

The Secretary
The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

My submission highlights specific problems in the Northern Territory, especially in relation to the management of Polling Booths in the Lingiari Electorate.

1. Pre Polling The system of pre polling should be totally reviewed. Many people use the pre polling as an excuse not to vote on polling day. The period of two weeks in most cases is far too long. Indigenous voters are rounded up in major centres and taken to the pre polling booths. Airport pre polling allowed staff at the facilities to cast their votes even though they would be available on polling day to vote.
2. Postal voting. Needs to be reviewed. Is the time frame available adequate?
3. Third party influences on voting. This is rife in the NT. People coerced by others in the communities to vote in a similar fashion. AEC staff restrict themselves to the small area outside the booth and ignore any direct evidence of this. The current system is completely re-active, instead of being pro-active which the enforcement of the Legislation must have.
4. Polling Booth Process. The practice that has developed in rural pre-polling booths of sending people back outside to confer with political staffers who in turn refer to Electoral Rolls to find an address and then print it on their Declaration to Vote.
5. Intoxicated voters. Drunken voters allowed to vote.
6. Validity of Electoral Roll. The following names seem to be over represented and have a distinct lack of information to allow authentication: Wungumurra or similar 162 entries, Wurraramara 198 entries, Yunipingu 185 entries.
7. AEC Officials bias. Whilst I am aware that you have a limited pool to select and recruit officials it seems that these people are consistently from the NT public service sector and do not display the impartiality the Act demands.

I would like to have the opportunity to speak to this submission at a public hearing in the Northern Territory.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Johnston