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Let me quote from a document that ought to be valid as far as the conduct of affairs of a group under the Ethnic Broadcasting Association. It is called the '3ZZZ Constitution (with amendments made up to December 1998). I trust most of it, if not all, hold good even now. It contains a section under the heading, 'Ethnic Community Broadcasting Group Committee'. Section (g) in it says as follows: 'The name of the candidates shall be displayed at and advertised through the radio station. At the Broadcasting Group's Annual General Meeting, at which the nominations exceed the number of members elected, there shall be appointed three members to act as Returning Officers to conduct elections at the Annual General Meeting, voting at elections shall be secret ballot on ballot papers prepared by the secretary of the Broadcasting Group.'

I am not interested as to whether all these requirements are adhered to or not, but there come basic requirements that any election should follow. First and foremost is that the ballot box be shown to candidates before it is sealed. What happened here is anyone's guess. What we saw was a box already being

filled with papers. Now he wanted to validate the votes already cast. He did that by the same strategy, i.e. putting to the house and getting its approval. His puppets came to his rescue once more.

Even more absurd was the way it was continued. At two or three AGMs that I attended, no election was held because once it was announced, one of the groups that had submitted nominations decided to withdraw from the contest. That decision was announced by the leader of the group. There was no fuss about it, which means that it was acceptable to the house. In fact, it was invariably the outgoing committee that withdrew at the last minute on all those occasions. On this occasion it appears the group that wanted to oust the existing committee had planned to withdraw at the meeting, perhaps aware of what result was expected. Why they wanted to withdraw is not relevant here. Why was that opportunity not given to them?

If they were allowed to do so, so much of ill-feeling and animosity could have been avoided.

All this unwanted confusion and questions of procedures could have not arisen if only proper procedure that apply to normal operation of societies and meetings were respected and followed. Australia is a country that speaks of proper procedure and fair play. When someone says it is un-Australian, he means that these elementary values are being ignored. Fair play and Fair go are not mere slogans to be brandished around, but to be observed as real niceties or ethics.

Why that was not found at this meeting is something the members and the Ethnic groups should give thought to, and take necessary action to avoid.



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