

27th February, 2014.

Submission 094
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The Joint Standing Committee on
Electoral Matters.
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT. 2600

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Submission.

Compulsory voting was introduced under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and was amended in 1924. By any measure this method would be considered archaic in this day and age, and to FORCE someone to do anything, voting or otherwise, is undemocratic and dictatorial.

Voter turnout increased from 58% in 1922 to 94% in 2013. This could be construed as 36% of voters who did not want to vote, did not have a clue what they were voting for, or couldn't care less. They were forced to vote, resulting in a misplaced or even a corrupt vote one could say. This was done under threat of a fine if you did not vote. In most cases the fines were never collected, as being considered too costly to do so.

Senator Ronaldson, in his letter of reply to me, says occasionally there have been calls for a return to voluntary voting, especially in the context of surprising electoral results. The word occasionally surprises me. In Fairfax we had more than a surprise, most would call it preferential election shock! He was not even a Senate candidate either. I understand, that since the 2013 election, there has been a rise in concerns about compulsory voting, in part because of preferential votes and the enormous unnecessary expense and waste. If the Prime Minister wants to cut costs, he should start here.

Surely Senator Ronaldson should ask the Committee to focus on all voting reform, not only Senate Voting. If he does not, a great opportunity to get it right will have been lost and the committee would have been a great waste of time and tax payer's money.

It was sad to read in Senator Ronaldson's letter that the present Government has no plans to alter the current arrangements at this time with regard to voluntary voting. How sad it was to read this. It is of no immediate concern apparently.

We should abolish our entire voting system. Preferential voting has made us the laughing stock of the world and compulsory voting is just plain wrong. Everyone in Australia has the right to a voluntary vote. How lucky are we, just leave it at that. We should just simply abolish the compulsory vote and the preferential vote. First past the post is the fairest way. Wake up Australia. We should consider electronic voting with identification. This would be much cheaper to the Nation. Also more scrutiny of the AEC. It is not difficult to vote twice under our system, not to mention as many as fifteen times as discovered in the last W.A.Election.

Put another way, the Preference System is all about how to vote for people you do not want elected.

The British Government and British Media said of our voting system, in May 2011, "it is obscure, unfair and expensive to administer, where it sets in place opportunities for back room deals between parties. A second rate system that would damage their democracy, if adopted in Britain". This is what it does to Australia right now.

It was further stated our system makes winners out of losers and being so despised that only Australia, Fiji and PNG use it.

It is a confusing, cheating, unscrupulous and worthless of way of electing governments.

The British media highlights Winston Churchill's opinion on the matter of preferential voting made many years ago. It was, he said "the stupidest, the least scientific and most unreal system. It would mean elections are determined by the most worthless votes given for the most worthless candidates".

This reflection of the Australian voting system was triggered in the UK by a referendum, held on 5th May, 2011 asking the British people if they wanted to change the 200 year old 'First past the post system to one of preferential voting like Australia. 19million people, representing 69% of those who voted, voluntarily voted against the change'.

On 7th May, 2011 the British 'Daily Mail' headline stated " Day the British people stood up for democracy".

The media then reinforced that opinion by stating 2.4 billion democratic voters in other nations use the British system of voting.

One speaker in Hansard stated that our compulsory voting system, since 1924, is an absolutely world standard system. How could this be when only Australia, Fiji and PNG use it. Based on this statement we are out of step with the majority of world democracies.

Lets just have a Referendum and let the people decide. That's true democracy.

A final question. Why should we help at elections even bother when we get the results that preferential and compulsory voting gives us.

My letter to the Prime Minister dated 12th September, 2013 is enclosed as part of my submission.

Yours faithfully.

A.G./~~Thornton~~.