14 June 2007

Mr Mark Roberts
Acting Executive Officer
Parliament House
Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Mr Roberts

Thank you for your letter of 11 May inviting submissions to your inquiry into the 2006 State election.

I ask that the attached letters I wrote to the Victorian Electoral Commission and Australian Electoral Commission regarding the failure of the VEC to comply with the Electoral Act in having above the line preference arrangements for the upper house 'prominently displayed' in polling booths, be accepted as a submission to this inquiry. As you will see, I have suggested a simple spreadsheet format that would allow voters to follow preference flows.

I ask that you also consider for future elections the display in all voting booths the 'how to vote' cards for candidates, at least those in registered political parties. This move has the capacity to save enormous quantities of paper (and greenhouse emissions used in producing it) and lessen the pressure on voters as they enter booths. Such a measure would also improve democracy, removing the advantage, inherent in the current system, which comes from candidates having good supplies of polling booth workers. I submit that the stringent rules for party registration already discriminate against small and emerging parties, and this measure would to some extent ameliorate that.

The ACT has adopted a 'no how to vote card' system, and Victoria would do well to follow suit.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Senator Lyn Allison
Leader, Australian Democrats
27 November 2006

Mr Steve Tully
Victorian Electoral Commissioner
Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Mr Tully

When voting on Saturday at the polling booth in Nott Street, Port Melbourne, I asked the official directing me to a table where the group voting tickets were, to be told that she didn't know anything about this and would have to consult a more senior officer. I subsequently spoke with the officer in charge who told me there were too many documents to display and produced stapled reports for all metropolitan upper house regions. He indicated that I was the first to request this information.

I remind you of the explicit statutory requirement in the Electoral Act that these group voting tickets are "prominently displayed". I would argue that it is not reasonable to have these documents tucked away, unknown to polling booth officers, just because no one usually asks to see them. People will not ask for something they do not know they are entitled to.

I would be obliged if you can indicate why it is that the preference flows of above the line voting for each party cannot be put on a matrix and prominently displayed in polling booths.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Senator Lyn Allison
Leader, Australian Democrats
14 December 2006

Mr Steve Tully
Victorian Electoral Commissioner
Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Mr Tully

Thank you for your reply dated 4 December to my letter concerning group voting tickets not being on 'prominent display' in polling booths for the Victorian election.

Now that preferences have been largely finalised and above the line group voting is in the news with political parties again coming under fire for preference deals of which their voters disapprove, I have prepared a sample of the matrix idea that I referred to which I suggest would go some way to overcoming the problem, both in terms of the VEC complying with the Act and voters being given the information they need on one page so it can be easily understood.

I hope you will take it into consideration in the forthcoming review.

Yours sincerely


Senator Lyn Allison
Leader, Australian Democrats
14 December 2006

Mr Ian Campbell
Australian Electoral Commissioner
GPO Box 2867
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Mr Campbell

You may be aware that the VEC has come under criticism by some for not having group voting tickets on ‘prominent display’ in polling booths for the Victorian election last month. You will also be aware that now that the count is largely complete, there is a level of dissatisfaction in Victoria with the preference ‘deals’ delivering at least one seat to the DLP on a very small primary vote with voters saying they did not want their preferences distributed in this way.

The Victorian Commission’s response has been to say that it is almost unheard of for voters to ask to see the tickets but that they were able to be produced on request, as indeed they were but not without some effort on my part when I exercised my vote. Even then the one copy of the group voting tickets - 18 pages stapled together - did not provide an overall picture and would have been available to only one voter at a time. I have put it to them, as I do you, that this unsatisfactory and not in keeping with either the Federal or the Victorian State Act.

I urge you to ensure that this does not happen for the 2007 Federal Election and attach a rough sample matrix I have prepared showing how all this information could be put onto one page, making above the line preference arrangements much more accessible to voters.

Yours sincerely

Senator Lyn Allison
Leader, Australian Democrats
### Preference flows for above the line voting

#### South Eastern Metropolitan Region

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<th>A - Family First</th>
<th>B - Liberal</th>
<th>C - PP</th>
<th>D - Democrats</th>
<th>E - Ind</th>
<th>F - CD</th>
<th>G - Greens</th>
<th>H - ALP</th>
<th>I - DLP</th>
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### Summary of preferences by party

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</table>

* Australian Democrats split voting ALP/Libs 50/50

** Independent flows irregular but denotes preference of first candidate in each group