



A weapon that comes down as still  
As snowflakes fall upon the sod  
But executes a freeman's will  
As lightning does the will of God  
And from its source no doors nor locks  
Can shield you. – 'Tis the Ballot Box.  
– John Pierpont (1785-1866)

# Voluntary Voting

The Liberal Party under John Howard's leadership is the party of constructive reform.

A necessary reform which will enhance the freedoms of Australians while not losing a single intelligent vote is the introduction of voluntary voting.

Liberals can vote for this motion with the confidence of knowing that the only Coalition opponent is Queensland's colourful Nationals Senator, Ron "Cane Toad" Boswell.

Opponents of voluntary voting allege that it will bring an advantage to the Liberal Party tantamount to guaranteeing its electoral success. Anti-Liberal phobias should not detract from the simple fact that compulsory voting is wrong and offensive to democracy.

Voluntary voting is the choice of the great majority of civilised nations. Britons, Canadians, New Zealanders, South Africans and citizens of the USA have difficulty believing that Australians are condemned to be harassed and fined or even gaoled if they choose not to vote.

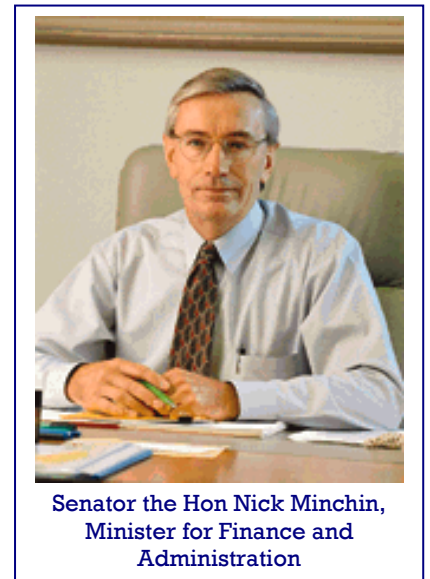
Senior Government Minister Senator the Hon Nick Minchin BEc LLB is a leading advocate for voluntary voting. Here are examples of his statements:

*New Zealand has yet again successfully conducted an election with voluntary voting with at latest count, eight out of ten New Zealanders voluntarily exercising their right to vote, and I commend New Zealand on that, and commend New Zealand voters on voluntarily turning out to cast their vote, without the force of compulsion, as we have in Australia. And indeed it's remarkable that New Zealanders have democratic rights that we don't. In New Zealand you can choose whether or not to vote. In this country you're guilty of an offence if you choose not to vote.*

19 September 2005 to ABC reporter Alexandra Kirk on the PM program.

*The current system of compulsory voting is undemocratic and should be dumped. . . . This is a matter of quite profound principle, that in a democracy a fundamental civil liberty should be whether or not people choose to vote, I find it thoroughly offensive that Australians who choose not to vote are guilty of an offence. It should be a democratic right not to [vote].*

Quoted by Kerry-Anne Walsh in the Sydney Morning Herald 2 Oct 05.



Senator the Hon Nick Minchin,  
Minister for Finance and  
Administration

Here's what the Prime Minister has said about voluntary voting:

"In 1964 when I was a member of the New South Wales delegation to the Federal Council Meeting, I was the only Member of the Delegation to vote in favour of it."

ibid.