



Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party Submission to the Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013

The HEMP Party totally opposes the proposal by Nick Xenophon to change the Above the Line Voting system to an 'Optional Preferential' method as currently used in the NSW Legislative Council elections. As has been demonstrated in NSW only a very small fraction of voters actually mark any further preferences, which turns the ballot into virtually a 'First Past the Post' method. NSW elections have shown that half a quota of first preferences is necessary to secure one of the final spots. This would be the equivalent of subjecting a minimum of 7.2% first preferences in any half senate election effectively disenfranchising all but the three major parties and the occasional populist like Nick Xenophon. By the same token HEMP also opposes any other minimum vote requirement such as 4% for the same reasons.

The simplest way to avoid the consequences of the single vote Above the Line system which have encouraged the multiplicity of micro parties in the last few elections and all of backroom preference trading would be to revert to Below the Line voting only as was used before 1984. With nothing to trade nearly all of the micro parties would soon disappear. To reduce mistakes by the voter making their vote informal, and speed the count, rather than requiring all squares to be numbered correctly, a minimum of, say, 12 consecutive numbers would be sufficient for a formal vote. This system gives the choice back to each individual voter and stops all the horse trading by party officials. This is the only reform that the HEMP Party would support

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Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party