
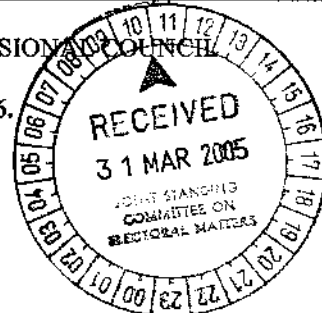


SUBMISSION NO. 91

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. <u>91</u>
Date Received <u>31-3-05</u>
Secretary 

WIDE BAY DIVISION
P O Box 66,
Wondai. Q. 4606.

29th March, 2005.



Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Department of House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA. ACT. 2600.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the Inquiry your Committee is conducting into the 2004 Federal Election and Matters Related Thereto.

Delegates to the Wide Bay Division of The Nationals have asked me, as their Chairman, to submit the attached list of concerns regarding the conduct of Federal Elections and in particular the 2004 Federal Election in our Division.

It would be appreciated if you would have your Committee consider the matters raised by our delegates as they reflect the feedback of many people who work "on the ground" both on election day and in the weeks leading up to an election. Sometimes these workers are the first people to experience the reaction of the voting public to matters causing them frustration or concern. Therefore their input should not be taken lightly.

We await the outcome of your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



**GIL SMITH
CHAIRMAN.**

**AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**Suggestions and matters of concern submitted from Wide Bay Divisional Council
Of The Nationals.**

- Evidence of Birth/Citizenship to be presented upon enrolment
- As much as possible, the same booth locations used for local, state and federal elections to ease voter confusion
- If a polling booth which has been used for many many years is changed from one location, then advance publicity should be given to voters. Ie Dundowran Hall was a booth for decades. A circular letter to residents in that area could have saved confusion.
- Following on from that, an advertisement in the paper ahead of polling day or even a small article would alert people to a change from a long time habit of voting in one particular booth. Many people only buy their paper when they go out, hence a list of booths in a paper on polling day is a waste of time. It should be published earlier.
- In the case of Dundowran Hall, the excuse given for not using thisvenue was it was an old timber hall and a possible fire risk.
- What difference was there between that and the Pialba Scout Hall used for pre-polling in Hervey Bay? It was not as well maintained as Dundowran Hall.
- It also had uneven ground leading to the entrance and was in a poor position.
- Some polling places which were selected because they were wheelchair friendly but were just the opposite for older voters who were ambulant. In Gympie eg the High School had no close parking so it was a long hot walk from the car parking to the rear of the school where the booth was operating. It used to operate in a Hall at the front of the school just off the footpath.
- Three weeks' prepolling at Divisional offices seems excessive
- Postal voting -- processing of applications was a debacle with ballot papers not being received by one partner when the other partner applied on the same form and received theirs. Or voting papers not arriving at all prior to polling day.
- Mobile Voting -- all returning officers should be obliged to carry an example of the How To Vote Card for each candidate so that if a person wishes to vote but is unable to speak to ask for help, then they could at least point out what they wish to do.
- Mobile Polling Booths -- the administrators at aged homes should be asked not to destroy or refuse How to Vote material supplied to them by candidates in the week before polling. Voting material so supplied should be left out in an obvious place for residents of these homes to avail themselves if needed. The Homes/staff are not required to distribute them -- just have them available at the polling booth or provide them to a resident if asked.

Attachment to letter dated 29th March, 2005.