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The Secretary
Electoral Reform Secretariat
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Dear Secretary

I would like to thank the Special Minister of State Senator Hon Joe Ludwig MP for the opportunity to contribute to the Commonwealth Government's Electoral Reform Green Paper – *Strengthening Australia's Democracy*.

The Northern Territory Government fundamentally believes that our democracy has been well served by compulsory voting and therefore believes that this means legislators must ensure that enrolment is an easy process.

We wish to comment on aspects of the green paper as follows:

1. **Harmonisation of voting systems** - my Government strongly supports harmonisation as a means of reducing administrative problems and potential voter confusion.
2. **Direct (Automatic) Enrolment** - my Government supports the concept of Automatic enrolment. Voting in Australia is compulsory. It is therefore incumbent on Governments and Parliaments to make enrolment as automatic and easy as possible. The onus needs to balance between our responsibility as legislators and the responsibility of the citizen.

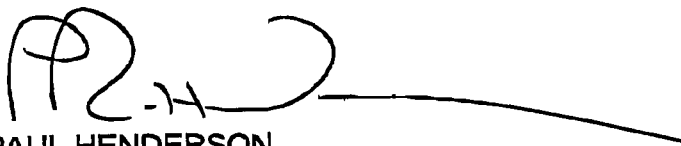
At this point the responsibility totally lies with the citizen and this should be more balanced. The Territory also has particular issues with highly mobile voters. Automatic enrolment would reduce the number of people who are made ineligible to vote by simply moving house.

3. **One Common Electoral Roll** - this is an extension of automatic enrolment and should be considered to ensure the integrity of rolls for elections. It also assists all jurisdictions in keeping rolls up to date and accurate.

4. **Close of Rolls** - my Government supports the concept of rolls remaining open as long as possible to ensure all Australians get a chance to exercise their right to vote.
5. **Territory Statehood** - my Government recently released our Territory 2030 plan that provides a strong goal of Statehood by 2020. Processes are already underway by a community led group for seminars and workshops across the Territory in 2010. We strongly support the move to Territory Statehood as soon as is practicable.

I trust these issues will be discussed and examined thoroughly and I look forward to your deliberations helping to strengthen democracy in Australia.

Yours sincerely


PAUL HENDERSON
10/12/09