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Federal Member for Calare

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The Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chairman,

RE: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 2001 FEDERAL ELECTION

I offer this letter as my submission to your Committee's inquiry into the conduct of the 2001 Federal election.

In doing so I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to a number of matters I believe undermined the fairness and integrity of the election.

In general terms my concerns relate to:

- the double standards the Electoral Act imposes on Independent candidates;
- aspects of the Electoral Commission's advertising; and
- evidence I believe points to the continued widespread misuse of parliamentary entitlements by incumbent Members for party political purposes during the period of the 2001 Federal election.

1. Registration Requirement for Independent Candidates

It is a requirement of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 Cth* (The Act) that at each election Independent candidates be nominated by at least fifty electors enrolled for the Division in which he or she is standing.

This compares to the requirement for endorsed candidates who may be nominated in bulk by their parties' registered officers, without the need for any signatures.

There is obviously a need to test the bona fides of Independent candidates at their first attempt, and at subsequent elections if they are not successful the first time.

However, it seems excessive that an elected Independent must continue to meet the 50 signature requirement at each subsequent election.

In my case, I was elected in 1996, re-elected in 1998, and again in 2001 – yet on each occasion I was required to obtain the 50 signatures.

Despite now having more than 50% primary voter support in the electorate, at the next election I will again be required to prove I am a genuine candidate by providing at least 50 nominating signatures.

Recommendation: *That the Act be amended so that incumbent Independent members should need not provide 50 signatures at each election after their first, but be able to be nominated by just one other person, enrolled in the Division in question.*

2. Tax Deductibility of Donations to Independent Candidates

The tax treatment of donations to Independent candidates as opposed to endorsed candidates remains blatantly discriminatory.

Under current arrangements donations over two dollars made by individuals to endorsed candidates are tax deductible to a limit of \$100. However, there is no such tax deductibility for donations to Independents.

Legislation designed in part to address this anomaly has been before the Senate for over two years as part of the *Taxation Laws Amendment (Political Donations) Bill 1999*. However, the Bill has been stalled because of the Senate's objection to other clauses in the Bill.

Recommendation: *That the Act/s be amended or specific legislation enacted to ensure donations to Independent candidates receive the same tax treatment as donations to endorsed candidates.*

3. Application of GST to Independent Candidates

On top of the discriminatory treatment afforded Independent candidates in terms of donations, the application of the New Tax System to their campaigns puts them at a further disadvantage.

While GST included on behalf of endorsed candidates is reclaimable by their registered political parties, GST paid by Independents as individuals is not.

This puts Independents at a 10% disadvantage compared to their endorsed counterparts, in terms of ability to purchase advertising, printing and other services essential to running a campaign.

In my case, this forced me to set up a not-for-profit association to separate as far as possible the financial side of my campaign from me personally, and to allow GST incurred by the Association to be reclaimed.

After the election, I submitted my case to the Australian Tax Office for a Private Ruling. This ruling is still to be finalised as the ATO is examining the broader issue of the treatment of Independent candidates in respect of the GST.

I did receive advice that, in regard to my individual situation, the Campaign Association had to collect GST from me for services rendered in the running of my campaign. The actual GST payable was calculated on the public funding I received from my share of the primary vote which outstripped the GST incurred in campaign related expenditure.

Despite my efforts to maintain a transparent account of my election spending, and legitimately reclaim the GST component as registered political parties are able to do, the fact remains that I was still at a considerable financial disadvantage, as were all Independent candidates when compared to endorsed candidates.

Recommendation: *The Act/s be amended or specific legislation enacted to ensure Independent candidates receive the same GST exempt status as party endorsed candidates.*

4. Provision and Administration of Postal Vote Applications by Candidates & Parties

The Electoral Commission has expressed concern to the last three JSCEM election inquiries about the increasing practice by the major political parties, of distributing postal vote applications across electorates.

For the first time I am aware of, this occurred in Calare during the 2001 election and I would like to add my concerns about the practice to those previously expressed by the Commission.

During an election, the roll of the Electoral Commission is to run them, and the roll of candidates (endorsed or Independent) is to campaign to be elected. Allowing candidates to distribute and administer postal vote application forms blurs these roles and by so doing diminishes the integrity of the electoral system.

I understand that since parties have been allowed to distribute and administer postal vote applications, there has been a large increase in the number of votes cast this way (some 850,000 this election). This suggests that many people may now be voting by post who are not actually entitled to do so under the Act.

