

Please accept this submission for the JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2010 Federal Election.

I am an Australian citizen living in New York City, USA.

I have been living outside Australia since 1978.

I am currently NOT on the Commonwealth electoral roll. Before the last federal election in Australia I discovered that I had been eliminated from the electoral rolls when I called my consulate in New York City to check on voting procedures. There was no explanation as to why this happened. I had voted in nearly all federal elections using the consulate site during most of my residence in the US.

My experiences with the Australian federal electoral system while offshore are as follows:
The option I was presented with was to return to Australia live there for at least a month, register and the become hopefully eligible again. I did this in late 2008. Again this was a frustrating experience when i phoned Canberra from my birthplace in Hobart after one month of my stay back in Australia. The office in Canberra i spoke to by phone instructed me to write to them and explain my situation. This I did, then no reply to my enquiries. I called again and was told I was not eligible to vote as i was permanently living overseas and had no official address in Australia.

Both my parents have passed away. I don't have an original home base address now in Tasmania to use for correspondence and verification purposes. I only have a birth certificate, current passport and a past voting record while in Australia and later in New York.

Can you help me with advice and perhaps a strategy for becoming re-enfranchised. It is my deepest wish to be able to vote for Australian elections. I am still a citizen of that country and proud of it.

I am a practicing artist exhibiting in the US, Australia, Japan and elsewhere.

I look forward to your reply and any assistance you may be able to give me.

Sincerely,
Garry Nichols