



PRIME MINISTER

17 May 1974

1974 ELECTIONS

Tomorrow's election will be the biggest ever held in Australia. There are three ballot papers and record numbers of candidates. In most States, and especially in New South Wales, the Senate ballot paper is unusually long.

All this will make voting arduous for many people. It will test their care and their patience. I frankly acknowledge, as I did at the outset of this campaign, the formidable task that voters will face.

I need hardly stress that the size of the Senate ballot paper is quite outside the Government's control. Record numbers of Australians have exercised their democratic right to contest the Senate election. Under the electoral law, voters must number every square on the ballot paper if their votes are to be counted.

In these circumstances it is all the more important to exercise care at the polling booth. This is an election of supreme importance. We cannot afford a wasted vote.

I appeal to voters to take their time when voting. Do not be unduly hurried or hustled. Check that you have numbered every square in sequence, that no numbers have been repeated or left out.

Follow your how-to-vote card exactly.

If you make a mistake it is your right to obtain another ballot paper and fill it in again. If in doubt about anything, seek advice from an officer at the polling station.

The Electoral office has responded splendidly to the challenge presented by this election. It is providing a record number of booths at the polling stations.

I am satisfied that these arrangements will fully meet the needs of voters and keep delays to a minimum.

Every voter has a legal right to vote in the privacy of a booth. There will be ample booths for this purpose.

If, however, a voter wishes to avoid any delay in queueing for the use of a booth, he may complete his ballot paper anywhere in the precincts of the polling station. In doing so he should be guided by the wishes of electoral officers.

It is important at all times to exercise patience and care. Let us make every vote count. Let this great exercise in democracy reflect the wishes of a diligent, intelligent and responsible electorate.

SYDNEY AND CANBERRA

17/5/74