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From: Marian Jones [Marian.Jones@visionaustralia.org]
Sent: Tuesday, 20 May 2008 11:22 AM
To: Committee, EM (REPS)
Subject: FW: Electronic Voting

ATT: the Committee Secretariat

Re: Electornic Voting

I have been legally blind since birth due to glaucoma and cataracts. I am able to access print with vision in one eye only (the other is totally blind) using a powerful magnifying aid. I can also access print on computer screens by means of magnification and speech software.

During the 2007 Federal Election I had the opportunity to cast an electronic vote for the first time. It was a wonderful, stress free experience.

Reading through high powered magnifiers means that my viewing field is severely restricted. This is particularly challenging when checking the Senate Ballot Paper with columns and white space. In recent elections I have voted above the line as even with careful checking I could have missed a square consequently my vote would have become informal.

This time when casting my vote electronically I could choose to vote below the line. I could then go back to check and/or change the order and be confident that my vote for both Houses was valid. Casting an electronic vote gave me total independence, freedom of choice and confidence in the validity of my vote.

I applaud the Government for giving myself and voters who are blind the opportunity of participating in the trial for electronic voting for the 2007 Federal Election.

I make this submission in the hope that all future elections can be similarly conducted to give total independence to voters who are blind and have low vision. I would like to encourage the Committee to recommend a change in legislation to the Government to enable implementation of electronic voting for all future government elections and make electronic voting the norm.

With Thanks
Marian Jones

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