

**SUBMISSION NO. 89**

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. <u>89</u>
Date Received <u>31-3-05</u>
Secretary <u>[Signature]</u>



**Submission**

to the enquiry by the

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

on the

2004 Federal Election

by

Eric Jones

27 Beamish Street

Padstow NSW 2211

Telephone and Fax (02) 97711272

30 March 2005

i) **CONTENTS.**

ii) **Thanks and Terms of Reference.**

iii) **Executive Summary**

iv) **Premises and Recommendations Made.**

**\* Items.**

Page 1 Informal Voting. House of Representatives.

Page 4 Senate Voting. Expression of Preferences.

Page 6 Voting in Subdivisions within Electorates.

Page 7 New Technology outlets. Telemarketing and Internet Advertising authorization.

Page 9 Postal Voting. Fairness and Privacy.

Page 11 Public disclosure of Campaign Expenditure.

Page 12 Four Year Term for Federal Parliament.

Page 13 Democratic Audit of Australia items.

**\* Personal wish list**

Page 15 Examination of the Electoral System.

Page 17 Public Funding for Elections. Threshold level and basis for claims.

\*

Page 18 Acknowledgement of sources or items referred to.

ii)

**THANKS.**

I thank the committee for this opportunity to make this submission. Whilst it does not claim to be exhaustive and covers every point made in depth it reflects substantially my Personal opinion. Regretfully it has been put together in a hurry.

Eric Jones.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE.**

Chairman's Media Release 7 February 2005 comment.

"the terms of reference for the inquiry are very broad ..... allows the committee to conduct a wide sweep and then focus on issues which people and organizations think are the most important."

iii)

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.**

This submission covers : -

**First**, that action needs to be taken to reduce the informal vote in the House of Representatives by urging the states to reintroduce full preferential voting for consistency of voting within Australia so that it gives a complete and accurate expression of the vote of the people. It also argues for more resources for the Australian Electoral Commission for community education.

**Secondly**, that if there is to be any change in the Senate Above-the-Line (ATL) voting provision that the full preferential system, not optional preferential system should be retained.

**Thirdly**, that potential multiple voting can be minimized by reintroducing subdivisinal voting in federal electorates.

**Fourthly**, that new technology outlets need to conform to the authorization standards for political advertising.

**Fifthly**, that the provisions for postal voting should be fair to all candidates and parties by virtue that the Australian Electoral Commission should be the only one that can make its provision known or at least that no How to Votes (HTV) can be supplied with postal ballot papers.

**Sixthly**, that there should be full public disclosure for all campaign expenditure right across the board.

**Seventhly**, that the term of the federal parliament should be four years with a set period of three years.

**Eighthly**, simply records some recommendations from the Democratic Audit of Australia covering campaigning, money politics and incumbency benefits items.

**The submission then concludes with the author's wish list** covering an examination of the electoral system by a separate high level inquiry and items for reform covering the threshold level and basis for claims for public funding for elections.

iv)

**PREMISE and RECOMMENDATIONS.**

**A. Informal Voting. House of Representatives. Page 1.**

**Premise.** That the increase in the House of Representative Informal Vote is a matter of concern as it denies voters an effective contribution to the democratic process in Australia.

**Recommendations.** That

- 1) the States be urged to reintroduce full preferential voting for consistency of voting Australia wide and so that there is a more complete and accurate expression of the vote of the people.
- 2) the Australian Electoral Commission be funded
  - a) so that it can conduct adequate community education programmes particularly in electorates with large numbers of Australians from non-english speaking communities; and
  - b) to do community education programmes in regards to the voting method and system during non election campaign periods; and
- 3) the Australian Electoral Commission be funded to provide political education funds to the various political parties based on their previous lower house vote for community education programmes. (These funds are not to be used in party or any other administrative area.)

1va)

**B. Senate Voting. Expression of preferences. Above the Line voting. Page 4.**

**Premise.** That for the Senate Above-the-Line (ATL) voting provision the full preferential not optional preferential system, should be retained in any suggestion to make the voting system easier for voters.

