

## INFORMATION FOR OVERSEAS ELECTORS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

9 August 2004

Are you ready to vote in the next Australian federal election which could be called at anytime? Even from overseas - if you're an eligible Australian elector you may be able to have your say.

Once the election is called there isn't much time for Australians living overseas to do something about their enrolment. And if you're not correctly enrolled - you can't vote.

To help you get started read the information below and then visit the overseas component <http://www.aec.gov.au/election2004/overseas/index.htm> of AEC website <http://www.aec.gov.au/>

### How can I find out if I'm still on the electoral roll?

Simply access the AEC website at <http://www.aec.gov.au/> and click the 'Check Your Electoral Details Online' icon. You will need to provide the exact name you are enrolled under, and the Australian address you're enrolled at - and the web service will confirm your enrolment status.

If you are unsure about where you may be enrolled - you will need to directly contact the AEC by emailing [info@aec.gov.au](mailto:info@aec.gov.au) or by phoning + 61 2 6271 4411. You will need to provide your full name, date of birth and the address you think you are enrolled at, and then the AEC will confirm your enrolment status.

### How can I enrol if I am living overseas and not enrolled?

If you are currently overseas and want to enrol, you may be able to enrol as an overseas elector. The Australian Parliament recently changed the eligibility requirements for overseas enrolment.

You are now eligible to enrol as an overseas elector if you:

- Are an Australian citizen aged 18 years of age or older;
- Departed Australia within the last three years and intend to return within six years of your departure

Simply access an Application for Enrolment from Outside Australia [http://www.aec.gov.au/content/What/enrolment/forms/ER016OSw\\_0504.pdf](http://www.aec.gov.au/content/What/enrolment/forms/ER016OSw_0504.pdf) form on the AEC website.

If you don't meet this eligibility, it is only when you return to live in Australia and reside at an address for at least one month that you will be able to enrol to vote.

### **Can I enrol for an overseas address?**

You can't enrol for an overseas address. You must enrol and vote for the electorate (or Division) in Australia for which you were previously enrolled or entitled to be enrolled. But you should put down your current overseas address as your postal address, so the AEC can contact you if needed.

### **I am already enrolled and want to stay on the roll while I am overseas.**

To make sure your name remains on the electoral roll while you're overseas, you should register as an overseas elector.

You are now eligible to register as an overseas elector if you are going to be away for no more than six years and either register during the three months before departure, or within three years, after you left Australia.

Simply access the Application to Register as an Overseas Elector [http://www.aec.gov.au/content/What/enrolment/forms/ER022Ew\\_0704.pdf](http://www.aec.gov.au/content/What/enrolment/forms/ER022Ew_0704.pdf) form on the AEC website.

If you are only going to be overseas for a short time, let the AEC know by completing an Overseas Notification Form <http://www.aec.gov.au/content/What/enrolment/forms/Overseas%20Notification%20Form.pdf> which is available on the AEC website.

### **Is it compulsory to be on the electoral roll if I am overseas?**

It is not compulsory for Australians living overseas to enrol and vote, however if you're not correctly enrolled your vote won't count.

### **How do I vote while overseas?**

There are two ways to vote from overseas in an Australian federal election.

You can vote in person at many Australian Diplomatic Posts located around the world or you can apply for a postal vote. Being enrolled as an overseas elector does not mean that you will automatically be sent ballot papers.

Once the election is announced, check the overseas component of the AEC website for the list of Australian Diplomatic Posts where voting will be available.

If you can't easily get to one of these Posts, you can apply for a postal vote. Postal vote applications are available from the AEC website once the election is announced. Fax or post the completed application to the nearest Australian Diplomatic Post with voting facilities and your ballot papers will then be sent to you. It is important to act quickly if you want to vote by post.

**If I am enrolled and away from Australia on election day will I be penalised if I don't vote?**

If you're enrolled to vote and not in Australia on election day you won't be fined for not voting. However the AEC will write to you asking why you did not vote, and it is in your interests to explain that you were overseas on election day.

By not voting and without suitable explanation, you do run the risk of being taken off the electoral roll or having your overseas elector registration cancelled.

So ensure you are correctly enrolled to vote and have your say count at the next federal election.