

Keele, Peter (REPS)

To: Miskin, Sarah (REPS)
Subject: FW: JSCEM-conduct of the 20004 federal election

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No.153.....
Date Received ...5-5-05.....
Secretary

-----Original Message-----

From: Bird, Betty (Sen L. Harris)
Sent: Thursday, 5 May 2005 9:34 AM
To: Keele, Peter (REPS)
Subject: RE: JSCEM-conduct of the 20004 federal election

Dear Peter Keele, Committee Secretariat
Thank you for your email
Please include the letter and also a previous letter attached, as a submission from Senator Harris to the committee.

Thanking you for your help and dedication.
Regards
Betty



Mrs Ann Bright.doc
(29 KB)

-----Original Message-----

From: Keele, Peter (REPS)
Sent: Wednesday, 4 May 2005 2:19 PM
To: Bird, Betty (Sen L. Harris)
Cc: Miskin, Sarah (REPS)
Subject: JSCEM-conduct of the 20004 federal election

Dear Ms Bird,
Thank you for the copy of the letter you sent to Ms Bright of the AEC. Is it your wish that this letter be received by the committee as a submission from Senator Harris?

Peter Keele
Committee Secretariat

Mrs Anne Bright,
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 2590
Brisbane 4001

April 19, 2005

Dear Mrs Bright,

Thank you for your correspondence 24/3/05 in response to my letter of February 2, 2005 about the inaccurate state of the electoral rolls and the disenfranchisement of thousands of postal voters at the last Federal election.

I reiterate the conduct of the postal voting was atrocious and the final result of the senate polling did not reflect the wishes of voters, I believe costing some candidates their seat.

I look forward to receiving from you the Senate count sheets and a breakdown of postal votes for each Queensland division. It is unfortunate that you also cannot provide me with the daily figures from start to finish, for these will show the obvious discrepancies in the final count for the Senate.

It is disappointing the Standing Committee on Electoral Matters did not see fit to travel to North Queensland to take evidence of the postal voting mess. I note the Committee has visited the Maranoa electorate where there were also huge problems with postal voting.

And yes our booth workers across the state (and interstate) at every election in recent years have reported significant numbers of voters whose name, for no apparent reason disappeared from the roll.

One experienced election systems analyst has told me the missing names from across the state have in the past re-appeared on rolls in marginal electorates elsewhere, usually interstate at proper addresses.

There is no doubt from previous discourse with the AEC the electoral rolls are less than 80% accurate at any given time. Other analysts have put the accuracy at 60%.

2.

Multiple voting in bogus names has long been a feature of the Australian electoral system as you would have heard from the Shepherdson Inquiry into ALP Plebescites of September 2000.

Nothing has changed since then. The Australian Labor Party is a past master of multiple voting, actually perfected in the last 15 years of Qld Labor rule.

Premier Peter Beattie was State campaign manager at times during this period of electoral duplicity but somehow managed to avert blame at the Inquiry by denying any knowledge of it.

Their motto, as told to me by former ALP members "vote early and vote often" apparently remains the state ALP's warcry.

I present you with a perfect example.

The Brisbane suburb of St Lucia is home to the State's largest university. It goes without saying there would be a high proportion of students out of the 28,209 in attendance in 2001 who have sympathies with the ALP.

At the Ryan by-election(albeit federal) on March 17, 2001 one of the many bogus voting cells was activated. Whether or not this cell actually voted is unclear but it is positive proof they do exist.

I have included the names of 14 voters who purported to live in one rental property at St Lucia, at 300 Hawken Drive, prior to the Ryan by-election. Your Ryan Divisional Office wrote to these names that were on the roll at the time. I enclose photocopies of the 14 letters sent to them by the AEC.

The owners of the rental property at the material time had different names to any of the bogus voters. We have all the letters in safe-keeping.

Our research at the material time revealed only one of these persons is real. The other 13 are fictitious names.

My staff and other researchers have been given various anecdotal evidence over time that this bogus voting occurs throughout the state. Two elections ago one of my staff was told of busloads of bogus voters traveling to booths across divisions, usually to marginal seats.

Indeed one of my former staff members was involved in presenting sworn evidence to the AEC (NQ) some years ago where a former ALP Cabinet Minister was seen handing out \$50 notes to potential aboriginal voters in Far North Queensland.

3.

Nothing will change these huge problems in spite of the efforts of the AEC. Voters need to produce identification when voting. I am in no way advocating any new type of national ID card or such. We already have a surfeit of this material.

A Medicare card would be sufficient for voters to prove their identity.

Thank you for replying, I presume I now do not need to submit my Question on Notice to the Minister about this matter.

Yours faithfully

Len Harris

Senator Len Harris

Mrs Ann Bright
Australian Electoral Commission,
Brisbane

February 02, 2005

BY FAX

Dear Mrs Bright,

A constituent has brought to my attention an example of one of the many discrepancies involving the issuing of postal votes and other problems at the recent federal election.

There has been a lot said about the number of postal votes that were rendered invalid due to late mail-outs by the AEC, or in other cases where postal votes after being requested from the AEC simply were not received by those who requested them.

I have received much anecdotal and read published evidence that tens of thousands of these postal votes were not counted.

Of course the unusually high number of requests for postal votes this election was a problem for the AEC, nevertheless it was something that should have been anticipated.

This situation remains highly questionable. Various analysts believe the results in some marginal seats could have been affected, particularly in my case in the senate.

Can you present me with all of the daily figures in the Queensland senate from start to finish as they were received by the tally room, especially after the count went below the line.

In a system where voting is compulsory, it is demeaning for an elector to receive a letter telling him or her their vote was not counted (see attached letter for Rankin division).

The elector in this instance whose correspondence is attached, filled in and posted an application for a postal vote 11 days before the election.

When the ballot forms hadn't arrived by the Wednesday before the election, the potential elector contacted the State Electoral office by telephone, resulting in the postal ballot forms arriving on Friday afternoon the eve of the election.

The elector was physically incapacitated, and could not post the forms herself, but relied on a relative to do so, which was done Saturday morning.

2.

There is no doubt, after the elector related to this office a conversation she had with AEC staff, that many thousands of voters had the same treatment.

It simply is not good enough. Australian electoral results have been questionable since at least 1987, and perhaps before this, for a multitude of reasons some of which I have previously discussed with Bob Longland.

The biggest downfall of fair and equitable elections in Australia is the lack of ID required when electors present at a polling booth. A Medicare card would be sufficient proof of identity, certainly streets ahead of the present system, where none is required.

Then when the AEC ceased physical habitation checks the whole system fell apart. Our research and that of other experts show the rolls remain less than 80 per cent accurate at any time.

A pool of 20 per cent of the voting base is sufficient for some unofficial body to control the outcome of an election.

And of course there is the mysterious and unnecessary removal of electors from divisional rolls who in some cases had been listed for decades.

These people too are mostly disenfranchised at polling time. I even had an example of this with a relative of an office staffer.

No doubt the normal post-election parliamentary committee examination of the conduct of the election, will as usual exonerate all and sundry from any faults.

Yours faithfully,

Senator Len Harris