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Subject: SUBMISSION

OFFICIAL SUBMISSION {inquiry into the impact of social media on Victorian elections}

Firstly the submission page conveniently omits an address or process to make these submissions, evidencing a possibility it is only allowing current party members an input.

I have been involved in this whole broad issue even as a candidate and campaigner therefore, that and my expert online knowledge is quite useful.

Firstly, I feel Govt should not be meddling into the VEC process and independence as a clear bias and conflict of interest can be said to be open.

Govt can if it wishes, interfere in area's in which it wont advantage one party over another in any way, but instead should put its findings to the VEC to decide to adopt or not.

Relevance of this must be considered before any of this submissions core objectives are considered.

A good example was fears by existing parties of the fast emerging Palmer United party or any threat to the main duopolies, a clear abuse of power witnessed by trebling some states candidate nomination fees without justification of the increases, and clearly to out price competitors in regards to affordability and likewise up the jump bar on the vote limit required for reimbursements etc.

These matters hold a conflict of self interest and bias, and must be left up to the more appropriate body the VEC.

What did the aforementioned achieve? I personally played a role in how that was countered, it caused all minor parties to unite to the biggest emerging minor party and therefore self-defeatist in some regards and backfired on the intent to shut out minor parties and voter democracy and constitutional construction of voting process and rights, in the name of Govt abuse of power, bias, and conflict of self interest.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Who can legally control such, and who can prevent fake entries, cloaked identities, hacking, hijacking, and detection of the person whom made inputs, are anyone allowing that international law dominates most of the web and has not yet addressed the many arising issues.

It is uncertain in most commissions rules in regards to social media, as it is too hard to police with out current systems and hurdles, in fact seen some very wayward candidate statements online in social media, but interestingly they are not web pages

but are things like private facebook groups, virtually covered by international law, facebook USA and friends list of people all over the world, however, most their group are such minor impact to the mainstay majority public

Our official internet police do not act hardly ever on any type of breach, but have more power than Govt itself to investigate and prosecute, so this is a good starting point, any outcome in regards to policing politics and social media really should be placed in their hands and legislated with specifics.

Only the VEC and the internet police agents have power to intervene in these matters NOT GOVT ITSELF as it has a conflict of self interest.

Social media can be political suicidal for a candidate or party, it can also be used to spread untruths about other parties, but current media election legislation is easy changed to include social media, but will this also restrict a party whom makes these changes or new restrictions.

Bullying online is a far bigger issue but in the too hard basket, and social media is being abused by parties whom use it to stop new competing parties from emerging and displacing them out of paid-office into 3rd party status.

The matters I raise might evidence current party bias via this submission not being published public along with all others, thus shut out and evidencing all my points.

Social media is used as a campaigning too, a smear tool, and to gather new members, but it's overall impact as yet is too small, and if any party or campaigner breaches ethics or rules, generally that party "upon complaint" will act against the offending member or candidate, or, the VEC can take action under their jurisdiction.

The VEC is the most advanced commission in Australia.

I do not think matters are big enough yet to justify intervention into social media during elections, but a close eye should be kept on it in the interim, and results of submissions used to find any reasonable justifications so this inquiry can have a second round of submissions based upon results of this first round.

Until then this inquiry has shown no substance whatsoever, therefore I await to read everyone's submissions to have a substance starting point

Sincerely

Brian Woods