

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Committee, EM \(REPS\)](#)
Subject: INVITATION TO MAKE A SUBMISSION - 2022 FEDERAL ELECTION INQUIRY
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Submission To The Joint Parliamentary Election Committee - Australian Federal Election 2022 Inquiry

My reading of your submission guidelines makes me question whether this will be a full and transparent inquiry. Whilst I have attempted to fit my observances as a scrutineer in the 2022 Australian federal election into your guidelines, I find that the most pressing of them do not exactly fit under your guideline headings. I have attempted to marry my observances with the guidelines but I am disappointed by their unnecessarily narrow scope.

I attended the Cygnet, Tasmania polling station in the Electorate of Franklin on the evening of the 2022 federal election as a scrutineer. My observations of the 2022 election process are as follows.

c) The potential for 'truth in political advertising' laws to enhance the integrity and transparency of the electoral system;

Two Party Preferred System (TPPS)

Whilst scrutineering the House Of Representatives (HOR) ballot paper counting, I was shocked to discover the “two-party preferred” system in place; previously I had no idea that this sorting system even existed. I am 63 years old and while I have heard of the “two party preferred” system, it was not until I participated in an election process that I finally understood what it meant, and only because I specifically asked the AEC staff what was happening due to my confusion whilst observing the preferences counting.

When I saw Liberal and Labour ballot papers being sorted into "second preferences" piles regardless of the second preference marked on the ballot papers, I had to ask the AEC staff at the polling station (three times to understand) what they were doing. I *had* understood that the preferences would be counted *as marked* on the ballot papers. There were many, many second preferences that were not Liberal or Labor on that evening in Cygnet.

When I asked what this was all about, I was told by polling station AEC senior staff that “...this is what always happens”, “...it’s called the “two party preferred” system”, and “...the real preference counting will commence next Monday” (when it would be coincidentally harder for scrutineers to attend).

Since we scrutineers were there to witness that no argy-bargy was taking place at the ballot counting stage of the election, this reply was indeed a shock to me. I had assumed that “real” preference counting would have commenced on-site, on election evening.

I was also told that this was happening “because the media want to get an "immediate helicopter view" of what’s happening at the polling stations”, which to my mind is deceitful as, especially with this last election, it is still not at all clear that the two major parties have received a lion’s share of second preferences.

Further, when I questioned AEC staff who chose the two parties for the “two party

preferred system”, I was informed that the parties were chosen by the “the politicians in Canberra” and that the choice was based on “the outcomes of previous elections”. Indeed, if two parties were to be chosen for this inaccurate and (to my mind dishonest) immediate preference counting, at least the parties should be chosen on vote numbers at the booth.

For example, at Cygnet polling booth the two parties leading the voting were *Labor and Greens*, not Labor and Liberal, and the counting should have reflected that. It is my opinion that the “two party preferred” parties chosen in this latest election (and probably previous elections) by interested and perhaps *biased politicians* in Canberra represents a *conflict of interest* in the election process.

The House of Representatives final voting count on the night for Cygnet were as follows, in order of number:

Labor 404

Greens 391

Liberal 257

The Liberal party was not even close to either Greens or Labor. I realise that this is only one polling station result, but surely this scenario was being repeated around the country. To my mind, this is dishonest and disingenuous “immediate” reporting that relies on the political ignorance of a lot of the Australian electorate to keep the TPPS system running.

Recommendation:

In future, I personally would like to see:

- a) Cessation of the “two party preferred” preferential vote counting system;
- b) Preferential votes counted as “one vote, one value” according to the marked voting slips;
- c) Cessation of media reporting on voting outcomes until *all* preferences have been properly, honestly counted and verified;
- d) Full disclosure of preferential votes to the public following honest outcome results.

False Information Pre-Election

There was a lot of confusion due to false information being supplied to the electorate during the run-up to the election with regard to how many boxes above and below the line were to be filled out. There were many recorded conversations with AEC staff giving out conflicting information to callers.

One Tasmanian independent Senate candidate’s scrutineer reported to her that her Senate vote had been marked invalid because the person had voted below the line but only filled out 12 boxes out of 39. I got this information straight from the Senate candidate herself and the reason we know this is true information is that in that particular polling station the independent Senate candidate only received one first preference vote, being a newcomer and little-known to the electorate. This is of great concern to both of us.

