

A I S S A

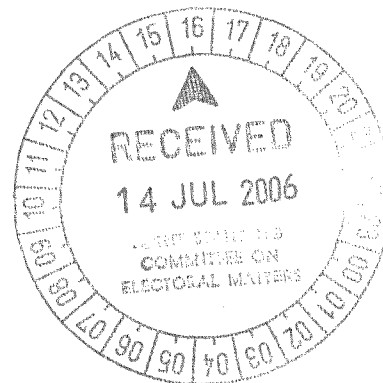


ASSOCIATION of  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOLS of SA

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| Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters |
| Submission No. 76                             |
| Date Received 14/07/06                        |
| Secretary <i>[Signature]</i>                  |

11 July 2006

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Dr Palmieri

**re: Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education**

Please find attached the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia's submission to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matter's Inquiry into Electoral Education. The AISSA has appreciated the opportunity to participate in this Inquiry as young people's education and participation in the electoral process is an important issue.

We look forward to the outcomes of the Inquiry making an important contribution to the understanding of the educational issues associated with this issue.

If you have any inquiries about the content of this submission, please contact Ms Libby Burns at AISSA (telephone (08) 81791400).

Yours sincerely

*[Signature of Garry Le Duff]*  
Garry Le Duff  
Executive Director

Encl

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**July 2006**

**Report to**

**The Parliament of Australia's  
Joint Standing Committee on  
Electoral Matters**

## **Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This submission is presented by the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA). The AISSA represents the interests of 97 South Australian Independent schools with an enrolment in excess of 39,000. The AISSA welcomes the opportunity to respond to this Inquiry and acknowledges current and previous DEST initiatives in relation to Civics and Citizenship education.

South Australian Independent schools have a long-established history of promoting active citizenship and community service as part of their school ethos. Independent schools undertake a range of activities which promote citizenship including pastoral care programs, volunteer work in community organisations, participation in a variety of national and international youth forums and financial and active support for charitable organisations. In addition, a number of Independent schools also have Student Representative Councils or groups which offer students opportunities to engage in democratic processes.

In the preparation for this submission AISSA consulted with Principals and teachers from member schools and project officers involved in previous Australian Government initiatives under the Civics and Citizenship Education Programme.

Participants in the consultation indicated that there are two major models of electoral education, involvement in participatory democracy and specific education, that occur at various levels of schooling. Involvement in participatory democracy through school structures can occur at all levels of schooling and provides students with a clear understanding of democratic processes and how elections and the Parliament operate. Specific education, through subjects such as History and Politics, covers parliamentary and electoral processes and the rights and obligations of Australian citizens occurs at specific levels of schooling. Schools incorporate these models into their curriculum in a range of ways.

A range of specific initiatives, such as programs developed by the Australian and State Electoral Commissions and Parliamentary Education Officers, also occur outside of school and reinforce school programs. It was suggested that these programs could be strengthened with strategies such as opportunities for provisional enrolment on the electoral roll, whilst still at school, and Special Focus Weeks. In addition, member schools raised the possibility of providing all teachers with ongoing professional development in civics education.

The consultation highlighted certain societal factors that affect young people's involvement in the electoral process including the particular characteristics of the younger generation; the disjuncture between the behaviours witnessed in Parliament and that expected of young people in schools; and the negative portrayal of young people in the media. The impact of these factors on how electoral education is delivered in our society should be considered in all curriculum models and other strategies developed to address the issue of low participation of young people in the democratic processes.

## **INQUIRY INTO CIVICS AND ELECTORAL EDUCATION**

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The AISSA is concerned that there is an increasing responsibility being placed on schools to educate students in a range of areas including values education, mental illness, health, child protection, drug education and civics. The underpinning capabilities of many of these programs are similar. Yet there is little if any coherent approach to the development and implementation of these programs by Governments. Schools are one place where this education should be undertaken. However, they should not be seen as the only area where this education takes place. Young people are influenced by a wide range of other factors including their family and community background. The AISSA argues that the wider community needs to take a more active role in educating young people about the importance of civics education and participating in the democratic process.

