

14 February, 2011

**To the attention of
The Inquiry Secretary,
Ms Samantha Mannette, JSCEM**

Dear Ms Mannette,

I am writing in response to the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' (JSCEM) inquiry into the conduct of the 2010 federal election.

I am an Australian citizen by birth, currently living in France. I have been living abroad since 1999. I have a daughter, aged 3, who is also an Australian passport holder, and another child expected within weeks (who will also be an Australian citizen).

I fell off the Commonwealth Electoral Roll some years ago, and by the time I realised this, it was too late to re-enrol because of my situation living abroad. (I had actually been diligently voting by post for some years without realising my vote was null and void owing to my Electoral Roll status.)

As we are based abroad for my husband's work, we are unlikely to return in the near future in order to meet the residency timeframe requirements to be reaccepted on to the electoral roll.

As an Australian citizen and the parent of children who will return to Australia in the future, I find it incredibly frustrating that I am not able to exercise my democratic right to vote in elections that affect the future of my country and that of my children.

Furthermore I find my disenfranchisement unjust in a country that is recognised as a great democracy and has a policy of compulsory voting. Surely in such a system, the basic right of a citizen should be to be able to vote?

Alas it is both physically and legally impossible for me to do so because of a glitch in the Electoral Act that effectively bans me from rejoining the Electoral Roll and exercising my right to vote because my family situation demands that we are based abroad for professional reasons.

I would be most grateful if you accepted this submission in good faith and, as a result of this inquiry, decided to allow ALL AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS the chance to exercise their democratic right at the polling booth, regardless of their place of residence.

Sincerely yours

Lynette Eyb