HOW TO CONFUSE VOTERS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

Gerry Wood, Independent Member for Nelson, says he will not support moves by the Government to change our voting system in the upcoming sittings of Parliament.

He says that in all three tiers of government, voters are required to fill in all the spaces on the ballot paper. Governments of all persuasions have been teaching people through the Electoral Commission for years about filling in all the spaces.

Gerry says this change allowing voters just to put a number in only one box at a Territory election will cause confusion when voters vote at the next Federal or Local government election. The voting system should be the same for all elections.

He said the proposed changes could mean an increase in informal votes at the Federal election, which may work against the CLP. Strangely the CM claims he is bringing in optional preferential system to reduce informal voting.

Gerry says that the public know that this move is a furphy as there was only 1.6% of the votes at the last Territory election classified as unintentional informal -hardly a reason to change the voting system – more a reason to educate the 1.6% on how to vote.

Gerry says Territorians see the changes as more about politics than good governance. Full preferential is a powerful voting system which allows voters to have a second say in who they think should represent them, if no candidate reaches 50%+1of the total vote.

Optional preferential diminishes those values.

Gerry says this change is aimed at independents and small parties to try and reduce their dependence on preferences and so enhance the chances of the big parties. But he says even if the Government thinks there should be change, this move should not be done without considerable community input and never 6 months out from an election.

Gerry says he will be asking the CM to drop this bill.