I understand there were also instances in this election of postal votes applications being returned to candidates or party offices, but not lodged on their behalf by the Electoral Commission's deadline. This should be of concern to the JSCEM for obvious reasons.

From the Commission's perspective, more declaration votes means more delays in announcing results and greater cost. In future elections, if the result is close, the larger the number of postal votes, the less likely it is that results will be known on the night.

From the perspective of Independents and candidates from smaller parties, the high cost of producing and mailing postal vote applications to voters makes it an unrealistic option. Again this means that candidates from the major parties are at a distinct advantage.¹

Allowing applications to be sent by candidates could see households receive multiple applications from different candidates. Besides being likely to annoy many voters, this can only add to the paper waste generated by the election process.

Recommendation: *Repeal section 184AA of the Act so that candidates can no longer provide postal vote applications to constituents as part of other printed election material authorised by them.*

5. Potentially Misleading Advertising by the Electoral Commission

One of the most vital roles the Electoral Commission plays during election campaigns is that of educating voters about the election, and in particular about how to make their vote count.

Educating voters about how to make a formal vote has gained even more importance in recent times given the steady increase in informal votes over the last 10 years.

At this election some 580,000 people or close to 5% of voters cast informal votes. That was up another 1% on the informal vote at the 1998 election.

While there may be many reasons for the increasing number of informal votes, I have received worrying anecdotal reports from my scrutineers that many of the informal votes in Calare involved people voting 1, 2, 3, & 4, but not filling in the other boxes on the ballot paper.

It has been put to me that these votes may have been influenced by the Commission's paper and TV advertisements (Attachment A), that while stressing that every box had to be filled in for a vote to count, also carried a mock ballot paper featuring four candidates and the statement: "**Number the boxes from 1 to 4 [my emphasis] in the order of your choice.**" In the example given it is not hard to see how some readers would reach the conclusion, on the strength of the graphic, that they need only mark from 1 to 4.

If there was a link between the increase in informal votes and these ads this is unfortunate, especially given the degree of care the Commission goes to ensure its advertising is not misleading.

¹ In this regard it is also interesting to note that incumbent MPs are permitted to use their communication allowance to mail these applications to constituents (See Attachment B).

Recommendation: *Request from the Electoral Commission data on the number of informal votes which included only 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th preferences. If the number is considered high, and a link can be established between these votes and the Commission's advertising campaign ensure such ads are not used at future elections, and ensure all future ads clearly indicate that all squares must be filled in.*

6. Use of Parliamentary Allowances & Entitlements During the Election Period for Party-Political Purposes.

After the calling of both the 1998 and 2001 Federal elections, all Members of Parliament and Office holders received letters from the Manager of the Department of Finance and Administration's Ministerial & Parliamentary Services Group advising them of the arrangements applying in respect of the use of their publicly funded entitlements and facilities during the election period (Attachment B).

The letters set out the arrangements for the use of staff, facilities and allowances (including information delivery services and travel) as provided by determinations of the Remuneration Tribunal and Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990.

Under a "convention", the Department authorises members to use their electoral entitlement in support of their own re-election, but not in support of another candidate.

Following the 1998 Federal election, I obtained from the Minister for Finance information about the use of MPs' staff travel and overtime for the election period. The answers showed that for the month of the 1998 election:

- claims made by staff for these allowances for the month of the 1998 election more than doubled when compared to normal monthly average;
- staff of backbench MPs claimed up to 31 times as much overtime during the election month as their monthly average;
- staff travel allowance claims for three minister not even up for re-election increased substantially.²

For the last three years I have argued this data points to widespread use of the Parliamentary entitlements system for party political as opposed to the authorised 'Parliamentary' and 'Electorate' purposes.

In his 1999-2000 financial year audit of MPs' entitlements, the Auditor General shared my concerns at the potential for misuse apparent in the entitlements system. In part he concluded:

"A number of reviews of the administration of Parliamentarians' entitlements have identified the need for clear guidance as to the definition of the terms 'parliamentary business', 'electorate business' and 'party business'. Given the key role these terms play in determining Parliamentarians' eligibility for a number of otherwise largely unlimited

² House of Representatives Hansard 1999, Question 90.

entitlements, the transparency and accountability of the entitlements management framework would be improved by the provision of enhanced guidance to Parliamentarians on the activities likely to be considered to represent parliamentary, electorate, and party business. Further clarity would be provided to Parliamentarians if, in addition to receiving enhanced guidance on what activities come under the various terms governing their entitlements, they were also provided with advice as to what activities or items may not be paid for by public monies provided through their various entitlements. The use of entitlements by Parliamentarians during periods of by-elections and general elections would seem to require greater clarity and certainty for those concerned."³

I understand the Audit Office will be carrying out an audit into the use of staff allowances and entitlements available under the *Members of Parliament Staff Act 1984 (Cth)* for the financial period covering the 2001 election. I have reason to believe these entitlements were possibly misused again during the 2001 election by the major political parties, and I presume the Auditor General's investigation will pick this up.

