

## Read, Shane (REPS)

**From:** Christine M. Drum [chrisdrum2b@yahoo.com.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 5 July 2002 4:21 PM  
**To:** JSCEM@aph.gov.au  
**Cc:** chrisdrum2b@yahoo.com.au  
**Subject:** Submission

From: Christine M. Drum  
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Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	125
Date Received	5/7/02
Secretary	<i>Shane</i>

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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 wish to comment on my attempts to vote in Australian elections and referendums while living overseas for the last 15 years.

I fully support the law that electoral enrolment and voting should be compulsory, and value voting as a fundamental responsibility of an Australian citizen regardless whether resident in Australia or elsewhere in the world.

However I have been frustrated in my attempts to carry out that responsibility, partly by - it seems, the processes and interpretations by Electoral Officers, and of the current rules regarding voter registration.

When I left Australia 15 years ago, I did not anticipate becoming permanently resident overseas, so I did not enquire into electoral enrolment. At some time my name was removed from the electoral roll. However I have been visiting in Australia at different times and was at one address (the family farm) for more than 6 weeks, so registered in the Sub Division of Mallee.

I also made telephone enquiries to the Electoral Commission about being an overseas voter: I understood from those conversations that once I was enrolled, then there was nothing more to do except to either apply for postal votes or vote at the nearest embassy at the time of an election.

Since then - about 1996

I received a letter - one standard letter checking enrolment that asked me to pinpoint residence on a map. I completed the form and added 'I am now resident overseas...'. The Embassy have advised me that I am eligible to remain enrolled at my last Australian enrolment address. I had again telephoned the Australian Embassy here in Turkey to check my eligibility.

I have in my documents a fax copy of a postal vote form completed and sent 25 September 1998 to the Australian Consulate in Istanbul.

I also have a copy of a letter dated 27 November 1998 to the Australian enrolment address 'Apparent Failure to Vote'. This letter did not reach me (due to slow response and slow post) until well after the 18 December deadline for response.

I received another letter dated 18 March 1999 (Notice of Intention to Remove Name from Electoral Roll) which again reached me quite a long time after the response deadline.

My sister-in-law also reported to me that possibly in 1999, their residence was visited by an electoral officer to check the roll, and she informed the officer that while I was registered at the address I lived overseas. (She was not aware of my intention to stay enrolled and that that was my last Australian address)

It seems to me that at no time was it registered that while I was enrolled at an Australian address, I was in fact an 'overseas voter'.

And I have been removed from the rolls and in all probability there is an outstanding fine. My frustrated attempts have come to a halt as I haven't known what more I could do as to enroll from outside Australia is presently impossible.

Why is that when it is compulsory to enroll? It seems that there is a gap in the law that disallows enrolment when it is compulsory for 'all Australian citizens'.

There seems also to be a procedural lack in distinguishing overseas voters on the rolls from those resident in the divisions.

I thank you for your time in considering my submission, and look forward to seeing resolution of these matters.

Yours Sincerely

Christine M Drum.