**Recommendation.** To provide for change 1) so that voters are able to express preferences for all parties and candidates within the context of the closed party list system which we have in effect for ATL Senate voting and 2) for the integrity of the full preferential voting system to be maintained that voters are required to fill in sequential numbers on all of the boxes above the line.

**C. Voting in Subdivisions within electorates. Page 6.**

**Premise.** That potential multiple voting can be minimized by reintroducing subdivisional voting in electorates.

**Recommendation.** That subdivisional voting in electorates be reintroduced.

**D. New Technology outlets. Telemarketing and Internet advertising authorization. Page 7.**

**Premise.** That new technology outlets ought to conform to the authorization standards for political advertising.

**Recommendation.** Recommend accordingly.

**Ivb)**

**E. Postal Voting, Fairness and Privacy. Page 9.**

**Premise.** That a fairer position would be had for all candidates contesting an election if postal ballot papers were provided without party how – to –votes. Also it has been reported that some aspects of privacy need to be tightened up with postal vote correspondence.

**Recommendation.** That the Australian Electoral Commission be the only provider of postal ballot paper application forms or if this is not possible that how to votes should be banned when other providers act in that capacity. That all privacy aspects be adhered to.

**F. Public disclosure of Campaign Expenditure. Page 11.**

**Premise.** That to enhance public funding and for more openness and public perception aspects that full disclosure of all campaign expenditure would be a good thing.

**Recommendation.** That full disclosure of campaign expenditure be reintroduced as a requirement for political parties to be eligible for public funding.

**G. Four Year Terms for Federal Parliament. Page 12.**

**Premise.** It appears that four years terms are a success at State and Local Government level. As such it would be advantageous and more efficient for government for the Federal parliamentary term to be four years.

**Recommendation.** That a referendum be promoted to the Australian people advocating a four year parliamentary term with a set period of three years.

Ivc)

**H. The Democratic Audit of Australia. ANU Canberra. Page 13.**

**Premise.** The Audit has raised a number of matters relating to campaigning, money politics and incumbency benefits that need to be looked at.

**Recommendations.** That the items listed on the submission paper from the audit be looked at.

**AUTHOR'S WISH LIST.**

**I. Inquiry into our electoral system and associated entities. Page 15.**

**Premise.** Our electoral system and its associated entities needs to be looked at in a full and comprehensive way to ensure that it is the best possible system for the people of Australia.

**Recommendation.** That a separate high level inquiry be set up to examine the Electoral system and should cover the items, at least, set out in the submission together with the guiding principles mentioned therein.

**J. Public funding for elections. Threshold level and basis for claims. Page 17.**

**Premise.** As it seems that one of the reasons for public funding being introduced was to make it easier for people to stand for parliament public funding needs to be more open to the public.

**Recommendation.** That the threshold level should be reduced to 2% like the Australian Capital Territory provision but also that public funding should only cover expenditure incurred not a payment dollar amount per vote.





1.

**Informal Voting. House of Representatives. Federal Election 2004.**

**Premise.** That the increase in the informal vote is a matter of concern as it denies voters an effective contribution to the democratic process in Australia.

It is noted that the adoption of optional preferential voting at the state level and the recommendation of "Vote 1" only on How – to – Votes (HTV) has had the unfortunate effect of increasing the informal vote at the federal level.

**Comment.**

**Some statistics.**

**Federal House of Representatives Informal Vote.**

Year	Australia	NSW	Banks	Inf Votes	Voters	Candidate Number
1983	2.1%	2.2%	?			
1984	6.8	6.2	?			
1987	4.9	4.6	?			
1990	3.2%	3.1%	3.63%	2367	65131	7
1993	3.0	3.1	3.42	2354	67206?	6
1996	3.2	3.6	4.25	3246	76436	6
1998	3.8	4.0	3.94	3006	76234	7
2001	4.8	5.4	6.82	5393	79047	9
2004	5.2	6.1	7.35	5818	79200	7

Banks for 2004 had the 13<sup>th</sup> highest informal rate out of the 50 NSW federal seats.

