

SUBMISSION NO. 45



Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	45
Date Received	23-3-05
Secretary	<i>[Signature]</i>

1197am RPH Adelaide

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23rd March 2004

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Department of House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Re: Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election and Matters Related Thereto.

Dear Secretary

I write this submission on behalf of RPH Adelaide Incorporated, the Association for Print Handicapped broadcasting in South Australia, to encourage the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to seriously consider the implementation of electronically assisted voting at the next Federal Election.

It is estimated that more than 17% of South Australians (264,000 people*) have a print disability – that's 264,000 people who, for a number of reasons, find it difficult to cast their vote under the current system.

People with a Print Handicap include those who have chronic Arthritis or Parkinson's disease, those who are blind or vision impaired, those with literacy difficulties, those who can understand but not read English and many more.

Current electoral procedures take it for granted that voters can see to complete their voting paper, that voters can manipulate the tools to complete the voting paper and most of all, that voters can understand what is written on the voting paper.

This is clearly not the case.

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Every Australian deserves the right to cast a secret vote and to independently verify that vote. The current voting method of pencil/pen on paper does not allow this basic right.

Electronically assisted voting is the way to overcome these shortfalls.

Being an electronic medium, the ballot paper can be rendered in a range of formats including:


- Audio
- Audio in multiple languages
- Large print format
- A variety of screen colours and contrasts
- Multiple languages
- Refreshable Braille display

Electronically assisted voting methods can be implemented to offer a practical and affordable solution to enable independent voting.

In South Australia alone, there are 264,000 people who could benefit from the introduction of electronically assisted voting at the next Federal Election.

If the UK Government can make a public commitment to running 'an e-enabled general election sometime after 2006', I would encourage the committee to adopt the process in Australia.

Yours sincerely



Hans Reimer
General Manager

* Market Equity 2002 research.