



**League of Women Voters of Victoria**  
**PO Box 451, Balwyn Victoria, 3103**  
**[lwvoters@vicnet.net.au](mailto:lwvoters@vicnet.net.au) [www.home.vicnet.net.au/~league/](http://www.home.vicnet.net.au/~league/)**  
**President - Deborah Towns**  
**Secretary – Sheila Byard**  
**3/06/2010**

The Executive Officer  
Electoral Matters Committee  
Parliament of Victoria  
Melbourne Victoria 3002  
[emc@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:emc@parliament.vic.gov.au)

### **Inquiry into the functions and administration of voting centres**

The League of Women Voters of Victoria is pleased to have an extension of time for its submission to the inquiry into the functions and administration of voting centres.

The League is a non-party organization established in 1945 whose members are committed to effective voter education and the principle of encouragement of widest public participation in electoral processes. The League's view is that Commonwealth and State and Territory electoral law and practice should comply fully with Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to ensure equal and universal suffrage.

- The need for better communication about proposed changes in location

Since the 1992 Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report, the desirability of standardised locations of polling places has been recognised. Nonetheless, especially where customary polling places become temporarily unavailable and other locations are advertised, for example in the daily press close to the date of an election, it is noticeable that the majority of voters still go to the old venue and become infuriated when they are unable to vote; on redirection, the alternative venue is often shown to have problems with car access and queue times over peak periods can be excessive e.g. more than 45 minute wait time.

Given that there is a decline in households subscribing to daily papers, and in localities where languages other than English are still in daily use, it is crucial that there be a commitment to adequate alternative means of notifying changes, for example through local papers, school newsletters, post offices, neighbourhood houses and other community outlets, as soon as the date of the election is known.

As well, clear multi-lingual signage should be provided at the entrance to the previous polling place giving the location of the new venue.

2

**League of Women Voters of Victoria –An associate member of IAW**



**League of Women Voters of Victoria**  
**PO Box 451, Balwyn Victoria, 3103**  
**[lwwoters@vicnet.net.au](mailto:lwwoters@vicnet.net.au) [www.home.vicnet.net.au/~league/](http://www.home.vicnet.net.au/~league/)**  
**President - Deborah Towns**  
**Secretary – Sheila Byard**  
**3/06/2010**

- The need for wider consultation as to appropriate polling places

It is understood that the Electoral Commission has both an Access Advisory Group and a regular consultative process for registered parties and independent candidates as to places to be used for voting. We wish to express our concern about the inadequacy of this approach and would argue that the Commission should advertise and consult more widely including with local government, so as to avoid error.

Our membership is aware of occasions where Electoral Commission decisions appear to have been ill advised for example where properties owned by particular quasi-political, or sectarian interests have been deemed suitable as polling places; and where venues are known by local voters to pose particular problems of current access: we note that the draft list provided by the VEC to the current inquiry contains a number of errors/potential difficulties where polling places previously used by the thousands of voters, are likely to be inaccessible for some elections held between June and December 2010, owing to heritage conservation and stimulus package related construction works at schools.

- Early voting centres

The League supports the points made in the May 28 submission to the current inquiry by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre NSW about the need for improvements in the provision of early voting centre for future elections.

There is a concern however that an expanded range of such pre-polling places may distract from the principle of well-recognised local polling centres, in locations with disabled parking and wheelchair access, being the main location for voting for the majority of citizens.

Dr Deborah Towns, President  
League of Women Voters of Victoria