

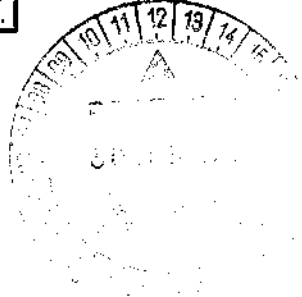


Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	60
Date Received	30-3-05
Secretary	<i>[Signature]</i>

Premier of Western Australia



Our Ref: 200502293/BL



RECEIVED
29 MAR 2005
BY:

Mr Tony Smith MP
 Chairman
 Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
 Parliament House
 CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for your letter dated 15 February seeking comment on the conduct of the 2004 federal election and any improvements necessary in the federal electoral system.

I will limit my comments to matters related to the federal electoral system, most of which have been raised previously with the Prime Minister.

Firstly, on the matter of the integrity of our electoral and enrolment systems, it is important that any new measures adopted are appropriate to improving the electoral roll and thereby our electoral system.

As to electoral integrity, there is no persuasive evidence of electoral roll manipulation such as to affect an election result. As I understand, this is acknowledged by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, and remains the view of my Government, as supported by recent State election experiences. In the absence of such evidence, any proposal to tighten voter eligibility by insisting on validating the proof of identity of electors against driver's licence details or supplementary documentation will only operate to disenfranchise many rural and indigenous Australian electors and potentially those people in society who do not have a driver's licence. More rigorous identity tests may also considerably increase the time taken for electors to submit or update enrolment details and in the process discourage their involvement.

As a related matter, moves to close the federal electoral roll on the day a poll is called will present particular difficulties for a large number of electors geographically dispersed throughout Western Australia and without immediate access to appropriate communication facilities.

The Western Australian Government has no intention to introduce similar changes to State legislation. We remain unconvinced that either measure will improve electoral integrity sufficiently to outweigh the potential to work against the full franchise of all eligible Western Australians. As I indicated to the Prime Minister earlier, we will not stand in the way of allowing the Federal Government access to State driver's licence details should proof of identity provisions for federal enrolment be further pursued.

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Secondly, while noting there may well be national debate in the future on voluntary voting, it remains my Government's intention to retain compulsory voting, which has been a feature of Western Australia's political system for many years. Compulsory voting continues to enjoy widespread public support and there are no plans to introduce changes.

Yours sincerely



DR GEOFF GALLOP MLA
PREMIER

22 MAR 2005