



Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Department of House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters – Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2013 Federal Election by Mathew Annear**

Ceasing a process open to blatant manipulation of the system by the parties/candidates

All parties/candidates to have any return postal votes with the correct AEC mailing address on it, not the mailing address of the parties/candidates

Suggested penalties to parties/candidates is \$50,000 per offence

Bring back those amendments in subsection 184AA(1) of the Electoral Act that were omitted in the 2010 debate and pass them (refer highlighted extract from AEC reply concerning my complaint from the attached document)

This will enable the following;

- Show transparency in the AEC
- Allows no manipulation of mail by parties
- Postal vote counts could be done in the week prior to an election and added to the tally's on election night, then only a minimal amount of postal votes would have to be counted after election night

Unfortunately, this will not stop the parties/candidates manipulation of minority groups/persons, but it will be a start in the right direction of honesty, integrity and fairness but that's a long road to travel.

Regards  
Mathew Annear

**In 2010 there was debate in Parliament on proposed amendments to the Electoral Act designed to prohibit additional material being attached to a Postal Vote Application and to ensure that Postal Vote Applications were sent by voters directly back to the AEC. The amendments designed to achieve this were omitted from Schedule 6 to the Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Modernisation and Other Measures) Bill 2010 during the debate in Parliament.**

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In particular, subsection 184AA(1) of the Electoral Act provides that:

‘An application form for a postal vote may be physically attached to, or form part of, other written material issued by any person or organisation.’

Subsection 184AA(1) was inserted in the Electoral Act by the Electoral and Referendum Amendment Act 1998 (the Amending Act). The Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill that became the Amending Act indicates that the intention of the Parliament was to ensure that political parties could issue and receive Postal Vote Applications. The Explanatory Memorandum stated that section 184AA was:

‘to provide that the approved postal vote application may be incorporated into another document with material issued by a body or person other than the AEC, such as a political party or a candidate....The amendment will not affect the practice of completed postal vote applications being returned to a political party’s or candidate’s office before being forwarded to relevant DRO for processing...’.

A further requirement that relates to Postal Vote Applications is contained in section 197 of the Electoral Act, which states that:

‘A person to whom an elector entrusts:

(a) an application for a postal vote; or

(b) an envelope apparently containing a postal ballot-paper;

for posting or delivery to an officer shall post or deliver the application or envelope, as the case may be, as soon as practicable.

Penalty: \$1,000’

Accordingly, the intention of the Parliament and the measures placed in the Electoral Act make it clear that members of political parties and ‘any person or organisation’ is legally able to print Postal Vote Applications and to add their own electoral advertisements.

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