Issues for certain minority groups with different cultural backgrounds, for example Indigenous and migrant groups, should be explored further and special measures be explored in relation to these matters.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Outline of the Submission**

This submission addresses the Terms of Reference as they apply to the South Australian Independent School sector: It has been developed in consultation with nominated representatives from Independent schools including Directors of Studies, SOSE Coordinators and history teachers. Two focus groups were convened. In addition, the AISSA consulted with Independent school Principals and with Project Officers and representatives from the other education sectors in the State involved in the Australian Government's Civics and Citizenship Program.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.2. Sector Profile**

The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) represents the interests of 97 South Australian Independent schools with an enrolment in excess of 39,000. The AISSA is recognised as the peak body for Independent schools (non-Catholic) by Governments, other education and training sectors and key interest groups within the community in South Australia.

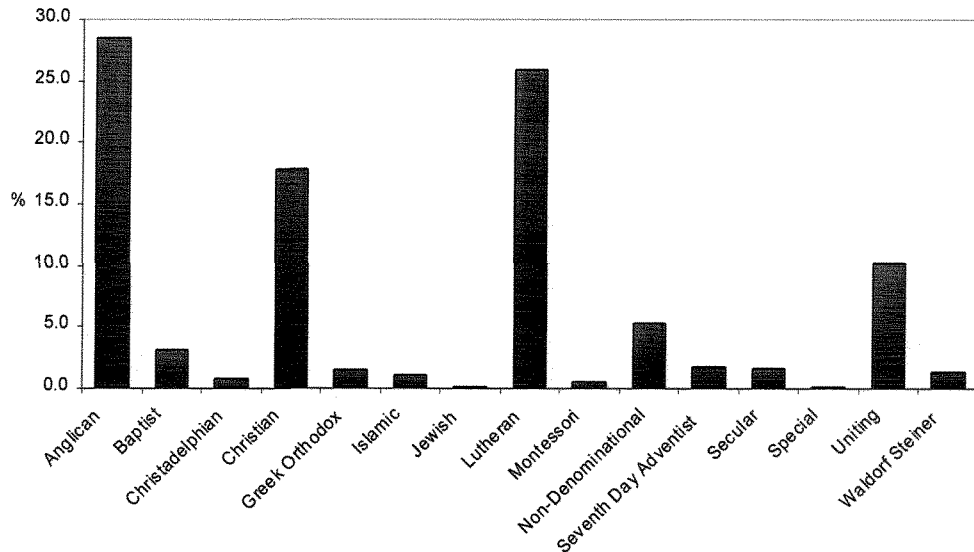
South Australian Independent schools educate students within a curriculum underpinned by a diverse range of religious affiliations (Anglican, Baptist, Christian, Christadelphian, Greek Orthodox, Islamic, Jewish, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, Uniting) and educational philosophies (Montessori, Waldorf Steiner). The sector also includes a number of secular schools and a special school which educates students with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities. A number of Independent schools are also members of a system - for example, the Lutheran schools and Adventist schools.

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed outline of the consultation process is contained in Appendix 1- could footnote last sentence.

**Percentages of South Australian Independent school students by schools' religious affiliation and educational philosophy 2006**

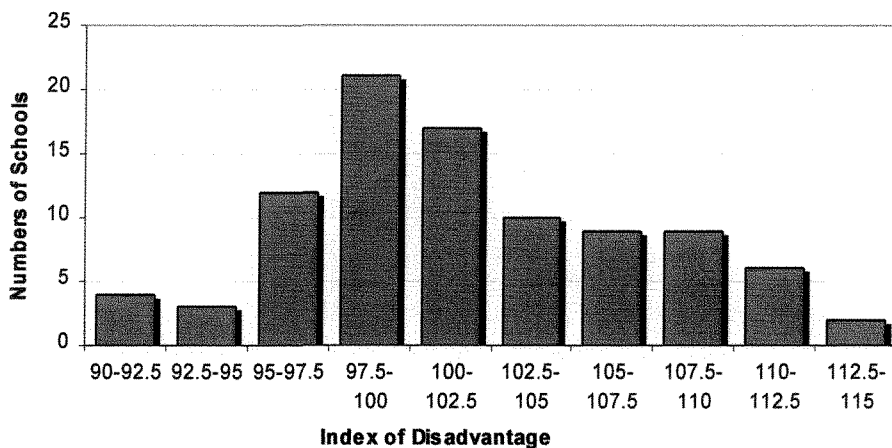
(Source: February Census, Non-Government Schools Secretariat 2006)



Independent schools educate students from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds. In 2005 there were 1,208 students within the sector who were classified as having a disability (according to Commonwealth definitions), 6,061 classified as having a learning difficulty, 402 Indigenous students and 5,295 on School Card (Advisory Committee on Non-Government Schools in South Australia, 2005). The sector also educates a number of students under the Guardianship of the Minister.

