

## SUBMISSION 9

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**From:** Westaway, David J

**Sent:** Monday, 22 May 2006 7:22 AM

**To:** Committee, EM (REPS)

**Subject:** Inquiry into Civic and Electoral Education

Dear Committee members,

Each year we take approximately 70 students from our Ballarat school to Canberra as the culmination of our unit on government. Although we teach the topic very effectively, actually viewing the magnificent buildings and hearing from the knowledgeable guides at many of the sites cements the learning outcomes we strive to achieve. Our local member, Catherine King, has been of great assistance when our visits have coincided with parliament sitting, taking us on behind the scenes tours.

We find that the end of primary school is an excellent age to introduce many of the electoral education topics. The Electoral Education Centre is a terrific resource housed most appropriately in the Old Parliament House. We conduct our own preferential vote on favourite fast foods before coming to Canberra which means we have been able to have lessons on Constitutional change and how to conduct a referendum. We consider the process for voting for the Senate too complicated but still have a fast food senate ballot to explain the basic differences between selection for the lower and upper houses of parliament. If you wish, I'd be happy to attach these files to another email.

The War Memorial is another highlight which we use to underline the importance of the role individuals have played in keeping our country free. It plays a vital role in the area of Civic Education just as our visits to both the old and new parliament houses are a vital part of our Electoral Education.

Other sites we usually visit include: the High Court, the National Museum, Questacon, the A.I.S., Telstra Tower, the National Capital Planning Centre, the Royal Mint and the National Gallery. This year we also plan to travel to the C.S.I.R.O. and Tidbinbilla's Deep Space tracking station.

With the travel, accommodation and entry to these different facilities our trip costs generally push up to \$350, although with added fuel costs it might climb even higher. The Commonwealth subsidy definitely helps parents with this sizable expense. The possibility of increasing travel subsidies will help us to continue using Canberra for our trip instead of being forced by financial pressures to relocate the camp to our state capital.

Regards,

David Westaway

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