

Denis and Rosalie Burns

My wife and I are retired teachers and I also am an ordained Minister in the Uniting church in Australia and have served at a number of Churches in rural NSW.

We want to add our voices to the many conversations we hear in our daily life about a desire for decisions in the Government being open, honest and without any strings attached. Most of the people we speak with would never write a submission, but nonetheless would want to support anything that leads to a more honest approach to decision making.

I am also in the fortunate position to speak to quite a few young people. Often when the conversation of politics is raised, they are dismissive of most politicians, feeling that they are heavily into self interest. As a democracy we need legislation that communicates to every generation that a select few do not have a privilege audience with our law makers.

Also another perspective I have listened to revolves around people who come to our food bank every Monday morning. Often this is in excess of 100 people who either live on the street or need help in feeding themselves and their families. My job is to listen. A common theme is that there are really enough resources for a fair distribution in our country, but our one vote pales into insignificance when it comes to getting an opportunity for the government of the day to listen.

In both of these groups there is a malaise of attitude towards 'a fair go for all'.

Both of these perspectives are far too generalised, but we need as a democracy to communicate better that each vote has the same 'weight' of legitimacy and there are no special privileges to those groups that are given better access to Parliament members or committees. This transparency needs to be spelt out, not after the fact but as a continual process.

I think everyone understands for groups of people to meet with Members of Parliament or their representatives. This is common sense. But such meetings should be made available to the public domain on a regular basis. My humble suggestion would be similar to a public listed company meetings. Date of meeting, persons attending, outcomes and if necessary costs involved.

Australians need to hear that if a group has special access, then we all need to hear about the process and the transaction. To make overt was covert. Totally transparency. To restore faith and help us all make more informed decisions.

We realise our submission is very general, but we hope it reflects the desire from many individuals to understand that democracy is such a great gift, but it requires a greater degree of translucence that is perceived currently.

Yours Sincerely
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