



To the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

The *Alliance for Progress*, an alliance of progressive minor parties, formally protests the proposed changes to the electoral system outlined in *The Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016* on the following basis:

- 1) The proposed changes diverge from the previously agreed recommendations made in the '*Report on the conduct of the 2013 election and matters related thereto*' by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, in that preferences below the line are effectively not optional, thereby still forcing most voters to vote above the line.
- 2) The proposed system deliberately exhausts votes (as admitted through the requirement for a saving mechanism on a 1-only vote Above The Line). Hence, the removal of the Group Voting Ticket thoroughly advantages the established, major parties and disadvantages the minor parties. It does this by exhausting votes for minor parties and in effect making it easier for larger parties to elect members on remaining votes of less than a quota.

The introduction of this system will reduce the diversity of representatives in Australia and could reduce the ability of the senate to act as a check on the government of the day.

The Alliance for Progress encourages the JSCEM to consider introducing optional below-the-line preferences while maintaining the Group Voting Ticket to ensure maximum choice for voters while reducing the risk of exhaustion of votes.

Member parties that are in agreement with this statement are:

1. Science Party (currently registered as Future Party)
2. Arts Party
3. Secular Party
4. Australian Cyclists Party
5. Renewable Energy Party
6. Australian Progressives
7. Flux
8. Bullet Train for Australia
9. Online Direct Democracy
10. Voluntary Euthanasia Party
11. Sex Party
12. Life Extension Science and Technology Party
13. The Labour Coalition
14. Building Australia Party

Regards

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Alliance for Progress