

August 23, 2007

**Re: Submission to a Senate Committee Inquiry**

I thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Bill for an Act to amend the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, cited as the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Act 2007*. I strongly agree with the wording of 1E lines 23 – 30, and I quote:

“23 (1E) A law of a State or Territory has no effect to the extent to which  
24 the law in any way prohibits a person or body from, or penalises or  
25 discriminates against a person or body for:  
26 (a) entering into, or proposing to enter into, an arrangement  
27 under subsection (1); or  
28 (b) taking part in or assisting with, or proposing to take part in or  
29 assist with, the conduct of an activity (such as a plebiscite) to  
30 which an arrangement under subsection (1) relates.”

The wording and intent of these statements upholds democracy. Australia is a great country, founded and conducted on democratic principles. The democracy of Australia must be protected. The recent actions of Premier Peter Beattie criminalising any actions of shire councilors to hold a referendum on the issue of shire amalgamation is totally undemocratic, a serious affront to Australia's democratic principles. Premier Beattie and his political party's enactment of a law that criminalises individuals who would organize a referendum, stops a referendum, and cuts off the democratic voice of the people. Premier Beattie's actions are the first cracks in the wall against democracy. Should Premier Beattie's actions against democracy go unchecked similar actions could be duplicated by other Premiers, plus other undemocratic actions might occur either here in Queensland or elsewhere in Australia. I applaud the Federal government's vigilance against the demise of democracy throughout Australia. I agree with this Bill, the enactment of the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Act 2007*.

Sincerely,

Lynda Hansen