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COUNCIL FOR THE NATIONAL INTEREST  
 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE



## **Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Reform**

### **Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2010 Federal Election**

The Council for the National Interest in Western Australia has taken a keen interest in Australia's Electoral System and its operation.

We have made submissions in the past to JSCEM inquiries and have read, with interest, the most recent Electoral Reform Green Paper.

While the subject-matter of our submission has been identified and discussed in this paper we never-the-less RECOMMEND the following to be treated as a matter of urgency.

#### **1. Identification at the Polling Place.**

This is now a common-place occurrence in any form of application for service and many business transactions. It is no longer considered an imposition but a reasonable requirement.

Why should registration to vote be any different?

a) **Multiple Voting.** A growing concern. Your inquiry into the 2007 Federal Election elicited over 20,000 cases of multiple voting, for all of which, no further action was taken. This is due to a variety of reasons ranging from 'those that forgot they had previously voted' to those that due to time constraints a conviction could not be pursued.

b) **Integrity of Absentee Votes.** Apparently large numbers of these blank forms are printed and distributed to each polling place "just in case" they are required, this, despite the availability of Postal Voting, Pre-Poll voting and Interstate and/or overseas Voting Centres.

As each election goes by there seems to be an ever increasing number of both absentee votes and multiple voting.

Isn't it time to act on this BEFORE it is found to have fraudulently influenced an election result, considering the close-fought contests of recent years?

Introduction of a requirement for Proof of Identification at the Polling Place is a must and would go far in reducing these incidences!

If the practice of allowing Members of Parliament to send "postal vote applications" to their constituents is to be allowed to continue, then the completed postal vote must be forwarded to the Australian Electoral Commission NOT to the Member of Parliament.

#### **2. The Electoral Roll.**

Must be closed on the date as subject to law and within a reasonable time prior to election day (4 weeks?) to enable administrators to verify information.

Notwithstanding the recent High Court judgment in relation to closing of the Roll and electronic enrolment, it is the role of the Parliament to make laws about enrolment procedures and closing of the Electoral Roll.

Legislation should be passed to mandate the closing of the Electoral Roll at 5:00 pm on the day that an election is announced.

**Integrity of the Roll.** More vigilance between elections to maintain a correct and valid Electoral Roll.

**Application to the Electoral Roll.** Procedures must be tightened to reduce the incidence of 'bogus' or 'non-existent'/'deceased' electors at incorrect or non-existent addresses. Signature/ID witnesses must be of a more select nature.

Electronic enrolment must be prohibited until such time as there is a guaranteed, foolproof, hacker free electronic system proving the identity and residential address details of the enrollee and the identity of the witness.

**3. Voter Education.** This should be an on-going campaign and voters must be left in no doubt as to what their obligations are in both the initial enrolment process and in providing proof of identity on polling day.

Agencies are becoming more concerned with an individual's RIGHTS without the corresponding OBLIGATIONS.

With thanks for your consideration.

Erica Hill  
Secretary  
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Council for the National Interest –Western Australian Committee

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