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Written Submission

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters:

In reference to the first Criteria

- assessment and review of the purported increase in incidents of aggressive conduct, deliberate obstruction, and intimidating behaviour towards voters, political participants, volunteers, and Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) officials

As a Volunteer on the [REDACTED] Campaign, in the seat of Wannon, I signed a Code of Conduct which held all of our volunteers to account. Our interaction with all members of the public, other politically affiliated volunteers and all candidates was to always be polite, friendly and conciliatory. We were all held to that or it was reported to the Campaign Committee.

In my own experience at two different booths, I was subject to intimidating, insulting and aggressive behaviour.

I am a woman in my 60's and while I am not intimidated easily, I worry that others will be discouraged from participating and celebrating **without fear**, in these pivotal moments of **our democracy**. Election days should be celebrations of our Democracy.. for instance, the 'Democracy Sausage' is a fabulous activity that promotes the joy and privilege as a nation, we all share.

Our campaign volunteers shared lollies, cakes and biscuits with our opposite counterparts, at pre-poll booths as well as on polling Day. It helped to break down any notions of defensiveness and encouraged an acceptance that it is ok to have different political opinions and remain friendly and respectful. I was a supervising Booth Co-ordinator and so visited approx 6 booths. Only at two (major) booths did I experience the poor and intimidating behaviour mentioned above.

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In reference to the second Criteria

- potential reform of safety and security arrangements, including consideration of the powers, processes, and capacity of the AEC to manage and address increasingly threatening or disruptive behaviour

There should be an AEC representative stationed outside the booths, with the power to sanction in some way, any of the political volunteers not behaving appropriately.

One Week of Pre-poll instead of Two...PLEASE (:

In reference to the third Criteria

- Reforms to address the ongoing threats of interference in our electoral system, both foreign and **domestic**.

The upset felt by myself and many others (who brought their 'disgust to my attention), about the scurrilous pamphlets and misinformation on various online and traditional media platforms, as well as in our letter boxes, produced by Advance Australia and other [REDACTED] entities about the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Candidate was shameful...

Their ugly 'campaigning' started well before the election because our laws allow this to occur prior to a Federal Election being called but it is prohibited after an election is called..

The onslaught of disinformation and misinformation is a shameful hypocrisy that promotes double standards in our enviable electoral process.

It threatens our democratic Election process, by either turning voters and **potential candidates off participating** or inciting voters to be angry and possibly aggressive.

As a nation, we have already established that online platforms can be a very damaging source of manipulated information. This is also the case when younger candidates who may have a lawful, historic online presence, become the subject of misleading and inequitable slurs on their character. Older candidates don't have years of online presence for unscrupulous people to 'troll' through.

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In reference to the forth Criteria

- The composition of the parliament as a whole; including the length of the parliamentary term, the potential for fixed terms, and the number of elected representatives relative to the growth in population and the electorate.

The Federal Period of Parliament should be 4 years, giving any elected Government time to achieve their agenda before having to gear up for the 'next' election.

Three years is not enough time.

Definitely Fixed terms.., makes planning much easier.