



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

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17 February 2012

Mr Daryl Melham MP
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Dear Mr Melham

Re: THE(PROTECTING ELECTOR PARTICIPATION) BILL - Public hearing, 29 February 2012

The Inquiry Secretary has invited the APF to appear on Wednesday, 29 February 2012 at 9.15 am.

The APF notes that the Bill was tabled only on the morning of 15 February, and we only became aware of it because a Board member happened to be in the Committee room when it was mentioned.

The APF has not previously been consulted by the Bill's proponents. We had an opportunity shortly before Christmas to begin thinking about the possibility, but it was an informal discussion only, and at a difficult time of year.

The APF is not aware of any Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) having been performed on the proposal. The APF draws attention to the comments made in section 4 on page 8 of its Supplementary Submission to the current Inquiry, regarding serious procedural deficiencies, and to its recommendations in section 5, on the same page. The APF notes that the new matter appears to suffer the same serious deficiencies.

The APF notes that the time available between the invitation sent today and the Hearing date is 11 calendar days, and only 7 business days.

The APF notes that its Board and Committees comprise busy professional volunteers. The APF further notes that the most relevant of its members have prior and longstanding commitments on most, and in some cases all, of the 7 business days between the date of invitation and the date of the Hearing.

The APF notes that, far from being conducive to disciplined, calm and rational analysis and debate, the procedure is inimical to it. Indeed, the APF is astounded that the Parliament would treat a Joint Parliamentary Committee in such a manner.

Would you please advise what alternative approach you are able to adopt in this matter.

Would you please further advise whether it would assist if the APF submitted a formal complaint to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and/or to the Manager of Government Business.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Roger Clarke
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