

I believe that all council elections in Victoria should return to a basic democratic principle of 1 person, 1 vote. I do not believe that those who own land, 'ratepayers', should be eligible for any extra votes than any other resident of Victoria. Every Victorian pays a range of taxes at all different levels of government; there is no clear rationale for 'ratepayers' to be given any extra eligibility to vote. For example, Victorians who rent property essentially contribute to owner's rates fees through their payment of monthly rent, yet they are not eligible for any extra votes.

What kind of democracy are we living in when landowners (generally wealthier than non-landowners) are given a disproportionate say in elections. This is 2015, not 1815! I believe that many Victorians are unaware of the fact that ratepayers are eligible for extra votes, and would generally be furious if they were knew.

Furthermore, as a resident of the City of Melbourne, my vote is even further diminished by the fact that various businesses and corporations are given a vote in council elections, in some cases actually given *two* votes! This is a clearly undemocratic system. Why should one Victorian's vote be worth more than another Victorians? Why should a business, run by Victorians who get to vote in *their* personal council, then get to vote in *my* council region, distorting the result and devaluing the vote of local residents?

Again, I believe this is a little known quirk of the City of Melbourne electoral system, and I truly believe that if it were more widely known in the community there would be genuine shock and anger that this practice has been allowed to continue.

I urge you to implement the recommendations of the *Electoral Regulation Research Network* (ERRN)'s 2015 report entitled '*Melbourne Democracy – Marvelous?*':

**Recommendation 1)** [Limit the franchise for candidature and for voting in the MCC for Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors of the MCC to residents on the electoral roll and non-citizen residents.](#)

This is a straightforward, common-sense reform that the community would clearly support.

You have a clear opportunity here to reform the way local councils are elected in Victoria. I urge you to completely scrap the right of ratepayers and businesses to vote. The right to vote should only be given to residents, as is the practice in State and Federal elections.

**1 resident = 1 vote!**