

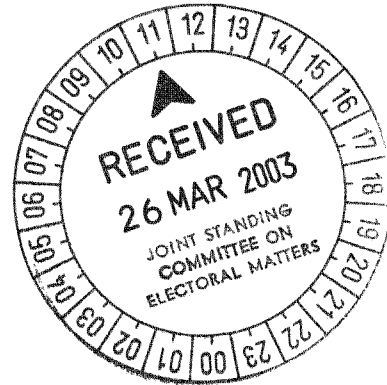


**FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND
TRADE**

Public Diplomacy, Consular and
Passports Division

25 March 2003

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Room R-1-121
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Secretary

Enclosed are the answers, as approved by the minister, to a series of follow-up questions placed on notice by the committee as part of its inquiry into the conduct of the 2001 general election.

Yours sincerely

Douglas Foskett
Parliamentary and Media Liaison Branch

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	193
Date Received	26.3.03
Secretary	<i>[Signature]</i>

**ANSWERS TO FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS ON THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY
INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE 2001 FEDERAL ELECTION**

Answer 23 states that the database contains 104,926 registrations, of which 74,601 are currently active. Could you explain what "currently active" means.

A registration is regarded as active if the departure date has not been reached. Once the departure date (plus one day) has been reached, the registration is placed in the closed part of the database. A closed registration can be reactivated by setting a new departure date.

Are people removed from the database once they return to Australia? How do you decide to remove names - ie do you wait for notification from the individual?

No - all records are retained for audit trail purposes. Registrations are either placed in the active, closed or archived part of the database. Decisions are made based on information provided by clients on departure dates as described above.

Could you elaborate on the role of overseas posts in adding to the database? ie If Australians overseas contact their local post does the post add them to the database.

Posts that have access to On line Registration of Australians (ORAO) system can enter data directly that is then replicated between Canberra and the relevant post(s). All posts should have access to this system by the middle of next year.

In the meantime, those posts using the old Register of Australian Citizens database have been advised to use the internet to enter data onto ORAO that is then downloaded by Canberra into a form that can be exported into the register of Australian citizens at the relevant post without the need to rekey data.

Answer 25 states that posts use existing means of communicating with Australians registered overseas, eg through bulletins and e-mails. Does this mean that posts use the information on the register to then create their own database/register of Australians in their region?

See above. Posts that use the standard Register of Australian citizens have various methods for communicating with those Australians registered. This will be standardised and simplified through ORAO. The initial release of ORAO has capacity to communicate directly with those registered who have e-mail addresses. The latest update of ORAO, which will be ready for pilot testing by selected posts shortly, contains a mass mail out module. This will offer e-mail, traditional mail and construct telephone lists to contact those registered.