As can be seen after the introduction of optional preferential voting in New South Wales in 1981 for State and Local Government elections there was initially no increase in the

2.

informal vote as the major parties still advocated on their how-to-Votes (HTV) a full expression of preferences. After that they, generally, turned to advocating a Vote 1 only strategy, especially after the rise of One Nation, which over the longer term has led to an increase in the informal federal vote by people only endorsing a number one on their ballot paper. It is noted that this trend appears to have been arrested for sometime, at an earlier stage, by extensive public education. However this has been overcome by people having to switch their voting patterns between state and federal elections and the use of Vote 1 only HTVs. We now see an ever increasing informal vote at the Australian, State and Banks electorate level.

It is noted that the Senate informal vote has remained much the same for Australia but with a reduction in NSW since 1990. Senate:-

Year	Australia	NSW
1990	3.4%	4.2
2004	3.8	3.5

**Some more comments upon the effect of the New South Wales voting provision on the federal voting.**

- 1) The AEC 2001 Banks Informal Ballot Paper survey disclosed that 1746 (32.35%) of the informal ballot papers had the number "1" only on the paper;
- 2) In 1996 the figure was 41.15%; and
- 3) A scrutineer for the Banks count for the House of Representatives, who attended the divisional counting centre, reported that roughly speaking one third of the informal vote only showed the number "1" on the ballot paper. (For the major parties it appeared two-thirds were Liberal and one-third ALP informals.) The other informals were made up of, roughly speaking, one third of voters not recording one to seven (the number of candidates) in sequential correct order and one third of blank or marked papers with ticks and crosses or other marks.

### 3.

#### **Queensland experience.**

Queensland introduced optional preferential voting for the 1992 state election. For the 1992, 95 and 98 elections all of the major parties choose to recommend to voters a full allocation of preferences. After the rise of One Nation the parties after 1998 **began not to recommend** a full expression of preferences.

The House of Representatives informal vote for Queensland was 1993 2.6%, 1996 2.6%, 1998 3.3%, and 2001 4.8% , 2004 5.2%.

**The prime source of informal voting seems to be in the numbering area of the ballot paper.**

#### **Conclusion.**

**The adoption of optional preferential voting at state and local government level has had a flow on effect to the Federal area that has meant that approx one third of the informal vote comes about because the state voting system is used by voters.**

**Before making recommendations** to at least mitigate this problem it would be appropriate to comment about what education programmes went on in Banks to tell people how to vote correctly. Whilst not exhaustive the following were conducted officially or by private effort:-

For the 2004 Federal election campaign in Banks the Australian Electoral Commission ran their usual advertisements showing people how to vote correctly. As well I noted a campaign by Mr. Melham and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and other candidates in Banks seeking to educate people in how to vote correctly. For example, the Christian Democratic Party candidate, Mrs. Janne Peterson, in a letter to the major local paper, The Bankstown-Canterbury Torch, on the 6 October 2004 stressed the need to lodge a formal vote. Because of my concern I had earlier written to the Torch on the 23 June 2004 urging people, amongst other things, to vote correctly. Notwithstanding that the informal vote increased to 7.35%, some 5818 votes in Banks in 2004.

There needs a lot more to be done in the educational area to address this problem.

### 3A.

For this there is a need for a bigger effort by the AEC. For them to do it they need to be adequately staffed and funded. Particular effort needs to be done for 1) enrolment and education of young people and 2) education in electorates where there are large non-english speaking groups. A benefit here for the AEC would that they would be able to report effort, compliance and progress in implementing the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society under its reporting for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs Access and Equity requirements.

As well there needs to be better Youth Education in these areas. One innovative project that could be modeled here is the Christian Democratic Party 's Youth Political Education Officer who gives presentations, on a non party political basis, on electoral and governmental and other matters to Schools, Church Youth Groups, Community bodies etc. Funding of these positions for various community bodies as well as parties could be a more cost effective way for the AEC to conduct Youth Education.

