Malcolm Mackerras AO
[redacted]
22 August 2019

Ms Lynley Ducker
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Ducker

The worst aspect of the dishonesty of the Senate voting system is the simple fact that the politicians have had the effect of making the Australian Electoral Commission dishonest in their wake. To justify this claim I cite the third page of the AEC document "Your official guide to the 2019 federal election: Saturday 18 May 2019". This document was sent to every household. I invite Committee members to read the third page closely. An original of the document is enclosed.

Dealing with above-the-line voting for the Senate it tells the reader: "If you choose to vote above the line, you need to number at least 6 boxes." (Note that the words "number at least 6 boxes" are in bold letters.) That statement is a lie. A single first preference is a formal vote, so you do not need to do that. Why, therefore, are you not told the truth? The answer is that the federal politicians want you to believe your vote is informal if you do not do as they instruct. Their reasons for concealing the truth from voters are as cynical as could possibly be imagined. The instructions are deceitful.

By the way I would not object to that if it were to read: "If you choose to vote above the line, and if you wish to follow the

instructions on your ballot paper, you would then need to number at least 6 boxes."

Another possibility would be to replace "you need to number at least 6 boxes" by "you should number at least 6 boxes". I would still dislike that, of course. But that statement would not be a lie.

Dealing with the below-the-line vote the guide has this:

> If you choose to vote below the line, you need to number at least 12 boxes, from 1 to 12, for individual candidates in the order of your choice. You can continue to place numbers in the order of your choice in as many boxes below the line as you like."

Note that the words "number at least 12 boxes" are in bold letters.

If politicians were honest with voters that would read this way:

> If you choose to vote below the line, you need to number at least 6 boxes, from 1 to 6, for individual candidates in the order of your choice. You can continue to place numbers in the order of your choice in as many boxes below the line as you like. Your vote will only be rendered informal if you fail to number 6 boxes in consecutive order.

Does anyone seriously dispute my claim that the Senate voting system is both dishonest and manipulative? What is needed is an honest system designed by me. My model ballot papers provide that. The voter would then be offered a voter-friendly ballot paper in which it is made quite clear that which vote is counted as formal and that which vote is not counted because it is informal. The present ballot paper is very voter unfriendly and very, very, party-machine friendly. It is precisely what would be expected from party machines that seek to manipulate voters who have the wool pulled over their eyes.

My use of the expression "designed by me" may sound conceited. For such a reason I should point out that the IDEA behind my reform proposals was generated by Dame Enid Lyons (on behalf

of the Liberal Party) in February 1948. Unfortunately, because the Labor Government of the day did not understand what it was doing she failed in the short term. When her party gained office, it decided her ideas were not acceptable because they would make the Senate voting system too fair.

Please reply by e-mail for which my address is as follows:

[redacted]

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Mackerras