

CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN NSW



Member of Catholic Church Religious Group
ABN 52 476 362 010

The Hon J. W. Howard MP
Member for Bennelong
PO Box 336
Gladesville NSW 2111

23 June 2006.

Dear Mr Howard,

Re: Electoral and Referendum Amendment Bill (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) 2006

I write on behalf of the CLRI Justice committee, a group representing the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes in NSW. CLRI represents approximately 4,000 Catholic Religious women and men, and their associates.

It is our conviction that this Bill has nothing to do with integrity or democracy. As many commentators and scholars have pointed out, the Bill in fact undermines the democratic rights of citizens. It will make it more difficult for people to vote, and it makes it easier for corporations and wealthy citizens to donate money to political parties in secret. It is an unveiled manipulation of the law to favour the Liberal Party and the coalition Government.

When you came to power, you assured the Australian people that you would not use your majority in both houses to enact laws that would unfairly favour your Government. Clearly, the Electoral and Referendum Amendment Bill (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) 2006 blatantly contravenes this assurance.

It is our hope that this debasement of the rules of the electoral system and its manipulation for the advantage of your Party (in spite of the best efforts of many citizens), will not be repeated in future legislation.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Barnett rsj
Social Justice Committee

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

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