

**From:** Patricia Stillman [trishys@queenslander.net]

**Sent:** Thursday, 15 May 2008 11:50 AM

**To:** Committee, EM (REPS)

**Subject:** Submission to 2007 Election inquiry.

I am legally blind and when I heard there was a chance to have Electronic Assisted Voting in my area I pushed very hard for it.

Once our area (Hervey Bay) was selected as one of the 29 sites for Electronic Assisted Voting I worked closely with staff from the Electoral Commission.

The system worked really well but sadly very few people used it.

One major reason for this low rate of use is due to lack of awareness.

Many people in the blind community do not belong to organizations because they don't meet their specific needs, By not belonging to any form of blindness organization they do not know what is happening eg new products or resources such as EAV .

This can be solved in part by advertising on local & regional media outlets such as community radio, local newspapers, ABC radio, commercial radio & television.

At one stage I was advised all media had to come from the Electoral Commission media people, I did receive a copy of the media release which outlined the system.

I consider a lot of money was spent putting EAV together across Australia but more people would have used the system if it had been promoted properly.

Why didn't staff from the Electoral Commission in company with a representative from the blind community, talk with programs such as Sunrise (Ch. 7) Today (Ch 9) 9am with David & Kim (Ch 10) or 7.30 report (ABC). Electronic Assisted Voting is such an innovative resource that would catch the interest of the media.

Next time around make sure the Electoral Commission media people earn their huge salaries and get the word out into the community.

I would also suggest that members of parliament didn't do their bit either – our local member (Paul Neville, Member for Hinkler) puts out a newsletter regularly and prior to the election we got numerous flyers from him and not once did he mention EAV was available in his electorate. And he was on the Communications working group. I did contact his office and discussed it with a staff member who said he would get one of their media people to call back but didn't.

I did do an ABC Wide Bay radio interview after I had used the system and at least one person who heard the interview used the system.

Please take my comments into consideration when planning the next Federal election in four years time.

Regards,

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