



SWAN DIVISION
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Liberal Party of Australia (WA Division) Inc
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Transmission by email: richard.wilson@waliberal.org.au

Dear Richard

Swan Preselection Reform Workshop

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 2022 in which you referred to the workshop held at Swan Divisional Council meeting on 7 December 2021.

The workshop was a great opportunity to identify areas of common-ground and diversity among members of Swan Division when it comes to the important question of preselection reform.

Following the invitation contained in your letter, I have engaged with members of Swan Division on the matters raised in your letter, including at a Divisional Council meeting and via email to the Divisional Membership database on two occasions.

The aggregate feedback of the majority position of members who responded to my requests for input forms the balance of this letter.

Larger

Swan Division members are supportive of steps taken to expand the preselection franchise to the broader membership, subject to the eligibility criteria described in the balance of this letter.

If that means a plebiscite, then Swan Division members are prepared to accept that proposition noting that – at least intuitively – greater participation in preselections is likely to incentivise greater membership at a grass-roots level and expand the perceived benefit of membership.

Swan Division members consider that the Liberal Party would benefit from an increase in our membership and the broader diversity of our membership base, as well as becoming a political party that more fully reflects the participatory and grass-roots democracy that we speak about more generally.

Local

The view of the majority of membership of Swan Division, based on my consultation with the Division is:

- Preselection delegate eligibility should include all members of the Liberal Party who:

- live within the relevant branch or divisional boundaries, according to the electoral role (or if they are not eligible to be on the electoral role because of age or Citizenship, provide suitable proof of residence) (**Criterion One**); **or**
- work within the relevant branch or divisional boundaries (and provide suitable proof) (**Criterion Two**); **and**
- as well as satisfying Criterion One **or** Criterion Two in respect of the relevant branch or divisional boundaries;
 - are current financial members of the Liberal Party of Western Australia; and
 - that financial membership has been held for a period of not less than two consecutive years leading up to the relevant test for eligibility,

(Criterion Three).
- There should be a “grandfathering” position in respect of the above criteria, along the following lines:
 - Any member who satisfies Criterion Three in addition to either of Criterion One or Criterion Two retains eligibility in respect of that branch or division, even if the member subsequently fails to satisfy both of Criterion One or Criterion Two in respect of that branch or division, provided that the member retained unbroken financial membership of the party.
 - Put another way, if an eligible member moves out of the division or branch boundaries either in terms of residential or primary work address, the member would retain eligibility except if that member’s membership became unfinancial, in which case the deemed eligibility would expire.
 - However, the person may subsequently satisfy Criterion One or Criterion Two in respect of the same or another branch or division and obtain eligibility as a preselector in that or another branch and division.

The majority of the membership of Swan Division does not support an eligibility criteria broader than this, notwithstanding the fact that people who have other connections to a branch or division may still make meaningful contributions to the Liberal Party in this context.

Simpler

The membership of Swan Division agrees that preslections should be comprised of local members satisfying the criteria described above and centrally determined members selected from the general membership and/or State Council in accordance with a generally accepted random method.

Centrally determined members should also be required to be members of the Liberal Party of Western Australia with at least two consecutive years of membership.

Better vetting

The membership of Swan Division supports the establishment of an advisory committee conferred with the function of enquiring into the suitability of candidates and advising pre-selection committees of their findings.

Where State Council (or another similar body) is required to ratify candidate selection, the content of any advice given by the advisory committee should also be disclosed to State Council (or another similar body).

Other matters

The general position of Swan Division membership, in response to the other matters raised in your letter is:

- Being an office bearer of the Liberal Party (in respect of Branch, Division, elected or appointed by State Council or State Executive or otherwise) should not entitle a person to preselection eligibility where that office bearer is not otherwise eligible to be a preselector.
- We agree with the principle of grandfathering preselector eligibility, along the lines described above.

Finally, I note that since our Constitution requires that any reform be undertaken by Special Resolution at State Conference, we are wedded to a delegate-led reform process. I have made reasonable attempts to engage with current delegates to State Conference in preparing this response but note that delegates to State Conference may ultimately hold views that differ from those described in this letter.

Thank you for your leadership in the reform process and we look forward to hosting you at another Swan Divisional Council meeting in due course.

Yours sincerely



Luke O'Callaghan
President
Swan Division