#### **Recommendations . That**

- 1) the states be urged to reintroduce full preferential voting for consistency of voting Australia wide and so that there is a more complete and accurate expression of the vote of the people; and**
- 2) the Australian Electoral Commission be funded**
  - a) so that it can conduct more extensive community programmes particularly in electorates with large numbers of Australians from non-english speaking communities; and**
  - b) to do community education programmes in regards to the voting method and system during non election campaign periods; and**
- 3) the Australian Electoral Commission be funded to provide political education funds to the various political parties based on their previous lower house vote for community education programmes. (These funds are not to be used in party or any other administrative area though it could be used to employ for example, a Youth Political Education Officer as the Christian Democratic Party does for Youth Education.)**

**SENATE VOTING.**

**EXPRESSION OF PREFERENCES WHEN THE ABOVE THE LINE VOTING METHOD IS USED.**

**FULL PREFERENTIAL VOTING SYSTEM.**

**Premise.** That for the Senate Above-the-Line (ATL) voting provision that the full preferential system, not optional preferential system, should be retained in any suggestion to make the voting easier for voters.

**Comment.** Presently when voters place the number "1" in a box for a party of their choice ATL the preferences are allocated as per the registered ticket by that party. Because of a number of deals done between the parties, at the last election, there was some public disquiet about it basically because people did not know where the preferences were going.

**Perhaps there will be proposals to move to an optional preferential voting system (opvs) whereby you only have to indicate preferences for one party by placing the number one against one box ATL as used in the New South Wales State Legislative Council elections.**

**I oppose such a provision** as opvs is a defacto first past the post system and is unfair to the voters. Under the opvs voters exhaust as most of the time now the parties only recommend people to place the number "1" on their ballot papers. Those voters who are smart enough, who tend to be smaller party/independent supporters, and extend their preferences have another go in the exclusion voting which will finally determine the winner.

5.

All voters should have exactly the same exclusion value, if that happens to their candidate. The only way for that to occur is to have a requirement that all candidates should be numbered in order of the voters preferences. AFTER ALL A FULL ALLOCATION OF THE VOTERS PREFERENCES IS A MORE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE EXPRESSION OF THE VOTERS WILL.

HOWEVER for the Senate there is a case for the fact that the voter should express their preferences. The Senate ATL voting provision now means that we have a closed party voting list system in operation. Voters should be able to list in order of their preference all the party lists. This should be done to ensure that the full preferential system still applies.

**Recommendation.**

Accordingly: -

- 1) to provide for voters expressing their preferences for parties after their number one party choice; and
- 2) for the integrity of the full preferential system to be maintained

**I recommend that for the ATL voting that voters be required to fill in in sequential number order all of the boxes above the line. (Above the line to also include independents boxes.)**

It should be noted that the below the line individual candidates choice should still be provided even though only 2.4% (NSW) and 4.2% (Australia) of voters now use it.

**VOTING IN SUBDIVISIONS WITHIN ELECTORATES.**

(Rather than having electorate (division) wide voting.)

**Premise.** That potential multiple voting can be minimized by reintroducing subdivisional voting in electorates.

**Comment.** Prior to 1984 voters could only vote in a number of polling booths in their electorate on polling day. This minimized multiple voting. Whilst such voting is not a big problem overall people have been prosecuted for doing it in the past. In marginal seats subdivisional voting could assist in maintaining the integrity of the electoral system in close contests.

**Recommendation.**

**That subdivisional voting be reintroduced.**



**NEW TECHNOLOGY OUTLETS. TELEMARKETING AND INTERNET  
ADVERTISING AUTHORIZATION. TEXT MESSAGING.**

**Premise.** That new technology outlets ought to conform to the authorization standards for political advertising.

**Comment.** During the 2004 campaign period I received a prerecorded telephone message from the Prime Minister seeking my support for the re-election of his party to government. I understand that the service provider was sourced through India, though I could be wrong here. Nonetheless, as a political advertisement it did not carry the authorization message normally required of advertisements under the Electoral and Broadcasting Services Acts.

It should be required to standardize all political advertising.

I am not aware whether or not Telemarketing is covered under the authorization sections of the relevant acts though I suspect they want be given the advance of technology. I suspect that the same would apply to Internet advertising.

