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22.6.2002  
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Mr Trevour Rowe

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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| Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters |                    |
| Submission No.                                | 56                 |
| Date Received                                 | 26/6/02            |
| Secretary                                     | <i>[Signature]</i> |

Dear Sir,

Thank you for writing twice to me, in reply to a letter I sent in about one year ago, about Percentage Voting.

A preface or summary of this letter is that I am concerned with the Exploitation of the existing Preferential Voting System, carried out by the major parties.

Hereby offering an alternative system of voting to reduce the existing advantages which can in turn eliminate the first most popular candidate.

At the time of my last writing I was not aware of the 50% +1 majority ruling which could prove difficult to obtain if the value of 2nd preferences is reduced, however I would still like to submit my papers for consideration, as I still believe it to be a fairer system.

I didn't write my original letter with only the 2001 elections in mind but believe that the idea of vote rigging was possibly there. Prior to those elections there was a lot of publicity about having the minor parties agree to having their 2nd preferences directed to the major parties in return for favours provided by them, to help the minor parties. For instance in advertising, how to vote cards etc etc.

This in itself may seem very generous by the major parties, but when you analyse the existing system you realise that they are only buying the value of the second vote, which then becomes a first vote. I don't believe the public are aware about the practice.

I have scrutinized the example given in the 1998 Electoral pocket book on the seat of Bass in Tasmania, and find that even though the Liberal party had the lead with 45.75% after the first count. Against Labour with 42.30%, then Labour received 4748 2nd preferences against the Liberal candidates 2560 votes, then the percentages changed to Labour 50.06% against Liberal having 49.94%, giving Labour the seat.

Under Percentage Value Voting, and halving the value of the second preferences then Liberal would have gained 1280 votes, while Labour gained 2374 votes. The Liberals would then have the higher percentage of 29253 or 47.9%, against Labour with 28188 or 46.1% with neither party reaching the 50% goal. As that is practically impossible, but the highest percentage person would take the seat.

If necessary the 3rd votes could also be counted at 25% value.

If adopted this whole idea would mean changing the entire voting system, so 50% +1 would have to go or be reduced to 47%.

YOURS SINCERELY

*[Signature]*

**Counting the votes for the House of Representatives**

A House of Representatives candidate is elected if he or she gains an absolute majority or 50% + 1 vote (not 51%).

- First, all of the number '1' votes are counted for each candidate. If a candidate gets more than half the total formal first preference votes, that candidate will be elected.
- If, however, no candidate has more than half of the votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded. This candidate's votes are transferred to the other candidates according to the second preferences shown by voters on their ballot papers. If still no candidate has more than half the votes, the candidate who now has the fewest votes is excluded and the votes are transferred according to the next preference shown. This process continues until one candidate has more than half the total votes and is declared elected.

A distribution of preferences takes place in every division, even where a candidate already has a majority of first preference votes. The result of this full distribution of first preferences is used to calculate the two party preferred statistics for divisions that have the ALP and Coalition as the final two candidates.

In divisions that do not have the ALP and Coalition as the final two candidates, a Scrutiny for Information is conducted to determine the two party preferred result. A Scrutiny for Information, in such cases, is a notional distribution of preferences to find the result of preference flows to the ALP and Coalition candidates.

An example of a distribution of preferences is shown on the following page.

A SECOND PREFERENCE ONLY, NOT THE ONE THEY WANT.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - 1998 ELECTION**

**Distribution of Preferences**

By Division

Bass

| Count  | SMITH Warwick (LP) | O'BYRNE Michelle (ALP) | BAIRD Stuart (GRN) | LOCKHART Allan (HAN) | SMITH Harvey (TFP) | MUIR Brian (DEM) | Total |
|--------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------|
|        | Count              | Count                  | Count              | Count                | Count              | Count            | Count |
| FIRST  | 27974              | 45758                  | 2595               | 2057                 | 1165               | 1491             | 61146 |
| SECOND | 108                | 1854                   | 71                 | 367                  | Excluded           | 247              | 1165  |
| TOTAL  | 28190              | 4610                   | 2666               | 2424                 | 1738               | 1738             | 61146 |
| THIRD  | 228                | 2629                   | 540                | 216                  | Excluded           | Excluded         | 1738  |
| TOTAL  | 28647              | 4685                   | 3206               | 2640                 | 2640               | 2640             | 61146 |
| FOURTH | 824                | 3121                   | 775                | Excluded             | Excluded           | Excluded         | 2640  |
| TOTAL  | 29471              | 4820                   | 3981               | 651                  | 651                | 651              | 61146 |
| FIFTH  | 531                | 2670                   | 3981               | Excluded             | Excluded           | Excluded         | 3981  |
| TOTAL  | 30534              | 4994                   | 3981               | 651                  | 651                | 651              | 61146 |

2 NP PREF. VOTES  
REDUCED BY 50%

L.P. would WIN OR 47.9% OR 46%