



Minister flags plan to remove Bracks's 2003 option for multi-councillor wards

Victoria's Labor Minister for Local Government, [Hon. Adem Somyurek MLC](#), has sought comment on his proposal for a *Local Government Bill 2019* that would result in a new *Local Government Act 2019* replacing the present 1989 consolidated Act.

The Andrews Labor Government had begun that process late in its first term when it placed online the text of its then *Local Government Bill 2018*, and sought public comments on it, which were, as promised, posted on its website.

That bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly, but stalled in the Legislative Council, following which it lapsed when both houses were dissolved prior to Victoria's 2018 State elections.

Both major parties had recognized the need for a replacement of the 1989 Act. The Napthine Liberal Government had, in 2013, established a Local Government Review Panel, chaired by a former member for the federal seat of Kooyong, Petro Georgiou, which received [public submissions](#), including those of the PRSA's Victoria-Tasmania Branch, and later made recommendations to the then Liberal minister, but no legislation eventuated.

Neither that Liberal Government's panel, nor the very open and public online processes undertaken by the subsequent Labor Government, under its first Local Government ministers, Hon. Natalie Hutchins MLA and later, Hon. Marlene Kairouz MLA, raised the prospect of any proposal to remove the option for multi-councillor wards.

Since the Bracks Labor Government's *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* - which provided that elections in such wards would all be counted by proportional representation using the single transferable vote (PR-STV) - Victoria's municipalities have been increasingly coming to be elected from multi-councillor wards, to the extent that such wards are now the dominant system.

The current minister, Hon. Adem Somyurek MLC, has alluded to a proposed *Local Government Bill*

2019, but he has not released a draft of such a bill. Instead, he has stated online a few major aspects that he intends to include in the bill, the most concerning of which is the quite unexpected proposal to remove the present option for multi-councillor wards.

The PRSA's Victoria-Tasmania Branch intends to respond to the invitation on the Local Government Victoria website to email a submission. That will be viewable [here](#), but LGV's website had no plan - as it did in the Andrews Government's previous term - to display the submissions it received.

Anniversaries of two first PR-STV polls: for all Tasmanian MHAs, and for senators in all States

This year is the 110th anniversary of the first Tasmania-wide poll to elect members of the House of Assembly under the Hare-Clark system of proportional representation using the single transferable vote (PR-STV). Hare-Clark has been used continually for that House's elections ever since. It has evolved well in three major ways:

- in 1918, Tasmania's *Electoral Act* was amended to provide for the filling of casual vacancies by [countback](#),
- in 1958, Tasmania's *Constitution Act* was amended to change the number of MHA's per electoral division from 6 to 7, to give the benefit of an odd number, and
- forty years ago, its *Electoral Amendment Act 1979* introduced [Robson Rotation](#).

The Hare-Clark system was first used in 1896 when its leading proponent - [Andrew Inglis Clark](#), who fortunately was Tasmania's Attorney-General, and who fittingly was recently commemorated by having the co-terminus Federal and State divisions of Denison renamed Clark in his honour - managed to convince the Legislative Council to have it used, for one election, in Hobart and Launceston, which were made multi-member districts. The Legislative Council accepted its value, and it was approved for Tasmania-wide use for Assembly elections in 1907.

This year is also the 70th anniversary of the first election at which all of Australia's vacant Senate positions were filled using PR-STV.

New South Wales 2019 Legislative Council polls

On 23 March 2019, the New South Wales general elections were held to elect 93 members of its Legislative Assembly. Also elected were 21 members of its 42-member Legislative Council.

Elections for the NSW [Legislative Council](#) are counted by proportional representation, using the single transferable vote (PR-STV). [Schedule 6](#) of the NSW *Constitution Act 1902* requires voters to record preferences for at least 15 candidates on the ballot, either through numbering individual candidates *below-the-line*, or at least one group *above-the-line*. The NSW Electoral Commission [website](#) does not reveal the percentage of ballots that are cast using the two options of *above-the-line* or *below-the-line*.

The overall result for the half of the Legislative Council elected is shown in the table below. The percentages of first preference votes received for each party can be found on the NSW Electoral Commission [website](#), and at [Wikipedia](#).