**Text Messaging.**

I understand that after the 2004 election the Government authorized an entitlement allowing each federal MP to text up to 7000 constituents (or nearly 10 per cent of the electorate) over three years. Whilst MPs cannot use it for political purposes it can be used for "official duties". Whilst I have no objection to this there has been some comment on the "official duties" statement being a loophole. I feel that this could be clarified by making the provision clear in an entitlement statement by stating clearly that it cannot be used for party or election purposes but only for constituent work.

**8.**

**Recommendation.**

**1) that the relevant Electoral and Broadcasting Acts provisions relating to the authorization of political advertising be amended to include;-**

- a) Telemarketing and**
- b) Internet advertising.**

**2) that a Text Message entitlement sheet be issued clearly stating that the entitlement can only be used in constituent work.**

**POSTAL VOTING. FAIRNESS AND PRIVACY.**

**Premise.** That a fairer position would be had for all candidates contesting an election if postal ballot papers were provided without party how-to-votes. Also that privacy should be tightened up in regards to some aspects of postal vote identity correspondence.

**Comment.**

**Some statistics.**

In the federal electorate of Banks in New South Wales since 1996 the following number of postal votes have been lodged : -

1996 2183 out of 76436 voters. 2.86%. (Informal 0.96%) 6 candidates.

1998 2736 out of 76234 voters. 3.59% ( " 1.54%) 7 "

2001 2914 out of 79047 voters 3.69% ( " 2.23%) 9 "

2004 3932 out of 79200 voters 5.13% ( " 3.30%) 7 "

Between 2001 and 2004 there was a 26% increase in this area which was the largest since the 21% increase in 1996/98.

**Fairness.** The major parties by advertising the provision and facilitating the supply of postal votes with their HTV enclosed enjoy an unfair advantage over most other minor parties and independent candidates. The AEC has a Standing Order for registered postal voters which I understand are dispatched to voters without an HTV.

The ballot papers have the name of the parties endorsed on it.

10.

To be fair to all parties and candidates I feel that:-

- 1) a) the AEC should be the only provider of postal vote application forms; or  
b) if the major parties do supply postal vote application forms that when the ballot paper is supplied to the voter that no HTV is to be included in it.

This would be fairer to all candidates.

- 2) the AEC should be funded to adequately advertise and supply this service as required separate from their normal standard order postal vote provision.

**Privacy.** The H S Chapman society evidentially lodged a complaint with the Privacy Commission, which has been accepted, over some postal vote papers moving through the postal system. These were without an anonymous envelope exposing voters to identity theft. The provision of the forms, and particularly the parties information office return application form and correspondence should not disclose that it is a postal vote.

**Recommendation.**

- 1) **That the Australian Electoral Commission be the only provider of postal paper application forms or if this is not possible that HTV should be banned when other providers act in that capacity as the parties and candidates are identified on the ballot papers; and**
- 2) **That all privacy aspects be adhered to in correspondence.**

**PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE.**

**Premise.** That to enhance voters regard for public funding and for more openness and public perception aspects that full disclosure of all campaign expenditure would be a good thing.

**Comment.** For public confidence in the political parties the requirement to disclose details of campaign expenditure in full, including mass media expenditure, which used to apply prior to 1998 should be reintroduced. I feel that the public can view this aspect as the parties trying to hide things.

I understand that non-party endorsed candidates and Senate groups are still required to disclose such details.

After all a concomitant of public funding, which applies, should be a willingness to disclose all expenditure incurred in a campaign.

No doubt administration would be a problem here and, perhaps, was the reason why the requirement was abolished. Perhaps simplified standards of reporting would need to be implemented here and provision made to have a reasonable administration allowance paid as part of public funding.

**Recommendation that**

- 1) full disclosure of campaign expenditure be introduced in a standard and, if possible, a simplified format; and
- 2) if necessary, provision be made for reasonable administration costs be made in public funding or an amount paid to those parties/independents who do not qualify for public funding.

**FOUR YEAR TERMS FOR FEDERAL PARLIAMENT.**

**Premise.** It appears that four year terms are a success at State and Local Government level. As such it would be advantageous and more efficient for government for the federal parliamentary term to be extended to four years.

