



POLITICAL PARTIES FRONT ELECTORAL INTEGRITY HEARING

The Liberal Party of Australia and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) will appear before the electoral matters committee tomorrow to discuss the integrity of the electoral roll.

‘Political parties can provide a unique insight to this inquiry,’ said Committee Chairman Mr Christopher Pyne MP (Member for Sturt). ‘Because parties are continuously using the electoral roll, they have an intimate knowledge of its accuracy. Political parties are also extremely well placed to judge the performance of the Australian Electoral Commission in investigating enrolment fraud.’

All sides of politics have different views as to how to maintain the accuracy of the electoral roll. Discussion will focus on the different approaches advocated by each party. The Liberal Party has for a long time argued for increased proof of identity checks for enrolment, while the ALP has favoured an expanded roll review process for the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The Committee expects to explore the advantages and disadvantages of both strategies.

The Committee also expects to discuss improved deterrents to enrolment fraud. The Committee has received a great deal of evidence advocating greater prison terms for enrolment fraud. A number of more innovative solutions, such as banning those convicted of enrolment fraud from holding public office, are also expected to be discussed.

Political parties currently contribute significantly towards the accuracy of the roll by providing the AEC with information about incorrect enrolments. The parties can therefore provide the Committee with an accurate assessment of the performance of the AEC in maintaining an accurate roll.

Finally, the political parties themselves bear some responsibility for preventing enrolment fraud. A significant amount of the enrolment fraud so far detected is a result of the activities of members of political parties. Also, this inquiry was prompted by the prosecution of enrolment fraud perpetrated by ALP members in Townsville in Queensland. The Committee expects to investigate what strategies the political parties have in place to prevent enrolment fraud by their members.

The Committee will table its report in June 2001.

Ends
26 March 2001

Further Information: Christopher Pyne MP (Chair) 02 6277 4842 (Parl. House) 0419 391 435 (Mobile)
Kevin Bodel (Inquiry Secretary) 02 6277 2374

Hearing programs attached

INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL

PUBLIC HEARING

Date: Tuesday 27 March 2001
Time: 6.30 pm – 9.45pm
Place: House of Representatives Committee Room 2R1
Parliament House, Canberra

Witnesses: 6.30 pm – 8.00 pm Liberal Party of Australia
8.00 pm – 8.15 pm Tea break
8.15 pm – 9.45 pm Australian Labor Party

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr Christopher Pyne MP (Chair)
Mr Laurie Ferguson MP (Deputy Chair)
Senator Andrew Bartlett
Senator the Hon. John Faulkner
Senator Jeannie Ferris
Senator Brett Mason
Senator Andrew Murray
Mr Robert McClelland MP
Mr Stuart St Clair MP
Hon. Alex Somlyay MP

INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL

On 23 August 2000 the Special Minister of State, Senator the Hon. Chris Ellison, asked the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to examine the issue of the integrity of the electoral roll and fraudulent enrolment. At its meeting on 5 September the Committee agreed that in examining the matter it would look at the following.

That the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquire into and report on:

- the adequacy of the Commonwealth Electoral Act for the prevention and detection of fraudulent enrolment;
- incidents of fraudulent enrolment; and
- the need for legislative reform.

Further information:

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