

[Redacted]
From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2006 6:33 PM
To: Committee, EM (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	93
Date Received	30/6/06
Secretary	[Signature]

Personal submission by Colin Robert Lawton [Redacted]

The Civics Expert Group appointed by the Keating Government presented its report "Whereas the People...." in 1994. It examined the perceived knowledge of the governmental structures in Australia and included recommendations for the education of children, young people and adults in the functions of local, state and federal government. Summary Table 19 of the report summarised the level of awareness of topics such as the federal constitution, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, how to vote for the two houses of federal parliament, and what the state governments do.

The Civics Expert Group contracted Adult Learning Australia (phone 02 6274 9500) to produce guides for adult discussion groups which are described on a leaflet which I will post. The hard copies of these guides are now out of print. However compact discs holding the same information were produced and it may be that these CDs are still available. The Expert Group also produced syllabuses for education in civics to be used with several different age groups of children and young people and these, I believe, are included in the report.

In the course of writing an article on the education of a citizen in 2002 I discovered a report in The Australian newspaper of 18/2/02 of a Commonwealth Electoral Office statement that in the federal election of 2001 500,000 (rounded figure) people failed to attend an electoral booth and a further 600,000 received a voting paper but did not cast a valid vote. On enquiry of the CEO office about voting in the 2004 election I learned that the figures for failure to attend an electoral booth and casting an invalid vote had increased somewhat.

Please note that I am posting a copy of Table 19 of the Civics Expert Group report and the leaflet advertising the discussion guides on "The Three Levels of Government" and "The Governance of Australia"

Please also note that Summary Table 19 was based on 2504 telephone interviews with people aged 15 and over in all states, the NT and the ACT

Attachment A

CIVICS EXPERT GROUP

REPORT 1994

7 SUMMARY OF PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE

SUMMARY TABLE 19

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE 15 ITEMS

	A Lot %	Moderate Amount %	Little Bit %	Only Vague Idea %	Never Heard. Nothing %	TOTAL LACK KNOWLEDGE %
1 WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION COVERS	2	11	25	45	17	87
2 HOW THE CONSTITUTION CAN BE CHANGED	4	16	32	29	19	80
3 WHAT THE HIGH COURT DOES	4	18	33	32	13	78
4 WHAT THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL DOES	5	22	38	23	12	73
5 HISTORY OF FEDERATION	7	23	25	34	11	70
6 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS	6	27	33	28	6	67
7 DIVISION OF POWERS	6	28	32	25	9	66
8 WHAT BECOMING A REPUBLIC WOULD MEAN	7	31	38	19	5	62
9 WHAT CABINET IS	13	26	23	26	12	61
10 WHAT LOCAL GOVT/ COUNCILS DO	11	39	29	18	3	50
11 HOW THE PM IS CHOSEN	18	35	26	15	6	47
12 HOW TO VOTE FOR THE SENATE	26	28	21	16	9	46
13 WHAT STATE GOVTS DO	13	42	26	15	4	45
14 WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVT DOES	17	41	23	14	5	42
15 HOW TO VOTE FOR THE HOUSE OF REPS	28	30	21	14	7	42

Attachment B

Civics & Citizenship

The Governance of Australia

Six session notes intended to stimulate and give some direction to discussion, and perhaps further investigation of our present system of government.

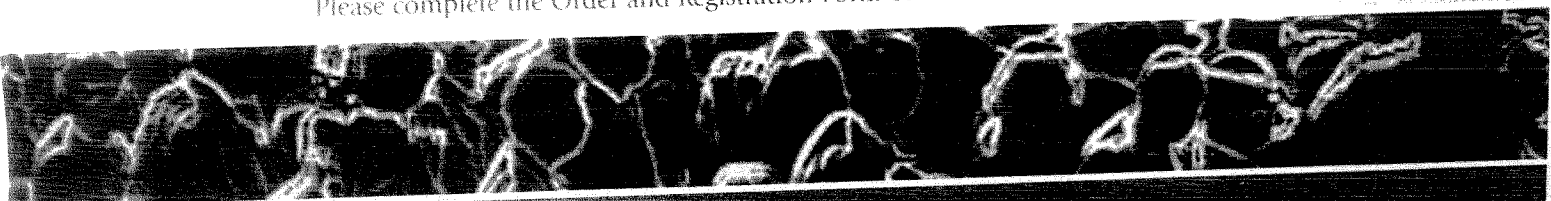
1. Our Group — Our Government
2. The Constitution: Basis for Stability or Constraint to Change?
3. Parliament — the Legislative Branch of Government
4. The Executive Government — Representative Leaders or Elected Dictators?
5. The High Court of Australia
6. An Australian Republic

The Three Spheres of Government

Six session notes intended to provide an opportunity to learn about the other spheres of government in Australia. These are the areas — especially at the local level — where people have a more direct relationship with government.

1. The Three Spheres of Government — An Introduction to the Learning Circles
2. Local Government
3. State and Territory Government
4. The Federal System
5. Citizens and Inter-government Relations
6. The Future of the Federal System

Please complete the Order and Registration Form on the reverse side of this flyer.



Would you like to be better informed about Australia's system of government?

Would you like to discuss how citizens of Australia can become more actively involved in the critical examination of our democratic system?

Would you like to discuss and explore issues around local government?

Participate in the Adult Learning Australia's Civics and Citizenship Learning Circle Programme by ordering your Kits now!

If you would like more information before ordering the Kits please contact Mary Hannan on ~~02 6274 9500~~ or email m.hannan@learningcircles.org.au

Discovering Democracy

Learning Circle Kits on Civics and Citizenship Order and Registration Form

Please send me:

- copies of *The Governance of Australia* at \$27 per hard copy (includes GST and postage)
- copies of *The Three Spheres of Government* at \$27 per hard copy (includes GST and postage)
- copies of *The Governance of Australia CD* at \$10 per CD (includes GST and postage)
- copies of *The Three Spheres of Government CD* at \$10 per CD (includes GST and postage)

This form will be a Tax Invoice for GST when you make a payment:

- You can debit my (please circle):
Visa / Mastercard / Bankcard for a total of \$.....
- I am attaching a cheque for a total of \$.....

Your First Name: _____

Your Last Name: _____

Organisation Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: (w) _____

(h) _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Signature on card: _____

Expiry date: _____



DISCOVERING
DEMOCRACY



ALA

Adult Learning Australia

Post or fax this registration form to:
Learning Circles Australia (a section of A.L.A.)

GPO Box 260 Canberra City ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA

Phone: p 02 6274 9500

Fax: f 02 6274 9513

Email: e info@ala.asn.au lcs.org.au