Dear Sirs,

Does this committee want an electoral system with 100% integrity. It is not that hard to achieve if not biased by self interest but by people who want real democracy.

Australia has had the most democratic system in the world.

1. Although mostly no-one need fear disclosing whom they voted for we have secret ballots to protect those who do need it.
2. We have preferential voting so that candidates of similar policies do not split the vote and elect the least desired candidate. It mostly works but consider that two of the last three American presidents were the least favoured candidates but won because a third candidate with similar policies split the vote of their opponent. First past the post also elected Adolf Hitler and a candidate for the Sunshine Coast Council with 16% of the vote a few years ago.
3. Compulsory voting. Again in America where it doesn't happen the bottom half of the socio-economic scale are effectively disenfanchised with dire consequences.

However in recent times changes to the voting laws have diminished the great system we inherited. These changes have tended to backfire on the party/ies that initiated them.

1. Reduction in the voting age to 18. Car insurers know that young people need to be at least 25 before they can be relied upon to drive a car and it's now moving higher. Statistics show that most 18 to 25 year olds have no knowledge or interest or appreciation of the priveledge granted to them. It was introduced under a Labor Government and has backfired because the extra votes go heavily Green.

2. The poorly thought out one above the line. Firstly this takes away democracy from the individuals giving the power to allocate preferences to the Parties. Second it is a system biased against independent candidates, forcing them to form political Parties. What was not anticipated was that a clever entreprenuer would get all these minnow Parties in a room together and organise a giant preference arrangement, no longer based on common interests. This makes them real contenders for the last couple of seats in each State at every election and potential holders of the balance of power. Again a change that has backfired on the instigators.

Clearly fiddling with the electoral system for what might appear as an advantage, is more than likely to backfire.

So why not have a clean foolproof system, it' very very easy.

Currently I could get my football team to vote with every returning officer in every polling booth. Technically each one could vote in multiple names in the one polling booth. Collectively my football team could vote over a thousand times EACH, time permitting. Due to the fuss currently being created, the number of illegal votes will escalate because it's easy and safe. A thousand votes could win five seats, enough to win government in a tight election.

Yet nearly 20,000 people allegedly voted more than once, enough to overturn most election results. Only 10% have admitted it and as the AEC claim that 90% of these are elderly with mental disorders and it is probable that other persons voted in their name and that they never voted at all.

I SHOULD TAKE THIS TO THE HIGH COURT AND HAVE THE ELECTION DECLARED INVALID and someone will next time. This is far more serious than the 1,370 votes that invalidated the WA senate election.

It is assumed that the recounts in Fairfax & Fisher meant that the votes were counted twice. This could not be further from the truth, in fact they were counted at least 8 or 9 times. Yet in Fairfax the numbers still kept changing everyday. Has anyone on this committee ever had first hand experience of a recount centre.

1. It's very difficult to survive in Australia today without producing ID. We are used to it. It should be essential to vote.
2. Having up to 800 rolls in each electorate is archaic. I go into a parking station my ticket has my rego number on it. I use the internet for forms it tells me if I have filled a form out incorrectly. Computors are sophisticated enough that each returning officer should have one, and as they input each voter every other returning officer in the electorate has his record updated immediately.
3. Each returning officer must initial and put his number (stamp) on each ballot paper that he hands out.
4. AGAIN COMPUTORS. EACH BALLOT PAPER IS INSERTED INTO A COMPUTOR. THE VOTER KEYS IN THE NUMBERS 1 TO WHATEVER THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES AND PRESSES ENTER. IF HE HAS VOTED CORRECTLY HIS BALLOT

PAPER IS RETURNED FILLED OUT. IF HE HAS VOTED INFORMALLY THE COMPUTOR TELLS HIM HIS MISTAKE, SAY 2 SEVENS. THE COMPUTOR DOESN'T KNOW WHO HAS VOTED BUT PUTS A NUMBER ON THE BALLOT PAPER. The computor rotates the order in which names appear on the screen, evening out the donkey vote advantage, which would otherwise increase.

With this system we have eliminated informal votes. We have eliminated the donkey vote advantage. We retain a hard copy of the votes to balance against what the computor says. By creating a number on the ballot paper, this can be matched against a corresponding number in the computor. No more dodgy pencil numbers where the validity of a vote is subject to interpretation. The necessity to work on two party preferred as now happens is eliminated. The polling booth where each vote is identified. The security of pre-poll votes is logged onto the computor.

With this system a button can be pressed at the close of voting in WA (not before) and the election result (subject to postal votes) is known instantaneously and accurately.

There are other issues.

There are multiple proceedures to be carried out when a person dies. Advising AEC should be added (by Births. Deaths & Marriages). After all they have used this to add 18 year olds to the Electoral Rolls, albeit in the wrong electorates.
Likewise there are multiple proceedures when a property is sold. This should trigger a computor generated letter.
Ballot papers need to be properly secured in quality boxes.
Pre polling and to some extent postal voting is overdone. 99% of prepoll votes cast are done for personal convenience. An election is held on a day when all parties have outlined their policies. To allow voting before then is undemocratic and like all changes tends to blow up in the face of the instigators sooner or later.
When I have requested a postal vote from AEC I have recieved it from the sitting members electoral office together with propaganda & how to vote. This is a disgrace. Postal vote applications should only be sent by the applicant to AEC and by AEC to the applicant. If AEC allows forms to be emailed, faxed etc this is too easy to be manipulated fraudulently.
Mick Keelty made a number of recomendations on security which lose most of their significance if you introduce my recommendations. Nevertheless, the hard copy is the check on the integrity of the computor and vice versa and his recommendations should still be implemented. Neither system, hard copy or computor are reliable on their own but collectively they are very tight.

One above the line is undemocratic & should be abolished. Filling out 100 or more numbers is going to be impossible for most voters, but 20 seems a reasonable number to cast a valid vote. Further preferences could then be allocated by the first vote. Done by computor it takes seconds to compute, the hard copy merely authenticates.

I am happy to come to Canberra and address your committee

Yours Sincerly

Ray Harvey