

19 MAR 2008

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matter
Submission No. 146
Date Received 17/3/08
Secretary

18-3-08

Dear Mr Raguse,

I was so disgusted by this whole ridiculous and frustrating series of events relating to the last time we 'voted' that I felt compelled to write this letter in response to the question as to '*why I didn't vote and shouldn't be fined*'. I feel I am due an apology or explanation. You will see after reading this that my vote for Labour didn't count after *all*. *And how many others?*

I have held back from sending this until after the Council elections to see if things improved. I am happy to say, I walked in with my card and the process went smoothly. We were, puzzled though, as we live next door to the polling location, as to where the long queues were this time. However, in view of the recent revelations that up to 30% didn't vote possibly through more bungling, it seems that the whole process needs an investigation and shake up.(!?)

Although I may add that if I were the elected councillor/politician, I would take heart that many of those who did vote were aware and genuine enough to actually *choose* to do so.

It will also interest you to know that Jase is *still* waiting for his refund.(See letter)

Yours Faithfully

Esther Mace

E A Mace

Mrs E.A. Mace

6/3/08

Dear DRO for Forde,

I am replying to your recent communication regarding my apparent negligence in voting. This is being sent to my Local Member and possibly Mr Rudd so it is in your interest to read it all. About March last year (07), Someone came to the house in an official capacity to check if our electoral details were up to date. As there was then my son, my daughter and her fiancée living here, the two males had recently moved in, and knowing young adults priorities- the answer was no, probably not. She insisted then, and was most persistent I get it done in time for her to return in 2 days as the rules were changing very soon and it would become a lot more trouble for the young people then. I told her that with the 3 of them all working different shifts and hours, and one even frequently away from home, it would be a BIG ask. However, despite this, I managed to get them to comply, and the forms were handed over to her. When the form for the confirmation of who lived at this address arrived, I was surprised to see that our very simple surname of four letters -MACE had been seen as **MALE** and my daughter was not registered correctly. As this was now her concern, she went to the trouble of inquiring what to do, and was told to fill in another form with explanatory note and send it in. This she did, only for us to receive another form now showing that 2 people A real one, AND a non existent H. Male lived here. I then sent it back with the facts highlighted and marked with a star- 'please amend,' and never heard back. I believe I should have received a form stating the correct names who then reside at this address?

Any election day we can expect to be a frustrating and annoying experience for us. This is due to the fact that our name is very hard to find in amongst the ludicrously small print as it is placed within alphabetical order in a manner that still clings to the dark ages of Scotland (literally- as it is in among the Mcs and Macs from a time when all were a MAC) .And at this point I won't mention the long queues However this election day was one to remember-clearly – months later. As usual the inexperienced young lady couldn't find us and she then asked the person next to her who couldn't find it either. We then, as has happened many times before, were directed to the other table of absent/ provincial voting

and more senior officials. They couldn't find it either. Then the most Senior official had a look after realising he didn't have a book of his own, and snatching one out from under someone's nose. Meanwhile the queue kept growing...He said that we were definitely not on the roll. No, I don't have to reach for the thesaurus just yet- at this point I was just rather cross at the fact that we had been on the roll here for 9yrs and since doing the right thing and going to a lot of trouble with the last forms- it appears we were not. When I said as much, I was told that '*Oh they (the forms the official had as she went door to door) wouldn't have been valid-had to be the new ones.*' I asked then, if my daughter -her fiancée-anyone- was at that address, as they were making a special trip of over an hr to come here and vote, having very recently moved out. I was informed '*NO one at that address.*' I may add here in relevant confusion that when she rung she was told she had to vote at the poll of her registered electoral address, but afterwards found that she could have done an absentee vote near her new home.

My husband was not quite so reserved as I -shall we say, and demanded to sign some proof that he had been and could not vote-which he did. I however, take my right to have a say more seriously, and I was told I could vote (a provincial?) SO I duly filled out the form. As is my democratic right I believe in taking some time and thought into numbering the House of Reps fully, however by this stage, I had become so flustered that I only put the one number.

This was not acceptable so I asked a senior official for another form only to have my incredulity rise 'a little' when I was told to REUSE the form- '*just cross out the other number.*' Shaking my head at this bizarre green/cost cutting exercise I conformed. at the same time as I assured myself that that the notice in the hall said '*If you make a mistake please ask for another form.*' It was later that I speculated on the validity of such a vote- let alone the non permanence-easily erasable nature of pencil marks. The thought that my vote wouldn't be counted now, did make me angry. having spent about 25mins deciding how to number in all good conscience, the 60+ boxes.

We told my daughter, not to bother coming, but she decided to try anyway. Imagine our surprise when they arrived just before 6 pm saying that they had voted at the **SAME place** with no problems!! The next event I could have said belies belief- however I keep that for later. When my daughter's fiancée some time later, needed to have information sent through from NSW (where he used to live) he was told that there was a block on it as he hadn't voted there and until the fine was paid he could not get the important info needed -regarding a licence related to employment. So he had no choice other than to pay it and send in a Statutory Declaration and hope for a refund.

Now, recently, this last communication from you nearly left me speechless- Flabbergasted may just cover it- as well as angry. The icing on this comedy of errors cake with bungling and ineptitude filling is that I now receive a letter asking to state the '*valid and sufficient*' reason as to why I didn't vote!!!! I trust that you now have it.

Further upon this subject of valid reasons, I would like you to consult your dictionary, and find any part of the definition of democracy /vote / ballot/poll or election that even remotely suggests it involves being forced or having no choice but to do so. In fact the definition of elect is *to choose to do* and elector is *one who has the right of choosing*. WE are past the days of the old excuse regarding low population and I cannot see why it is not our right to choose to vote or not- rather than the dictatorial definition and oxymoron that '*we have to- but it is our right*.' It makes absolutely no democratic sense. If I was a politician I would rather have 100 people vote for me because they *want* to- rather than take pot luck with a thousand ,who by whatever whim on the last minute, after waiting and getting more and more irritated in a queue that they do not *choose* to be in , just puts a mark anywhere (or deliberately not) in order to get out of there as quick as possible. I would also like to state that I believe, based on what I have heard and seen of recent polling days, that unless something is done to alleviate the length of queues, efficiency of the staff, and the size of the print, it won't belong before another term is added to our descriptions of people reacting under pressure. **Poll Rage.**

So you know that all events are true as stated, I have had a JP witness this. And I await the next communication, wondering if poor H. Male will be sent a fine for its existential-or should I say extant SELF. And I am sending this to my local member and the Electoral Commission so I can be sure it is read and I am not wasting my time and energy as I clearly did on the 24th November last year.

Yours, not all that Faithfully, Esther Mace.

E A Mace

Dave (JP QUAK)