In my own electorate for example, while the guidelines specifically prohibit members using their entitlements in support of other candidates, it was reported that the National Party candidate was assisted in his campaign by a staffer of the Minister for Trade (Attachment C). I am also aware of reports that the former Member for New England was extensively supported in his campaign by Ministerial staff. For all I know, the same thing could have been happened across the country, especially in marginal seats.

In my electorate a National Party Senator distributed a letter across the electorate urging voters to support his Party's candidate for the seat (Attachment D). Such a letter, printed on Parliamentary letterhead, appears to be in breach of the guidelines (Attachment B) that clearly states that such entitlements may not be used in support of other candidates.

Two days before the election voters in the seat of Warringah received a personalised and highly political letter from the Prime Minister urging them to vote for the Liberal candidate Tony Abbott (Attachment E). The letter carried the Commonwealth Crest and purported to have been sent from the Office of the Prime Minister, Parliament House.

The Act does not require such a letter to require an authorisation because it bears the address of the sender.⁴ However, the formal nature of the letter, the use of the Crest, the office of Prime Minister and Parliament, is clearly designed to give the impression that it has the imprimatur of the Commonwealth.

After making public statements about the Prime Minister's letter in Warringah, I was sent similar letters received by voters in the seats of Blair, Dobell, Wentworth and Lowe (Attachments F – I). All letters urged the recipient to vote for the respective Liberal candidate, however, these did not use the crest, but a photo of the Prime Minister. Some

³ Barrett P.J, *Parliamentarians' Entitlements: 1999-2000, Audit Report No.5 2001-2002*, at p.41.

⁴ *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth)* ss.328(3)

carried the statement: *"Not produced or distributed at tax payers' expense"* which was notably absent from the letter sent to Warringah voters.

The questions that I ask the Committee to consider in relation these letters are whether:

- it is appropriate for the Office of Prime Minister, and Parliament, to be used in this way during election campaigns?
- Whether it is fair for such tactics to be used in local campaigns given the relative resources of the major parties compared to minor parties and Independents?
- Whether appropriate rules and audits are in place to ensure public funds are not used as such?

For example, what requirements are in place to ensure claims such as: *"Not produced at tax payers expense"* can be substantiated?

These are not trivial matters, to be dismissed as sideline issues. While we will never know, the letter sent out in Warringah by the Prime Minister just prior to the election may have made all the difference to the result.

Use of entitlements in this way is quite different from having a Prime Minister, Minister, Shadow Minister or Opposition Leader make a personal appearance, but even in such cases the use of public monies for campaign purposes is brought into question.

Given the millions of dollars parties and candidates now receive through the Act's public funding provisions, there should be no need for Members to use their Parliamentary entitlements for campaign purposes, let alone in support of other candidates.

As for misuse of staff entitlements, there is no reason, except for the major parties' reliance on the system, why Australia could not adopt a system like that used in the United Kingdom where once the election is called, political staff are no longer employed by the Government but become directly employed by their parties or members.

While the JSCEM may argue that these matters are outside its terms of reference, I could argue that guaranteeing the system of MPs' entitlements is transparent and not open to misuse is fundamental to ensuring the integrity and fairness of the electoral system.

Until these issues are properly addressed by the Parliament, disillusionment and cynicism with our political system will continue to grow, and the number of informal votes cast will continue to increase as voters register their protest.

Recommendation: *That the JSCEM review the Auditor General's report on Parliamentarians' Entitlements and his yet to be released report on the Members of Parliament Staff Act, with a view to producing recommendations aimed at ensuring the system of entitlements available to MPs, Senators and Ministers is transparent, not open to misuse and not able to be used for party political purposes both before and during election campaign.*

Conclusion

I note that in the forward to your Committee's report on the 1998 election the then Chairman Mr Nairn said: *"The body of work produced by these inquiries has contributed to Australia's distinguished electoral reputation; encouraged steady and appropriate reform of the electoral system; corrected deficiencies; and advocated the adoption of relevant procedural and technological advances."*

I trust that the matters I have raised in this submission are of interest to your Committee and look forward to them being addressed through your inquiry and subsequent report.

