



Tasmania

PREMIER

Senator The Hon Nick Bolkus
Chair, Senate Legal and Constitutional
References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

4 NOV 2003

Dear Senator Bolkus

Thank you for your letter of 7 October 2003 inviting the Tasmanian Government to provide input to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's Inquiry into the State Elections (One Vote, One Value) Bill 2001 [2002].

The basic principle of the State Election (One Vote One Value) Bill 2001 [2002], providing, as near as possible, equal numbers of electors in electorates (equal suffrage) is not disputed and is a fundamental tenet of democracy. However, I would like to make the following brief comments relating to concerns with the Bill.

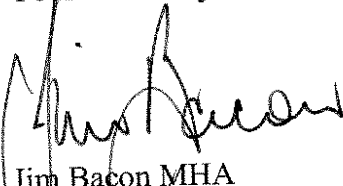
It is the view of the Tasmanian Government that matters relating to State and Territory parliaments are matters for the people and governments of each State and Territory. Federal legislation for the purpose of a perceived inequity in one State is certainly not appropriate and is possibly unconstitutional.

Further, changes such as those proposed by the Bill, should be the subject of extensive community consultation and debate to ensure a full understanding of the extent of any changes proposed within individual States or Territories. It is clear that this has not occurred.

I am aware that Mr Bruce Taylor, Chief Electoral Officer for the Tasmanian Electoral Office has also provided the Inquiry with comments on the Bill. Mr Taylor expressed concerns with the workability of the Bill and raised a number of specific issues with its drafting. I support Mr Taylor's comments relating to concerns with the Bill in its current form.

Thank you again for the invitation to provide input to this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Jim Bacon MHA
Premier

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