

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

I am an Australian citizen living in France.

I have been living outside Australia since 1991.

I am not currently on the Commonwealth electoral roll.

My experiences with the Australian federal electoral system while offshore are as follows: I had never heard of the Overseas Elector category before leaving Australia so automatically assumed at that time that I could never vote while abroad. Now that I know it exists, it is too late for me to re-enrol. However, I am still a citizen of Australia, and as such am affected by Australian laws. I feel strongly that voting rights should be linked to CITIZENSHIP - the Constitution uses the phrase "the people". If voting was based only on residency, then everyone living in Australia would be able to vote, including Permanent and Temporary Residents. I don't believe this should be the case, but I do believe that CITIZENS wherever they live should be able to vote in Australian elections. Many countries around the world enable, indeed encourage, their off-shore citizens to vote.

I should add that although the possibility for overseas Australian to vote does currently exist, the rules governing voting and staying on the electoral roll are incredibly complicated and time-consuming for most busy people, (that is, if they know about the rules in the first place).

Thank you for this opportunity to give my views.

Janet Magnin