Yours sincerely,

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

PETER ANDREN
Federal Member for Calare

the republic, the AEC went for a virtual tally room relaying the results via the Internet. But there's something about the tally room that people are in between elections for the AEC as a director of election education, has just overseen the rollout of eight kilometres of computer cabling, night, the last time a prime minister came to the tally room. It was a mad media frenzy as everyone tried to get near him."

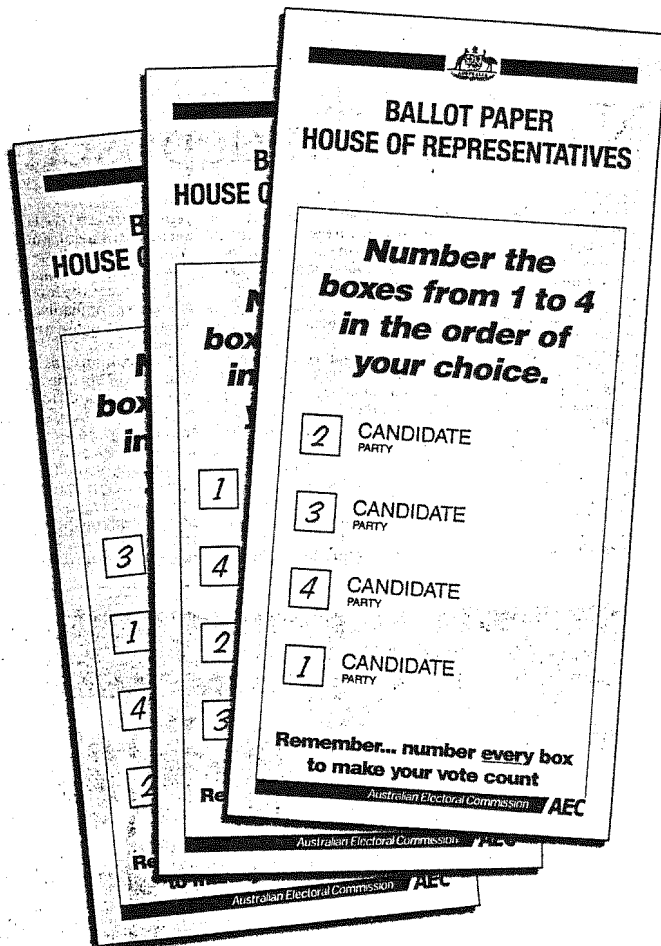
ELECTION 2001

Whether you have three, four, five or even more boxes on your House of Representatives ballot paper, remember

to place a number in every box.

If you use a tick or cross, or leave boxes blank, your vote won't count and if your vote doesn't count, you can't have your say. So make sure you have your say this Saturday. Remember, it's your right, don't get it wrong.

Number every box.



Federal Election, Saturday, November 10th.

Interpreting Services. العربية 1300 720 132 Arabic • 廣東話 1300 720 135 Cantonese
 Hrvatski 1300 720 136 Croatian • Ελληνικά 1300 720 137 Greek • Italiano 1300 720 138 Italian
 маџиџи 1300 720 134 Khmer • Македонски 1300 720 139 Macedonian
 國語 1300 720 142 Mandarin • Polski 1300 720 143 Polish
 Português 1300 720 145 Portuguese • Русский 1300 720 146 Russian
 Српски 1300 720 147 Serbian • Español 1300 720 148 Spanish • Türkçe 1300 720 149 Turkish
 Tiếng Việt 1300 720 152 Vietnamese • 1300 720 153 All other languages

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www.aec.gov.au

Australian Electoral Commission AEC

ATTACHMENT B



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

09 OCT 2001

To All Members Seeking Re-election

ENTITLEMENTS AND FACILITIES – ELECTION PERIOD

I am writing to you to outline the arrangements which apply in respect of entitlements and facilities now that the House of Representatives has been prorogued. These arrangements derive from specific provisions in legislation or Remuneration Tribunal Determinations and conventions which have developed over time and which have been endorsed by successive governments.