**Comment.**

State jurisdictions in Australia have successfully implemented four year terms, either fixed or a portion fixed, which have meant that governments have been able to govern within a better time frame.

I would suggest that a four year term, with a fixed component of three years, be brought before the people of Australia in a referendum at the 2007 federal election. Of course, this would have to be on a bipartisan basis between the major parties for it to have a chance of passing. The fourth year leaves flexibility for the Prime Minister of the day to call an election at his will as the present three year position allows.

**Recommendation.** That a referendum be promoted to the Australian people advocating a four year parliamentary term with a set period of three years.

**DEMOCRATIC AUDIT OF AUSTRALIA.**

**Premise.** It is worthwhile considering the following issues, amongst others, raised by the Democratic Audit of Australia project.

First by way of background The Democratic Audit of Australia is a Political Science project of the Research School of Social Sciences of the Australian National University in Canberra. In their paper “Australian Electoral Systems – How well do they serve political equality” prepared by Graeme Orr of the Law Faculty of Griffith University Brisbane they have made some useful points in the area of Campaigning and Money politics and incumbency benefits for you to examine. Without covering everything the following is listed : -

**Campaigning.**

\* Research is needed to determine what effect publishing opinion polls during election campaigns has on voter psychology. If that effect is significant the question of regulating publication as is common overseas would have to be addressed.

\* Push polling should be dealt with by a statutory based, civil right to seek an urgent injunction against any misleading innuendo in any poll questions, coupled with strong civil sanctions against any firm engaging in polling without statistical validity.

\* While it is difficult to regulate misleading campaign statements, reforms could be considered in two related areas: broadcasters should be required to publish reasons when they refuse to carry an advertisement; and a mechanism could be introduced to mandate public retractions of blatantly incorrect factual claims.

14.

**Money politics and incumbency benefits.**

\* The single greatest issue confronting elections in the developed world is the influence of private money. Once ..... We should look at how expenditure caps are working in Canada, UK and NZ to see what lessons we can learn from them.

\* Incumbent parliamentarians and parliamentary parties have considerable incumbency benefits and advantages ..... To counter such advantages, free air-time should be widely available as a way of empowering those who draw least on incumbency benefits.

**Reproduced with permission from the Democratic Audit project.**

For further details view their website at –

**<http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au/orrdiscuss.pdf>**

**Recommendation. That you look at the items listed from the Audit above and any other matters as appropriate.**



**PERSONAL WISH LIST.**

**EXAMINATION OF THE WHOLE ELECTORAL SYSTEM.**

**Premise.** Our electoral system needs to be looked at in a full and comprehensive way to ensure that it is the best possible system for the people of Australia. Our last major changes were effected (from memory) in 1949 and 1984. On both occasions by a Labor Government.

**Comment.** A separate high level enquiry to be set up to investigate our electoral system to see if it can be improved. For the first 20 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Australia and the Australian States were in the forefront of electoral reform. However, generally speaking, since 1949 (1984?) we have not had substantial reform or change to the whole system as such. I understand that we have not had a major examination of the fundamentals of our electoral system for a long time. However I could be wrong here. Things in this area have moved on around the world which has systems, in essence, like our own.

For example, New Zealand went through a time of review and change in the 1980s. In December 1986 the Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System reported. Subsequent to that substantial reform and change was implemented. Whilst I appreciate that their unicameral system is different to our bicameral system and change was stimulated by a reaction of the people of New Zealand against the unitary parliament following the economic reforms of the Lange Labour Government it was, nonetheless, still a valuable exercise in an examination of their system. Indeed they looked around to see "what was on offer around the world". They basically adopted major elements of the German system notwithstanding that Germany has a bicameral federal parliamentary system. A greater expression of minority views has been brought into the New Zealand parliament without necessarily bringing in unstable government. Indeed the people have seemed to accept the system!

