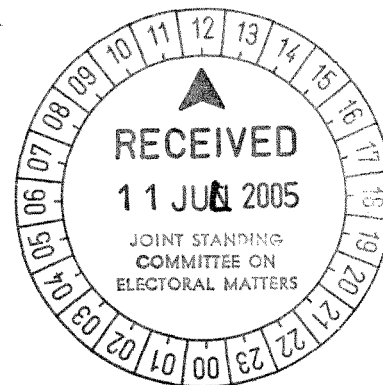


Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No. ....	179
Date Received .....	11/7/05
Secretary .....	SD

SUB

5<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Committee Secretary  
 Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
 Department of House of Representatives  
 Parliament House  
 CANBERRA ACT 2000

### Compulsory preferential voting

For many years I have been troubled by the compulsory preferential rule and since the late 1960's I have chosen not to vote.

It is my view and one I suspect is shared by many, that the imposition of this condition makes voting unnecessarily complicated while having the potential to at least distort, or at worst, invalidate the voter's intention, particularly when the count comes down to preferences.

I believe it is all but impossible for even informed electors to juggle the complexities involved in working through the preferences of the minor parties and independent candidates. In addition to this, voters can be confronted with the names of candidates of whom they are only vaguely aware and whose policies seem even more remote.

I am not opposed to the preferential system per se, merely compulsory preferential voting. An optional preferential system, while far from perfect would produce a more accurate reflection of the electorate's intention.

Why should I be forced to preference candidates or parties whose policies I dislike in order to cast a valid vote? Further distortions can occur when there is the opportunity for multiple voting.

Because the differential between the "two party preferred" is now, to all intents and purposes, hardly discernable it is crucial that the electoral act be suitably changed. Until that occurs, people who have no affinity with the major parties will have no other choice than to withhold their vote.

If evidence of previous discussion on this matter is any criterion, Labor and Liberal parties have been quite unyielding and it appears highly likely that they are motivated by narrow self-interest rather than a commitment to producing a fairer system. Your comments would be most welcome.

Yours sincerely,