

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

I want to share my experience as a voter in Bennelong during the 2025 federal election.

At the booth I attended, there were a very large number of [REDACTED] volunteers. Their presence felt overbearing - they weren't just handing out how-to-vote cards but were repeatedly approaching people in a way that felt intrusive and almost tout-like.

What made me especially uncomfortable was that the [REDACTED] candidate, [REDACTED], walked along the queue of people waiting to vote and gave short campaign spiels (about 30 seconds each) directly to those in line. I was one of the people he spoke to. While he was polite, it felt inappropriate. Voters are effectively a captive audience at that point and should not be subjected to campaign messaging while waiting to exercise their democratic right.

In my view, voters should feel free, comfortable, and unpressured at polling places. What I saw blurred the line between legitimate campaigning and undue influence.

I'd like to see reforms such as:

- ☐ Clearer rules preventing candidates from approaching people waiting in line to vote.
- ☐ Stronger guidelines on how close and how persistent campaigners can be near the entrance.
- ☐ More active enforcement by the AEC to make sure booths are neutral and accessible spaces.

Thank you for considering my input. I hope this helps improve the voter experience for future elections.

Kind regards,

Jerry Gek