

Media Release

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COUNCIL REGULATIONS REPEAL BAD NEWS FOR VOTERS

Minister for Local Government Natalie Hutchins has labelled the Liberal-Greens move to repeal a section of the new council electoral regulations only weeks before elections as bad news for voters.

The Andrews Labor government recently reformed the electoral regulations to increase transparency for the elections. Unlike the last minute move of the Legislative Council, the regulations were created with the full support of local government stakeholders and after lengthy consultation.

The decision of the Legislative Council to disallow S.38 of the electoral regulations and remove preference indications from the Victorian Electoral Commission voter packs will reduce information for voters and may cause significant disruption.

The previous Liberal Government ignored the idea during their time in power and have resorted to this stunt with less than a month till the VEC mails out postal votes to around 3.1 million Victorians.

The Labor Government also made changes to the regulations including giving candidates the option of supplying more information about themselves, including details of any training they have undertaken to prepare themselves to become a councillor.

The questionnaire asks candidates if they have read key council publications, undertaken training, if they are endorsed by a political party and, if the candidate is a current councillor seeking re-election, what their attendance record at council meetings has been

The government consulted on the issue of removing preference indications and did not proceed due to the lack of support in the community and concerns of an increased level of informal voting.

The decision made last week by the Legislative Council does not affect the City of Melbourne elections as they left those regulations unchanged.

Attributable to the Minister for Local Government Natalie Hutchins

"This was nothing more than a stunt from the Liberals, Nationals and Greens that will make voting at council elections harder for Victorians and will increase the level of informal voting."

"The Liberals could have made this change when they were in government but failed to act. Making the change three weeks before the VEC mails out around 3.1 million postal vote packs has the potential to cause significant disruption and is unfair to all those involved."