

Democratic Accountability & Representation

TCCI supports the restoration of the House of Assembly to 35 members and increasing the number of electorates from 5 to 7, on the basis that it provides for better governance and more Members to scrutinise Executive conduct, including the work of government agencies and Ministerial advisers.

The reduction in the number of Members and the subsequently smaller Government Backbench has resulted in a limited competition for ministerial positions and challenges in replacing ministerial vacancies.

The restoration of the House of Assembly will also restore its capacity to undertake its Parliamentary functions, particularly its role in robustly debating legislation, undertaking inquiries, policy development and achieving timely quorums for Parliamentary Committees; ultimately improving democratic outcomes for Tasmania.

Cost of Restoring the House of Assembly

The costs associated with restoring the House of Assembly to 35 Members and increasing the number of electorates from 5 to 7 are justified to improve governance, accountability, and representation, and to provide for a better functioning Parliament which enhances democracy and in turn improves public services.

The cost to democracy and good governance of not having an effective Parliament to undertake its functions on behalf of the Tasmanian people is significantly greater than the monetary cost of Parliamentary reform.

Ministerial Workloads & Portfolios

Despite Tasmania's smaller population, the Tasmanian Government has the same range and complexity of responsibilities as other jurisdictions in Australia. However, Ministers have more portfolio responsibilities and thus a greater workload than their interstate counterparts, which impacts good governance.

Maintaining the current number and scope of portfolios whilst restoring the House of Assembly would support Ministerial workloads and minimise Ministerial turnover.

Redrawing Boundaries

Maintaining the current boundaries and number of electorates, alongside the restoration of the House of Assembly Members would not produce Members that can most effectively represent their constituencies.

State politics is meant to be closer to the community than federal politics, and for that reason, federal election boundaries are not representative of the diversity of interests within the Tasmanian community.

A rise in informal voting would occur if the number of electorates does not increase from 5 to 7 with the restoration of the House of Assembly, as it would increase the scope of information required for voters to cast an informed vote; it would require voters to vote 1 to 7 instead of 1 to 5 on their ballot papers.

Reduction of Advisors

Since the reduction of members, there has been a proliferation of Ministerial advisers that are not directly accountable to the House of Assembly or the people of Tasmania.

Decreasing the reliance on political advisers by better utilising policy specialists in the State Public Service would in turn reduce costs and improve governance.

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