The *Parliamentary Allowances Act 1952* provides that a Member who is a candidate for election as a member of the House of Representatives at the general election shall be paid salary and allowances until the day immediately preceding polling day. This principle was reinforced by section 7(1) of the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990* which provides that all benefits provided by the Act, including by determinations of the Remuneration Tribunal, apply while the Member is entitled to an allowance under the *Parliamentary Allowances Act*.

The following points are worthy of particular attention:

- Overseas study travel may not be commenced following the dissolution of the Parliament.
- Members may undertake electorate business but not Parliamentary business (there being no Parliament).
- It is recognised that in carrying out their electorate business Members may use their entitlement in support of their own re-election but not in support of another candidate.
- The Electorate Office is a Commonwealth leased office and signs promoting your own, or any other persons candidacy, or that of your party should not be displayed on the external walls, windows, fences, etc of your office. Travel by scheduled services may normally be accessed for parliamentary and electorate business but not party business (other than meetings of a parliamentary political party, or of its executive, or of its committees, and the national conference of a political party, of which he or she is a member). It would therefore follow that for Members, as the House of Representatives has been dissolved, it would be difficult to rely on parliamentary business as a justification for travel.
- It is recognised that the relevant Whip or the properly authorised person may convene a properly constituted meeting of the parliamentary political party to co-ordinate with the policy launch by the Leader of a recognised party as defined by the Tribunal ie. at least five members in the Parliament.
- The Communications Allowance (formally postage) may be used to provide constituents with postal, pre-poll and absentee voting information on ballot forms and for the return of those forms.

The relevant Remuneration Tribunal Determination contains provisions relating to accessing the Communications Allowance pre and post polling day. Briefly the entitlement ceases to be available on the day before polling day and in the event of re-election is reinstated up to the level of one year's entitlement. The Determination also contains a provision which applies from the date new electorate division boundaries are determined. Under this provision a Member may communicate with residents of an adjoining or nearby area, if that area and part of the existing electoral division are to become part of the same electoral division at the forthcoming election.

- Entitlements provided for electorate business may be used in support of a Member's own re-election but not in the election or re-election of others:
 - Long standing convention is to regard electorate business as including activities in support of the Senator or Member's own re-election – hence staff can be expected to perform duties associated with the Senator or Member's re-election.
 - However the duties should not extend to supporting the campaign of another Senator or Member.
 - Moreover care should be taken to ensure that any duties staff undertake have regard to the fact that the staff are provided to assist a Senator or Member in carrying out his or her electorate duties (and parliamentary duties when the Parliament operates).
 - Independent Senators and Members are, having regard to their Parliamentary duties, provided with an additional staff member employed under Part III of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*. Their employment continues during the campaign period and by convention they are treated in the same way as electorate staff.

If you need any further information about your entitlements during this time please contact your Account Manager whose number appears below*.

Yours sincerely



Jan Mason
 General Manager
 Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Group

8 October 2001

*Sue Whisker (02) 6215 3426 – NSW and Tasmania;
 Greg Miles (02) 6215 3827 – Victoria, SA, NT and ACT;
 John Ignatius (02) 6215 3623 – Queensland and WA

RELIANCE
CREDIT UNION LTD

Yes, surely on us

MONDAY

WIN \$10,000 OFF YOUR MORTGAGE

To enter, simply cut out coupons daily and attach to the entry forms, (published each Monday & Wednesday).
ENTER AS MANY TIMES AS YOU LIKE, but remember original coupons only.
GOOD LUCK!!! *conditions apply - see entry form. NSW Permit No. TPL 01/9887

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A case of 'Yes Minister'!

By Tony Rhead

IF federal Trade Minister and National Party member for the North Coast seat of Lyne, Mark Valie, is re-elected on November 10 it will be due in part to the "important trade issues" one of his senior advisors has been discussing with voters around Orange.

Bolstering Minister Valie's re-election chances was the explanation given to the *Western Advocate* for ministerial aid Peter Walsh being in the Calare campaign office of National Party candidate Dave Shearing last week.

Under 1998 Department of Finance and Administration guidelines on the use of staff,

entitlements and facilities during an election period, the long standing convention is that staff like Mr Walsh can be used "in support of one's own re-election".

For more than three years Calare Independent Peter Andren has been calling for a review of regulations, conventions and what he calls their flagrant abuse by all the major parties at election time.

"This year the Auditor General is doing just that. The travel allowance, staff overtime and other expenses rung up to Australian taxpayers by all MPs and senators during election period will be examined.

Early last week Mr Shearing said Mr Walsh had been seconded to his office to "help out".

