

**THE ELECTORAL REFORM SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Secretary:

Mr Deane Crabb
11 Yapinga Street
SOUTH PLYMPTON SA 5038
Ph: [08] 8297 6441 [H]
[08] 8226 0342 [W]

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. 97
Date Received 4/7/02
Secretary <i>Deane Crabb</i>

July 3, 2002

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/ Madam

On behalf of the Electoral Reform Society of South Australia, I am enclosing a brief submission to the Inquiry into the 2001 Federal Election.

Please let me know if any clarification of our comments is required.

Yours faithfully

Deane Crabb

Hare-Clark.....fair and democratic

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. 97
Date Received 4.7.02
Secretary <i>Spalm</i>

Inquiry into the 2001 Federal Election

Comments from the Electoral Reform Society of South Australia, July 2002

Method of election

The Electoral Reform Society believes that the electoral system used to elect the House of Representatives needs to be changed from single-member electorates to the quota-preferential method of proportional representation with multi-member electorates.

The Proportional Representation Society of Australia has prepared an analysis of the 2001 Federal Election. This analysis shows what could have resulted if a Hare-Clark form of quota-preferential proportional representation had been used.

A copy of this analysis is attached.

With single-member electorates, there were some marked discrepancies. At the 2001 election, in South Australia, the Liberal Party gained 75% of the seats with 46% of the vote, while in Tasmania, the ALP gained 100% of the seats with 47% of the vote.

Even more importantly than how the parties fared, is an analysis of how the voters fared in actually electing the candidates of their choice. Unfortunately the figures are not yet publicly available from the Australian Electoral Commission to calculate this for the 2001 Federal Election. However, at the 1998 Federal Election, only 54% of Australian voters found that their votes actually elected someone to the House of Representatives. This Society believes that the figure for the 2001 Federal Election would be similar.

In contrast to the House of Representatives, the results of the 2001 Senate elections gives a much fairer result. Not only were Senators elected to represent their parties or supporters in proportion to the votes received, but also it is estimated that over 85% of voters found their vote electing a Senator (at the 1998 elections, the figure was 87%).

It is hoped that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters will take the opportunity with the Inquiry into the 2001 Federal Election to consider some wholesale changes to the methods of electing both the House of Representatives and the Senate, rather than just reviewing some aspects. A full review of Australia's electoral system has not been done since the 1980's by the then Joint Select Committee on Electoral Reform.

Above the line voting for the Senate

The Electoral Reform Society believes that above the line voting for the Senate needs to be abolished. In its place, optional preferential voting should be introduced. While this Society would like to see voting fully optional (so that a vote for a single

candidate is a formal vote), we appreciate the arguments for marking as many preferences as there are candidates to be elected.

Above the line voting is both cumbersome and confusing. And this is likely to become more so, following the next State election in New South Wales for the Legislative Council when voters will be able to mark more than one preference above the line for party lists.

Most voters are unaware what it means if they simply mark a 'one' above the line in terms of where their preferences may go. And yet voters should not be expected to take the alternative option of being compulsorily made to mark preferences against all candidates below the line.

If above the line voting is to be continued, then there needs to be more information on what this means. Perhaps any party submitting a group voting ticket needs to be compulsorily made to advertise to show how preferences are to be distributed. Simply urging their supporters to mark a number 'one' above the line with no explanation is unacceptable.

The Australian Electoral Commission is to be congratulated on putting the voting tickets on their website, and this obviously created considerable interest.

Under the Act (Section 216) a poster or a pamphlet showing the voting tickets must be prominently displayed at each polling booth. This Society knows of no polling booth where the pamphlet could be described as *prominently* displayed, and at many polling places it appears the pamphlet was not available or the electoral officials were not aware of its existence.

In some instances, electoral officials referred any inquiries for the poster/pamphlet to those outside handing out how-to-vote cards (who invariably knew nothing either). In one case, a voter was told that there was no list and when he argued that he had seen such a list previously, he was told that regulations had been changed so "that there was to be no such list any where in a polling booth." In another instance, another voter was already using the pamphlet, and there was a considerable wait. The Society has also been told by one voter that he was shown the booklet, but when he noted that some groups had supplied two or even three distinct tickets and asked what this meant, the officer-in-charge stated that he had no idea.

