



Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your inquiry into the conduct of the 2010 Federal Election. There are two issues I would like the Committee to consider in preparing its report to the Minister.

The first has to do with pre-polling which has become a serious issue, particularly for regional and rural electorates spread across large areas and involving a number of population centres. I believe the pre-polling period of three weeks to be excessive. I am also concerned with the distribution of pre-polling places within the McMillan electorate in particular and I am sure the same applies to other rural electorates. At the 2010 election there were six pre-polling centres - three in Warragul and one each in Pakenham, Moe and Wonthaggi. Warragul was over-catered for with the McMillan Divisional office of the A.E.C., a centre for people with impaired vision and a third location all providing pre-polling facilities. I believe this situation is unacceptable.

The second issue I would like to raise is the viability of polling places where only small number of votes are lodged - again an issue affecting mainly rural electorates. In McMillan, there were a total of 81 polling places on election day. This requires an enormous amount of work for both the A.E.C. which has to locate, rent and man the polling stations and for the candidates who are under pressure to find workers to maximise their chances of election. Quite a number of these smaller polling places are located within a short distance of larger population centres and it has been my experience that many of the electors who use these polling places often cast their votes and then continue on into the nearby urban centre for other activities such as shopping, sport etc. I have no doubt it is a convenience to people living out of the main towns as it enables them to simply walk into the polling place without having to queue up. I believe this situation could be better addressed by better organisation at

larger polling centres to reduce waiting times for voters. Long queues were common during the morning and later in the day at polling places in the larger centres.

I would like to emphasise that my comments should not be seen as a reflection on the efforts of the A.E.C. staff during the election. The staff at the McMillan division office carried out their tasks with the utmost efficiency and all times were helpful and co-operative.

Yours sincerely,

Russell Broadbent