



Rise Up Australia Party

VICTORIAN DIVISION

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Mr Mark Roberts
Executive Officer
Electoral Matters Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Wednesday 8th July 2015

Dear Mr Roberts,

Inquiry into the 2014 Victorian State Election – Response from Rise Up Australia Party - Vic.

The Electoral Matters Committee (EMC) wrote to us, the Rise Up Australia Party - Victoria (RUAP-Vic), on 29 May 2015, inviting us to share our thoughts on how well or otherwise we considered the 2014 Victorian State Election was conducted. We kindly thank the EMC for its invitation to comment, and hereby make the following submission for its consideration and deliberation.

Overall, our Victorian State Executive, on behalf of its candidates and their support teams, consider the 2014 Victorian State Election was as professionally run as previous elections, with VEC staff conducting themselves well. This was evidenced by their capably handling the usual challenges that arose at the Polling Booths on election day, such as helping the elderly and others to vote privately.

However, we did make some observations on and around the subject election that appeared unprofessional, undisciplined, and/or favouring the larger more affluent parties, and these are raised in numbered points below for our mutual convenience:

1. Signage of Political Parties at and around polling places:

- a. **Excessiveness.** Most polling places had a preponderance of major party signage, seemingly for miles leading up the access roads and paths to each polling place.
- b. **Fairness.** There is an attitude of 'first in best dressed' for signage placement, but this smacks of unfairness, especially to the minor parties being given a fair go.
- c. **Undisciplined.** The visual appearance of the various party's signage comes across as undisciplined (ie not adhering to any defined standards), with some parties using excessively lengthy banners, and others simply using single corflutes.
- d. **Unprofessional placements and installations.** Some signage was on fences, some on buildings, some in trees, on parked vehicles and trailers (of various sizes), in adjoining shop windows, on A-frames placed on the paths or worn by persons. All this prolific signage seems completely at odds with professional advertising signage design and installation as seen in the general community, where advertising signage laws apply.
- e. **Conclusion.** There must be a better way for polling place signage to be managed.

- f. **Suggested Solution.** May we respectfully suggest the EMC develop legislative **rules** for Parliament to adopt, concerning erecting political party signage at and around pre/polling places, with each party assigned pre-allocated space for their signage at each polling place's entry points. To ensure no favouratism occurs, this could be controlled by a **ballot** draw, giving first drawn the allocated space closest to the entry gates, then moving outwards for each subsequent party drawn. Limiting the **size** of each party's allocated space to one corflute only, would ensure minimal visual pollution around polling/pre-polling places on election days.
2. **Ease of Voters' Access.** Over-manning and space commandeering by some political party's How To Vote (HTV) Card hander-outers caused much frustration to many of the attending voters and party supporters, especially to some of the elderly voters with walking frames, sticks, or ride-on aids. Perhaps a **limit** of two support persons, and no helpers' tables, per polling place entry point could be applied to better facilitate voters' ease of ingress and egress.
 3. **Security Staff at Polling Places.** Some polling places had professional security staff on-site all night the night before, to protect their particular party's signage from any vandalism or skulduggery. Such measures would not be necessary if signage spaces were pre-allocated, as per point 1f above, but **signage erection timelines** may need to be defined, say to two hours before polling places open at 8:00 AM. Should sensitivities increase between political parties canvassing voters as they attend at polling places, like what is occurring in many places overseas, then the VEC may need to engage professional security services (either VicPol or private contractors) to pre-empt and constrain such a possibility.
 4. **Parking Availability.** Parking spaces immediately in front of Polling Places should only be available for attending voters, especially but not exclusively any handicapped, and not hogged by political party candidates or their helpers. VEC could make arrangements with Local Councils to have their by-laws staff assist manage this.
 5. **Selection of Polling Places.** All Polling Places should have easy access for voters, especially handicapped in wheel-chairs or ride-ons. Access ramps need to be wide enough for voters coming and going to pass each other without difficulty, including wheelchair bound persons. The Frankston Polling Place at DHCS in Nepean Highway, Frankston, was a totally inappropriate site for a polling place and ought not have been selected and used, for the above reason, and also because the building's access opening was shared by an adjoining restaurant business whose staff and customers were considerably inconvenienced in various ways.
 6. **Toilets Availability and Accessibility.** The VEC needs to ensure toilets normally locked on weekends, or during the working week in multi-business buildings, are opened for voters and political party helpers, and 'Toilet' access signs/rules sufficiently prominent for all attending.
 7. **Emptying of Rubbish Bins.** It would be helpful if the VEC could arrange for bins outside polling places to be emptied after lunch at least, and possibly even a couple of hours after polling places close, especially on windy days when HTV cards, lunch-wraps, and other election day signage can be seen strewn all over the surrounding roads and parks.
 8. **Party Registration.** Restrict registration of political parties (including majors) for each election (including by-elections), to only those parties that have current policies published four months prior to the election date, such policies to cover all areas of State Government responsibilities.

Our RUAP-Vic are happy to nominate an executive member or two to attend to discuss these matters further. Should you so wish, then please contact the undersigned. All the best with your inquiry outcomes.

Yours faithfully,

Endorsed,

(Original signed)

(Original Signed)

Anthony Moore
Team Member

Yvonne Gentle
National Secretary