If above the line voting is to continue, then there needs to be more information provided both to the electoral officials and to the voters. Ideally this needs to be provided before election day and consideration on how to do this needs to be considered.

Other aspects with the method of electing the Senate

Unfortunately there are a number of other defects in the procedures for electing Senators, which have yet to be corrected.

We have already mentioned above that voting should be optional preferential.

The procedures to calculate transfer values and for transferring surplus votes need to be reviewed. With the Senate count now computerised, the correct transfer values can be calculated. The current formula using averaging distorts the proportionality of the voting with some votes increasing in value.

The Robson rotation needs to be used to decide the order of candidates on the ballot paper. This method is now successfully used for both the Tasmanian House of Assembly and the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The method of filling Senate vacancies needs to be reviewed. Before the new Senate started on July 1, 2002 eleven of the 72 Senators elected to represent the States were chosen by their State Parliaments (or in the case of Tasmania, appointed by the Governor). This 15% were not elected by the Australian voters. It is little wonder that a previous Prime Minister referred to the Senate as an “unrepresented swill.” To ensure that the voters decide and that the candidates elected have actually faced the voters, vacancies should be filled by countback – that is by recounting the votes, excluding the retiring Senator, so that the opinion of the voters as expressed at the election for the retiring Senator is used.

Election day

The Federal Election was held on November 10, 2001. Unfortunately this clashed with one of the busiest days in Adelaide for the annual Christmas pageant with many country and interstate visitors, and yet there did not appear to be any extra effort made to assist in responding to people’s inquiries of where they could vote while they were waiting for the pageant (many families with children arrive to find good positions several hours before the pageant). With the Electoral Reform Society listed in the Adelaide telephone directory, we took many calls (often out of hours) on this but even when we tried to find out where absentee votes could be cast particularly for those from interstate it was difficult to get a clear answer.

Ideally there should be a fixed election date, and one that does not clash with major events and school holidays, etc.

In addition there is merit in considering changing completely to postal voting (as now used for local government elections in South Australia and used in electing delegates to the Constitutional Convention on the Republic).

Such a change would do away with the need to arrange polling places, and the need to publicise where these are. Currently when the “normal” polling place is not available and somewhere else needs to be arranged, there appears to be little extra advertising to advise voters where to go. At the very least, polling places need to be listed in the Australian Electoral Commission guide.

This guide needs to be expanded to not only include polling places, but the list of candidates and even details on the candidates. With the Constitutional Convention election, the Commission’s guide also included statements from candidates – this practice needs to be continued so that voters are more informed.

Publicity for this Inquiry

Concern is expressed about the lack of publicity for this Inquiry. Why is there never any mention in Federal Parliament that this Inquiry is to be held? Those interested in making a submission are left to rely on newspaper advertising (easily missed) or word of mouth (not always reliable). A mailing list needs to be developed to include all candidates at the election, and those who have made submissions to previous inquiries etc. The mailing list should also include all those who receive the Australian Electoral Commission's excellent publication, "Electoral Newsfile".

Several years ago, this Society made a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties and since then we keep receiving notification on any treaties or inquiries. Despite making submissions to previous inquiries of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, we have yet to make your mailing list. Are you trying to limit the number of submissions the Committee receives?

EFFECTIVE VOTES

An analysis of the Senate election results, October 3, 1998

(A) Election results (after distribution of necessary preferences to obtain quotas)

Electorate	Effective votes					Ineffective votes					Total votes
	LIB/NAT	ALP	AD	HAN	IND	LIB/NAT	ALP	AD	HAN	OTHER	
New South Wales	1073066	1737075	536533						407935		3754609
Victoria	1239279	1218498						384252	310		2842339
Queensland	572490	572490	316055	286245		252414	3332				2003026
Western Australia	478393	304024	152012						129193		1063622
South Australia	406231	270520	135260				34304		100269		946584
Tasmania	88108	132222			46987					40670	307987
Australian Capital Territory	67142	65679					23088	41035	38		196982
Northern Territory	35412	37722				651	537	5119	8657	4904	93002
Australia	3960121	4338230	1139860	286245	46987	253065	61261	430406	646402	45574	11208151
Grand Total	9771443					1436708					

(Note: These figures do not include those votes exhausted or lost by fraction during transfers.)

