



Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below my submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

I am appalled at the blatant cheating that happens in our election process, as you will see from my story below. There definitely needs to be an urgent overhaul of the process.

This is the story of my experience as scrutineer:

In 2007, Rev Hon Fred Nile, MLC was running to be re-elected for the NSW Upper House and Pastor Robyn Peebles was running to support Rev Nile as a lower house candidate in the electorate of Ryde.

I had worked a good part of the day on my assigned polling booth and had enjoyed conversation between different party supporters. For the first time I had decided to scrutineer at the polling booth, I had filled in my Scrutineers form and handed it in to the Returning Officer earlier in the day, and entered into the polling booth shortly before 6pm to receive my badge that identified me as a scrutineer. I discovered it was quite simple to just watch and make sure the process happened properly and I learnt quickly just by watching the other experienced scrutineers from the other parties.

I was standing at a long table with all the lower house candidates votes sorted out into their individual piles in bundles of a certain number and with the loose votes on top. While I was just standing and looking at my candidates pile of votes the Returning Officer came up from behind me, took the loose votes from the pile and threw them onto the Informal pile. I was so shocked I strongly stated "what did you do that for?" he never said a word; he just picked them up and put them back onto my candidates pile of votes. I was astounded.

After all the Lower House numbers were finalised all the other scrutineers left, they weren't interested in the Upper House votes at all. Being the only scrutineer left it was impossible for me to watch all of the Electoral staff sorting the large Upper House voting papers, so I would watch one person for a while and then move onto the next and so on. All the while I was watching the box that stated Christian Democratic Party (CDP). I noticed that Rev Nile had many number 1 votes. I was really encouraged.

One of the staff, a lovely lady asked me if I would like to have the CDP votes counted. Well, it was late and I was tired and so were the staff and I regret now that I had said no, don't worry, don't go to that extra bother. At the same time she had said to me, your party is doing very well I have seen many votes for you. I continued watching and was aware that we had received votes that would have been in the hundreds. When it was very late at night I left.

A number of days later, I went onto the AEC website to see what the final count was for CDP/Rev Nile from my particular polling booth, I was shocked to discover that the official number was 3.

Needless to say, since this time I have scrutineered at every election.

Please seriously consider bringing in photo identification at polling booths and designated

polling booths for voters.

Yours sincerely,
Anita Bird