

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
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Secretary	<i>Shane</i>

Read, Shane (REPS)

From: Ron Murray [rjmx@rjmx.net]
Sent: Thursday, 4 July 2002 12:39 PM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au
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Subject: Submission to Joint Standing Committee

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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.

First, a little about myself. I left Australia in September, 1998, moving to the U.S.A. to marry a U.S. citizen. This was not an easy decision to make; I was born in Australia, I still have a sister and two brothers there (and they have children). I'm still passionately interested in what happens in Australia, both for their sake and for my own sensibilities.

I try to keep myself up-to-date with happenings in Australia. I send and receive emails to/from my brothers and sister on a regular basis. I visit Australian media websites (the Sydney Morning Herald and the West Australian particularly) quite often. Just because I've left Australia (for now, anyway) doesn't mean that I don't care what happens there any more.

The last Federal election that I voted in was that of early 1996 (I think), in the Western Australian electorate of Canning. I would dearly have loved to vote in the 1999 Referendum on the Republic, but I wasn't aware that I was able to.

I have since checked, discovered that I am no longer on the Australian Electoral Roll, and I understand that this currently precludes me from re-enrolling as an overseas elector. This makes me sad; before I left my country, I'd served as an electoral assistant at various Western Australian elections, and I believe in the democratic system that exists in Australia. I believe that it is superior in many respects to the system here in the U.S.A.

I am still an Australian citizen, yet Australia will not permit me to participate in its democratic process. I'm not a U.S. citizen, so I cannot vote in this country either. This leaves me (and, I'm sure, numerous others) with no control over how I'm governed. Anywhere.

I believe that it's time to stop disenfranchising Australian citizens simply because they've moved out of the country. We're still Australians, and we're still proud of that. Anything that Australia

does as a nation reflects on us, and we have no control over it. Please let us have our say in our country once more.

Thank you,

.....Ron Murray