

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. 118
Date Received 22/12/06
Secretary



SUBMISSION NO. 118

Australian Government
Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

21 December 2006

Ms Sonia Palmieri
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Palmieri

INQUIRY INTO CIVICS AND ELECTORAL EDUCATION

Thank you for your letter dated 5 December 2006 attaching a copy of the draft record of evidence given by Ms Ellis and me at the hearing on 4 December 2006.

I would like to suggest the following corrections to the proof transcript:

- p25: Australian citizenship “force” should read “course”;
- p25: “spoken English” immediately prior to – CSWE – levels 1, 2 and 3, “ should read “spoken and written English”;
- p25: “firstly”, “secondly”, “thirdly”, “fourthly”, “fifthly” and “sixthly” should read “first”, “second”, “third”, “fourth”, “fifth” and “sixth”;
- p27: “funded by DIMA through the Commonwealth government” should read “funded by the Commonwealth government through DIMA”.

The following information is provided further to evidence given in response to a question by the Chair on the provision of civics and electoral information to ethnic media:

- this is an access and equity issue and it is up to all government agencies, including the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), to meet their responsibilities that regard;
- historically the AEC has taken its access and equity responsibilities seriously and have worked well with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in contributing to the annual Access and Equity Report;
- we understand that the AEC exceed the Government's requirement to have 7.5% of all print and electronic advertising in languages other than English, and that they are planning a multilingual media campaign beginning in April 2007 in the lead-up to the next federal election;
- the AEC has information on its website in 19 languages and, given their awareness of the need to inform culturally diverse voters about electoral matters, could be expected to have a list of ethnic media outlets.

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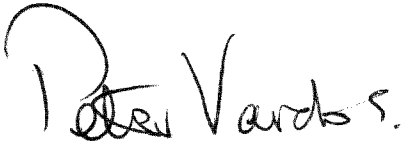
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During the hearing I undertook to advise the Committee on whether information on electoral enrolment could be included in the booklets *Beginning a life in Australia*. We have consulted with the AEC and, on their advice, will include the following paragraph in the booklets at the next update which will be published early in 2007:

For Australian citizens it is compulsory to enrol to vote if you are 18 years of age or older. There is often an opportunity to enrol at your Australian citizenship ceremony. You can also enrol at 17 years of age to be ready to vote once you turn 18. Enrolment forms are available at post offices, Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) offices and the AEC website at www.aec.gov.au Completing a single enrolment form enables you to be able to vote in federal elections, state or territory elections and most local government elections. Every time you move address you must complete a new enrolment form. Call 13 2326 if you have any questions.

The paragraph will be included in the English language version and the 23 community languages editions.

Yours sincerely



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