

From: Senan John Whelan
Sent: Wednesday, 12 June 2002 3:26 AM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au

Subject: Submission

From: Senan John Whelan

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.

Off and on, I have been away from Australia since August 1997; I have been back over the intervening years and have spent about 9 months in total thus being able to remain on the electoral role; I am registered in the Sydney electorate; it is not clear at this stage whether or not I will move permanently back to Australia.

I maintain contact with family and friends in Australia on a regular basis and even maintain a property there and each year have filed a return with the ATD.

In addition, I keep up to date with Australian news issues by daily reading the Sydney Morning Herald on the Internet. Fortunately I have been able to vote in all state and federal elections by doing so in the consulate here in Toronto, Canada, and have only missed one local election due to the fact that I was unaware of its taking place.

I explained my absence to the AEC and was not penalised.

I was also able to vote in the referendum on an Australian Republic.

With the increased ease of travel and communication available to us, I am strongly in favour of liberalising the requirements and entitlements for Australian citizens to register to vote, to vote and to remain on the electoral roll while overseas.

For me, the matter of actually casting my vote is easy since I live within a few kilometres of the Australian consulate. For others, the matter, would be more of an ordeal.

One thing that I particularly like about the voting arrangements in Canada is that one can register to vote on the very day of the poll by simply turning up and providing proof of entitlement; while this may be a more difficult task in

the case of non-citizens in Australia, it might be worth a look at liberalising this matter also.

To repeat, I am in favour of re-enfranchising all Australian citizens in the electoral process especially given that there are some non-citizens in Australia who have more electoral entitlements than they do.

Thank you, Senan John Whelan.