

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

Inquiry into the conduct of the 2004 federal election

*Chair: Tony Smith MP**Deputy Chair: Michael Danby MP*

## **Inquiry to probe conduct of federal election campaign**

One of the closest battles of the 2004 federal election is about to come under the microscope of a federal parliamentary committee.

As part of its inquiry into the conduct of the 2004 federal election and related matters, federal parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters will hold a public hearing in Tweed Heads, far north NSW, to examine the election campaign in the federal NSW electorate of Richmond.

Richmond was the fourth-closest election result in the country, with Labor's Justine Elliot winning the seat from incumbent Larry Anthony (The Nationals) by 301 votes.

The committee will explore some of the issues that submissions to its inquiry have raised about the election in Richmond, including party how-to-vote cards and the high rate of provisional voting.

The committee, which comprises members of the Government, Opposition and the Australian Democrats, is eager to hear first-hand about the concerns that voters have about the election. Already, it has held hearings in regional Queensland to learn from affected voters about the major problems with postal voting in that area.

Committee chair Tony Smith said it was appropriate for the committee to go to areas where there had been problems during the election to hear for itself the difficulties that voters had encountered.

"Australia has one of the best electoral systems in the world, but that does not mean it can't be improved or there are faults that can't be rectified," he said. "We want to hear from people about what they like about our electoral system, what they don't like, and what they think could be done better at the next election."

Other centres in which the committee will hold hearings over the next two months include Brisbane (6 July), Melbourne (25 July), Adelaide (26 July) and Perth, Sydney and Canberra in August.

The electoral matters committee is a joint committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and comprises Mr Smith (chair), Mr Michael Danby (deputy chair), Senator George Brandis, Senator Kim Carr, Senator Michael Forshaw, Senator Brett Mason, Senator Andrew Murray, Mr Steven Ciobo, Mr Daryl Melham, and Ms Sophie Panopoulos.

Details about the inquiry and the committee's hearing program are available from the committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/elect04](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/elect04).

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