

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

1.1 The Electoral and Referendum Legislation Amendment Bill 2006 (the bill) was introduced into the House of Representatives on 30 November 2006 by the Special Minister of State, the Hon. Gary Nairn. The bill was then introduced into the Senate on 7 December 2006.

Reference of the bill

1.2 On 7 December 2006, the Senate adopted the Selection of Bills Committee Report No. 16 of 2006 and referred the provisions of the bill to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration (the committee) for inquiry and report by 20 February 2007.

Purpose of the bill

1.3 The purpose of the bill is to implement Government supported reform measures arising from the recommendations made by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral matters (JSCEM) in its *Report of the Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election and matters Related Thereto* (JSCEM Report).

1.4 The bill amends the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and the Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984.

Submissions

1.5 The committee advertised its inquiry in *The Australian* on 12 December 2006. In addition, the committee contacted a number of individuals and organisations in writing alerting them to the inquiry and inviting them to make a submission.

1.6 The Australian Electoral Commission, the Commonwealth agency with carriage for the legislation, provided a submission to the inquiry. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Department of Defence provided the only other submissions.

Acknowledgement

The committee wishes to thank all those that assisted with the inquiry.

