

From: Jon Brady [jon_s_brady@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, 1 May 2008 5:46 AM
To: Committee, EM (REPS)
Subject: A Disenfranchised Australian
To Whom It May Concern:

SUBMISSION 38

RE: Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2007 Federal Election

Please accept this short email as my submission to the Inquiry in the hope that justice and reason can prevail.

As an Australian by birth it is my understanding that I can not have my citizenship revoked (<http://www.citizenship.gov.au/loss/deprive-citz.htm>). Indeed it is only by positive action on my part that I could lose my citizenship. As I have no intention of doing so I will remain Australian for the term of my natural life.

As an Australian, I enjoy many privileges including the right to carry an Australian passport and consular protection should I ever need it. Should I find myself in a country in turmoil such as was the case for a number of Australians in Lebanon a few years ago, I would seek out my Australian Government representative to assist me in reaching safety. And the Australian Government would recognize my request as the right of an Australian citizen.

Additionally, I have obligations. Where Australia has made certain agreements with other countries, I may or may not have an obligation to pay Australian taxation. As a Australian, I am subject to Australian laws, including those which may apply to Australian citizens when overseas.

So ultimately, I am Australian. Yet because I happen to reside outside of Australia, I have essentially been stripped of my right to participate along with other Australians in the democratic election of representatives to our Parliament where they enact legislation that directly affects me. This is an injustice that must be corrected.

I know that many would claim that by being resident outside Australia I would not be aware of the conditions or issues that would assist me in making an electoral choice. I counter this argument that only those people in specific circumstances where the internet is unavailable could be considered in this predicament. Indeed, I read the ABC's website daily for news. I watch podcasts of the daily Channel 9 News. I read my hometown newspaper regularly. I even watch the NRL on my computer!

The world has changed and technology has made it that much smaller. As an Australian resident overseas I am no more disconnected from Australia's affairs than the grazier sitting in his homestead west of Alice Springs. And yet - he can vote - I can't. That is an injustice that must be changed.

I implore the members of this Inquiry to acknowledge this new world as spoken about by Prime Minister Rudd at the 2020 Summit and make the necessary changes to the Electoral Act that will see all Australians once again fully enfranchised.

Regards,
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