

**Public hearing: Canberra 7 August 2006****Civics and electoral education: a missing link in school curricula?**

Key organisations including the federal Department of Education and the Australian Electoral Commission, will be asked next week by the Electoral Matters Committee about their strategies to improve the quality of teaching the theory and processes of government and electoral education in schools.

Committee Chairman Peter Lindsay (Member for Herbert, Qld) said the Committee gained a valuable insight into the challenges of electoral education and the teaching of civics during a recent visit to schools in Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

"Judging from the views expressed by students at last week's school forums, there is still a lot to do in the area of civics and electoral education in schools," Mr Lindsay said.

"Where students elect to take on subjects that cover civics, students seem more interested and engaged. Where students do not have any civics included in the curriculum, they are more likely to say they 'don't know enough to care about it.'"

The Committee also learned that some teachers find it difficult to include civics and electoral education in their classes, especially if it is taught as a 'discrete subject'.

"I expect that witnesses appearing before the Committee on Monday will have a range of strategies to inspire young people to become active citizens," Mr Lindsay said.

The Committee will also seek the views of the Australian Electoral Commission on its efforts to promote electoral awareness among indigenous people and migrants. The inquiry has received over 100 submissions from a broad range of individuals and organisations, including teachers and schools, Federal, state and territory parliaments and electoral commissions, academics and governments. Copies of these submissions are available on the Committee's website.

The Committee is a Joint Committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and comprises members of the Government, Opposition and the Australian Democrats.

Public hearing in Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House on Monday 7 August 2006

- 8:45am Department of Education, Science and Training (Sub 100)
- 9:30am Department of the Senate (Sub 28)
- 10:00am Department of the House of Representatives (Sub 92)
- 10:45am Australian Electoral Commission (Sub 72)
- 11:30am Dr Murray Print and Dr Lawrence Saha, Youth Electoral Study (Sub 54)
- 1:00pm Constitution Education Fund Australia (Sub 73)

Video broadcast on HMS 11 and internally on radio 98.3FM.

For media comment: Please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Peter Lindsay MP on (02) 6277 4964 (Canberra) or (07) 4725 2066 (Townsville), or by mobile on 0419 656 234.

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 4453, by mobile on 0411 440 490, email jscem@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/>