



RESEARCH NOTE

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1995 ACT Elections

Introduction

Elections for the 17 member ACT Legislative Assembly were held on 18 February 1995 using the Hare-Clark electoral system. The election was the third held since the granting of self-government to the ACT in 1988 and the first using the Hare-Clark system. Under the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988*, the Assembly has a fixed term with elections being held on the 3rd Saturday in February every three years. A total of 74 candidates contested the election in the three multi-member constituencies of Brindabella, Ginninderra and Molonglo.

The Result

The Labor Government, led by Rosemary Follett, received a substantial rebuff at the election which can be seen as a personal triumph for Liberal leader Kate Carnell. As neither major party won a majority of seats, the choice of Chief Minister was left to the four minor party and Independent candidates elected. At the first meeting of the new As-

sembly on 9 March, Kate Carnell was elected Chief Minister, after receiving support from the two Independent and two Green members.

The Labor Party was the major loser at the election, having its members reduced from eight to six and its vote reduced by 8.3% to 31.6%. On the other hand, the Liberal Party achieved an 11.5% swing in its favour and its members in the Assembly increased by one to seven.

The ACT Greens, contesting the Assembly elections for the first time, achieved considerable success with two candidates elected and receiving 9.1% of the vote. Elected as Independents were sitting member, Michael Moore, and prominent football identity, Paul Osborne.

Support for both major parties was remarkably consistent among the three electorates, with only a small difference between the best and worst result for both parties. Support for the other candidates was more disparate with the Moore Independents polling best

in Ginninderra and Molonglo while Mr Osborne's vote in Brindabella affected all parties' support in that electorate.

The Candidates

A total of 74 candidates (including Arthur Burns who died before polling day) contested the 1995 Assembly election, a slight decrease on the 83 who contested the previous election. One member of the old Assembly did not re-contest at the 1995 election (Dennis Stevenson for the Abolish Self-Government Coalition). The new Assembly will contain five new members occasioned by Dennis Stevenson's retirement and the defeat of four sitting members; Annette Ellis (ALP), David Lamont (ALP), Ellnor Grassby (ALP) and Helen Szuty (MI).

Liberal leader Kate Carnell received the largest number of first preference votes, 28.7%, followed by Labor leader Rosemary Follett

1995 ACT Legislative Assembly Election

	Seats	Votes	%	Swing
Liberal Party	7	66 895	40.5	+11.5
Australian Labor Party	6	52 276	31.6	-8.3
ACT Greens	2	14 967	9.1	+9.1
Australian Democrats	..	6457	3.9	-0.6
Moore Independents	1	11 645	7.0	+1.4
Others	1	13 030	7.9	-13.1
Formal		165 270	93.8	+0.3
Informal		10 994	6.2	-0.3
Total	17	176 264		

Vote by Electorate						
	Brindabella		Ginninderra		Molonglo	
	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	%		%		%	
LP	2	37.1	3	40.7	2	42.8
ALP	2	31.6	2	32.7	2	30.9
GRN	..	7.9	1	8.7	1	10.1
AD	..	3.8	..	5.0	..	3.2
MI	..	3.8	1	8.0	..	8.8
Others	1	15.8	..	4.8	..	4.2

with 21.4%. The two leaders were the only candidates to receive a quota of first preference votes. Although Mrs Carnell received more than two quotas, a second Liberal candidate failed to be elected on the distribution of her surplus votes.

The System

Like the Tasmanian House of Assembly, the ACT Legislative Assembly uses the Hare-Clark form of proportional representation, introduced for the first time in the ACT for the 1995 elections. The ACT is divided into three multi-member electorates:

- Brindabella - based on Tuggeranong and southern Woden suburbs
- Ginninderra - based on Belconnen
- Molonglo-based on central Canberra, Gungahlin, Weston Creek and northern Woden suburbs.

The electorates of Brindabella and Ginninderra elect five members while Molonglo elects seven members giving an Assembly of

17 members in total. The quota for election in the five member electorates is 16.7% while the quota in the seven member electorate is 12.5%. Like Tasmania, the ACT uses the Robson Rotation system to rotate the candidates' positions within party

Winning Candidates			
LP	ALP	Greens	Others
* Carnell	*Berry	Horodny	*Moore
* Cornwell	*Connolly	Tucker	Osborne
* De Domenico	*Follett		
Hird	*McRae		
* Humphries	Whitecross		
* Kaine	*Wood		
* Stefaniak			
* sitting member			

groups on the ballot papers. The Robson Rotation system ensures that for each party group the preferred first position on the ballot paper is shared equally among all candidates.

Entrenching Referendum

A Referendum to entrench the Hare-Clark electoral system was held concurrently with the ACT

Assembly election. Under the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988*, entrenching referendums in the ACT require a majority of electors enrolled to be in favour of the proposal before it can be passed, in contrast to the requirements for Federal Referendums where only a majority of votes cast is required. The entrenching referendum was passed with 55.68% of electors enrolled voting yes.

As a consequence of the success of the Referendum, major principles of the ACT electoral system can now only be changed if a majority of electors vote in favour of change at a future refer-

endum, or if a two-thirds majority of Legislative Assembly members (12 or more) vote in favour of change.

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Entrenching Referendum Results			
	No.	Percent	% of Enrolment
Yes	109 666	65.01	55.68
No	59 017	34.99	29.96
Formal	168 683	95.91	
Informal	7190	4.09	
Total	175 873	89.29	
Enrolled	196 959		