## 16.

Such a high level enquiry should cover, amongst other things, but not being exhaustive : -

- 1) The Voting System. Plurality, Majority or Proportional Representation;
- 2) Indigenous representation in our Parliament;
- 3) Representation and the number of members in parliament – single or multi member constituencies;
- 4) The term of parliament;
- 5) Public funding and full political disclosure of all finance;
- 6) Media and advertising;
- 7) Publication of Polling in election periods;
- 8) Referenda. Initiative and Recall provisions on issues and MPs; and
- 9) Electoral members support and allowances.

As well it should cover the Australian Electoral Commission and its role, function and place in supporting the system.

**Some of the guiding principles that should apply to the enquiry would be without being exhaustive: -**

### **The electoral system should**

- 1) result in a government that reflects the majority opinion of the electorate;
- 2) allow for stable government;
- 3) reflect in its representative numbers the actual vote of the people;
- 4) result in a parliament that reflects the electorates wishes;
- 5) be understood, as far as possible, by the electorate;
- 6) be seen to be fair;
- 7) provide good constituent representation;
- 8) provide a result as quickly as possible;
- 9) provide for choice in candidates; and
- 10) be accessible, financially speaking, by individual and independent candidates as well as political parties.

(More work is required here on the Terms of Reference and Guiding Principles.)

17.

**Recommendation.** That a separate high level inquiry be set up to examine the electoral system and associated entities in a full and comprehensive way to ensure that it is the best possible system for the people of Australia. The inquiry should cover, at least, the items set out in the submission, together with the guiding principles mentioned above.

**PUBLIC FUNDING FOR ELECTIONS.  
THRESHOLD LEVEL AND BASIS FOR CLAIMS.**

**Premise.** As it seems that one of the reasons for public funding being introduced was to make it easier for people to stand for parliament public funding needs to be more open to people who are running for parliament.

**Comment.**

One of the reasons for public funding when it was first introduced was that it would allow ordinary people and small parties to stand more easily for parliament. However with a threshold of 4% a lot of people miss out.

It is appreciated that nuisance candidates do not want to be encouraged so some level has to be set. **For the Australian Capital Territory elections I understand that the threshold is set at 2%, which seems to me to be a more reasonable figure.**

**A matter of concern to some people is the ever increasing public funding cost. I feel that public funding should only apply for expenses incurred and not be paid on a \$ amount per vote. Assumably there would be savings here which would offset the reduction in the threshold to 2% and would go someway to minimize costs.**

**Recommendation.** That the threshold level for public funding be reduced to 2% and that it should only apply to actual costs incurred and not paid on a \$ amount per vote.

18.

**Sources and Acknowledgements made to : -**

- Page 1. \*Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) figures.  
\*E. Jones personal figures collected.
- Page 2. \*AEC figures 2001 Banks Informal Ballot paper survey.  
\*E. Jones scrutineer.
- Page 3. \* Democratic and Electoral Shifts in Queensland. Back to First Past the Post Voting. John Wanna, Deputy Director of governance and public Policy Research Centre Griffith University, Brisbane.  
\* The Torch, City and TV and Radio coverage.  
\*ALP workers in talking.\*Mrs. Janne Peterson. Torch 6 October 2004.  
\* E Jones Torch 23 June 2004. \* AEC figures.  
\* Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. Charter of Public Service in a culturally diverse society. 2004 Access and Equity Annual Report.  
\*Christian Democratic Party Youth Political Education Officer.
- Page 7 \* Prerecorded phone call by Prime Minister Howard to Eric Jones household during the election campaign period.\*Campaigning in the 2004 federal election. Innovations and traditions. Research note No.30. 8 February 2005 Federal Parliamentary Library  
\* "MP message flood." Herald Sun 6 December 2004.
- Page 9. \*AEC statistics. Pages 9 & 10. \* H S Chapman Society circular February 2005.
- Page 11. Democratic Audit. ANU Canberra.
- Page 13. Democratic Audit of Australia. ANU Canberra.  
<http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au/orrdiscuss.pdf>  
Australian Electoral Systems – How Well Do They Serve Political Equality?  
Graeme Orr. Reproduced with permission with acknowledgement to the Democratic Audit. ANU Canberra.
- Pages 15 and 16. Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System. "Towards a better Democracy". December 1986.