



MEDIA RELEASE

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

New Inquiry - Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election

Chairman: Tony Smith MP

Have your say on electoral reform

"Federal Parliament's electoral matters committee wants to hear directly from the Australian public about how Australia's electoral system can be improved," the Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, Tony Smith, said today.

Mr Smith announced that Federal Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee is to conduct an inquiry into the conduct of the 2004 federal election. Since 1983, successive Commonwealth governments have initiated similar inquiries after each federal election with a view to improving the operation of Australia's electoral system.

"Federal election inquiries are an important opportunity for all Australians to comment on the last federal election and to suggest ways of improving our democratic process," Mr Smith said.

"Australia has one of the best electoral systems in the world, but that does not mean it can't be improved or there are not faults which cannot be rectified. We want to hear from people about what they like about our electoral system, what they don't like, what they think could be done better at election time.

"The terms of reference for the inquiry are very broad. This allows the committee to conduct a wide sweep, and then focus on issues which people and organisations think are the most important."

The Committee is a Joint Committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and comprises members of the Government, Opposition and the Australian Democrats.

"While we have very different views on some subjects, we are united in our desire to improve Australia's electoral system," Mr Smith said.

Members of the public will be able to make submissions in writing to the Committee until the end of March and attend public hearings which will be held from April onwards.

Details of the inquiry and subsequent hearings will be advertised nationally on Wednesday, 9 February 2005.

Further information:

Committee Secretary (02) 6277 2374

Or visit the committee website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em