit more difficult. Scrutineers I have spoken to have said there were lots of difficulties and it was a very, very slow process. My only wish is to ensure that the people of Western Australia get to vote for the person they want and that they know where their vote and preference is going. That is true democracy. There are many versions of that, but in the end, people need to know where their vote will end up. That sounds pretty fair to me. We must always review all matters. Even if we decide in the near future that we are going to make a change to our electoral system, we will need to review that, because I can imagine that there will be another Glenn Druery around the corner who will try to change whatever we come up with—whatever we feel is fair and equal and gives the Western Australian public a real opportunity to know where their vote is going.

There are many things that could be improved and could be changed. I will comment on these and other matters later on. I just wanted to put a few facts and figures on the table. Thank you.