

# SUBMISSION 7

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Sent: Thursday, 18 May 2006 4:49 AM  
To: Committee, EM (REPS)  
Subject: Electoral Education of Expats

Dear Secretary,

Please pass my comments onto the JSCEM.

As an Expat living in the USA for over three years I do not have voting rights in Australia as I was not informed that I could retain my rights. I am very disappointed that I lost my voting rights for I still call Australia home. I want to be involved with deciding who represents me in parliament and participate in how Australia is being governed. I will be returning to Australia to live eventually and I want it to be a strong democracy that includes its citizens, who by circumstance or vocation chose at times to live somewhere else.

Many countries allow their citizens to vote even though they live overseas, my American friends have great delight in reminding me they could vote in the USA when they lived in Australia, Europe, anywhere.

I believe it is extremely important that citizens leaving Australia to live overseas be educated on immigration and other matters like voting that are likely to effect them. I have married a US citizen, what are the implications of bringing my wife to Australia, would it have been better handled another way, should I have been educated as I was leaving Australia so that things could be done better when I return. It is not only these items; what about Taxation, Medicare, etc. etc. How does one start to live in Australia once again, we should know all the implications when we leave and the government should provide that advice in many ways.

I am told that 5% of Australians live overseas, that would probably equate to at least 10% of the voting age population of Australia, does their opinion matter, apparently not, at least not at the moment.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith

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