

From: Leanda Lee

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Sent: Thursday, 15 May 2008 3:12 AM
To: Committee, EM (REPS)
Cc: leanda.lee@buseco.monash.edu.au
Subject: Submission

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To: The Committee Secretary, JSCEM

Dear Sir,

Please accept this submission for the JSCEM's
Inquiry into the 2007 Federal Election.

I am currently on the electoral role as an
overseas voter. I have been living in Macau
for nearly 3 years. I voted by postal vote in
the last Federal Election. I also attempted
to vote in the Victoria Elections prior to
that but not understanding the postal voting
system was not able to submit my ballot paper
on time. I was thus a little concerned that I
might have been struck off the electoral role
and would not be able to vote in the recent
Federal Election. Thankfully, that appears
not to have been the case.

Just after the Federal Election I wrote a
letter to DFAT in Hong Kong to raise my
concerns about the administration of ballot
papers to Australians living in Macau. I have
close connections with the Australian
community in Hong Kong and Macau by virtue of
membership of the HR Committee of AustCham in
HK and through personal friendship with the
Macau representative for AusTrade.

In my letter to DFAT I outlined 3 concerns.

Firstly, the time it takes for mail to be received from HK to Macau. The ballot paper took 9 days to reach me due to the speed of the Macau postal service. I received the paper on the Thursday prior to the Saturday election and knowing that the postal service would not be able to deliver back to Hong Kong before Saturday I considered not attempting to lodge my vote. I contacted DFAT in HK to request advice on how to return the postal vote on time. Secondly, the information I received through correspondence attached to the ballot paper was inconsistent with the information that I received from advice offered me over the phone. However, it appeared that there still might be a chance that my ballot might still be accepted so I posted the paper regardless. However, my concern lay with those Australians who did not pursue the matter and failed to mail the ballot paper thinking that it would be impossible to lodge it in time. Thirdly, I raised the suggestion that a place be offered in Macau in order to lodge ballot papers due to the speed of the postal service and due to the increasing numbers of Australians that now live and work in Macau.

I failed to vote in one election due to the lead time necessary to deliver to Macau and allow for postage out of Macau. Had I not pursued further information over the phone directly with Hong Kong, I would have not been able to vote in the Federal Election. I wish to submit that circumstances in Macau differ

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from that of Hong Kong and due to the increasing importance of Macau to the Australian community, it may be timely to consider more effective methods of distribution and collection of ballot papers to Australians in Macau than currently exist.

Sincerely

Leanda Lee