(B) Voter representation

The election results listed in (A) can be summarised:

Party	Total votes	Effective votes	Ineffective votes
LIB/NAT	4213186	3960121 94.0%	253065 6.0%
ALP	4399491	4338230 98.6%	61261 1.4%
AD	1570266	1139860 72.6%	430406 27.4%
HAN	932647	286245 30.7%	646402 69.3%
IND	92561	46987 50.8%	45574 49.2%
Australia	11208151	9771443 87.2%	1436708 12.8%
Effective representation		87.2%	
Wasted votes		12.8%	

(C) Party representation

The election results listed in (A) also show the following:

Party	% of total vote	Corresponding proportion of seats		Seats actually won
LIB	37.6%	15.04	15	17
ALP	39.3%	15.70	16	17
AD	14.0%	5.60	6	4
HAN	8.3%	3.33	3	1
OTHER	0.8%	0.33	0	1

This analysis has been prepared by the Electoral Reform Society of South Australia.

*For further details, contact Deane Crabb at PO Box 2019, South Plympton SA 5038
phone 8297 6441 (h)*

Source: Australian Electoral Commission, "Election 98", 1998 Election Statistics,
Volume 1.

EFFECTIVE VOTES

An analysis of the House of Representatives election results, October 3, 1998

(A) Election results (after distribution of necessary preferences so that the winning candidate has more than 50% of the vote)

Electorate	Effective votes				Ineffective votes						Total votes
	LIB	NAT	ALP	IND	LIB	NAT	ALP	AD	HAN	OTHER	
New South Wales											
Banks			37386		27121				8721		73228
Barton			37741		26610			2360	5271	3363	75345
Bennelong	37651						25479	4633	3732	3593	75088
Berowra*	43180						21763	5255	4788	4454	79440
Blaxland*			44096		15649			1733	5052	5266	71796
Bradfield*	47725						13937	5791	2832	3858	74143
Calare				38638		15183	18991				72812
Charlton			40781		23741			5383	10400		80305
Chifley*			43496		14485			3595	7400	4426	73402
Cook*	37075						22850	3147	6144	4604	73820
Cowper		41335					32002				73337
Cunningham*			37592		17285			4108	5378	6641	71004
Dobell			40980		35840						76820
Eden-Monaro	36722						36460				73182
Farrer*		36602					16489	2940	9664	3531	69226
Fowler*			49472		13705			2603	5886	8532	80198
Gilmore	40013						34037				74050
Grayndler*			41971		15628			4301	2342	11152	75394
Greenway			38837		25643			4737	8348		77565
Gwydir		42480					24330				66810
Hughes	41228						32159		7946		81333
Hume	35315						24903		8934		69152
Hunter*			39187		11919	7976		2278	8131	2243	71734
Kingsford-Smith*			37123		21852			2723	4167	5698	71563
Lindsay	39200						37238				76438
Lowe			40527		33662						74189
Lyne*		38812					22456	1974	9011	3848	76101
Macarthur	42496						31742		10351		84589
Mackellar*	39966						14605	7104	5355	7422	74452
Macquarie	41053						34830				75883
Mitchell*	46203						16263	3852	5090	5087	76495
Newcastle			32928					6864	11020	14411	65223
New England		43086					25377				68463
North Sydney*	42887						20403	5726	2270	7667	78953
Page		39265					35724				74989
Parkes		39638					33617				73255
Parramatta	36346						34824				71170
Paterson			39268		37397						76665
Prospect*			41310		15965			3405	5199	3508	69387
Reid*			41162		15637			2052	4477	8184	71512
Richmond		41270					40013				81283
Riverina		48552					25801				74353
Robertson	39051						36034				75085
Shortland*			38004		20733			2605	7499	4559	73400
Sydney*			38920		20899			5092	1917	8609	75437
Throsby*			44468		12538			2751	8267	4558	72582
Warringah*	39753						19730	4271	3873	4049	71676
Watson*			41159		19461			2309	3392	6084	72405
Wentworth	36806						25163	4821	2027	4240	73057
Werriwa*			37106		21251			2594	8440	3964	73355

