

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. <u>102</u>
Date Received
Secretary

Read, Shane (REPS)

From: Denise Burns [deniseburns@eircom.net]
Sent: Thursday, 4 July 2002 9:28 AM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au
Cc: deniseburns@eircom.net
Subject: Submission

From: **Denise Burns**
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Address:

10 Glencar Road,
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Ireland.

Message:

To: The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee
on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir,

This submission is in response to the JSCEM's invitation for public comment as part of its Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2001 Federal Election.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission on a very important matter. As I have been excluded from voting in Australian elections for some years, I should greatly value amendments that would enable me to be restored to the electoral roll.

Personal and voting history:

I was born in Mareeba, North Queensland, in 1947 and lived in Cairns for approximately forty years; for twenty-three years I was a Sister of Mercy working in education in Herberton and Cairns. I have a B.A. from James Cook University in Townsville, a Diploma in Education and a Masters in Educational Administration from the University of Queensland. For many years I was on the electoral roll in the Leichhardt electorate. After leaving the Sisters of Mercy in 1989, I lived in Enoggera in Brisbane where I was on the electoral roll for three years and worked in Brisbane Catholic Education.

I have been living in Dublin since 1993 working in education. I am engaged in writing reports and formulating recommendations for the Minister for Education and Science in Ireland. I constantly draw on my Australian experience and contacts in education. I have spent several months in Australia during visits in the period from 1993 to the present. I have kept particularly informed of developments in education, especially in Queensland, during that period.

I have been able to facilitate many exchanges in educational issues between Australia and Ireland through my contacts in both countries.

I have not voted in an Australian election since I have been in Dublin as I realised that I had been struck from the roll.

I submit that the following amendments should be made to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918:

- The two-year limitation on enrolment from overseas should be deleted and enrolment should be possible for Australians overseas at any time;
- The two-year limitation on applying for eligible overseas elector status should be deleted and application for this status should be possible at any time from overseas, as long as the Australian citizen is still on the electoral roll;
- The requirement that a person have left Australia for employment reasons or that of his or spouse, in order to qualify for enrolment from overseas, should be deleted;
- The intention to resume residing in Australia should no longer be a requirement for either enrolment from overseas or the attainment of eligible overseas elector status;
- The six-year limitation on absence from Australia should be deleted from the provisions on overseas enrolment and eligible overseas elector status in the Act.

I sincerely hope that these amendments can be made so that I may regain the franchise.

Sincerely,

Denise Burns