



Federal inquiry into allegations of irregularities in the recent South Australian state election

On 13 May 2010, the Senate referred the following matters to the federal parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for inquiry and report on issues arising from the South Australian state election on 20 March, including:

- (a) the circumstances surrounding the impersonation of Family First polling booth workers and the distribution of misleading voting information at polling booths in the recent South Australian state election;
- (b) the extent to which this was a calculated activity designed to mislead voters into directing their preferences in a different direction from that of the official Family First voting information;
- (c) whether comparable activity would be considered to be legal under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, including the implications flowing from the decisions in *Bray v Walsh (1976)*, *Evans v Crichton-Browne (1981)*, *Webster v Deahm (1993)* and *Re Carroll v Electoral Commission of Queensland (1998)*;
- (d) what changes would be required to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* so as to prevent a political party (or others) engaging in such misleading and deceptive conduct at future federal elections;
- (e) the allegations that a single family illegally lodged more than 150 votes on polling day through impersonation of other voters; and
- (f) the allegations that a large number of votes remained uncollected from hospital facilities because of errors on the part of polling officials.

The South Australian Attorney-General has introduced legislation in the State's Parliament relating to the publication of electoral material to address concerns about how-to-vote cards.

"The Committee will observe the outcomes of current measures to address these issues in South Australia, and consider any implications for the Commonwealth Electoral Act," Committee Chair Mr Daryl Melham said.

Members of the public and interested groups are invited to make submissions in writing to the Committee. Submissions can be emailed to jscem@aph.gov.au or posted to The Committee Secretary, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, PO Box 6021, Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600. The closing date for submissions is **Friday, 23 July 2010**.

For media comment: Please contact the Committee Chair, Daryl Melham MP on (02) 9774 2111 (Electorate Office).

Further information: Visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/em> or contact the Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 4534 or jscem@aph.gov.au.