A comparison of the numbers of South Australian Independent schools by the South Australian State Government Index of Disadvantage scale illustrates the diversity of needs in the South Australian Independent schools sector.

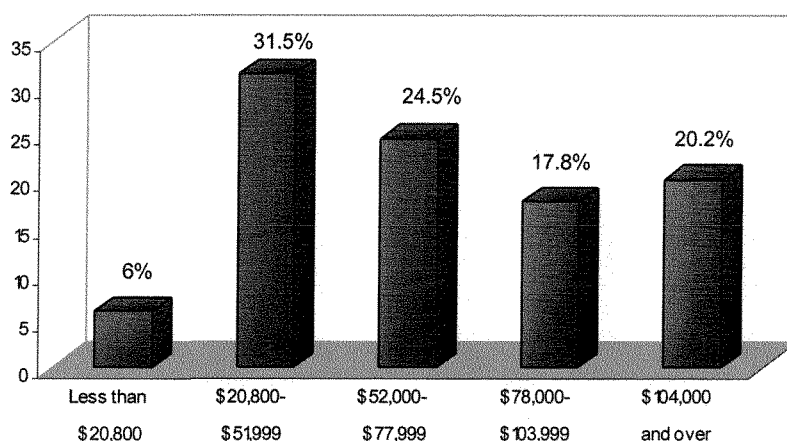
**South Australian Independent Schools 2004 by Index of Disadvantage**



The ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing identified the following key points:

- 16.8% of students in the Independent school sector are from families with an annual income of less than \$32,000
- Over one-third of Independent school students are from families with an annual income of less than \$52,000
- 25.5% of students from family income ranges of over \$78,000 are in Independent schools. The remaining 74.5% are distributed between the Government (22,673) and Catholic (10,358) sectors.

**Percentages of South Australian Independent school students by family income range in 2001**  
(Source: ABS 2003)



More parents, especially from middle and lower incomes, are making the choice to send their children to Independent schools.

Enrolment growth in South Australian Independent schools has increased significantly since 1994. This growth has been most prominent in schools located in the outer suburbs and regional centres across South Australia.

Independent schools are distinguished by a model of governance based on local management and accountability to school communities. Autonomy is an essential principle underpinning non-systemic and systemic Independent schools. Independent schools are accountable to Government through the requirements for registration under the *Education Act 1972* and on a number of other legislative levels, including the *Children's Services Act 1985*, *Children's Protection Act 1993*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *Schools Assistance (Learning Together-Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*. This latter Act sets out a range of initiatives and requirements which all schools must comply with in order to receive Australian Government funding.

The direct accountability of Independent schools to parents is a key strength of the sector.



## **2.0 SCHOOL ETHOS AND CURRICULUM**

As noted above Independent schools in South Australia educate students within a curriculum underpinned by a diverse range of religious affiliations and educational philosophies. The curriculum of all South Australian Independent schools is assessed through the registration process by the Non-Government Schools Registration Board against the eight Key Learning Areas outlined in the Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for Schooling (1999). Along with English, Mathematics, Science and Information and Communication Technologies, Civics and Citizenship Education is a national priority for Australian schooling (Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century 1999).

South Australian Independent schools have a long-established history of promoting active citizenship and community service as part of their school ethos and the wider curriculum.

The range of activities undertaken within schools includes pastoral care programs, volunteer work in community organisations, participation in a range of national and international youth forums and financial and active support for charitable organisations.

Many schools promote these activities in their prospectus as an important outcome of the education for members of their student body. In addition, Student Representative Councils or groups, where a body which represents the interests of the students in the school is elected by the student community, provides students with an experience of democracy in action.

## **3.0 AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

### **3.1. Overview**

The AISSA acknowledges the range of Australian Government initiatives that have supported and promoted electoral education in Independent schools including the Civics and Citizenship Program, the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate Program and the National Assessment Program in Civics and Citizenship.

