



Submission: Electoral Education Inquiry

Introduction

IEUA-QNT welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Electoral Education Inquiry.

IEUA-QNT is an industry union representing ~17,500 teachers, support staff and ancillary staff in non-government education institutions and Early Childhood centres in Queensland and the Northern Territory. As an industry union, IEUA-QNT regularly participates in education and industrial debate at both state and national levels through a system of committees comprised of members and union officers.

Overview

Issues of enrolment and engagement, particularly among young voters, deserve serious consideration. Data from the Australian Electoral Commission indicates that in March 2015 only 92.8% of eligible voters are enrolled to vote with 1,164,496 people not on the electoral role.¹

The situation among young Australians is particularly concerning with 25 per cent failing to enroll for the 2013 Federal Election. The Australian Electoral Commission indicates that a low level of enrolment among young voters is an increasing trend.²

The Australian Electoral Commission provides a comprehensive set of resources for education professionals to build knowledge and understanding of the Australian political system and the voting processes in Australia with their students. The missing component of this education program is an fully resourced engagement strategy which encourages voter enrolment, particularly amongst young voters.

Programs which encouraged and supported early voter enrolment in schools have previously existed and were a positive way to encourage both education and engagement in the political process. The return of such programs, or other strategies which provide personnel or resources to schools to not only discuss voting, but enroll students to vote, is needed.

With Year 12 attainment rates sitting above 85%³, the school environment is the obvious place for targeted voter enrolment programs for young voters. A focus in schools also allows for strategies which seek to both engage and activate young voters to ensure that they not only understand political and voting processes, but that they are eligible to be part of these processes.

Concluding Comment

IEUA-QNT believes fully resourced initiatives which focus on targeting young voter enrolment strategies within the school environment would be a critical addition to current education programs provided.

Terry Burke

Secretary

Independent Education Union of Australia - Queensland and Northern Territory Branch

17 July 2015

References

- (1) www.aec.gov.au 15/07/15 http://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Enrolment_stats/national/2015.htm
- (2) *Statistics show 25 per cent of young people failed to enrol to vote in September election* – ABC News 21/08/2015
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-21/figures-show-25-per-cent-of-young-people-failed-to-enrol-to-vote/4903292>
- (3) www.abs.gov.au 17/4/2011
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2071.0Main%20Features552012%E2%80%93932013?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2071.0&issue=2012%962013&num=&view=>