

## ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION & COMMENT

- 15.4 When this particular point was being investigated and considered, was there any consideration of alleged corruption by Members of Parliament? I refer to matters raised by the Ombudsman of Victoria regarding Brimbank Council wherein he named certain state Members of Parliament. Yet, while that Council's successor has subsequently been sacked and ever Councillor and potential Councillor in Victoria labelled as potentially corrupt and unable to decide issues for themselves by legislation recently enacted, nothing whatsoever was done regarding these MPs named by the Ombudsman. The various principles listed in this part of your paper are a joke if the matters that I have raised are ignored. While I do believe that most MPs are honest, decent and caring, if we do not agree with all that they say and do, we cannot state the same for one and all.

### *Chapter 2: Standards, qualities and expectations*

- 2(b) While this is outside of the legislation, MPs need to uphold the intent of the Act even within their own party elections. The Brimbank Report [supra] clearly argued that some MPs had not acted appropriately.

### *Chapter 3: The legal framework for elections*

- 3(d) Creating effective teaching material for secondary level education is relatively easy and it can be written to suit the curriculum requirements of various subjects such that teachers in different areas of study can use the material, effectively

### *Chapter 4: The franchise*

- 4(b) In simple and clear language, NO! To vote one must be a citizen, otherwise why bother becoming a citizen? Would you, for example, allow refugees in detention camps to vote?
- 4(c) It is time that this was changed. If they live overseas for four years or more (i.e. longer than a parliamentary term, then they temporarily lose the right until they return to live in Australia.
- 4(d) Under no circumstances whatsoever should the voting age and/or enrolment age for Australian elections be lowered

I am aghast at the utter nonsense put forward by one Senator wherein he has suggested a change to the law to allow 15 and 16 year olds to vote. Is he arguing that they are mature enough to understand the seriousness of their votes? Or simply acting on a belief that kids of that age are far more likely to believe in his own political views? Has he heard any of the media reports or actually understood the debates about the alcopops legislation about the growing number of younger people "boozing their brains out"? Does he believe that kids will forgo football, soccer, bludging, vandalism, studies, parties... to consider the issues and to then cast formal votes?

- 4(e) Should the current exclusions from the franchise be maintained, amended or abolished, in particular for:
- persons serving a prison sentence of three years or more?      Maintain
  - persons of unsound mind?      Need you ask? MAINTAIN

### *Chapter 5: Representation and voting systems*

- 5(b) would be a positive step forward

- 5(c) No
- 5(e) There is a major issue with many an ethnic Australian not understanding the voting system and no amount of training... will make a difference. The formality rules should be changed such that if their intention is clear then their vote counts, whether they tick, cross, mark only one name... This would require a change to the present system where, for example, with the Reps we require a mark in every box. This has not worked for decades and will continue to be a joke unless reformed.
- 5(f) What strategies do you think could reduce the level of unintended informal voting? Supra
- 5(k) Should a Member or Senator retire within the first half of their term, except on the account of personal tragedy or illness, then they should bear all of the costs of their replacement whether they be meeting etc costs of the Senate or a by election for a Member. The case of a Victorian MP quitting after one year was a disgrace but so too is every MP (usually Ministers) who quit so soon after their party losing an election. The community are sick of paying for poll after poll, and for taking time off work... just to satisfy such actions.

*Chapter 6: Electoral management bodies*

- 6(a) Having worked at elections for over three decades I have seen and known many staff who were otherwise members of political parties and yet who acted honestly, fairly and justly at all time. The AEC should NOT discriminate in an unproven belief of potential corruption if the parties identify themselves and open themselves up to transparency and scrutiny.
- Equally, there are DROs who employ kids under age to do certain jobs, usually their own children and neighbours, and who employ their partners. NO transparency whatsoever in such actions and of questionable status given the clear conflict of interest. If their partner or child does the wrong thing, would they be sacked?
- 6(f) The accountability mechanisms that apply to the AEC are insufficient to ensure that decisions relating to elections and electoral matters are independent and impartial. The FOI legislation has been used to the detriment of Australian citizens by the AEC and it needs urgent review. If a person is maligned to the AEC they have a natural justice right to know the identity of their accuser. The AEC refuses such a right and their FOI staff need to be brought into line with the spirit of the legislation.

*Chapter 7: Enrolment and participation*

- 7(a) Enrolment processes need to be reformed to ensure maximum participation in Australia's elections. There are far too many Australian born persons, living in Australia, working, paying taxes, driving vehicles... and who are not registered to vote and so do not vote. Why cannot the relevant laws be altered such that the electoral roll can be compared, for example, with driver license records to identify those who are not registered or who have changed addresses? This is far too easy in this technological age and is not a real matter of privacy or confidentiality since non registered persons are breaking the law.

*Chapter 9: Education for electoral participation*

- 9(a) Do you think that any changes should be made to existing electoral education programs?  
 – If so, what programs do you think should be in place to effectively and efficiently improve electoral participation in Australia? See above
- 9(b) Should electoral education be mandatory in all Australian schools? Yes

*Chapter 10: The campaign*

- 10(a) To what extent should the government seek to regulate the use of new media, including the internet, for campaign purposes, or encourage the development of a voluntary code of conduct?
  - Are there any specific emerging campaign practices which you would like to see tackled?
- 10(e) Should 'truth in advertising' laws be introduced? The answer is yes but MPs on all sides will not agree, especially the major parties and the Greens.
- 10(f) Polling booths work well. Staff, scrutineers and political persons outside ensure that they do so in Australia