QUOTA PR NOTES

Newsletter of the Proportional Representation Society of Australia

Tribute to the PRSA National President 1994-2017, the late Bogey Musidlak

by Dr Stephen Morey, PRSA National Secretary

This re-launched *Quota Notes* begins with my tribute to the Society's long-term National President, Bogey Musidlak, who died on 27 August 2017, at the age of 63. Bogey had been President of the PRSA since 1 January 1994, for over 23 years.

In his obituary in *The Canberra Times,* Malcolm Mackerras AO referred to Bogey as the 'father of Hare-Clark in Canberra', pointing out that in the period when many were just working towards getting self-government for the ACT, Bogey was making sure that this self-government was elected by the best and fairest of electoral systems.

Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly from all parties also paid tribute to Bogey in speeches in the Assembly on 19 September 2017.

As the last of a number of PRSA National Secretaries to work with Bogey, I had an opportunity to get to know him personally. In 2000 and 2001, I was working for a Member of the House of Representatives, and visited Canberra frequently. Bogey kindly offered me room to stay at his home, which he did on at least six occasions.

In those days, Bogey was accustomed to working very late hours and I would often only see him in the morning. We sometimes took breakfast together in the garden on a summer's morning – and breakfast discussions were where I learned much about the importance of a clear understanding of the fine details of electoral arrangements.

In his obituary, Mr Mackerras described Bogey as 'a hoarder – but also a genius, as hoarders so often are.' I can certainly attest to both of those as facts; Bogey had many things - some might say junk - but he certainly had a lot of knowledge and ideas. Both of those assets he had were immensely valuable for the PRSA and its cause.

His submissions to various government inquiries, particularly those of the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM), showed how best practice electoral systems can be well managed, and how important is the kind of PR-STV system now established in both Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

Over the years, Bogey and I would meet in many different locations; I can recall a picnic lunch with him in front of the National Library the day after the 2013 Federal election when we needed to make a comment about the Senate result, leading to an article that appeared on *The Conversation* website.

I have shared several long walks with him from Canberra City out to Kingston, or from the ANU to where I was staying, with discussions about the PRSA, and about how it can further its aim to promote good electoral arrangements, where the voters' will is primary.

I saw him for the last time in July 2017, on a freezing night in Canberra. Bogey had walked from his home in Strzelecki Crescent, Narrabundah, wearing shorts! It was the usual very engaging and informative discussion, with Bogey clearly outlining the priorities that the Society needs to follow. I will certainly miss him, as will all that believe in a democracy that should much more fairly represent its voters' wishes.

PR analysis of Queensland's 2017 election

The recent Queensland election, held on 25 November 2017, had the following overall result:

Table 1: Votes versus Queensland Assembly seats won

Party	First Preference Votes (%)	MLAs elected
Australian Labor Party	35.4	48
Liberal National Party	33.7	39
One Nation Party	13.7	1
Greens Party	10.0	1
Katter's Australia Party	2.3	3
Others	4.8	1

Australian Labor Party candidates won 48 (51.6%) of the 93 seats in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland's unicameral Parliament - which exceeded an absolute majority - with just 35.4% of the first preference votes cast.

Since all Australia's mainland Lower House polls still use single transferable vote marking and counting in single-member electoral districts - and at this election the formality rules had changed again to require a valid ballot to show at least all but the last preference - a 'two-party preferred-vote' can be calculated to measure the relative strength of the two 'major parties' vote after the transfer of preferences - the Australian Labor Party and Queensland's Liberal National Party. The two-party preferred vote was as follows:

Table 2: Two-party-preferred Vote

Party	Two-party-preferred vote (%)
Australian Labor Party	51.2%
Liberal National Party	48.8%

That TPP vote might suggest that a majority for the Australian Labor Party is reasonable, but not when half the votes cast elected nobody. From the perspective of true representation, for a party to gain only 35.4% of the vote and yet have a majority in the Parliament is quite improper.

What would the use of PR-STV *(proportional representation using the single transferable vote)* instead of the existing *winner-take-all* single-member electoral system have brought to this Queensland election?

To answer that, a PR-STV analysis by the Proportional Representation Society of Australia has grouped Queensland's 93 seats into six multi-member districts in the rural and regional sector each with 5 MLAs, and nine districts each electing 7 MLAs in the south-east.

