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SEO 5/2001

February 13, 2001

Ms H Donaldson ^{H.D.}
The Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
SG 60
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Donaldson

Thank you for the opportunity to address issues relating to political honesty and accountability that will shortly be considered by your committee.

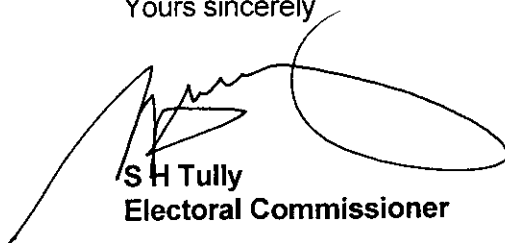
It is not my intention to comment on matters of government policy. However, I note that the proposed changes to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, relating to truth in political advertising, are similar to requirements in the South Australian Electoral Act 1985 ss113 and 114, first legislated in 1985 and amended 1997.

One of my statutory responsibilities is to carry out publicity and public education programmes and inform the public of their democratic rights and obligations. Enrolment to vote in South Australian parliamentary elections is optional; once enrolled an elector must obtain ballot papers for every election in which s/he is eligible to vote though electors are not legally required to mark the ballot paper.

Elector turnout and informality rates are matters of concern. The office expends up to one fifth of its election budget on advertising and education materials which explain the electoral and voting systems, advise of polling facilities and encourage participation.

It is my firm belief that an elector must have faith not only in the fairness and impartiality of election administration but in the polity and governments which they are asked to select. I welcome measures that re-enforce the probity of the electoral and political systems to which they are subject.

Yours sincerely


S H Tully
Electoral Commissioner

