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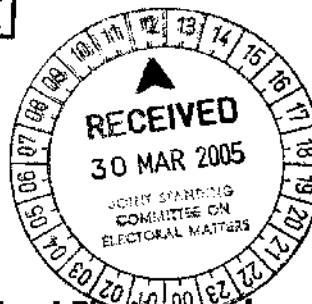
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. 67
Date Received 30-3-05
Secretary <i>[Signature]</i>

The Secretary of the Committee

Parliament House

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Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election and Matters Related Thereto

Introduction

I would like to provide the following as a submission into my views, and the views of many of my supporters, to the way that Australia elects politicians to represent them. Specifically I am eager to provide my views in this submission as a person who has engaged in the political system for the first time by putting myself up as a candidate in the 2004 Federal election.

Firstly I would like to indicate that we have in Australia very competent and dignified staff in the Australian Electoral Commission. I had occasion to contact the Tasmanian ranch of the Commission and found them to be professional and helpful.

Issues

My concerns primarily are with the way that Senators are elected. The above the line and below the line voting in the Senate is not conducive to keeping to the spirit of the meaning of the Australian Constitution. In the current system of electing Senators the political parties make deals, which are not widely promoted or explained, and so means that the people, in voting above the line, go along party lines often unwittingly. There is a need to therefore revisit this since the Constitution indicates that The Senate shall be composed of senators for each State, directly chosen by the people of the State. The above the line voting does not provide for the people to directly vote for senate candidates because the deals that are made by parties are not widely promoted or understood by people.

The reality then means that the current system of above the line voting and below the line voting in the Senate does not encourage the direct election of Senators and therefore needs to be revisited urgently.

There needs to be a more fairer system of allowing the people to vote for their Senators. One that is simple and encourages direct election of Senators by the people. Notwithstanding the fact that changes to the Senate voting system was made at a time when there were only a few independent Senate candidates presenting for elections. But now there are more independent Senate candidates who attract a good part of the peoples vote. This then means that a revision of the Senate election system needs to be done to enable the peoples vote to directly reflect their wishes and not the wishes of any other party or agency or organization.

Solution

My suggestions to solve this problem is simple and would actually make the people's vote more clearly and directly elect a Senator.

There could be two ways of fixing this.

All Above The Line

The first possibility, and this is not my favourite or preferred solution, is to have all Senate candidates to have an above the line box. This means that all political parties, all grouped independent candidates as well as all independent candidates will be able to make deals that need to be explained to the people so that the people can then be educated about what their number one vote or tick in a box above the line will mean in terms of preference votes.

No Above The Line

The second, and this is my preferred system, is to have no above the line voting. All candidates will be listed on a voting sheet and under their names there should be their party name or grouped independent name or independent status. Then next to their names there should be a box where people will place a number 1 - 6. The order of the names will be purely random.

The people then will need to only place 1- 6 in the boxes next to the names of only 6 senators of their choice. They will place a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and it does not matter how many candidates there may be in any one Senate election, thereby the people and the people alone give their preferred choices of their 6 Senators per federal Election.

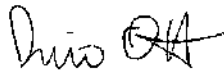
To avoid problems each vote will attract a score, with the number 1 vote attracting a score of 9, then the number 2 vote attracting a score of 6, the number 3 vote attracting a score of 5, with the

number 4 vote attracting a score of 4, the number 5 vote attracting a score of 3, and the number 6 vote attracting a score of 2.

The scores for each senate candidate are tallied at the end of voting. The 6 senate candidates that attract the 6 highest scores will be declared the winners. If there are more than one senate candidate with the sixth highest score then there will be a tally of how many number one votes that those Senate candidates got. The senate candidate with the largest number one vote is declared the winner. If after this next step there are still senate candidates with same number of largest votes it will go to the how many number two votes they had, and so on and so on.

I would be more than happy to discuss any of the issues that I have covered in this submission.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my submission. The issues that I have covered in my submission I believe go to the heart of our democracy and need to be taken into consideration before the next Federal Election, so that the people are able to really vote for their own choice of candidate in the senate and not any other organization or party whatever.



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