

## **On the system used for the single-member elections in MMP**

The system used for the single-member elections in MMP determines which party's local candidates will be elected and, as a result, how many list seats each party will receive. This issue is related to legitimacy, simplicity and practicality, and potentially proportionality.

### **First-Past-the-Post**

FPTP is a plurality system where voters cast a single, categorical vote for the candidate of their choice. First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) is a system that Ontarians are very familiar with as it is the system that has traditionally been used to elect MPPs in the province. For this reason, FPTP may be the system that would be the easiest for the voters to understand. FPTP is also the system that is the easiest for the voters to use in the sense that all they have to do is mark a single X. FPTP only allows voters to demonstrate support for a single candidate. FPTP ensures that the winning candidate receives a plurality of support. Every existing MMP system uses FPTP for its single-member elections; this is because MMP was designed to correct for the disproportionalities of FPTP.

### **Alternative Vote**

Alternative Vote (AV) is a preferential system that requires voters to rank candidates according to their preference. As a result, AV offers a high degree of voter choice. While voter choice may be seen as a benefit, this increased voter choice can also make AV somewhat harder for voters to understand, particularly if there is mandatory ballot completion. AV ensures that the winning candidate has received a majority of support from their constituents. However, it is possible that AV could lead to a greater likelihood of either disproportionality or overhangs if the transferring of votes were to privilege the larger parties. If this were to happen it would increase the likelihood of a situation where the large parties win more seats than their percentage of the popular vote entitles them to. With a 25% list tier there is an increased likelihood of this occurring. The risk of this is reduced however if, as often happens in Australia, the candidate who leads after the first count is also the person eventually elected; however this possibility also highlights how little the results are changed when the move is made from FPTP to AV.