

When the Taskforce on Implementation of ACT Self Government of May 1984 (of which I was a member) addressed the issue of Assembly size, it was operating at a time of considerable public opposition to the concept of self-government. It found this issue of Assembly size particularly vexing. There was the imperative of recommending a sufficiently high number to allow the individual assembly members a reasonably prospect of performing a wider range of functions than were being required of their state counterparts, while at the same time factoring in the desirability of achieving a reasonable public consensus for the imminent major changes to the structure of the ACT's government.

In the end, the Taskforce recommended a 15 member Assembly. Its report made it quite clear that its expectation was that that number would be increased over time (s.9.20-22). It is important to keep in mind that the Taskforce reported in 1984, a good eight years prior to the establishment of COAG which, in turn, resulted in a heightened level of activity for ministerial councils and their supporting structures.

In terms of both a reasonable workload for the politicians and the effective representation of the ACT's interests in inter-government forums, my current preference is for a 25 member Assembly. However, I do appreciate that when the affordability issues are factored in, a compromise of a 21 member Assembly may have to be accepted.

Llois Cutts