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Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
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Secretary	[Signature]



Queensland
Government

Department of
Education and the Arts

Ms Sonia Palmieri
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Palmieri

Thank you for your letter dated 4 April 2006 encouraging the Department of Education and the Arts to provide a submission to the inquiry into civics and electoral education, currently being undertaken by the Parliament of Australia Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. I sincerely apologise for the delay in replying to you.

The need to improve student knowledge and skills in civics and citizenship has been recognised by all education jurisdictions. Education Queensland had significant input into the National Consistency in Curriculum Outcomes (NCCO) project which engaged all state and territory education authorities in developing national Statements of Learning and Professional Elaborations in Civics and Citizenship. It is intended that the Civics and Citizenship NCCO will be embedded in all state and territory syllabuses. An improvement in students' knowledge and understanding of civics and engagement in citizenship activities is expected as a result of this national exercise.

You may be aware the Legal and Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee of the Queensland Parliament has recently undertaken an inquiry: *Voices and Votes — A Parliamentary Committee inquiry into young people engaging in democracy in Queensland*. Submissions to this inquiry closed in November 2005. This inquiry has canvassed views across Queensland on ways to engage young people more effectively in electoral education and the democratic processes of government. The report from this inquiry is expected to be released later this year.

The adequacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's participation in democratic processes including the adequacy of electoral education, and civic education and engagement is also a concern for Queensland. In December 2002 a parliamentary inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's participation in Queensland's democratic processes was undertaken by the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, Legislative Assembly of Queensland. The report of this inquiry, *Hands on Parliament*, was tabled in September 2003 and contains 25 recommendations to enhance the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's democratic processes.

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Recommendations relating to enhanced and inclusive civics education, and testing inclusiveness of civics education have been considered by my department. In response to these recommendations my department has supported Zone School Constitutional Conventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Brisbane and Townsville, and assisted Indigenous students to attend regional sittings of the Queensland Parliament.

The issues papers and the reports from these Queensland inquiries would be useful resources to inform this federal inquiry into civics and electoral education. They are available for viewing online at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/committees/committees.asp?area=LCARC&LIndex=3&SubArea=LCARC.

Thank you for advising me of this inquiry.

Yours sincerely



KEN SMITH
Director-General

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