When asked on Friday how his presence was helping re-elect Mr Valie, Mr Walsh said he was in Orange at the direction of the minister who was extremely cautious and conservative in his interpretation of the regulations and conventions.

Mr Valie's chief of staff, Owen Johnstone, confirmed Mr Walsh's role in Mr Shearing's Summer Street office had been trade related.

"He has been helping out the minister talking to people in industry about apples and fish, murray cod I think," Mr Johnstone said.

"There are some important trade issues out there."

Asked why Mr Walsh seemed to be often in Mr Shearing's office, Mr Johnstone said Mr

Walsh was using it as his base.

Mr Walsh went to the National Field Days with Mr Valie the previous weekend and stayed on in Orange until Friday, Mr Johnstone said.

Another convention which Mr Andren says is being abused by the major parties is the delaying of formal campaign launches. Once the leaders give their formal campaign speeches their parties not the taxpayer have to foot the bill for travel and staff costs.

"Do you ever wonder why the Prime Minister's policy speech is so late in the campaign," Mr Andren said.

Mr Howard gave his campaign policy speech yesterday, 23 days after he called the election. Mr Beazley's will be on Wednesday.

Western Advocate

Monday, October 29, 2001

**If it wasn't
so serious ...!**

IF it wasn't such a blight on the democratic process the abuse of regulations and conventions governing MPs' staff, travel and other expenses at election time would be almost a joke.

That, and the fact that it's also an attack on the hip-pocket of every taxpayer in this country, makes it no laughing matter.

The major parties have the most to gain by it and are guilty of it, which is why independents like Peter Andren complain about it.

And because the Labor Party and the Coalition know taxpayers' dollars are crucial to sustaining their escalating campaign costs they share complicity in avoiding the simple legislation needed to clean the whole rotten system up.

Stopping the rot would mean either scaling back the election bandwagon or raising much more for the fighting funds from donations. Why on earth would they do that?

The fact that some of the most important controls on this type of mis-use of taxpayers' money are covered by convention not specific regulations, shows just how lax Australia's electoral controls have become.

In fact the guidelines issued to MPs and Senators prior to 1998 poll have not re-issued this year. Perhaps the Department of Finance expects MPs

The world of Anne Frank remembered

By Adam Joyce

THE world of Anne Frank will be remembered at Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre tomorrow.

Jewish community service organisation B'nai Brith has co-ordinated a performance of *And then They Came For Me*, a one act multi-media play telling the story of Eva Geiringer, Anne Frank, Ed Silberberg and their families during the Nazi occupation of Holland.

The play will be performed by recent graduates of



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CROSS

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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA • THE SENATE

SENATOR SANDY MACDONALD
National Party Senator for NSW

November, 2001

Dear Resident,

Important election choices

As you are aware, a Federal election will be on 10 November. As well as being a Coalition Senator up for re-election, I would also like to introduce the National Party's candidate for Calare, Mr **Dave Shearing** — a local businessman who knows the grass-roots issues that really matter to local people.

Dave serves as a councillor on Orange City Council and works with many other community organisations. Over the past 15 years, he has travelled the region extensively with his job so he knows the issues and the needs of local communities. This is why he is contesting the seat of Calare, to ensure locals continue to benefit under a strong Howard-Anderson Government which is delivering effective services in country areas and will protect our national security and sovereignty from illegal immigrants and the very real threat of terrorism.

As a Senator for NSW, it is also important that you take advantage of the services my office provides to you. This ranges from providing information on Federal services and grants, to helping constituents with inquiries, be it about social security, immigration, telecommunications, health, employment, taxation or any other Federal issue. My office is here to assist and you may call toll-free on **1800 019 537**.

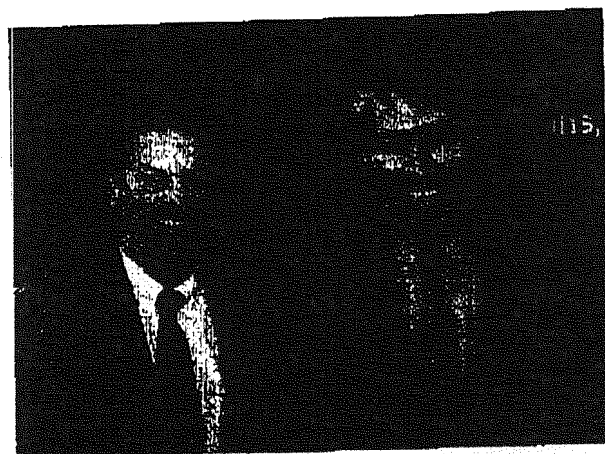
This Coalition Government is rightfully proud of its economic performance, having delivered over the last five years:

- Protection of Australia's borders,
- Lowest inflation and mortgage interest rates in 30 years,
- Lower income tax rates for everybody,
- Reduced unemployment,
- Record funds committed to roads and the environment,
- Balanced budgets and re-payment of Labor's public debt.

