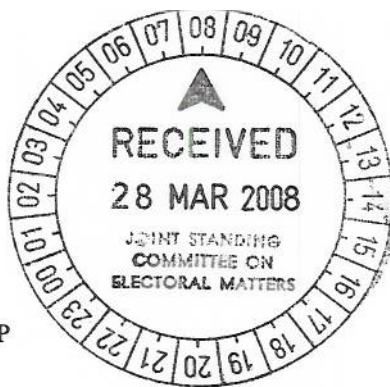


D. J. MORRIS



26 March 2008

Mr Daryl Melham, MP  
Chairman  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Chairman

This letter is in response to the public invitation from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for submissions relating to the conduct of the 2007 federal election.

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* provides, at section 163, that the requirements for nomination as a candidate for either the House of Representatives or the Senate are (i) attainment of the age of 18 years; (ii) Australian citizenship; and (iii) being an Elector, or eligible to be an Elector – i.e. on the Roll as an elector for the House of Representatives or the Senate, or being eligible to be on the Roll.

I submit that the Committee consider recommending a modest amendment to the Act to add a requirement, for election to either the House of Representatives or the Senate, that candidates must be enrolled in same State or Territory as the seat for which they are nominating. I do not believe it is an onerous requirement to have to be enrolled in the State or Territory a person is seeking to represent in the Senate. Nor is it onerous to be resident in the same State as the House of Representatives division for which a candidate is nominating.

At the 2007 federal election, for example, four candidates for the Senate in Tasmania were not enrolled to vote in Tasmania, nor did they reside in the State. Whilst I have no general objection to any person putting him or herself forward for the electors' choice, I do not think it reasonable that a candidate who is not resident in a State can in any way logically seek to represent the residents of either a division in that State, or the State at large in the national parliament. I do not know how prevalent this practice of 'absentee candidates' is, and I am sure the Australian Electoral Commission would be able to provide the committee with relevant statistics, but it does seem to me to be inconsistent with the principle of representative democracy. A minor amendment to the Electoral Act would preclude this practice from spreading.

Disclosure: I was a Senate candidate in the 2007 election for a political party, but this submission is made on an entirely personal basis.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely

(Don Morris)