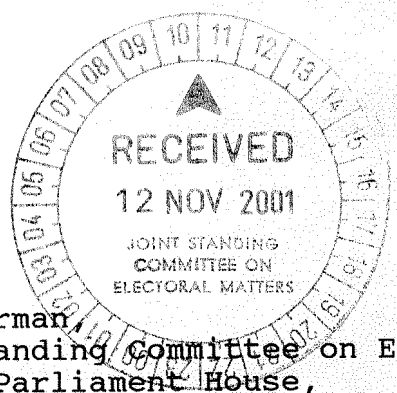

10th November, 2001.

The Chairman,
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters,
Federal Parliament House,
C A N B E R R A. A.C.T.

Dear Sir, Madam, Ms,

Re: Anomalies in today's Senate voting paper

I wish to point out that the 2001 Senate ballot paper to elect 6 Senators for the State of NSW embodies inherent faults that could impede the casting of an effective Preferential vote.

The beige attachments to this letter raise no complaints about the H. of R. Poll where, in the seat of Newcastle, 9 candidates had to be placed in order of choice. This poses no difficulties for voters and a likely outcome could be reached tonight.

However, the Senate paper is a recipe for undue delay and likely resentment. Given that Federal voting is by an optional Preferential system associated with the Quota System, then the voter retains the right to cast a preference vote for the 6 Senate places. It is true that your paper advises that one can place "the single figure 1 in one and only one of (these) squares" but that applies, solely to ***ABOVE THE LINE*** voting.

On p. 2 of the beige supplement I have set down a few questions, about the difficulties confronting one seeking to cast a PREFERENCE vote and I draw the Committee's attention to these. A point that concerns me mostly is that if one wants to encourage one or two minor parties whose candidates have undertaken to direct their preferences to one or other major parties, then one should not have to fill in the entire 65 places; far fewer will clearly indicate what the elector has in mind. Further, there are parties on the Senate paper who are not only ungrouped but give no indication of the planks of their platform, or, for that matter, their relevance to a Federal Poll.

During the week past I telephoned a contact number at the Electoral Commission. An earnest young lady assured me that the Joint Committee retained an open mind. I reminded her that the Senate paper was 1 metre long. She did not think this significant, saying that the last State polling paper "was like a tablecloth". My view is that something 1 metre long won't readily fit into a polling booth; to complete the numbers 1 to 65 without error is a virtual impossibility. Presumably errors invalidate the paper; the paper gives no advice in this respect.

Yours faithfully,

David McAlister

Attachments: 2pp.

POSTAL BALLOT PAPER - H. OF R. (NSW) ELECTORAL DIVISION NEWCASTLE

Number the boxes from 1 to 9 in the order of your choice.

WILLIAMS, Harry (Progressive Labour Party); WILLIAMS, David M. (Liberal); CRITICOS, Harry (Independent); GRIERSON, Sharon (ALP); SUTTON, John (Greens); KILLION-DelCASTILLO, Erin (-); BATTERSBY, Elaine (Christian Democratic Party - Fred Nile Group); KAVANAGH, Mary (Aust. Democrats); LAWN, Barrie (Pauline Hanson's One Nation)

REMEMBER ... number <u>every</u> box to make your vote count. - *AEC*

SENATE POSTAL BALLOT PAPER NSW ELECTION OF 6 SENATORS

You may vote in one of two ways *EITHER* by placing the single figure 1 in one and only one of these squares to indicate the voting ticket you wish to adopt as your vote.

A Pauline Hanson's One Nation *or* **B Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)** *or* **C Unity** *or* **D Citizens Electoral Council E Progressive Labour Party** *or* **F Helen Caldicott's Our Common Future Party** *or* **G Australian Democrats** *or* **H Help End Marijuana Prohibition** *or* **I Peter Breen - Reform the Legal System** *or* **J Australian Labour Party / Country Labour** *or* **K Lower Excise Fuel and Beer Party** *or* **L (-)** *or* **M The Fishing Party** *or* **N (-)** *or* **O Non-Custodial Parents Party** *or* **P Nuclear Disarmament Party of Australia** *or* **Q Liberal/ Nationals** *or* **R No GST** *or* **S Republican Party of Australia** *or* **T The Greens** *or* **U (-)** *or* **V Advance Australia Party** *or* **W Australians Against Further Immigration (N.B. Blank Space shown after W).**

.../2

(NB: *Q: relate to those voting below black line).*

(Q: Is one's vote invalid if 65 numbers are not entered? If not invalid, what is the cut-off point above and below which it is? No clue is given on this paper. Besides, one should be able to exercise a preference for just a few candidates not 65, surely! Note length of paper - I measure it at 1 metre - How does this fit in a polling booth without one's preferences becoming known to others waiting to cast a vote? And how long will it take that percentage of voters wanting to cast Senate preferences to actually get into a booth and vote? A recipe for voter dissatisfaction, surely. Not to mention apathetic filling-in).

OR by placing the numbers 1 to 65 in the order of your preference

Group A Pauline Hanson's One Nation (McKinnon/Putra/Deeney)	= 3
Group B Christian Democratic - Fred Nile (Capsis/Hume)	= 2
Group C Unity (Ngo/McLeod)	= 2
Group D Citizens Electoral Council (Butler/Collins)	= 2
Group E Progressive Labour Party (Woldring/Lee)	= 2
Group F Helen Caldicott's Party etc. (Caldicott/Potts)	= 2
Group G Australian Democrats (Bourne/Yates/Chung Mayfield/Prince/Evans)	= 6
Group H Help End Marijuana Prohib'n (Balderstone/Fuggle)	= 2
Group I Peter Breen Ref.Legal System (Greenaway/Armstrong)	= 2
Group J Aust.Labor Party/Country Labor (Stephens/Campbell Mundine/Woods)	= 4
Group K Lower Excise Fuel Beer Party (O'Loughlin/Freeman)	= 2
Group L (-) (Stewart, L/ Stewart, J)	= 2
Group M The Fishing Party (Smith/Wiseman)	= 2
Group N (-) (Smith/Lawler/Anthony)	= 3
Group O Non-Custodial Parents Party (Thompson/McKeegan)	= 2
Group P Nuclear Disarm. Party of Aust. (Denborough/Francis)	= 2
Group Q Liberal/Nationals (Coonan/Macdonald, S./Payne/ Nash/MacDonald, S./ Tang)	= 6
Group R No GST (Gallagher/Martin)	= 2
Group S Republican Party of Australia (McNally/Jordan)	= 2
Group T The Greens (Nettle/Kay/Davis/Ryan)	= 4
Group U (-) (Hinman/Rintoul)	= 2
Group V Advance Australia Party (Connor/Astridge/Guy)	= 3
Group W Aust'ns Against Further Immig'n (Kitson/Woodger)	= 2
(Ungrouped Independents) (Ivor F/Tinyow/Baker/Lord)	= 4

	Σ N = 65
	====

FOOTNOTE: How is one to cast an intelligent vote if Groups L, N, U, and "Ungrouped" (the final four candidates) "fly no colours" indicating their intentions? I doubt the electoral process is being served by invalid Senate voting from those preferencing 1 to 65. One thing is certain, undue delay in declaring the Poll.