The AISSA considers that the Civics and Citizenship Education program, in particular, has provided a range of positive outcomes for both teachers and students. Teachers in South Australia have made good use of the Discovering Democracy resource materials. Examination of the school-based work on the South Australian website, for example, highlights the heavy reliance on these materials. There is now greater knowledge of the existence of these materials and it is interesting to note how they have been adapted and developed to suit the local school context.

### **3.2. Civics and Citizenship Education**

The Australian Government Civics and Citizenship Education Program (CCE), incorporated the Discovering Democracy resources for all schools. This program finished in 2004 and funded a range of activities and grants to support schools to plan curriculum in this area. The Discovering Democracy resources were distributed to all South Australian Independent schools. This program produced a range of improved student and teacher outcomes. These outcomes were reported by the three South Australian Education sectors in the final report to DEST in June 2004. A summary of the outcomes for students and teachers is provided below.

#### **3.2.1. Student Outcomes**

In the report three strands were identified which contributed to improved student outcomes.

These were:

- grants to develop a whole of school CCE Program, involving auditing the curriculum, developing scope and sequence documents and units of work from the Discovering Democracy resources
- rethinking Student Representative Council workshops to primary and secondary schools
- the South Australian Discovering Democracy Study Tour, which enabled teachers to participate in a study tour of Canberra with a view to planning student excursions to the national capital.

A range of Student learning outcomes were identified as arising out of this program including:

- increased knowledge of key concepts and issues relating to Government, democracy, rules and laws, and social justice
- developing a greater awareness of themselves as citizens, Australia, history and culture
- understanding decision-making processes, lobbying and negotiation
- understanding global issues and how these impact on Australia
- developing skills for lifelong learning and active citizenship including planning, setting goals, problem-solving, communication and team work
- the attitudes, values, dispositions, beliefs and actions that underpin active citizenship
- understanding democratic processes in the classroom/ school/ community and how these impact on the lives of individuals and communities
- understanding the three levels of Government
- understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy
- recognising that citizens require certain skills and dispositions to participate effectively in democratic decision-making
- developing the skills for active participation.

### **3.2.2. Teacher Outcomes**

There were also significant learning outcomes for teachers that included:

- increased understanding of CCE by all staff
- greater commitment by staff to integrate CCE into the curriculum
- clearer understanding of democracy in our society and in our schools
- a shift towards adopting pedagogies to allow for student initiated learning
- explicit teaching of skills
- development of units of work
- resources to support the implementation of teaching programs
- curriculum planning and design across the whole school.

### **3.3. Parliament and Civics Education Rebate Program**

The Australian Government also supports students to visit Canberra by providing a rebate for CCE. In the May 2006 Federal Budget, an additional \$10.7 million was given to the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate Program for 2006-2009 which combined the two previous rebates, the Citizenship Visits Program and the Education Travel Rebate. However, member schools noted that a school visit to Canberra still remained out of the reach of many schools, in particular those located in rural areas because of resource implications.

### **3.4. National Assessment of Civics and Citizenship**

Civics and Citizenship is assessed as part of the National Assessment Program agreed to by all Ministers for Education in all states and territories. The assessment measures and reports on civic knowledge and understanding and the skills and values needed for active citizenship. It is one of the sample assessments used to monitor progress towards the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century. In October 2004, samples of Year 6 and Year 10 students from SA Independent schools participated in this assessment.

The report on the first round of sample assessments in 2004 has not yet been released but the AISSA considers that the feedback from this report and future sample testing will provide valuable information on the state of electoral education and possible ways of addressing any issues.

## **4.0 FEEDBACK ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

### **4.1. Overview**

The AISSA now addresses specific Terms of Reference as they apply to the South Australian Independent school sector.

### **4.2. The current status of young people's knowledge of, and responsibilities under, the Australian electoral system**

#### **4.2.1. Overview**

Feedback from the consultation process indicated that a range of factors influence young people's knowledge of the electoral system, including the emphasis placed upon the topic of civics and electoral education in the curriculum, discussed in more detail in the next section, and other societal backgrounds.