Table 3: Overall PR-STV result of Queensland's election

Political Party	MLAs	% of the Assembly	% of first preferences
Australian Labor Party	35	37.63	35.4
Liberal National Party	36	38.71	33.7
One Nation	12	12.90	13.7
Greens	6	6.45	10.0
Katter's Australia Party	3	3.23	2.3
Others	1	1.08	4.8

In Table 3, the 'other MLA' was the re-elected Independent MLA for Noosa, Ms Sandy Bolton.

As with any other PR-STV elections, this result would have led to three main significant advantages over the current parliament:

1. More than 80% of voters would be represented by a candidate that they voted for, either first preference or another high preference,

2. The various minor parties, One Nation, Greens, and Katter's Australia Party would be represented at levels close to the support they received from the voters, and

3. In every one of the 15 multi-member districts there was a contest, and the final position in each of those districts would have been very close. Unlike the recent election, where at least 70% of voters lived in safe seats that were not really in contest, under PR-STV each part of Queensland has a genuine electoral contest.

For example, in multi-member District12, named 'Southern Suburbs' in the PRSA analysis *(the 7 single-member districts in that District appear on the left),* results were as follows:

Table 4: First Preference Votes in 7-member District 12

SM Districts	ALP	LNP	Green	ON	Others
Mansfield	**11375**	11610	3263	2631	
Oodgeroo	9389	**14549**	3812		
Redlands	**9591**	9435	2527	5262	2889
Springwood	**13289**	12117	2721		1961
Stretton	**14061**	7884	2059	3298	484
Toohey	**12284**	8336	4026	2891	
Woodridge	**17837**	4122	2072		3385
Totals	**87826**	**68053**	**20480**	**14082**	**8235**
Percentage (%)	44.10	34.17	10.28	7.07	4.13
Quotas	3.53	2.73	0.82	0.57	0.33
Elected	**3**	**3**	**1**	**-**	**-**

Table 4 shows the ALP with 3.53 quotas, and the LNP with 2.73, which guarantee 3 ALP and 2 LNP candidates being elected. The Greens, with 0.82 of a quota, would almost certainly have one MLA elected. Table 4 shows the seventh MLA elected to be an LNP candidate, but that depended ultimately on the transfer of later preferences, as described below.

It was likely that the third LNP candidate would be elected, but if enough subsequent preferences shown on ballots marked as first preferences for 'Others' strongly favoured One Nation, its candidate could have been elected instead.

If - on the other hand - the preferences for 'Others' had more strongly supported the ALP, with ON preferences not strongly to the LNP, a fourth ALP candidate could have been elected.

The point here is that the final two positions in Southern Suburbs were close enough that every vote in that region was important. A very small shift in votes would have either elected a One Nation candidate, or an additional Labor candidate, and might have seen the Greens candidate defeated.

PRSA members will notice immediately that whereas Queensland's current single-member electoral system led to a majority ALP government, in PRSA's analysis, a PR-STV election might have led to a minority Liberal National Government, supported by One Nation.

PRSA member urges PR-STV in Canadian webinar

Malcolm Baalman, a member of the Victoria-Tasmania Branch of the PRSA, was invited by FairVote Canada to explain the Hare-Clark form of PR-STV in a substantial webinar on YouTube this year. The Netherlands party list system was then explained by a FVC member that had grown up under it, but now lives in British Columbia, where he is a strong PR-STV supporter.

Malcolm's lucid description of PR-STV, and its value, from a PRSA member that has experienced its use will assist campaigners in another referendum to be held in British Columbia in 2018 to choose between the existing single-member plurality system and a PR system.

FVC is silent on the great importance of voters' direct election of candidates. It has made a longer video with accounts of PR-STV by Professor David Farrell of University College, Dublin, and by Antony Hodgson, President of a separate group, Fair Voting BC, which prefers PR-STV. Accounts of a Mixed Member Proportional alternative by a Canadian, and a New Zealander, follow. The PR-STV case easily beats MMP. MMP's absence of transferable votes, and its hybrid of single-member plurality districts, and its at-large component with exclusionary threshold, are undesirable.

