

**THE ELECTORAL REFORM SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

<http://www.effectivevoting.org.au/>

President:

Mr Graham Pratt

Secretary:

Mr Deane Crabb

21 January 2010

The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

NSW proposal for automatic electoral enrolment

As the aim of the Electoral Reform Society of South Australia is to maximise the number of people who are enfranchised, empowered and made to feel as though their views are taken into account, the Society supports the NSW proposal for automatic enrolment.

In addition to examining the recent NSW Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Amendment (Automatic Enrolment) Bill 2009, the Society has taken into account the submission the Electoral Commission NSW has made to the Electoral Reform Green Paper on "Strengthening Australia's Democracy" on having a Smart Roll used for the whole of Australia.

It is worrying that at every election (Federal and State) that a large number of voters attempt to vote, and either find that they are ineligible as their names are not on the roll or they make declaration votes which are later ruled ineligible.

If the process can be improved so that changes of address for existing voters and the details for people who have become eligible to vote can both be incorporated automatically, this must mean that the electoral rolls will be more accurate than currently.

Automatic electoral enrolment would also assist in reducing the chaos that happens once an election is called, when people try at the last minute before the rolls close to change their enrolment details or try to enrol for the first time.

Hare-Clark.....fair and democratic

Of course improving the enrolment process is but a first step in improving Australia's democracy. Once people are enrolled to vote, it is then necessary to have systems in place so that:

- firstly their votes are eligible to be counted, by having more flexibility in assessing formality; and
- secondly, these votes actually are effective in being used to elect a candidate.

In the words of Catherine Helen Spence, one of the first to campaign in Australia for electoral reform, *"if an elector voted for a candidate who was not elected, he was 'disenfranchised' and not represented."*

It is for this reason that the Electoral Reform Society advocates that the quota-preferential method of proportional representation should be used for all elections.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deane Crabb". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Deane Crabb