#### **4.2.2. Family Background**

The knowledge that students draw from their families is seen to be crucial in the level of student engagement with the electoral system. Consultations indicated that there is a large variation in student attitudes to the Australian electoral system, dependent in part upon cultural issues, allegiance to countries of origin and level of education. Family attitudes can also strongly influence young people's knowledge of the electoral issues and their responsibilities under the system. Hence, education of the wider community of the importance of participating in the democratic process is also important.

#### **4.2.3. Societal Factors**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a range of societal factors are also influencing young people's engagement with the electoral system in particular the differences in the attitudes about democracy of this generation of young people.

There is a growing body of literature now on the characteristics of Generation Y – that is, those young people born since 1981 – which illustrates factors that impact on engagement with the democratic process. For example, in September 2005 on the Evatt Foundation website in an article entitled, "Is Generation Y Apolitical and Apathetic?", Rebecca Huntley argues that the two-party system does not provide real choices for this generation, as they do not perceive any difference between the two major parties, nor do they feel they can make a difference. They prefer direct involvement in decision-making such as they get on current television shows (for example, "Australian Idol") hence the current structure of political parties and the political process are too constraining for a generation that is used to direct involvement in decision-making.

In addition, consideration needs to be given to the disjuncture between the codes of behaviour required in schools and the behaviour which is seen or is reported to be acceptable in the State and Federal Parliaments and the portrayal of youth issues in the media. It is not, for example, appropriate in a school context to interrupt or use personal insults during debates or discussion. Images of this behaviour occurring in parliament is, however, often replayed on news broadcasts.

Research also indicates that young people are often portrayed negatively in the media. The 'skills crisis' in trades is one example of this, where young people are constituted as lazy and unwilling to work rather than as making active decisions on the basis of job interest, wages and conditions. This negative focus on young people might have an impact on their willingness to contribute to the democracy as perception might be that their voice is not taken seriously or heard.

The impact of these factors on how electoral education is delivered in our society should be considered in all curriculum models and other strategies developed to address this issue.

### **4.3. The nature of civics education and its links with electoral education**

Civics education is addressed primarily in the curriculum area of *Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE)*. Electoral education is situated within civics education. Teachers agreed that SOSE covers a range of subject areas of the curriculum including history, geography, environmental studies, politics, civics and citizenship, etc. Within this context, electoral education may receive only limited specific attention and this can depend on the curriculum content priorities of the school and the emphasis placed on it by individual teachers.

The consultation indicated that there appear to be four dominant models of electoral education operating in schools. These models are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The focus group participants described these models as follows:

- *The integrated curriculum model* – In this model, electoral education is addressed from a theory perspective within subjects such as history or politics. This model is more common with secondary students and provides an in-depth understanding of electoral processes and their role in contemporary democracies
- *The once-a-year model* – This model focuses on the specific topic of Parliament including electoral education and involves a visit from a relevant person (e.g., a local politician) or a special visit (including visits to local or federal Parliament). This model was commonly reported at Year 7 and in senior secondary school. This model was viewed as very effective but had resourcing implications
- *The election event model* – In this model, an actual election provides the impetus for a specific unit of study. The focus may be on a Local, State or Federal Government election. This model was reported by secondary schools

- *The democratic school model* – In this model, the processes of democracy are reflected as part of school governance. The model places an emphasis on student voice, on the election of student office bearers and on students taking an active role in decision-making in the school. This model was more commonly described in relation to primary schools but was perceived to be an ideal model for all schools. Many South Australian Independent schools (both primary and secondary) have Student Representative Councils (SRC).

Independent schools incorporate civics education into their curriculum in a way which best meets the needs of their student population and the aims and objectives of the school. The AISSA believes that schools must be given the opportunity to retain flexibility and would not support a uniform approach to this topic.

#### **4.4. The content and adequacy of electoral education in Government and Non-Government school programs of study, as well as in TAFE Colleges and Universities**

In the Independent school sector in South Australia, there is scope within the curriculum to adequately address electoral education. There are also opportunities within schools to use models that promote democratic processes and that demonstrate, through everyday interactions, the basis of a democratic society, including elections. (Registration Board, Adelaide Goals). The AISSA again notes that the curriculum of Independent schools is assessed by the Non-Government Schools Registration Board (NGSRB) against the eight key learning areas.

