



## **Australian Government**

Australian Government response to the  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report:

*Interim report on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 Federal  
Election: Senate voting practices*

MAY 2024

## **Introduction**

On 9 May 2014, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) tabled a report titled *Interim report on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 Federal Election: Senate voting practices*.

The Government's response to the recommendations of the Report follows below.

**Government Response to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters reports:**  
**Interim report on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 Federal Election:**  
**Senate voting practices**

#	Recommendation	Government Response
1	<p>The Committee recommends that section 273 and other sections relevant to Senate voting of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> be amended to allow for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• optional preferential above the line voting; and</li> <li>• ‘partial’ optional preferential voting below the line with a minimum sequential number of preferences to be completed equal to the number of vacancies: six for a half-Senate election; twelve for a double dissolution; or two for any territory Senate election.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee further recommends that appropriate formality and savings provisions continue in order to support voter intent within the new system.</p>	<p><b><u>Noted</u></b></p> <p>The Government notes the recommendation. Given the passage of time, a substantive response is no longer appropriate.</p>

#	Recommendation	Government Response
2	The Committee recommends that sections 211, 211A and 216 and any other relevant sections of Parts XVI and XVIII of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> be repealed in order to effect the abolition of group and individual voting tickets.	Refer to recommendation 1.
3	The Committee recommends that the Government adequately resource the Australian Electoral Commission to undertake a comprehensive voter education campaign should the above recommendations be agreed.	Refer to recommendation 1.
4	<p>The Committee recommends that sections 126, 132, 134 and any other relevant section of Part XI of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> be amended to provide for stronger requirements for party registration, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an increase in party membership requirements to a minimum 1 500 unique members who are not relied upon for any other party in order for a federally registered party to field candidates nationally;</li> <li>• the provision to register a federal party, that can only run in a nominated state or</li> </ul>	Refer to recommendation 1.

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	<p>territory, with a suitable lower membership number residing in that state or territory, as provided on a proportionate population or electorate number basis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of a compliant party constitution that sets out the party rules and membership process;</li> <li>• a membership verification process;</li> <li>• the conduct of compliance and membership audits each electoral cycle; and</li> <li>• restriction to unique registered officers for a federally registered party.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee further recommends that the Government adequately resource the Australian Electoral Commission to undertake the above activities.</p>	
5	<p>The Committee recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all new parties be required to meet the new party registration criteria; and</li> <li>• all currently registered parties be required to satisfy the new party registration criteria within twelve</li> </ul>	Refer to recommendation 1.

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	months of the legislation being enacted or the party shall be deregistered.	
6	The Committee recommends that the Government determine the best mechanism to seek to require candidates to be resident in the state or territory in which they are seeking election.	Refer to recommendation 1.

**Additional comments by Senator Nick Xenophon**

#	Recommendation	Government Response
1	That, consistent with the Committee's recommendations, the Government support the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013 as part of its response to the Committee report.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.