

Date: Friday, 11 March 2011 5:31:48 PM

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Submission to inquiry re: Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment (Disallowance and Amendment Power of the Commonwealth) Bill 2010

Good afternoon

I realise this is a day after the submission date however I would like to request it is accepted. I also apologise for the absence of an attachment in Word or PDF format, I have neither licensed on my home computer. I ask that you please accept my email as a submission in its own right.

As an Australian born citizen of 34 years, a voting individual for 16 years and an ACT resident of over 10 years now, I am submitting in the positive for this Bill's passage. I believe firmly in democracy and the rights of every Australian to have equal say in the way in which they are governed at a State/Territory and federal level. If the Committee does decide to recommend against the Bill's passage I will be very interested in knowing the Committee's full reasons for recommending against the passage of this Bill - if that is the direction that is taken. To not support the passage of this Bill is, in my eyes, to not support democracy.

I do appreciate the difference in the establishment of the ACT and that its government's establishment is far more recent than the State jurisdictions. I understand that the makeup of the ACT parliament has its differences to State government parliaments. We may be smaller in geographical size to any other State or indeed the Northern Territory. However in terms of population, we in the ACT as almost as many as Tasmania. As ACT residents we identify as ACT residents - not as part of NSW, not as a offshoot of the Australian Government. Yes many of us work for the Australian Government and it is the historical reason for the establishment of the ACT. But we are more than that. We are Australian citizens who deserve equal representation at our local level as much as a person living in Broome, WA or a person living in Far North Queensland, or a person living in Hobart, Tasmania. We vote in our local Territory election for a government that we choose to represent us and what we stand for. I cannot fathom any rational policy or reasoning why the Australian government considers us as ACT citizens less worthy of our local vote and self-government than anyone else in this country. We vote for our ACT government based on their policies and promises, and they either continue or fall based on their follow through on those promises of representation. How is it that our democratic choosing of the ACT government is worth any less than our neighbours in Queanbeyan, NSW - many of whom we work side by side with? We are equally intelligent and rational human beings - and yet the Disallowance and Amendment Power that the Commonwealth Government currently has the power to wield through Executive decision to strike down any law of the ACT suggests strongly that you consider us unable to self-govern, unable to exercise our democratic rights to be represented locally, unable to make intelligent and rational voting decisions assumed of those who reside in State jurisdictions.

As a sidenote I resent the connection made between this Bill and 'gay marriage' - I am a member of the GLBTI community, I have no issue with 'gay marriage' but this Bill is separate and far more important than one issue. It is about equal representation and democracy.

The disallowance law as it stands is an insult to every ACT voter. Also please remember that we don't just cast a vote in an ACT government election, but also the next federal election.

kind regards

Jessica Brown