The knowledge and skills of teachers, however, can be a variable that impacts on the adequacy of electoral education in all schools. Teachers bring a wide range of these to the area of electoral education. The AISSA acknowledges the difficulties that teacher training courses face in covering all the additional requirements of the broader curriculum. Currently there is also pressure for teacher training courses to include more information on students with disabilities and the range of learning difficulties, mental and other health issues. The age of students also influences the approaches taken to electoral education. In primary schools, for example, more emphasis is often placed on processes of democracy using whole-school approaches. In secondary schools, individual teachers who have a background in history and especially politics, bring in-depth knowledge to a study of democracy and in particular to electoral education. These teachers often express a passion about their subject and this passion clearly enhances the learning of their students. However, it was acknowledged that, in general, only a few teachers have this level of expertise in these subjects.

Specific suggestions were offered to enhance electoral education. These include ensuring that student voice is valued at every level of schooling and ensuring that teachers are provided with opportunities for continual professional learning to enable quality teaching in the area of democracy. Whilst making this point, the issue of the "crowded curriculum" is significant. There are currently significant concerns amongst

teachers and in education generally about the range of what are issues for society generally that are expected increasingly to be delivered in the curriculum.

#### **4.5. The school age at which electoral education should begin**

The democratic school model which introduces the youngest children to concepts of participatory democracy was promoted in the consultation by member schools as a model for every school. Ideally, this model should build throughout a young person's time at school into a clear understanding of democracy including civic responsibilities, politics, parliamentary processes and the role of Government at local, State and Federal levels, by the senior years of schooling.

#### **4.6. The potential to increase electoral knowledge through outside school programs**

There was strong support to increase electoral knowledge through outside school programs. A number of outside programs were described as extremely valuable. These include programs provided by education officers at the State and Federal electoral commissions, programs provided by museums, and programs provided by the parliamentary education officers.

A number of suggestions were made to increase electoral knowledge through outside school programs. These included an education role being developed through the offices of local members of parliament, funding for an education officer at the level of local government and increased opportunities for the State electoral office to work in schools. Teachers emphasised the need to keep electoral education local, and as such, accessible rather than developing a reliance on a visit to Canberra which was perceived to be "out of reach for most schools" even though such a visit when it can occur is considered extremely valuable.

#### **4.7. The adequacy of electoral education in Indigenous communities**

Only one school in the consultation has a significant number of Indigenous students in an urban setting. Other schools have a small number of Indigenous students and some of the teachers have worked with Indigenous students in previous schools. A number of issues were raised.

1. Many Indigenous students come to urban schools from remote areas with little or no knowledge of civics or electoral processes.
2. The knowledge and experience of electoral issues for Indigenous students depends on the strength of governance of their Indigenous group or community.
3. There may be tension between the structures and processes of Indigenous communities and those which promote the Westminster form of government.
4. There might also be cultural issues which affect Indigenous students' ability to engage in the electoral process.

Suggestions to address some of these issues in schools favour a model of democratic processes in action where schools "live and breathe democracy" thus modelling democratic processes as an intrinsic part of everyday life.

The AISSA believes these issues should be specifically investigated and addressed by the Committee when determining recommendations from this Inquiry.

#### **4.8. The adequacy of electoral education of migrant citizens**

The consultation process identified a significant need for community education for many migrant groups including migrants who have been in Australia for a long time.

For example, it was noted that many migrants experience a range of emotional responses to government requirements based on previous experiences of repressive, militaristic or dictator-led governments. Common responses include fear of reprisals, fear of identification, and lack of trust for freedom of speech.

In addition, low levels of English language ability can alienate some migrants from the electoral process. Many examples were presented at the consultation, of migrants who engage in strong discussions about politics in their local cultural communities but will not engage in official election processes.

Some migrants have a strong allegiance to their home country and are still strongly aligned to political processes in that country.

It was suggested that the Federal Government needs to address the fear and alienation expressed by many migrants as part of encouraging active Australian citizenship. There is a need for significant community education programs in some migrant communities. All of the issues described above have an effect on young people from these communities and their attitudes to electoral education.

#### **4.9. The role of the Australian Electoral Commission and State and Territory Electoral Commissions in promoting electoral education**

Both the Australian Electoral Commission and the State Electoral Commission are highly valued in promoting electoral education. Concern was expressed in relation to "cut backs in time available for education programs" in the South Australian State Electoral Commission especially in the lead up to elections. Schools view this as an ideal time to promote electoral education as a result of the visibility of the election process.

