



**COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS
ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.**

Founded 1931. Celebrating 75 years of service in
2006.

Serving pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income
retirees.

Consumer Protection Awards – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005

Our Ref:
GSA.050

5 July 2006

Ms Marianne Saliba, MP
Chairperson
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

(Fax 9230 2333)

Re: Submission to Voter Enrolment Inquiry

Dear Ms Saliba

Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW Inc (CPSA) wishes to make the following submission to the Voter Enrolment Inquiry conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters of the NSW Parliament.

CPSA was founded in 1931 in response to pension cuts. CPSA is a non-profit, non-party-political membership association serving the interests of pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees. The aim of CPSA is to promote the rights and improve the standard of living and well-being of its members and constituents. CPSA has approximately 140 branches and affiliated organisations with a combined membership of over 15,500 throughout NSW. CPSA serves the interests of its membership and broader constituency at the local, state and federal levels.

CPSA is concerned that the new federal law to close the electoral roll as soon as a federal election is called potentially takes the vote away from ten of thousands of people.

CPSA is also concerned that, because of this law, chequebook political lobbying will now become legal at the federal level. Political parties will be allowed to accept secret gifts and donations of up to \$10,000. The previous limit was \$1,500.

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CPSA, Level 3, 25 Cooper Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
Phone: (02) 9281 3588 Country callers: 1800 451 488 Facsimile: (02) 9281 9716
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Donations: 1800 451 488 / www.cpsa.org.au - donations over \$2 are tax-deductible.

At present, when an election is called and a writ for the election issued there is seven days before the close of the electoral roll. During this time people can join the roll to vote or change their enrolment details. The new law has changed this. The roll will now close at 8pm on the day the writ is issued, with people wanting to change their details given a further three days to do so.

If a person is not on the electoral roll, they cannot vote. This premature closing of the rolls will disenfranchise thousands of Australians, especially young people, who join the roll for the first time when an election is called. According to the Australian Electoral Commission, during the seven days before the close of the rolls for the 2004 federal election, 423,000 people either enrolled for the first time or changed their address or other details.

The new law will also remove the right to vote from all full-time prisoners serving a sentence for a Commonwealth, state or territory offence. This will change the present law that allows prisoners serving sentences of less than three years to take part in the ballot.

The final major change is to increase the threshold for disclosing gifts to parties and candidates from \$1,500 to \$10,000. This will make it far more difficult for the media and the public to know who is seeking to influence political parties through cash and other donations. The change will have a harmful effect on our democracy and increases the chances of corruption. The public has a right to know who is contributing money to our politicians and political parties. It is one of the most important accountability measures of a political system.

In summary, CPSA is concerned that this new law will undermine the integrity of the Federal electoral system.

Yours sincerely

Bob Jay, State Secretary



Paul Versteeg
Policy Coordinator

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