



To whom it may concern,

RE: SENATE VOTING

The system of voting for the Senate is complicated and made more difficult by the increasing number of candidates.

In my view, it is undemocratic to impose any restrictions on the number of candidates, or to impose any minimum primary vote threshold required for a candidate to win a Senate seat.

However, I do believe that four changes should be considered to simplify the Senate election process.

1. Micro party officer holders. Micro parties are an important part of our democracy. However, when a number of minor parties are administered by the same person, it risks undermining democracy and increases the likelihood that these parties do not exist to represent a particular viewpoint, but rather to 'game' the system. I believe that party office holders for AEC reporting and administration purposes should not be eligible to fulfil officer roles in any other party.
2. Party registration. The conditions to register a party should be tightened to ensure that registered political parties are serious and credible. I believe that there should be a minimum \$1000 fee to register a party and that there should be a requirement to identify 1000 members across Australia.
3. Ballot paper amendments. The ballot paper for Senate elections should be changed in two ways.
  - \* The ballot should be randomised so that each ballot paper is changed from the previous paper, as per the system used in the ACT. This will eliminate the 'donkey' vote.
  - \* The only parties that should be 'grouped' on the Senate ticket should be those parties with elected representation or more than 500 members in that state that the senate ballot paper refers to. Independents who can show that they also have the support of electors in that state should also be grouped. All other candidates should be placed in the ungrouped section. This will ensure that group voting tickets are only available to parties that have a significant minimum level of public support in that state, and will probably result in much lower numbers of grouped candidates.
4. Preferential voting amendments. Electors should be able to order 'above-the-line' preferences.

Kind regards,

Bernard Gaynor