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**Submission No. 2**

Tony Abbott M.P.  
Federal Member for Warringah  
Minister for Employment Services

September 25, 2000

Gary Nairn MHR  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Electoral  
Matters  
Parliament House  
Canberra 2600

Dear Gary,

Thanks for your letter inviting comment on your two current enquiries.

AS you know, I have been concerned for some time about the ability of shysters to register bogus political parties to cash in on public funding. Recent reports about Messrs Oldfield and Ettridge heighten these concerns. Plainly, the anti-GST and anti-nuclear waste "parties" are an attempt to capitalize on popular prejudice rather than establish a political party in any meaningful sense.

The Electoral Act should be tightened to ensure that registrable political parties require internal democratic accountability. Alternatively, the Commissioner should be asked to use a discretion under the existing Act to refuse to register parties which do not give all members a say in electing office bearers.

In my view, registering a "party" for the purpose of obtaining public funding when that "party" has no internal democracy whatsoever is a species of fraud. To my mind, the Oldfield/Ettridge move should be referred to the DPP.

The "parties" in question are no more real parties than any other bodgy item offered to the general public - who should be protected against this kind of get-rich-quick stunt.

Plainly, Mr Oldfield cannot reasonably be a member of one political party and exploit that position to register different and (presumably) competing parties. At the very least, this a serious loophole in the Act.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Abbott

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