

From: pamela gaye clements
Sent: Tuesday, 4 June 2002 4:52 AM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au
Cc:
Subject: Submission to the JSCEM from Pamela Clements

Message:

To: The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee
on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir,

This submission is in response to the JSCEM's invitation for public comment as part of its Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2001 Federal Election.

~~ SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS ~~

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) leaves it to you identify the issues you would like to comment on, as long as they are within the terms of reference of the Inquiry. For this Inquiry, the terms of reference are very broad:

That the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquire into and report on all aspects of the conduct of the 2001 federal election and matters related thereto.

My name is Pamela Gaye Clements and I reside at 5225 White Willow Drive apt. I-130, Fort Collins, Colorado 80528, USA. I have been resident in the USA since March 1997 having left Australia in March 1996 to travel overseas. I am an Australian born Australian citizen and intend to remain so.

I was last enrolled as a voter within the electorate of McPherson on the Gold Coast, Queensland. I was removed from the electoral roll during a routine mailing check.

I was unaware when I left Australia, or even when I became resident here in USA (for work) that I could be removed from the electoral roll or that there was a time limitation. I did not know before I left Australia that I could apply to keep my ability to vote; I did not know that I was removed from the electoral roll or could have applied at that time to maintain my right to vote. I only knew I had been removed from the electoral roll at the time I tried to vote in the referendum and was advised that I was unable to vote in any way.

I am a citizen of Australia. I am a permanent resident, NOT a citizen, of USA so I do not have a right to vote in any country of the world now.

I certainly aim to return permanently to Australia, in fact to Queensland where I last lived, within 5-6 years. I have family and friends in Australia who I keep in contact with daily. I also visit Australia regularly. I also maintain a current awareness via Internet and printed copies of the major Australian

papers. I also keenly follow Australian current affairs, politics and the economy.

I maintain shares, a bank account, a credit card, and have superannuation still in Australia. My family and friends are in Australia.

I last voted in a Federal election in 1996 just before leaving for overseas. I did try to vote in the 1999 Referendum and that is how I discovered that I had been removed from the electoral rolls and was unable to vote.

I was not advised until that time that I had been removed and therefore it was too late for me to register from overseas to maintain my ability to vote. I am effectively voteless and have been since that time.

It would better served me to maintain my ability to vote if perhaps there was better promotion of these requirements and time limitations when citizens leave Australia for overseas, even if only for a holiday. It would also have served me better if I had been advised that I was taken off the electoral roll and given a chance to enroll from overseas without a tight deadline (although I believe I was taken off the roll BEFORE my mail redirection of one year finished). I also believe that in a global economy there is not enough information and forewarning of the impact on voting rights.

I also believe the 6 year limit should be discarded, especially for Australian citizens who do not hold dual citizenship or the ability to vote elsewhere.

I had travelled overseas in 1975 and was able to obtain a postal vote and vote in that election from Indonesia. I take my citizenship seriously and miss my ability to vote for the country that I am still a citizen of and intend to return to. I truly feel disenfranchised by the current system.

I do not believe that current regime for overseas voting is appropriate for a democratic nation such as Australia in the 21st century, given the global economy.

Sincerely,

Ms Pamela Gaye Clements