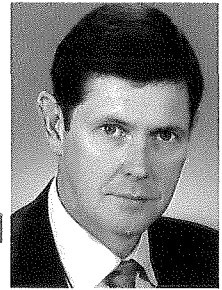




Parliament of Australia
House of Representatives

Kevin Andrews MP

Federal Member for Menzies



10 November 2008

Ms Julie Owens MP
Chair
Procedure Committee
House of Representatives

Dear Ms Owen,

I understand that the committee is conducting an inquiry into the business of the House,

I have a proposal to place before the committee dealing with divisions.

I believe that the formality of divisions should be retained, but the conduct of them undertaken in a more efficient way.

This could be achieved by electronic voting. Members could be issued with a digitally coded card. Each seat in the chamber could have a card reader.

When a division is called, members would divide, as they currently do. Upon the putting of the motion, members would insert their card in the card reader at the desk where they are sitting. Those on the right of the chair would be recorded as voting for the motion; those on the left, against. Those not in the chamber, or who didn't engage their card, would be recorded as not voting.

I suggest that tellers be appointed, as they are now, for two reasons. First, if a member did not have his or her card, he or she could report to the tellers. Secondly, if the electronic system failed, the tellers could conduct a manual count.

I believe such a system would save much time each week, but still retain the tradition and formality of divisions.

A further suggestion is to indicate how each member votes, as occurs in the US Congress. I suggest that the glassed area above the Press Gallery be used for this purpose. In 17 years in Parliament, I have only seen that area used once or twice. It would be possible, using modern technology, to project the votes onto the glass, whilst retaining the area for the occasional other use. The names of members voting for or against a motion could be projected onto the glass (or some other screen).

I commend these proposals to the committee.

Yours sincerely,

KEVIN ANDREWS.

Electorate Office

1st Floor, 65 Doncaster Rd, Doncaster
Tel: 9848 9900 Fax: 9848 2741
Email: kevin.andrews.mp@aph.gov.au

Correspondence

PO Box 124
Doncaster VIC 3108

Parliament House

Room 1 - 20 Canberra ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6277 4585 Fax: (02) 6277 8566