

SUBMISSION 164



Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. 164
Date Received 19 May 2005
Secretary [Signature]

Forest Hill  
Blackall Q. 4472  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

Dr Sarah Miskin  
Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Dr Miskin,

My apologies for not sending these letters sooner.

Enclosed is the letter from Jeanette Johns, the Maranoa Divisional Returning Officer, dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 2004, also enclosed is a letter headed "Important information for postal voters in remote areas."

Both letters and my ballot papers, came in the one envelope.

I trust that this information is useful and I look forward to hearing of the committee's recommendations.

Kind regards,

Sonja Doyle  
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Contact: Jeanette Johns

Sonya Lorraine Doyle  
Forest Hill  
BLACKALL QLD 4472

Dear Mrs Doyle

On 20 September 2004 I received your application for a postal vote, which I have now processed. I note however, that postal voting papers for this election have already been sent to you on 29 September 2004 in response to your registration as a general postal voter.

Please note that the dispatch of more than one set of ballot papers does not entitle you to another vote. In fact, it is an offence to vote more than once in an election or referendum.

If you have already voted, you should destroy all of the papers included with this letter – please do not simply discard them or return them to this office.

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Johns  
Divisional Returning Officer

29 September, 2004

Dear Voter

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR POSTAL VOTERS IN REMOTE AREAS**

You should be aware that for a postal vote to be allowed into the count at an election, the postmark on the envelope must indicate that it was posted before the close of polls. In effect, this means that it must be postmarked by close of business on the Friday preceding polling day, since Australia Post does not postmark mail on a Saturday.

Regrettably, in the past the votes of some electors in very remote areas have not been post marked until the Monday following polling day, even though they were picked up on the Friday, because the mail was stamped only when it got back to a post office.

The Australian Electoral Commission and Australia Post have made special arrangement to try to overcome this problem, and to ensure that postal voters are not unduly disadvantaged by the remoteness of their place of living.

These arrangements are as follows:

1. When a mail contractor collects postal votes before the close of polling but cannot return these votes to the post office or mail centre in time for them to be postmarked prior to the close of the poll, the contractor will note on the postal vote envelopes the time and date of receipt. A responsible officer at the receiving post office or mail centre will then countersign these envelopes.
2. The action outlined above can, of course, only be undertaken if mail is passed un-bagged to the mail contractor. Postal votes enclosed in a locked, private bag that is not received at the post office or mail centre before the close of polling cannot be included in this special treatment. **It is therefore important that postal voters who use locked private bags, and are concerned that their votes may arrive too late, should not put their postal votes in the bag, but should hand them separately to the mail contractor who can annotate them with the time of receipt, as outlined above.**

Your postal voting material is enclosed.

Divisional Returning Officer

2004