Tasmania's 33rd Hare-Clark General Election

On 03 March 2018, the world's longest continually-operating PR-STV electoral system demonstrated again the extremely satisfactory translation of voters' ballot instructions into parliamentary seats it is famous for.

Table 5: Votes versus Tasmanian Assembly seats won

Party	First Preference Votes (%)	MHAs elected
Liberal Party	50.3	13
Australian Labor Party	32.6	10
Greens	10.3	2
Others	6.8	0

As established in Tasmania's Constitution, the election was for its Lower House, the House of Assembly, as the periodic elections for the Upper House - for those of its less-recently elected members - occur in May each year.

The distinctive characteristics of Hare-Clark now include its lack of the stage management, such as an *above-the-line* option, that has been introduced for mainland electoral systems, except the similar Hare-Clark system of the Australian Capital Territory.

Those characteristics include the filling of casual vacancies by countback, which removes the need for expensive and destabilizing by-election polls and also ensures that each serious party stands several more candidates than it expects will be elected.

Hare-Clark now combines that greater choice of candidates with its impressive Robson Rotation, in which ballot papers are printed so that the order of candidates' names in each party column differs from one ballot paper to another such that each candidate's name appears with equal frequency at specified positions down each column.

That feature removes the effect of donkey voting, and makes the mainland's notorious *how-to-vote* cards impractical, leaving the order down the party column entirely in the hands of each individual voter, and not just decided by some party committee.

A striking feature of the election result was the election to the lower house of Tasmania's Parliament, the House of Assembly, of a majority of women.

Although 40% of the 109 candidates State-wide were women - and only one of the five electoral districts, Denison - had a majority of women candidates, 13 of the 25 MHAs elected were women. In Denison, four of the five MHAs elected were women even though eight men were candidates.

That result matched the 13 of the 25 MLAs elected that were women in the Australian Capital Territory's Assembly Hare-Clark election in October 2016. Both of those results were a result of voters' decisions much more than the stage management by the party machines that predominates in Australia's other elections to legislative chambers. Tasmania's 2018 election demonstrated, for a second consecutive term, that Hare-Clark will deliver an absolute majority of MHAs to a single political party if that is an actual reflection of the voters' indications, as it was in this case. In this case it was again the Liberal Party that had clearly retained the voters' confidence. Detailed results can be accessed via PRSA's website.

Another consistent Hare-Clark feature in the 2018 outcome for the Jacqui Lambie Network was its failure to have any of its candidates elected, even in its stronghold in Braddon, where it totalled only 0.35 quotas.

Jacqui Lambie was first elected to a parliament - with a 14.3% quota - in the September 2013 half-Senate election as a Senator for Tasmania as she was the leading candidate on the Group Voting Ticket for the Palmer United Party. She took up her seat in the Senate as a member of that party in July 2014.

Ms Lambie was far less well-known then, even in Tasmania, than Clive Palmer, the party's Queensland billionaire leader, who spent lavishly on campaigns in all the elections that his eponymous registered political party contested during its short-lived existence.

Between Jacqui Lambie's election and her joining the Senate, his Palmer United Party stood at the March 2014 election for Tasmania's Assembly, but it failed to gain a seat, even in Braddon, where its five male candidates only totalled 0.43 quotas – a vote well below the State-wide half-Senate quota that the party had achieved only six months earlier.

The Assembly quota of 16.7% was higher than Ms Lambie's half-Senate quota of 14.3%, but the 2014 Braddon failure to gain a quota would have still applied with that lower quota.

South Australian election versus Tasmania's

On 17 March 2018, South Australia's election followed Tasmania's Assembly election earlier in March, though in SA's case the general election for all 47 members of its House of Assembly was concurrent with an election for its Legislative Council of 11 of its 22 members.

Table 6 shows Liberals won an absolute majority of the 47 seats in the Assembly with only 38.0% of the votes.

