

SUBMISSION 58

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Department of House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA
Phone: 61 2 6277 2374
Fax: 61 2 6277 4710

23 May 2006

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to put forward a submission for the Inquiry into Electoral Education.

I left Australia 8 years ago and have been caught out by not knowing enough about how to stay on the electoral roll. When I left Australia I remained on the roll for my home electorate of Farrer, voting at the High Commission as something like 'out of the state'. I did not know about registering as an overseas elector, nor the process for staying registered as one. It is only through my contact with the Southern Cross Group that I have now found out that I have been disenfranchised and have no possibility of returning to the electoral roll unless I return home.

Nothing is sadder for an Australian than to be deprived of 'their say' in the running of their much loved country.

There are many ways to communicate this issue to Aussies leaving the country; a couple of obvious examples of how this issue can be brought to the attention of Australians leaving Australia:

- A flyer with every air ticket issued
- Handed out by the immigration staff when travellers are handing in their departure cards
- In High Commissions and Embassies at election time

I urge the inquiry to not only examine the many ways to put this issue in front of Australians leaving Australia, but to act vigorously upon it so that we don't lose so many Aussies from our democratic process.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Wettern