Comments about resources provided by the Electoral Commissions were mixed with some member schools making extensive use of these resources and others preferring to use their own resources developed in other arenas.



#### **4.10. The access to, and adequacy of, funding for school visits to the Federal Parliament**

School visits to Federal Parliament provide an invaluable opportunity for young people to gain first hand knowledge of government at the federal level. In addition, the opportunity to visit Canberra provides opportunities for young people to learn about other civic institutions that support Australian society. These include the Australian War Museum, the National Library, the National Museum, the National Art Gallery, the Mint, the High Court of Australia etc. This experience should be available to every young person. Praise was given to the group in Canberra that organizes school visits.

Participants in the consultation consider that there is considerable value in the visit to Canberra. However, until recently the level of funding has been inadequate and has put such visits out of reach for many schools. It is still not clear that the increased funding announced by Julie Bishop in May 2006 will totally overcome the issues for schools in rural and remote and socially and economically disadvantaged students.

It was noted that many rural schools, in particular, those serving lower socio-economic communities, can not raise funds for a visit to State Parliament, let alone a visit to Canberra.

A number of suggestions were put forward to address this problem include; additional funding to enable visits to Canberra and special consideration for funding for rural schools to visit State Parliament.

#### **4.11. Opportunities for introducing creative approaches to electoral education taking into account approaches used internationally and, in particular, in the United States**

Approaches used in the US were not considered in the consultation; however a number of creative approaches for community education were proposed to assist young people to engage in the electoral process. These proposals are outlined below:

- General support was given by the member schools involved in the consultations to a process that would enable provisional enrolment to occur at the age of 16-17 years. Such a process could be part of a general introduction to licensing (including license to drive) and the role that licensing plays in maintaining a democratic and civil society. It was considered that provisional electoral enrolment could be a culmination of an electoral education focus and would increase the number of young people who enrol to vote when provisional enrolment becomes official at age 18.
- It was also suggested that special consideration for specific groups including some migrant and Indigenous groups could be of assistance. The issue of alienation from main stream Australian society was discussed at length. General support was given to the development of local approaches to address the issues for these groups.

- The issue of a Special Focus Week was raised after discussion about the success of special focus weeks including Law Week and History Week. It was suggested that Politics Week could provide an opportunity for a community education focus on political processes including electoral education. This could include an increased focus on Youth Parliament which was reported as extremely effective although restricted to too few students.
- The need for opportunities for teachers to continue to learn about civic and electoral education was constantly raised. Suggestions included; an increase in the number of Parliamentary Fellowships to enable teachers to engage in study of political processes, the need for inspirational resources, the role of professional development experts and opportunity and encouragement to develop whole-school democratic policies and processes.

The Civics conferences organised by DEST in Canberra are highly valued by staff but places are extremely limited.

It was considered that there is a significant need for improved resources and a data base of resources. Many resources already exist but teachers are unaware of their existence. There was much identifying and sharing of resources throughout the consultation!

The teachers in the consultation enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the issues and provide information to the Inquiry on a topic that they consider is crucial to a democratic society.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Process for Consultation or Consultation Process**

The AISSA conducted a wide ranging consultation process including two focus groups. Teachers and Principals were invited to participate, ensuring representation from the diverse range of Independent schools, including:

- Urban and rural schools
- All levels of schooling
- Schools with Indigenous students
- Schools with migrant students and/or students with non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB).

There were ten participants in two focus groups, representing nine Independent schools.

| <b>Representation</b> | <b>Schools</b>   |
|-----------------------|--|
| Rural                 | 4  |
| Urban                 | 5  |
| Primary               | 3  |
| Secondary             | 3  |
| Senior Secondary      | 1  |
| R-12                  | 2  |
| Indigenous Students   | One school with significant numbers of Indigenous students.<br>Two schools with a small number of Indigenous students.<br>Six schools with no Indigenous students. |
| Migrant/NESB students | One school with 100% migrant/NESB students.<br>Six schools with some migrant/NESB students.<br>Two schools with no migrant/NESB students.                          |
| Faith-based school    | Eight faith-based schools.<br>One non-sectarian school.  |

A series of questions was provided to participants to enable them to consult more widely with colleagues in their schools prior to the focus group meeting.