Table 6: Overall Result of the House of Assembly election

Party	Votes (%)	MHAs elected
Liberal Party	38.0	25
Australian Labor Party	32.8	19
SA Best (Xenophon)	14.1	0
Greens	6.7	0
Australian Conservatives (previously Family First)	3.0	0
Dignity Party	1.5	0
Others (Independents)	3.9	3

The Electoral Commission of South Australia must determine a notional two-party-preferred (TPP) vote. To do that the ballot papers in 15 of the 47 electorates where the final two candidates were not Liberal or Labor had to be redistributed again for that purpose. The notional State-wide two-party-preferred vote was:

Table 7: Notional two-party-preferred vote for the Assembly

Party	Two-party-preferred vote (%)
Liberal Party	51.9
Australian Labor Party	48.1

That TPP vote might suggest that a majority of Liberals is reasonable, but not when half the votes cast elected nobody. From the perspective of true representation, for a party to gain only 38.0% of the vote and yet have a majority in the House of Assembly is quite improper.

The Electoral Reform Society of SA's PR-STV analysis groups the 47 seats into 8 multi-member divisions, each with 5 MHAs, plus one with 7 MHAs. Table 8 shows the overall result under that much fairer electoral system.

Table 8: Party share of Assembly seats with PR-STV

Party	MHAs	% of the Assembly	% of first preference votes
Liberal Party	19	40.4	38.0
Australian Labor Party	18	38.3	32.8
SA Best	6	12.8	14.1
Greens	1	2.1	6.7
Australian Conservatives	0	0.0	3.0
Dignity Party	0	0.0	1.5
Others	3	6.4	3.9

While the Liberal Party, ALP and the Independents are still over-represented, it does mean that SA Best and even the Greens would have some representation in the new House of Assembly.

In contrast to the House of Assembly's single-member electorates, the Legislative Council is elected by PR-STV (proportional representation with the single transferable vote). At this election, 11 MLCs, which are half the Council, were elected.

Malaysia's extraordinary parliamentary election

Malaysia's 14th general election, on 09 May 2018, gave a very different result from its 13th, in 2013, and earlier polls. At the 2018 election, 3 coalitions stood ; *Pakatan Harapan*, led by Dr Mahathir Mohammed, but with the long time opposition Democratic Action Party (Mahathir had once imprisoned its leader); *Barisan Nasional*, led by defeated Prime Minister Najib Raza;, and *Gagasan Sejahtera*, which is a conservative Islamic party.

Malaysia uses single member electorates and plurality counting. The results for those 3 coalitions in the 222-member lower house, the Dewan Rakyat, are as follows:

Table 9: Coalition shares of Malaysian Lower House seats

Coalition	MHRs	% of MHRs	% of votes
Pakatan Harapan	121	55.9	47.9
Barisan Nasional	79	35.6	33.8
Gagasan Sejahtera	18	8.1	17.0

Each of those three coalitions is represented in the lower house at levels less distorted than usual for plurality polls. That is because the defeated Barisan Nasional, which had governed since Independence, had enacted a pronounced malapportionment of electorates that strongly favoured itself. Table 10 gives details in 2013 of the electorates in the State of Negri Sembilan. Note that the opposition coalition was called Pakatan Rakyat in 2013.

Table 10: Coalition shares in 2013 of MHRs for Negri Sembilan

Name of electorate in Negri Sembilan State	Number of Voters (2013)	Party of the MHR elected (2013)
Jelebu	45,034	Barisan Nasional
Jempol	65,332	Barisan Nasional
Kuala Pilah	47,780	Barisan Nasional
Rembau	79,793	Barisan Nasional
Tampin	57,386	Barisan Nasional
Rasah	88,535	Pakatan Rakyat
Seremban	102,305	Pakatan Rakyat
Telok Kemang	70,655	Pakatan Rakyat

The electorates held by Barisan Nasional in Negri Sembilan had a mean enrolment of 59,065 while those of the then opposition parties had a mean of 87,165. Table 11 shows malapportionment let Barisan Nasional 'win' in 2013 with far fewer votes than its opponents.

Table 11: Coalition share of Malaysian lower house seats (2013)

Coalition	MHRs	% of MHRs	% of votes
Pakatan Rakyat (Opposition)	89	40.1	50.9
Barisan Nasional (Govt)	133	59.9	47.4

That malapportionment, intensified in a pre-election redistribution, led a reform group to note that Barisan Nasional could regain control with just 33% of the vote. That did not happen, but the malapportionment could well have let Barisan Nasional control the lower house with only 38% of the vote. Electoral reform is overdue in Malaysia, as it is in many other jurisdictions.