



12 May 2010

The Executive Officer
Electoral Matters Committee
Parliament House
Melbourne. 3002

Voting centres administration inquiry

Dear Mr Roberts

For the past nearly 30 years, besides my full-time position of subeditor at the Hansard unit, I have worked on a casual basis for the relevant electoral commissions at a polling booth (Bundoora Secondary College) at state and federal elections.

Initially I worked as a polling official for ordinary voters; then for some years as an 'absent/special voter' polling official, and for the past several elections as officer in charge of the booth.

The purpose of this submission is to highlight what I have observed over those elections in relation to **elector queuing**.

Once the booth opened at 8 a.m., a queue of voters would extend out of the building for app. 30 metres, with a waiting time of about 45 minutes; this would be the situation for up to 2-3 hours. With the ebb and flow of voters attending the booth, for the rest of the day the queue would disappear but then re-establish (although the voter waiting time would generally be much less than 2 hours).

Throughout this waiting period the officials recording ordinary voters would be flat out, while the three (sometimes two) officials handling absent/special voters would have little to do.

I **suggest** the pooling of all polling officials; that all be able to handle both ordinary and absent/special voters.

The paperwork/methodology associated with recording and dealing with absent/special voters is not so complicated that basic training and clear written instructions would not suffice for all polling officials to be involved, particularly if the procedures for absent/special voters were simplified somewhat.

That would shorten the waiting time for voters. The appearance in the booth — and often annoyance to voters — of some officials handling a large number of ordinary voters while officials on the absent/special tables sit doing little could be avoided.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Cullen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely".

David G. Cullen