

Sent: Wednesday, 5 June 2002 11:42 PM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au

Subject: Submission

From: Alexander Donald Zielinski

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.

I am an Australian Citizen currently working in the United States of America. I first came to the U.S.A. in December 1995 to work for one year and because of improved work opportunities I have stayed on.

I am appalled by the fact that the Federal Australian Government is denying me a fundamental democratic right - that is of an Australian Citizen to vote in an Australian government election.

I had the opportunity to cast an overseas vote for the 1996 Federal election - however I did not receive my ballot by post (from the Electoral Commission) until the day of the election. As a result my vote was late and invalid.

Prior to the referendum on the Republic, I wanted to make sure I could vote so I rang the Electoral Commission and was told that, as I did not intend to return to Australia in the short term I was not entitled to vote. Here was one of the most important issues in our country's history and Government legislation had disenfranchised me. I am no longer on the Electoral Roll. Subsequently I could not vote in the 2001 Federal Election.

A democratically elected Australian Government had denied a fundamental democratic right to an Australian Citizen.

Although I have lived in the USA for over six years I have maintained my Australian citizenship - something that I consider beyond value. I still own a house in Adelaide. I have very strong connections with family and friends in Australia. I have substantial financial investments in Australia. Since residing in the USA (December 1995) I have visited Australia on nine (9) occasions. Sometime in the future I expect to return to Australia. Yet my Government refuses to give me a voice where it matters most.

Where has the Australia ethos of a "fair go" gone?

I ask that you please restore my right to vote in Australian elections so that I can help mould the future of a country that I love. Yes, Australia is still home.

Yours Sincerely,

Alex Zielinski