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The Secretary, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters,
Parliament House,
Canberra.

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Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	95
Date Received	21/6/02
Secretary	<i>[Signature]</i>

INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE 2001 FEDERAL ELECTION

This, the first federal election of the twenty-first century was notable especially for its resemblance to all the previous elections in the twentieth century. The most important thing a citizen does in a democracy was still being conducted in the same manner, yet everything else has changed in our society.

I therefore submit these proposals for consideration.

- 1) In a nation and world where even our finances are conducted via the computer, why do we still vote with a stub of pencil?
- 2) Modern transport means that no corner of this vast land cannot be reached on election day. "Vote early and vote often" used to be a joke, now it is a possibility. Why is there no computerised electoral roll in every voting booth, so that when one's name is crossed off, it is crossed off everywhere.?
- 3) Eventually it will dawn on those members of the public who are interested that for the first time in history true democracy is now a real possibility via the computer. Would it not be a sensible move to place a "voting" computer in a central position like a library, and let people discover them slowly. From them we could learn the background to any proposed Bill presented in a non-partisan manner. And should anyone so wish, they can indicate their views to the relevant Body without it being binding or threatening to the Government. This would educate the general public in the use of the democratic vote and avoid those excesses that the sudden placement of these computers might encourage in people whose ideas are formed by commercial media, party politics or those desiring unbridled power for themselves.

The choice for the Government is do something now or be forced to do it in the face of public demand, in a hurry and without planning.

[Handwritten Signature]
Gina Behrens (Ms.)