Total 722670 371040 883514 38638 447021 23159 757220 111007 203324 153551 3711144

Electorate	Effective votes				Ineffective votes						
	LIB	NAT	ALP	IND	LIB	NAT	ALP	AD	HAN	OTHER	
Victoria											
Aston	40155						32524	7017		79696	
Ballarat	40280						36050			76330	
Batman*			53034		16290			4038		80553	
Bendigo			41726		36311					78037	
Bruce			39514		30776			5721	2418	78429	
Burke			36534		26340			4399	3338	73034	
Calwell*			50022		21111			5363		80219	
Casey	40598						33395			73993	
Chisholm			40887		37629					78516	
Corangamite	40665						33950			74615	
Corio*			38608		25561			4352	3854	75977	
Deakin	40233						37236			77469	
Dunkley	39721						36613			76334	
Flinders	41457						35711			77168	
Gellibrand*			51443		15233			3420	2638	76241	
Gippsland		36983					25338			73951	
Goldstein*	41881						26980	6156	1822	80477	
Higgins*	41353						24852	5770	1208	77379	
Holt*			44172		21823			4425		73886	
Hotham*			46107		26059			3720	2559	80915	
Indi*	38590						21572	3708	6023	75866	
Isaacs			37606		29396			6515		73517	
Jagajaga			40963		33014			6694		80671	
Kooyong*	43028						23107	6366	1637	78479	
Lalor*			46374		19381			4090	3127	75757	
La Trobe	37442						35988			73430	
McEwen	38699						37119			75818	
McMillan			38360		37488					75848	
Mallee*		43132					16471	3440	9516	75437	
Maribynong*			48458		18305			3469		74941	
Melbourne*			45958		19289			7122		79374	
Melbourne Ports			41585		32896					74481	
Menzies	38039						27989			75531	
Murray*	46070						16061	2276	5259	77524	
Scullin*			52320		18882			4503		77257	
Wannon	38462						24520	5941	7641	76564	
Wills*			50507		20280			4507		78967	
Total	646673	80115	844178	0	486064	0	525476	113012	51040	2842681	

Electorate	Effective votes			Ineffective votes							
	LIB	NAT	ALP	IND	LIB	NAT	ALP	AD	HAN	OTHER	
Queensland											
Blair	36398								31766	68164	
Bowman			39641		34746					74387	
Brisbane			43895		36517					80412	
Capricornia			37660			25860			11266	74786	
Dawson		42228					35375			77603	
Dickson			36911		36735					73646	
Fadden	36860						25125		10021	72006	
Fairfax	37286						31300			68586	
Fisher	35997						21894		11215	69106	
Forde	37948						30741			68689	
Griffith			41689		37831					79520	
Groom	46951						27522			74473	
Herbert	38512						38362			76874	
Hinkler		36423					35933			72356	
Kennedy		46254					29341			75595	
Leichhardt	38535						32759			71294	
Lilley			41902		36961					78863	
Longman	35525						34236			69761	
McPherson	38112						27452		8221	73785	
Maranoa		48576					26826			75402	
Moncrieff*	37527						21055	2610	7357	3790	
Moreton	39554						38655			78209	
Oxley			36772		20784				14072	71628	
Petrie	39522						38348			77870	
Rankin			36485		22999				9852	69336	
Ryan*	38785						23350	6139	4032	4642	
Wide Bay		37923					33814			71737	
Total	537512	211404	314955	0	226573	25860	552088	8749	107802	8432	1993375
Western Australia											
Brand*			36391		19413			1630	8308	4237	69979
Canning			38834		33732						72566
Cowan			38208		33135						71343
Curtin	49870						28940				78810
Forrest	42775						32421				75196
Fremantle			39930		28205					9069	77204
Kalgoorlie	35632						32754				68386
Moore	38973						33026				71999
O'Connor	42959						20305		12854		76118
Pearce	41246						33334				74580
Perth*			38395		22689			3517	6555	5395	76551
Stirling			39176		37582						76758
Swan			40067		35964						76031
Tangney	39538						29257	8459			77254
Total	290993	0	271001	0	210720	0	210037	13606	27717	18701	1042775

