

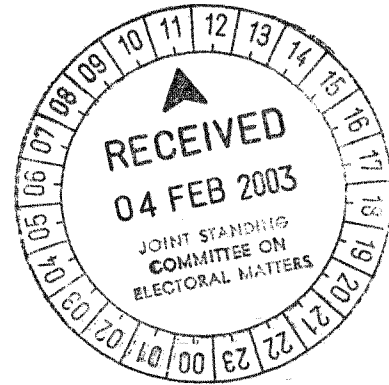


The Liberal Party of Australia

FEDERAL SECRETARIAT

28 January 2003

**Mr Alex Olah
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Room R2.118
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**



Dear Mr Olah

I understand that Senator Ray, at the hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on 9 December 2002, sought to attack the credibility of the Liberal Party's submission with regard to the Liberal Party's correspondence with the Australian Electoral Commission during the 2001 election campaign.

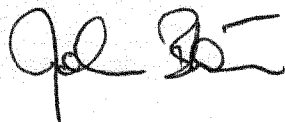
Our submission is, of course, based on what is shown by our own records. According to what we hold in our records, we received replies from the AEC to 4 of our letters before election day. In other words, I confirm the number of 4 that was in our submission. Our records also show that we received replies to 4 more of our letters after election day. Our checking indicates that there were 17 letters from our Campaign Headquarters to the AEC (adjusting the figure from the 14 referred to in the earlier submission). [This number does not include complaints going to the AEC from local candidates or State Directors, since these were not referred to in our submission although the AEC's submission included these in their listing of our letters.] In other words, of the 17 letters, our records do not show a reply having been received to 9 of them at all.

The AEC listing refers to 15 letters that came from our CHQ. The list omits 2 letters, both from me on 8 November 2001 and both raising matters concerning Section 91 B (2).

The AEC stated to the Committee that it had recently written to the Liberal Party about this matter of unanswered correspondence. I advise the Committee that we have not received such a letter.

I suggest that the most important point in all this is not the fine detail of which individual letters were sent or received by either organisation on particular dates but to reiterate the importance of the AEC being in a position to respond in a timely fashion to time-urgent inquiries from parties and candidates during an election campaign.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Burston', written in a cursive style.

JOHN BURSTON
Acting Federal Director