

The Liberal Party of Australia

Victorian Division



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16 August 2005

Mr Tony Smith MP
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

Liberal Party How to Vote Card – Melbourne Ports

The Liberal Party distributed a How to Vote Card (“the Card”) on 9 October 2004 in the Division of Melbourne Ports promoting the Party’s environmental achievements. A copy of the Card is attached. The facts concerning the Card are as follows:

- The Card presented a case for voting for David Southwick based on the Liberal Party’s environmental achievements. The front of the Card stated, in 25 point bold font, that “Some of the Environmental Achievements of the Liberals Include ...”, followed by 6 noteworthy environmental achievements of the Howard Government. (I note by comparison that newspaper articles are printed in 9 or 10 point font).
- The Card featured a picture of Liberal candidate David Southwick, as did the Liberal generic How to Vote Card.
- The Card included the word “Liberal” 5 times, including in the authorisation line, which clearly stated that the Card was authorised by “Julian Sheezel (Liberal Party of Australia)”. The Card also recommended voters place a number 1 in the “Liberal/The Nationals” box for the Senate.
- The How to Vote panel on the Card was the same as the How to Vote panel on the Liberal generic How to Vote Card, including the word “Liberal” printed clearly next to the name David Southwick.
- The font used on the Card was the same as the font on the Liberal generic How to Vote Card.
- The Card was **not** at all similar to the ALP and Greens’ How to Vote Cards, and could not reasonably be confused with either of these Parties’ cards.

I understand that the principal objection to the Card from the ALP and the Greens is that because the Card promoted the environmental achievements of the Liberal Party, and encouraged a vote on the basis of these achievements, the Card was in some way misleading. The clear implication being that the ALP and the Greens consider that they have a mortgage on environmental achievements (and indeed the colour green) and any claim by the Liberal Party to have superior environmental policies must in some way be misleading. The Liberal Party is concerned that the ALP and the Greens wish to prevent the Liberal Party seeking support from the electorate on Election Day on the basis of our environmental policies and achievements.

The ALP in particular has been oversensitive about a Card that is very clearly a Liberal Card, promoting a Liberal vote based on the Party's environmental achievements.

I note that in testimony to the Committee Mr. Dacey of the AEC derided the view of Michael Danby MP that the Card was misleading. Mr Dacey advised the Committee that:

"I could form no other view, on the basis of the particular evidence in front of me, that it was not in fact misleading. It is quite clear it is a Liberal Party how-to-vote card ... it is a legitimate House of Representatives how-to-vote card which says, 'Mark "1" for the Liberal candidate, David Southwick'. It mentions 'Liberal Party' in several places. It talks about Liberal-Nationals for the Senate, it talks about some of the environmental achievements of the Liberals. So, in applying section 329 of the act, I had no choice but to determine that ... it was not misleading."

I note that Mr Danby has objected to people handing out Liberal Party How to Vote Cards where they do not wear the same coloured shirts. I find this view particularly odd and therefore difficult to respond to. I note for the record that the Liberal Party has no particular dress code requirements for Election Day. Our supporters wear a multitude of colours on Election Day, and in my experience the colour blue does not necessarily dominate, in contrast to the expectations of Mr Danby. The AEC has quite reasonably advised the Committee that "There are no regulated colours for parties".

Finally I note that Mr Danby has procured statutory declarations from individuals alleging that the Liberal Party's supporters, in distributing the Card, made statements affirming the Liberal Party's environmental achievements message which is clearly printed on the Card. Needless to say the style of the statutory declarations attempts to present a self-serving message of support for Mr Danby's case and would in any case be disputed by the Liberal Party's campaign workers.

Yours faithfully









Julian Sheezel
State Director

Vote for David Southwick and our environment



SOME OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LIBERALS INCLUDE:

-  Acting immediately to ensure that **over 1 million hectares of old growth forest in Tasmania will now be protected** from logging.
-  **Added over 2.8 million hectares to forest reserves**, significantly increasing the protection of old-growth forests.
-  Invested **\$3 billion in the Natural Heritage Trust** to improve the health of our land and waterways, and provided **\$1.4 billion for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water quality**.
-  **Rezoned the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park** providing for the greatest protected stretch of ocean.
-  **Cutting greenhouse gas emissions.**
-  **Phased out leaded petrol, set and lifted national fuel quality standards** - resulting in cleaner air in our cities.

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR **HOW TO VOTE** DETAILS



How to vote for David Southwick and our environment

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(green coloured ballot paper)

- CAMERON, L
- 1** SOUTHWICK, David (Liberal)
- BEALE, C
- DANBY, M
- JACKEL, G
- ISHERWOOD, A
- HORIN, L
- LEWIS, J

Number every box from 1 to 8 as shown.

DO NOT use ticks or crosses.

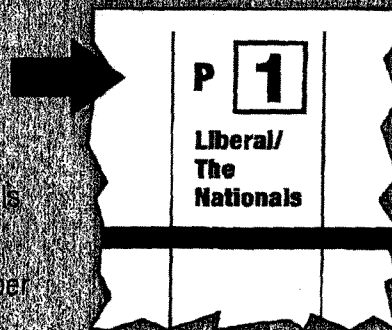
If you make a mistake, please ask for a new ballot paper.

SENATE

(white ballot paper)

Simply place number **1** in the Liberal/The Nationals box above the line.

There is no need to number any other box.



Printed on Recycled Paper

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