

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

Public hearing: Inquiry into the 2007 election

*Chair: Daryl Melham**Deputy Chair: Scott Morrison*

New ALP National Secretary to appear before parliamentary committee

Recently appointed National Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, Karl Bitar, will appear before parliament's Electoral Matters Committee at a public hearing tomorrow, Tuesday 11 November 2008.

The hearing is part of the committee's inquiry into the 2007 Federal election. Mr Bitar was appointed to the position of National Secretary of the Australian Labor Party in October 2008, replacing Tim Gartrell.

"Political parties are a key stakeholder in the electoral system and it is important to get their feedback on the conduct of the 2007 election and proposals for electoral reform," committee chair Daryl Melham (Member for Banks, NSW) said.

The Australian Labor Party's submission to the committee raises a number of issues including the impact of laws to shorten the close of rolls period and require proof of identity, the low admittance rate of declaration votes and the potential for a system of automatic enrolment to be introduced.

"The submission by the Australian Labor Party starts from the position that every entitled elector should be enrolled to vote and that every valid vote should be counted," Mr Melham said. "The committee will be keen to explore what this principle means in practice to see how the franchise can be made as accessible as possible whilst maintaining the integrity of the electoral roll and voting."

The public hearing will be held in Committee Room 2S1, Parliament House, Canberra, from 12.30pm to 2.00pm. The hearing will be broadcast on the House Monitoring Service (HMS 9) and webcast live on the Parliament House website at: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Please note that the Committee will be conducting a private meeting prior to the commencement of the public hearing. The public will be admitted at the conclusion of the private meeting.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Daryl Melham, on (02) 6277 2054 (Parliament House Office).

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 2374, email jscem@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/em>