

THE NATIONALS

Mr Alistair Sands
Committee Secretary
Finance and Public Administration Reference Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

22 February, 2006

Dear Mr Sands



RE: Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) Bill 2005.

Thank you for your letter to Ms Pam Stallman, Federal Secretary of The Nationals, inviting our comments on the legislation currently under consideration by the Committee. I am responding on her behalf.

Our party's view is that the provisions in the Bill will significantly increase the integrity of the electoral roll and improve the electoral process. The proposed changes to disclosure limits and nomination deposits reflect the lack of inflationary adjustments since the laws were originally introduced.

While our party would prefer the total removal of provisional voting, we believe that the changes to the voter identification process will assist in improving integrity for provisional voting.

The party still encourages the AEC to undertake work to ensure people are informed of their current status and address on the roll, which may involve an audit of the roll via a mail-out to all voters at some defined time prior to the latest possible date for a general election. The AEC's work should also involve a greater advertising awareness campaign prior to an election period, in the final 12 months of a Government's term.

The proposed changes to the party registration rules will ensure that all parties are subjected to the same rules and should ensure that frivolous groups are not able to register as political parties. The proposed changes to disclosure limits will bring a system which has not been indexed for more than 15 years, back into line with the original intention of the disclosure provisions.

Our party believes that the proposed legislation will significantly address many of our concerns which we raised in the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry. We believe there are still outstanding matters which must be dealt with by the Parliament, such as the different voting system across the State and Territories, and the need to give the AEC greater powers to deal with deceptive behaviour by candidates and political parties on election day.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hall
Federal Director