



19 November 2021

The Hon Ben Morton MP
Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister
and Cabinet
PO Box 329
Willetton WA 6155

By email: Ben.Morton.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister,

Electoral Legislation Amendment (Voter Integrity) Bill 2021

We are writing to express our opposition to the *Electoral Legislation Amendment (Voter Integrity) Bill 2021*.

The Bill is an attack on the right to vote. The effect of the Bill will be some of the most marginalised people in Australia losing their democratic right and undermining the integrity of Australian compulsory voting. We have no doubt that these laws will disproportionately affect people that experience economic and social disadvantage and cannot be justified.

Kingsford Legal Centre is a community legal centre, providing free legal advice, casework and community legal education to people in south-east Sydney. We specialise in discrimination law and run a state-wide Discrimination Law Clinic. In 2020, we gave 297 discrimination advices and provided intensive assistance with 71 discrimination matters. This letter is also endorsed by Community Legal Centres Australia and Community Legal Centres NSW.

The Bill in requiring a proof of identity document in order to vote will disenfranchise many people. From our experience working with people who experience social and economic disadvantage many of our clients will be affected by this change. In particular we are concerned that these common situations will disenfranchise the person:

- **Experiencing homelessness:** Not having a permanent address, being itinerant or 'couch surfing' – this will affect many women fleeing domestic violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who experience high rates of homelessness.
- **Having multiple names:** This will impact on culturally and linguistically diverse groups and people who change their name for safety reasons or identity reasons.
- **Not bringing documents on the day:** Simply not being aware or forgetting the relevant documents will disenfranchise someone and this may disproportionately affect older people or people with disabilities.
- **Not having sufficient documentation:** Many people do not have adequate identity documents – this can particularly impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may have not had their birth properly recorded and recently released prisoners.

In our view, the alternative methods of establishing identity in the Bill are not adequate solutions to the serious disenfranchising impact of the Bill. In our experience we know that many people in the community do not have another person who is readily able and willing to attest to their identity.



Likewise, many people in this situation will not know or understand how to verify their identify through the Australian Electoral Commission. These are just more hoops that people experiencing disadvantage are not going to be able to jump through and they do not correct the fundamental and disturbing impact of the Bill on the right to vote.

Australia has a proud electoral history and everyone has the right to vote. This Bill is an attack on the democratic rights of people in Australia.

If you have any questions, please contact Emma Golledge at legal@unsw.edu.au.

Yours faithfully,

Emma Golledge
Director, Kingsford Legal Centre

Nassim Arrage
Chief Executive Officer, Community Legal Centres Australia

Tim Leach
Executive Director, Community Legal Centres NSW



19 November 2021

Senator the Hon Don Farrell
Shadow Special Minister of State
PO Box 6338
Halifax Street SA 5000

By email: senator.farrell@aph.gov.au

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