Electorate	Effective votes			Ineffective votes						
	LIB	NAT	ALP	IND	LIB	NAT	ALP	AD	HAN	OTHER
South Australia										
Adelaide	37731						36379			74110
Barker	39847						20086	6349	11378	77660
Bonython*			35961		17253			6539	10542	891
Boothby	38784						25490	11286		75560
Grey	38319						26291		10557	75167
Hindmarsh	39100						37224			76324
Kingston			41206		40443					81649
Makin	42180						40620			82800
Mayo	43354							40437		83791
Port Adelaide*			39449		19083			6696	6731	2328
Sturt	36699						25628	10319		72646
Wakefield*	40464						17526	6200	13473	3148
Total	356478	0	116616	0	76779	0	229244	87826	52681	6367
Tasmania										
Bass			30612		30534					61146
Braddon			31567		26540					58107
Dennison*			34854		20114			2460		5195
Franklin			31105		25331					4975
Lyons*			32843		21543			1469	3050	5285
Total	0	0	160981	0	124062	0	0	3929	3050	15455
Australian Capital Territory										
Canberra			50012		33115			9607	5458	98192
Fraser*			50573		27088			7157	4773	6900
Total	0	0	100585	0	60203	0	0	16764	10231	6900
Northern Territory										
Northen Territory			45986		44951					90937
Total	0	0	45986	0	44951	0	0	0	0	0
AUSTRALIA										
Totals	2554326	662559	2737816	38638	1676373	49019	2274065	354893	455845	305529
Grand Total	5993339				5115724					

(In those electorates marked with a *, the winning candidate had over 50% of the first

preference votes, and it was not necessary to distribute any preferences)

(B) Voter representation

The election results listed in (A) can be summarised:

Party	Total votes	Effective votes		Ineffective votes	
LIB	4230699	2554326	60.4%	1676373	39.6%
NAT	711578	662559	93.1%	49019	6.9%
ALP	5011881	2737816	54.6%	2274065	45.4%
AD	354893	0	0.0%	354893	100.0%
HAN	455845	0	0.0%	455845	100.0%
OTHER	344167	38638	11.2%	305529	88.8%
Australia	11109063	5993339	53.9%	5115724	46.1%
Effective representation		53.9%			
Wasted votes		46.1%			

(C) Party representation

The election results listed in (A) also show the following:

Party	% of total vote	Corresponding proportion of seats		Seats actually won
LIB	38.1%	56.36	56	64
NAT	6.4%	9.48	9	16
ALP	45.1%	66.77	67	67
AD	3.2%	4.73	5	
HAN	4.1%	6.07	6	
OTHER	3.1%	4.59	5	1

This analysis has been prepared by the Electoral Reform Society of South Australia.

*For further details, contact Deane Crabb at PO Box 2019, South Plympton SA 5038
phone 8297 6441 (h)*

Source: Australian Electoral Commission, "Election 98", 1998 Election Statistics, Volumes 2 to 5.

Read, Shane (REPS)

From: Crabb, Deane (PIRSA) [Crabb.Deane@saugov.sa.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 4 July 2002 3:22 PM
To: 'JSCEM.Reps@aph.gov.au'
Subject: Inquiry into the 2001 Federal Election



Inquiry into the 2001 Federal ...



2001 Fed inquiry letter.doc



1998sen.xls



1998hor.xls

I am attaching a

submission from the Electoral Reform Society of South
Australia.

This includes all but one of the attachments - at this stage I do not have an electronic version of the Proportional Representation Society of Australia analysis of the 2001 elections, and it is not yet on its website.

When I receive this I will send it on electronically.

I will be posting a complete copy.

Deane Crabb
Secretary
Electoral Reform Society of SA

<<Inquiry into the 2001 Federal Election.doc>> <<2001 Fed inquiry
letter.doc>> <<1998sen.xls>> <<1998hor.xls>>