

Please accept this submission for the JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2010 Federal Election.

I am an Australian citizen living in England.

I have been living outside Australia since 2003.

I am not currently on the Commonwealth electoral roll.

I find the current system is not fair to expats such as myself and would like the system to be modernised.

My experiences with the Australian federal electoral system while offshore are as follows:

I have been working in England since 2003.

I thought that I was on the electoral roll, after contacting the electoral division before the election in 2007, and voting in that election. I thought that I was enrolled from overseas. However I encountered trouble when I tried to see if I was still on the electoral roll for the 2010 election. As I could not remember which division I was enrolled, I had to contact the electoral people. The person who emailed back was most unhelpful and said that I needed to provide the correct address - but I did not know this as I did not know how I had been enrolled in the previous election. Thus I was UNABLE TO VOTE in the 2010 election - which I was deeply upset about.

The upshot is that the process, if you are not permanently living at one address in Australia, is very confusing and unfair.

I was born in Australia nearly 40 years ago to Australian-born parents.

I left Australia because I could not find permanent work as a biomedical scientist.

I still am an Australian citizen and only have an Australian passport.

I have maintained and will continue to maintain strong links - such as family, financially, professionally.

I do not have citizenship or allegiance with any other country.

I strongly believe that I should be allowed to vote in federal elections because my life is still influenced by the Australian government. This will continue to be the case, until such time that I become a citizen of another country.

**I THINK THAT MY DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS ARE BEING DENIED.**

Previously I have voted at the embassy in London. However I would hope that in the future there would be an easier process. I would like to be able to communicate/vote via a secure internet system specifically created for expats such as myself. I would be happy to pay for the extra encryption that would be required.

Yours sincerely,  
Simone Eliza Girdham