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20 December 2013

Ms Siobhan Leyne  
Inquiry Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra 2600

Dear Siobhan

I wish to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters but I must admit I am not quite sure how I go about it or even to which enquiry I should make the submission.

I begin by introducing myself. Once upon a time I used to be described as "Australia's leading psephologist". I have now been overtaken by several younger men but I still try to enter debates on electoral system questions. Anyway I enclose my curriculum vitae from which you can see that part of the reason for my post-nominal AO is that I have shown a "commitment to reform and improvement of the electoral system".

As to which inquiry I wish to make a submission I am not sure. I read that there is to be an "Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013". There is also going to be a general inquiry into the conduct of the September 2013 federal general election. I leave it in your hands to decide which of these inquiries (or, perhaps, both) my contribution should be made.

Over the past couple of months I have presented to a range of audiences my simple reform of the Senate electoral system. It is described in the paper enclosed titled "In Defence of the Present Australian Senate Electoral System". I enclose the paper, together

with the supplement, together with Senate ballot papers which illustrate my reform simply.

I chose deliberately to get the ballot paper most difficult to vote below the line (New South Wales, with 110 candidates) and the one easiest to vote below the line (Northern Territory, with 24 candidates). My suggestion is that every ballot paper (whether it be state or territory, whether it be half-Senate or double dissolution) should carry the same instruction below the line, namely:

Or: **Below the line** By placing the numbers 1 to 15 in the order of your preference. You may, if you wish, vote for additional candidates by placing consecutive numbers beginning with 16 in the squares opposite the names of those additional candidates in the order of your preference for them.

It is important to stress that whatever the number of squares decided upon (a round number like my 15, or perhaps 20, or perhaps 10) it should apply uniformly to every ballot paper, regardless of the number of candidates on that ballot paper.

I have to confess in all this that I have not actually read the "Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013" although I know I am opposed to it by instinct. I would be grateful if you would send a copy to me (at the above address) together with the explanatory memoranda and second-reading speeches.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Mackerras