

Our democracy deserves better

WHEN Trevor Chappell bowled that infamous underarm delivery in 1981, it was described as "the most disgraceful moment in the history of cricket". It was universally condemned, not just in the sporting world but throughout the whole community.

Nearly 30 years on it is still remembered. I certainly remember it. I think it was the first time I heard the phrase "un-Australian".

Like many here, I've played a lot of sport in my life. I've also been in business and politics a long time.

Each can be rough, tough and very competitive. Certainly not for the faint-hearted. And while all these have their official rules, there are some principles that go beyond just rules of the game.

Before Trevor Chappell bowled that ball, veteran wicketkeeper Rod Marsh waved to his captain Greg Chappell, telling him not to do it. "We're better than that", was the essence of what he was saying.

When our Family First volunteers started ringing me on March 20 to tell me there were people impersonating Family First volunteers handing out different how-to-vote cards to the ones we were distributing, I was gob-smacked.



IN MY VIEW

BOB DAY

I thought I'd seen it all. Obviously I hadn't. As I reflect now on what happened that day, my thoughts are similar to Rod Marsh's. Surely "we're better than that". Aren't we?

SA's leading political commentator *Advertiser* columnist Dr Dean Jaensch echoed the cricket commentator's response to the voting card incident.

"It's the worst of its kind I've seen in 40 years", he said. "It is deceitful. It is deliberately designed to mislead voters".

A month's worth of letters to the editor writers to *The Advertiser* agreed with him. The outrage in the community was powerful.

What the perpetrators of this scam did reflects the contempt they have for the ordinary voter. Sadly, it doesn't stop there.

We've just recently seen the clinical execution of a prime minister by the same sort of backroom operators who organised the fake T-shirts and how-to-vote cards.

Where will it all end? What sort of "democracy" do these people want?

The average citizen has all but been excluded from the political process. The takeover by the political class is now complete.

All that Joe or Janet Citizen have left is a small piece of green paper called a ballot paper where they can support the candidate or political party of their choice. But even that some would try to swindle or hoodwink out of them.

However, as is often the case, these things can well and truly come back to bite. Those attempting such practices get "hoist by their own petard", as the old saying goes.

Now, I didn't know the real meaning of that phrase until recently. I thought a petard was some kind of flagpole or pike-staff and you get hoisted upon it. But it doesn't mean that at all. Petard is French for bomb and you get "hoisted" or "thrown in the air" by your own bomb, hence "hoist by your own petard". Your own bomb blows up in your face.

Well, the clever little ruse on election day has well and truly blown up in its perpetrators' faces. Let that be a lesson to all. Our democracy deserves better.

■ Bob Day is federal chairman of Family First