

**LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA**  
— NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION —  
**State Director**

26 August 2016

Mr Jason Arditi  
A/Director  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Arditi

I refer to your letter of 11 August 2016 regarding my recent evidence to the Inquiry of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters into the 2015 NSW state election.

Please find at ANNEXURE 1 responses to the questions I took on notice at the public hearing.

Yours sincerely



Chris Stone  
State Director

## Annexure 1

**The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS:** *Earlier Mr Green indicated that there is a potential problem with the large number of candidates on the ballot paper, so much so that if there are any more candidates running for the State upper House we will move into the territory of returning to the old tablecloth. Two proposals have been mentioned. One is to increase the nomination fee for people wanting to run and the other is to increase the requirement of nominees required to sign a nomination form for a candidate. Do you have any particular preference one way or the other in that regard?*

**Mr STONE:** *I must say I have not thought through that particular issue myself.*

**The CHAIR:** *We are happy for you to take it on notice.*

**Mr STONE:** *I am happy to take that one on notice.*

Like Mr Green, I believe it is important to respect a citizen's right to nominate for Parliament, just as it is an important and legitimate part of sensible electoral administration to impose rules that test the support and seriousness of candidates before permitting them on the ballot paper.

Mr Green's recommendations to control the number of columns on the Legislative Council ballot paper, including increasing the number of nominators for a Legislative Council candidate from 15 to 50 - ensuring parity between independents or non-party groups and registered political parties - are sensible and would help address the current imbalance in relation to test the support of a candidate.

I note Mr Green's assessment that while the NSW Legislative Council nomination deposit is low by interstate comparison, it is not low once ballot paper grouping is taken into account.

However, I would respectfully suggest that increasing the nomination deposit to \$1,000, while still capping the deposit for groups of candidates, would better serve as a test of a candidate's seriousness, particularly given the substantial increase in the number of candidates and unnamed groups that contested the election.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** *Following up on the question about complaints, I will ask you a specific question that you will almost certainly have to take on notice because you were not there. Did the Liberal Party make any complaints about signage on polling day which breached the Act in terms of the size limits or any official complaints about third-party campaigns? If there were complaints about either of those issues, did you receive a response from the Electoral Commission? Were you advised what sanctions would be imposed on the parties, organisations or individuals that breached the Act?*

**Mr STONE:** *I would need to take that on notice to check.*

As noted by Mr Franklin, I was not involved in the 2015 election campaign.

As best I have been able to ascertain, the Liberal Party did not make any complaints on polling day about signage that exceeded the size limits.

I am aware that one complaint was made about unregistered and unauthorised material being distributed at a polling place in the District of Holsworthy. It was not clear whether the material in question was prepared and distributed by a registered political party or a third-party campaigner.

I understand that in that instance, the NSW Electoral Commission responded to the concerns raised by the Liberal Party within an hour.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Please also take this question about voter ID on notice. I was wondering—

**The CHAIR:** I thought I would get away with that, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have been taking copious notes. Please tell us what evidence the Liberal Party has as to the extent of voter fraud and in relation to why voter ID of some nature might overcome that. I am not asking for a response now, but please provide us with some evidence.

**Mr STONE:** Sure.

I note that this Committee, in its report into the *Administration of the 2011 NSW Election and Related Matters*, considered the matters of multiple voting by an individual and impersonating another elector for the purposes of voting, and noted evidence from the NSW Electoral Commission which stated that instances of these offences had occurred, that they were difficult to prosecute, and that they had the potential to lead to fraud.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) of the Australian Parliament, in its *Second interim report on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 election: An assessment of electronic voting options*, also noted evidence by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee at 2013-14 Additional Estimates hearings that during the 2013 federal election 18,770 multiple marks (persons marked off the electoral roll more than once) were identified, with 10,671 of these being attributable to polling official error, 2,013 being instances of electors admitting to multiple voting, and 6,000 instances remaining unresolved.

Indeed, the AEC noted in its submission to the *Inquiry into and report on the conduct of the 2013 election and matters related thereto* that at that election, three separate voters in NSW were recorded as having their names marked off 15, 12 and 9 times.

The introduction of a requirement for voters to present some form of photo identification at the polling place before voting would help reduce the occurrence of multiple voting and would also reduce the potential for fraud.



**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS:** *Further to the voter ID question, you said that most people have some form of government ID. What kinds of exemptions would you support?*

**Mr STONE:** *I would need to take that on notice.*

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS:** *Yes, absolutely, because in your own words there would be some people who would not have ID so we need to be mindful of what we could give those people.*

**Mr STONE:** *Sure, I am happy to take that on notice.*

I note that Queensland introduced a requirement to produce identification to vote before the July 2014 state by-election in the district of Stafford.

At that by-election, voters presenting at a polling place would only be issued an ordinary vote if they could provide one of the following pieces of identification:

- a current drivers licence;
- a current Australian passport;
- a voter information letter issued by the commission;
- a recent document evidencing electoral enrolment;
- an identification card issued by the Commonwealth or State evidencing the person's entitlement to a financial benefit;
- an adult proof of age card issued by the State;
- a recent account or notice issued by a local government or a public utility provider;
- a recent account statement, current account card or current credit card issued by a financial institution;
- a recent account statement issued by a carriage service provider as defined under the *Commonwealth Telecommunications Act 1997*, and
- a recent notice of assessment issued under the *Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

I further note that at the 2015 general election, the Electoral Commission Queensland sent every enrolled elector a Voter Information Letter soon after the close of rolls, which informed each elector of the voting requirements, with the addition that the letter itself could be used as acceptable identification for voting purposes.

Apart from the range of forms of identification able to be used, there was also ability for electors to cast a declaration vote should they not be able to produce identification at the polling place.

The very small proportion of votes cast as uncertain identity declaration votes (0.6 per cent of the total vote at the 2015 general election) indicates that the system impacted only a very small number of voters.