I have heard with some alarm today’s media reports that Members and Senators in the Commonwealth Parliament are seeking compensation if their parliamentary careers are cut short because they are "voted out' at an election.

There is ample precedent for not entertaining such a claim. Australian industrial laws contain many references to compensation entitlements for employees engaged on fixed term contracts or, in the case of academic staff for example, have rolling term contracts which may or may not be renewed at the end of a particular term. In essence, there is no entitlement.

Parliamentarians go into campaigns for office knowing that, if they are elected, their subsequent parliamentary careers may or may not continue depending upon the will of the electorate. Like other 'employees' on term contracts they take their chances that their careers will continue; they take that decision up front and have to accept the consequences that their tenure in the Parliament may not be renewed.

Some candidates give up existing careers - e.g. solicitors, primary producers, merchant bankers - when seeking office. Others face elections as the culmination of careers which have been chosen to specifically enhance their chances of being pre-selected and then elected. Trade union officials come easily to mind in this regard.

Conditions applying to public sector employees which are ahead of those applying outside the public sector have a history of trickling down over time. This is one which has that potential and there is no good reason for it to be introduced.

My submission is that the claim should not be entertained. Thank you for the opportunity to make it.

David Davies