Following the election, I did submit a complaint to the AEC and subsequently spoke to someone from the AEC by phone regarding my concerns as a scrutineer. When I mentioned the scenario outlined in the paragraph above, the observation of the person I spoke to was that it was “*highly unlikely*” and I was forced by him to go into great detail on the phone to explain how I could possibly know of or be sure that such a thing had happened. In the end he reluctantly concurred (without conviction) that this “might” have

happened.

If scrutineers are being invited to observe vote counting, it would only seem fair that the AEC takes our observations seriously.

Pencil or Pen

Other inconsistencies at the polling stations included widespread reports of voters being told they could not bring their own ink pens into polling booths and that they had to cast their vote using a pencil. This also happened at Cygnet polling booth.

Given the concerns over voter fraud, people felt safer using their own pen that could not be rubbed out by anyone attempting to interfere with the election. The information being put out by some AEC polling staff on election day about not being allowed to use a pen was untrue, so it seems that a lot of AEC representatives did not know all there was to know about voting legitimately and were spreading false information.

Recommendation:

It is my recommendation that simple education around Australian voting processes vastly improves and becomes readily accessible and available to AEC staff and to the *whole* electorate, keeping in mind that not everyone in the electorate is highly literate. In this last election it fell to members of the public to educate other members of the public on Australian election processes. Surely some of our taxpayer dollars can be better spent on fundamental education videos concerning elections, accessible to all in the electorate.

b) Potential reforms to funding of elections, particularly regarding electoral expenditure caps and public funding of parties and candidates

Vote Payments For Electoral Expenditure

Perhaps the most concerning part of the whole 2022 election was learning for the very first time (I am 63 years old and have been voting for a lot of years) that the AEC distributes a taxpayer-funded payment of \$2.914 per eligible vote to eligible political parties, candidates and groups in both houses to reimburse them for electoral expenditure, and the fact that these candidates are only eligible to receive this electoral expenditure payment if they achieve 4% of the primary vote.

I have a couple of concerns regarding this practice:

a) Funds go only to those capable of garnering higher vote numbers - smaller candidates and parties receive *no funding whatsoever* to cover their costs and are probably in more dire need than established, larger parties who already have campaign coffers, are already sponsored and who receive solicited and unsolicited campaign donations to cover their costs.

The costs of campaigning are very high. Candidates are paying up to \$40 per corflute sign, have high advertising and other per diem costs including travel for interviews and electorate mingling, accommodation fees, fuel, etc. Parties and candidates with already large campaign budgets naturally have a higher visibility rate within electorates and are therefore more likely to influence voting patterns. This system is not equitable, is unfair to all smaller candidates who have no hope of winning 4% of the primary vote and shows undue favour to large, established and better-known candidates who are vastly more able

to cover their costs.

The Australian public are by and large (according to vox-pops) unaware that these electoral expenditure payments occur, even less aware that they are paying for them. This is hardly a transparent practice or every voting Australian would be aware of the situation. Given that Australian citizens are ultimately paying for these electoral expenditure costs, we should have a say in to whom they are paid. This should not be decided by politicians who, once again, have a vested fiscal interest in the outcome.

All upper and lower house candidates pay a \$2,000 non-refundable registration fee, which is, once again, refundable *only to those who achieve 4% of the primary vote* and is non-refundable to everyone else.

Recommendations:

a) No parties, politicians or candidates are paid for electoral expenditure during election campaigns;

OR

b) Each party/candidate receives a fair and proportionate share of vote payments for electoral expenditure based on votes counted - no matter how large or small the number - and not *only* to those who achieve 4% of the primary vote;

c) \$2,000 election registration fees are fully refundable to all participants and not only to those who achieve 4% of the primary vote;

OR

d) \$2,000 election registration fees are not refundable to any party/candidate.

h) other matters

Computer Counting of Senate Votes

Given that vote fraud in the US during the 2020 election has been uncovered and proven following the release of the documentary “2,000 Mules” and scrutiny of other proffered evidence, it is concerning that Australian federal election Senate votes are counted using computer technology that cannot be scrutineered.

Here is the link to referred documentary, “2,000 Mules”, by Dinesh D’Souza, concerning election fraud in the 2020 US elections.

<https://www.bitchute.com/video/rE6QkUbfA5xF/>

I sincerely hope that a report on the issues raised in all submissions to your committee is compiled and shared publicly with all Australians in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,

Jo goodman



Franklin Electorate