Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

Dear Committee members,

I am a retired computer professional with over 40 years experience in IT, having been employed as a commercial programmer and systems analyst. I ran my own computer consultancy for over 15 years.

I am also a concerned citizen and I believe our voting system resembles something from the ark. Trooping down to the local school, getting crossed off a list and marking forms with a pencil... unchanged since franchise began more than a century ago! I believe many of the problems associated with the 2013 election are due to the archaic manual systems in use.

I have been pondering the implementation of a secure method of online voting for Australian elections for voters prepared to pre-register and then vote online on the day (or even earlier if the AEC deems that acceptable).

Advantages of online voting include:

- Ability to vote online from computer or smart phone avoiding attendance at polling place.
- Editing of vote before submission, advising of any informality and allowing for correction or acceptance if the voter is insistent.
- Instant counting of these votes and capability of distribution of preferences for online votes.
- Reduction in prepoll and postal votes.
- Reduction in need for staffing and scrutineering at polling places, let alone counting.
- Later a reduction in the number of polling places. Ultimately it might be cut to council chambers or town halls etc instead of every school.
- *Greater appeal to the young voter.*

Security is the *key issue* here and I believe my method provides far better security than the current manual method where it is not even necessary to prove one's identity.

 It is entitled "Online Voting Specification - Précis" and I believe it contains sufficient detail for the AEC to consider. I would be happy to be involved in further specifying the changes required to the current AEC computer systems.

The Aim of this Specification:

To facilitate, secure and grant one only validated online vote per registered internet voter for an Australian Election.

My method contains a built-in *audit trail of this entire online voting procedure*.

Since writing the original specification, I have successfully tested the mechanics of the security procedure outlined.

In the light of the farcical situation with the WA Senate election and the recent news of the multiple voting in the 2013 Federal Election my proposal seems more apposite than when it was conceived last year.

This idea was originally sent to the AEC last September with no response yet received, and I now make this submission to the JSCEM for consideration.

I would request that it be given consideration by your committee and referred to the AEC for further assessment.

Yours faithfully,

John Curran

See attachment: *online voting JSCEM.pdf*