Party	% of first prefs.	No. of seats	% of seats	Change since 2015
Liberal-National	34.8%	8	38.1%	
Labor	26.7%	7	33.3%	+2
Green	9.7%	2	9.5%	-1
One Nation	6.9%	2	9.5%	+2
Shooters, Fishers & Farmers	5.5%	1	4.8%	
Christian Democrats	2.3%			-1
Liberal Democrats	2.2%			
Animal Justice	2.0%	1	4.8%	+1
Keep Sydney Open	1.8%			
Sustainable Australia	1.5%			
Voluntary Euthanasia	1.1%			
All Others	5.6%			

As has been observed in other recent elections, such as the [Victorian elections](#) in November 2018, the percentage of voters casting votes for non-major parties continues to increase.

Thus, in the New South Wales elections, the percentage of voters that supported non-major parties (i.e. did not vote for Liberal, National or Labor), was 38.5%, a higher percentage than for either of the two major party groupings.

Voters that did not vote for Greens, Labor or Liberal-National, amounted to 28.8% of all voters, which is more than voted for Labor. They voted for 17 minor parties as well as ungrouped candidates. From among those small parties, 4 MLCs - which was 19% of the seats being contested - were elected. No independent candidates were elected.

In the Lower House, the Legislative Assembly, which consists of 93 single-member divisions, significantly more people gave their first preference vote to major parties, as shown in the table below:

Party	% of first prefs.	No. of seats	% of seats	Change since 2015
Liberal-National	41.6%	48	51.6%	-6
ALP	33.3%	36	38.7%	+2
Green	9.6%	3	3.2%	
One Nation	1.1%			
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers	3.5%	3	3.2%	+3
All others	6.2%			
Independents	4.8%	3	3.2%	+1

The Indian federal elections in May 2019

On 23 May 2019, five days after the most recent Australian federal elections, the counting of votes in the 2019 election for the lower house of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha, occurred. That count progressed quite rapidly. It began at 8 am Indian time, and the result was clear ninety minutes later.

This election was the world's largest ever in terms of the number of voters and the numbers of votes cast. It showed a slight increase in the turnout percentage, up 0.7% to 67.11%, apparently the highest on record since the first Indian election in 1951.

The lower house consists of 545 single member electorates, all elected using [plurality](#) counting (first-past-the-post).

The [overall result of the election](#) for the lower house was that the governing Bharitya Janata Party (BJP) - led by the Prime Minister, [Narendra Modi](#) - won 303 seats, with 38.5% support, and the main opposition Congress Party won only 52 seats, with 19.5% support, which was not a very proportional outcome.

The remaining 190 seats were won by candidates from 33 other parties and 4 independents. Men constitute [85.5%](#) of the members of the house.

India's voters do not directly elect its upper house, the Rajya Sabha, but [India's Constitution](#) - which is said to be the [longest in the world](#), and can only be [altered](#) by parliamentary votes - provides in its Article 80(4) that the votes that State MPs cast for its members are counted by [PR-STV](#).

As at June 2019, the total number of votes for each party was not readily available online. The percentage of votes State-by-State is [here](#).

An example of the extent of plurality's failings can be gleaned from studying the result in the State of Assam, with which the PRSA National Secretary, who has drafted this article, is very familiar.

Although no totals of the number of votes for each party contesting in Assam are online, there is the percentage of votes cast for each party, and that can be compared with the seats won.

As can be seen in the table below for the State of Assam, the governing Bharitya Janata Party (BJP) is significantly over-represented compared to the percentage of votes it received.

The Indian National Congress Party, which governed India for most of the time since India's independence began in 1947, is significantly under-represented by that measure.

Indian electoral constituencies vary significantly in [district magnitude](#). One of the larger ones in the State of Assam is Gauhati, the capital of Assam, where there were 1,763,757 valid votes cast, and the district was won by the BJP's candidate, Q Oja, with 1,008,936 votes, which was 57.2% of those valid votes cast.

A full list of seats won across the whole of India is at <http://results.eci.gov.in/pc/en/partywise/index.htm>

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Party	% of vote	No. of seats	% of seats	Notes
Bharatiya Janata Party	36.1%	9	64.3%	
Indian National Congress	35.4%	3	21.4%	
Asom Gana Parishad	8.2%	0	0.0%	(Regional Party, largely Hindu supported)
All India United Democratic Front	7.8%	1	7.1%	(Regional Party with Muslim support)
All others	12.5%	1	7.1%	(One independent elected)