The hard work has been started and the foundations are in place for a stronger Australia. If you wish to discuss the future of your electorate please call Dave Shearing's campaign office on **02 6361 9429**.

The National Party, Dave Shearing and I remain committed to serving you into the future.

Yours sincerely,

Senator Sandy Macdonald
National Party Senator for NSW

Dave Shearing

Sandy Macdonald



7 November 2001

PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA



Mr R & Mrs P Lanham
PO Box 64
MANLY NSW 1655

Dear Mr and Mrs Lanham,

On Saturday we do more than just cast a vote. We choose the road we wish to take in the future.

There are challenges ahead. I believe we should face up to them in a decisive and confident way.

And, in particular, we will meet the challenges to our nation's borders, sending a strong message to people smugglers: **"We decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come"**.

To do this I need **Tony Abbott on my team** because at this election there are only six seats between government and opposition. A vote for an independent could elect a Beazley government.

Some want us to abandon our course, putting at risk all that we have worked so hard to achieve. This is unacceptable to me and to my team.

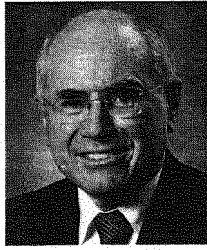
Since being elected to the Federal Parliament in 1994, Tony Abbott has proven himself a strong advocate for the people of Warringah and a very effective member of my Ministerial team.

In these difficult and uncertain times, **you can count on Tony Abbott**. I ask that you support him on Saturday.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Howard".

John Howard



PRIME MINISTER JOHN HOWARD



Mr U Koch
PO Box 28
LOWOOD QLD 4311

Dear Mr Koch

Australians must soon make a crucially important decision. We must elect a Federal Government. The quality of the Government we elect will affect our capacity to do the everyday things that we take for granted.

My Government's ongoing commitment is to securing the financial future of Australian families. Interest rates are at a thirty year low, economic growth is strong and steady, inflation is very low, and job creation figures are strong.

The attached document presents a summary of our plan and demonstrates how, together, we can make Australia an even stronger, more prosperous society.

But we will do more.

- The tragic events of September 11, and challenges to the integrity of our borders, means that my government will provide more resources - and strong decisions.
- We will create more aged care places for our ageing population.
- We will make workplaces more flexible, and create jobs and help Australians balance the demands of work and family, through our new first child tax refund scheme.
- We will work to improve services in rural and regional Australia and, increasingly, in the outer reaches of our major cities.
- We will further address the problems of salinity and water quality.
- We will invest in schools - *all* schools. And we must measure our children's progress against national standards.

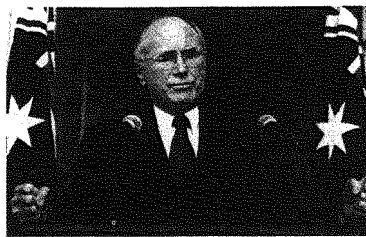
My government has a detailed and affordable plan to meet these challenges and I need Cameron Thompson in Blair to help implement this plan.

Please take the time to read the attached document before you vote on November 10th.

Yours sincerely

John Howard
Prime Minister

PS On Saturday, November 10th I ask you to vote for Cameron Thompson in Blair.
PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA 2600



PRIME MINISTER
JOHN HOWARD

Mr D Williamson
1 Ganora St
GLADESVILLE NSW 2111

Dear Mr Williamson,

On Saturday we do more than just cast a vote. We choose the road we wish to take in the future. There are challenges ahead. I believe we should face up to them in a decisive and confident way.

There's the challenge of an ageing population – and our plan to create an extra 30,000 aged care places. We will **make it easier for seniors** to stay in their own homes.

There's the problem of salinity, and challenges to water quality and biodiversity. We have a **strategy to fix these problems** and will back it up with new funding of more than \$750 million over the next five years.

