

SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO A BILL TO REVISE THE ELECTORAL ACT
Edwin Adamson, Secretary, One Planet Political Party and Secretary, Eastern Melbourne
Climate Alliance, [REDACTED]

02/07/2020

Edwin Adamson DipAg MEnvSc is a current land and water manager in north-east Victoria, with a Melbourne base.

His political career included being an instigator of the Australian Democrats where he became State Policy Co-ordinator for Victoria. He also stood for the 1980 Federal election seat of Deakin.

Recently he Chaired the Steering Committee for One Planet formative processes, which has resulted in an alliance with Save the Planet to form the political party, now registered. This combination of urban and regional people from Victoria and around Australia brings to the table a range of interests focussing on recognizing and acting effectively on the Climate Emergency, and also maintaining accountability, transparency and honesty in government for Australians and to educate voters in the importance of understanding proper use of the preferential voting system.

This submission to the Parliamentary Committee to review the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Matters) Bill 2020 is an individual submission with inputs from others.

This submission is to:-

- 1) Endorse electronically assisted voting for both sight impaired and Antarctic based voters - and making a Bill that opens the possibility of having (totally Australian controlled software and coding) electronic voting generally.
- 2) Move to electronic voting, for all those competent to do this, as a logical next step to help people cast an effective vote. Of course, transparent checks and balances must be in place as this happens. This will reduce stress on voters, save much paper and energy use in the paper warfare. Instead of having pressure exerted on voters by partisan how-to-vote card purveyors, people will be able to make up their mind in a timely manner, with the best information available.
- 3) AEC information on each candidate and party in each voting booth, for those who don't vote electronically will save on resources and energy while providing effective information.
- 4) Oppose open-ended gifting clauses in this Bill or in any other clause that refers to third parties being able to receive gifts other than the party or candidate or their agent or on behalf of them.
- 5) Totally oppose non-transparency and advocate public declaration of any gift over \$4,999 immediately upon receipt by the party of this amount (14 days grace for declaration).
- 6) Oppose the words "Federal use" for gifts. Such gifts ought to be able to be used by the recipient party in Australian elections of any Sovereign State body, State or Federal.
- 7) Gifts ought to be able to be used by any properly constituted branch of a Federal election party.

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Demand much stronger gifting prohibitions from foreign entities, even if they have business interests in Australia. (A business is not a voting entity, so a business entity must not have undue influence in a vote.) Now we are coming to understand just how much influence countries like Russia and China, USA infiltrate, indoctrinate and sanction transparent processes, business deals and freedom of speech and action by dual or Australian citizens, businesses and politicians, the time is right to clarify and ensure Australia's more independent future.

- 8) Limit the total extent of gifting to any political party, or its branches or candidates to double (i.e. x2) the Federal rebate amount set from time to time which is currently \$2.73454 per vote of 4% or more.
- 9) Totally ban electoral advertising on public land, except where provision is made for all parties to be represented equally, especially where for instance privately owned "Civic Signs" installations on public parkland in Kooyong electorate at the last Federal election displayed the incumbent's election material; and in Kooyong electorate where Telstra phone booths on public land displayed similar material.
- 10) Provide for direct, immediate and severe penalties for misinformation, deceit and lies, by candidates, their party or agents and for opponents or subverters of candidates, especially very close to closure of public comment and the immediacy of the election. This include misleading signage such as those put up near polling booths in both Kooyong and Chisholm electorates; signs in the AEC purple colour, in Mandarin, telling voters that the correct way to vote in the last election was to vote Liberal. Some obviously did !
- 11) Find ways to present Senate voting papers in a more comprehensible way (if we must have voting papers). My colleague Kammy Cordner-Hunt, a trained, experienced and excellent teacher, who has candidated for the Senate at the last election, asserts that the human eye cannot comprehend the current format at the ballot box. (See her separate submission).
- 12) Stressors of going to the ballot box and making very significant decisions about the future of our country could be minimized for voters through a more effective campaign by Government to educate people and bring the final candidate news in the lead up to elections.
- 13) The significance of the voter's preferences in voting should be included in all pre-poll and polling education programs. AEC already does this, yet it seems that most voters do not understand how to use the preferential (or even the Hare Clark) system effectively.
- 14) Highlight integrity, accuracy, transparency and expectations of candidates, voters, supporters of candidates and parties and opponents of candidates and parties, which measures need to include **immediate** and **strong action** to remedy breaches of the Electoral Act, rather than long drawn out processes, with few sanctions of penalties issued. This should include voiding an electorate's result. It will only have to be done once or twice to bring parties into line.

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15) Aim to eliminate favours bought or business deals done to gain electoral advantage.

This Bill must be withdrawn and another drafted, based on one vote, one value, and open and transparent mechanisms for elections that keep the democratic power with voters, not businesses or foreign government interests.

That the Electoral Act is already over 600 pages shows that it needs to be simplified. A forthcoming Bill should address the matter. That means being much more clear cut about what is and what is not permitted.

I would be willing to present to the Committee.

Thankyou for the opportunity to participate in this democratic process.
