

Submission regarding Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016

I wish to make a submission regarding the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016, which I understand amends the requirements for marking Senate ballot papers.

I request that the bill be amended to require electors voting “below the line” to indicate preferences for at least one candidate.

My understanding is that the proposed Bill requires “below the line” voters to number nearly every candidate., which is quite difficult and error-prone.

My reason for requesting this change is that I want to specify my preferences for individual candidates, which requires voting “below the line”.

If I vote “above the line” indicating my preferences for parties, I cannot specify my preferences between the individual candidates within each party, as those preferences are decided by factional deals made by party organisations. I often personally disagree with those party factional deals.

I also believe that “below the line” electors should have the option of indicating preferences for fewer than the number of vacancies, so long as they indicate at least one preference.

I assume that all Senate voting papers are now being digitised (with careful scrutiny and verification) and the votes counted by a (very carefully written and tested) computer program, so that the time taken to count mere tens of millions of these digitised votes is trivial.

Notwithstanding my above submission, I believe that the proposed Bill is a vast improvement over the present Senate voting statute.

I thank the Joint Committee for considering my submission.