There's the challenge of keeping Australia competitive in the global workplace. We'll create a further 100,000 TAFE places. We will **keep measuring literacy and numeracy** standards in our classrooms, and we will retain Work for the Dole.

And we will meet the challenges to our nation's borders, sending a strong message to people smugglers: **"We decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come"**.

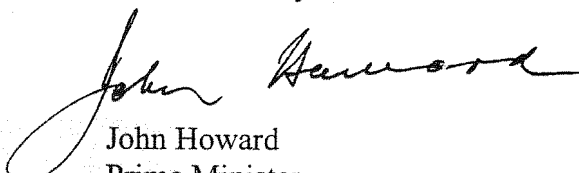
We will **boost Australia's maritime surveillance capability** by investing in new long range surveillance aircraft, radar and telecommunications. And we will support the vital work of our navy, purchasing fifteen new patrol boats.

There are those who want us to abandon our course, putting at risk all that we have worked so hard to achieve. This is unacceptable to me and to my team.

We must keep the economy strong, continue to repay debt, keep interest rates low and secure the financial future of Australian families, including targeted family tax refunds.

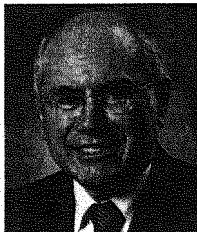
You can help by supporting Ken Ticehurst in Dobell on Saturday.

Yours sincerely



John Howard
Prime Minister

PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA 2600

PRIME MINISTER
JOHN HOWARD

010

M/s B Kowey
46 Wallis St
WOOLLAHRA NSW 2025

Dear M/s Kowey,

Australians must soon make a crucially important decision. We must elect a Federal Government.

The quality of the Government we elect will affect our capacity to do the everyday things that we take for granted.

My Government's ongoing commitment is to securing the financial future of Australian families. Interest rates are at a thirty year low, economic growth is strong and steady, inflation is very low, and job creation figures are strong.

The attached document presents a summary of our plan and demonstrates how, together, we can make Australia an even stronger, more prosperous society.

But we will do more.

- The tragic events of September 11, and challenges to the integrity of our borders, means that my government will provide more resources – and strong decisions.
- We will create more aged care places for our ageing population.
- We will make workplaces more flexible, and create jobs and help Australians balance the demands of work and family, including through our new first child tax refund scheme.
- We will work to improve services in rural and regional Australia and, increasingly, in the outer reaches of our major cities.
- We will continue to strengthen Medicare and retain the private health insurance rebate.
- We will invest in schools – *all* schools. And we must measure our children's progress against national standards.

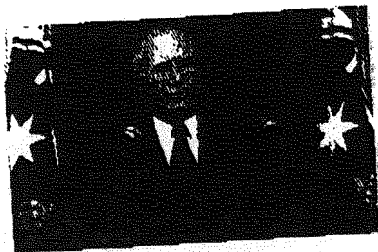
My government has a detailed and affordable plan to meet these challenges and I need Peter King in Wentworth to help implement this plan.

Please take the time to read the attached document before you vote on November 10th.

Yours sincerely

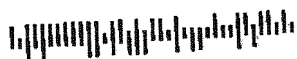
John Howard
Prime Minister

PS On Saturday November 10th I ask you to vote for Peter King in Wentworth.



ATTACHMENT I

PRIME MINISTER
JOHN HOWARD



011

M/s J Richard
4/84 St Georges Cres
DRUMMOYNE NSW 2047

Dear M/s Richard,

On Saturday we do more than just cast a vote. We choose the road we wish to take in the future. There are challenges ahead. I believe we should face up to them in a decisive and confident way.

There's the challenge of an ageing population – and our plan to create an extra 30,000 aged care places. We will **make it easier for seniors** to stay in their own homes.

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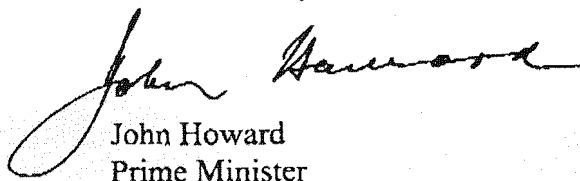
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There are those who want us to abandon our course, putting at risk all that we have worked so hard to achieve. This is unacceptable to me and to my team.

We must keep the economy strong, continue to repay debt, keep interest rates low and secure the financial future of Australian families, including targeted family tax refunds.

You can help by supporting David Doust in Lowe on Saturday.

Yours sincerely


John Howard
Prime Minister

PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA 2600