

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

I am an Australian citizen currently living in Malaysia. I have been living outside Australia since April 2002 when I moved to the United Kingdom. In February 2009 I moved to Bahrain, and have been residing in Malaysia since August 2010.

I am not currently on the Commonwealth electoral roll. I duly registered as an Eligible Overseas Elector and was informed that I would be registered for 6 years. My registration was subsequently terminated after I failed to apply for an extension of registration. I understand that I am now ineligible to make a subsequent application.

I am an Australian citizen who has a keen love for, and interest in, my country. The policies of the Australian government continue to effect me as an Australian citizen. I am saddened that I was unable to vote in the 2010 Election, one that became so tight, due to the fact that I overlooked a procedural matter. My grandfathers fought for our democratic freedom and I think they too would be saddened to think that their granddaughter could no longer vote because she was residing overseas.

I would ask that the Senate Committee introduce a system whereby ALL Australian citizens, regardless of their country of residence, be given an opportunity to exercise their right to vote, a right which should not be permanently taken away by a failure to register or extend their registration in particular time periods.

It is disappointing that in a country where voting is compulsory, that my right to vote has so easily been lost.

Yours sincerely,
Rachel Burgess