

Re: the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016

Dear Senators,

I strongly support OPTIONAL PREFERENTIAL VOTING BELOW THE LINE as well as above the line on the Senate ballot.

If there is to be Optional Preferential Voting above the line in order to give the voter more control over where their vote is directed and when it is exhausted, it makes sense that there is also Optional Preferential Voting below the line for the same reasons.

Forcing voters to number every square below the line is unnecessarily onerous and is a disincentive for voters to use this method of voting. It would make sense to ask voters to fill out no more than a minimum of six boxes if they are voting below the line. The same safeguards should apply as proposed with above the line voting in that filling out any number of boxes from 1 to 100 is still counted as formal.

This amendment is about giving more power to the voter. Optional Preferential Voting below the line is an obvious way of increasing that power. To not allow this freedom could be construed as an active attempt to discourage the voter from voting below the line and leave the Government open to charges of hypocrisy by freeing up the vote in some ways but not others.

Thank you for your consideration,

Angus K. M. Murray