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Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Department of House of Representatives
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Submission 101
Date Received: 5 March 2014

SUBMISSION INTO ENQUIRY INTO THE 2013 FEDERAL ELECTION

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the enquiry, please find below a number of areas suggested for consideration by your committee

(1) IMPROVING SECURITY IN TRANSPORT OF BALLOT PAPERS FROM REMOTE LOCATIONS

There are several electorates around Australia like Grey that have votes flown in from remote areas. Practice reported to me involves emptying the sealed ballot boxes into cardboard boxes in order to fit them on the aeroplane in order to transport them to the electorate counting centre. While the boxes are taped, no paper work for the delivery from the electoral worker to the pilot was provided and this seems to be a recipe to lose batches of votes or have them tampered with. If the booths are small and the planes cannot hold the secured boxes then smaller secured boxes should be supplied and transfer paper work provided.

(2) RIGOR OF PROCESS IN ASSISTED VOTING

Each Officer in Charge of venues where assisted voting occurs particularly in nursing homes and remote indigenous communities should give a small training session to the person designated to assist those who need help to fill in their forms, with a strong emphasis on their obligation to be impartial.

(3) LENGTH OF PREPOLLING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The length of pre-polling should be restricted to a two week or less time frame in those places where it occurs. The pressure on the AEC to be ready for a three week pre-poll period is unrealistic when the nomination period has barely closed. Very early voters are not making fully informed decisions when the campaigns have a long way to go. If catering for shift workers is the premise for this extended period of pre-poll then it is tested in a large seat like Grey as it has only one community where this occurs. Other towns with even greater numbers of shift workers seem to manage perfectly well with one week. By comparison State elections offer only two weeks of pre-poll voting. There is no doubt many could easily vote on the day, but are simply taking the early option simply to "get it out the way".

(4) REGISTERING OF PARTY NAMES

Registering of party names where there is reasonable potential for confusion should be addressed I had many approaches of people who voted for the Liberal Democrats in SA in the Senate by mistake. An example is a letter I received from a wife, husband and their two adult children who were extremely upset when they came out of the booth to find they had not voted for their party choice.

Yours sincerely

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