

To: The Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

This submission is in response to the invitation for public comment as part of the Committee's Inquiry into Australian Expatriates. I am 27 year old Expatriate living in Sweden and working in Denmark. I have done so for three years and believe the occupational opportunities afforded me in my field in Scandinavia are superior to those on offer in Australia. So saying, I will continue to work outside Australia indefinitely.

As I see my long-term status as an expatriate mitigated in part by conditions in Australia, I welcome the opportunity to comment on a number of issues relating to the terms of reference.

#### **Preamble-a decision to leave**

After completing a BA and then a masters degree in the health sciences I was offered a government job in Moe (rural Victoria). Being a city-boy I weighed this against the opportunities presented me against another temporary job offered in London, UK and decided quickly upon the latter. Working life in London proved invigorating and gave me the opportunity to liaise with electro-acoustic manufacturing firms in Denmark, one of which offered me a job.

Given my higher salary, greater responsibility, better conditions and other benefits in Denmark, I cannot regret my move overseas.

#### **Vocational Education-a long term benefit**

In passing comment on Education, with regards to the Australian Diaspora I must first make a clear distinction between 'vocational education,' and 'academic' or 'scholarly education.' Vocational education would include courses in business, commerce or the applied sciences, as opposed to their more pure academic siblings, for instance, physics, musicology or theology. My comment is that funding for vocational postgraduate study would in the long-term benefit Australia particularly in fields or at levels to which Australian institutions do not cater.

To illustrate this long-term benefit I cite the experience of a Danish colleague, Mads. Mads began his carrier in the business wing of the Udenrigsministeriet (or Danish department of foreign

affairs) in Germany. With a young family he then relocated to London and took a postgraduate Masters of Business Administration (MBA) at the London Business School. This relocation and study was funded entirely by a government administered grant from the Danish Board of Industry. This grant allowed Mads to participate in MBA studies without neglecting his young family. Naturally, Mads returned to Denmark and took a high profile job within one of Denmark's technology manufacturing firms. The company for which Mads applies his expertise is successful and pays company tax. Mads pays personal income tax. Thus, the net benefit to Denmark is now far greater than the net expenditure invested in his studies and his family.

As Mads is a friend, mentor and role model, I have considered further study at such a level and at such an institution, but on cursory perusal of Australian awards for further vocational study am disappointed at the lack of opportunity. Apart from some sponsorship by corporate citizens (notably the Macquarie Bank), there are precious few grants for pursuing such study, not to mention grants that would provide for a family given the cost of living in London.

It can be argued that it is not necessarily the role of Government to support study at this level. Being a 1990's graduate of two Australian universities I am also all-too familiar with the rallying cries of 'economic rationalism,' with regard to educational resources. Similarly, I am not as naive to believe that provision for postgraduate funding of this nature could be dismissed as seeking the proverbial 'free ride,' or subject to the bludgeoning stick that proceeds the 'tall poppy syndrome.' Thus my comment does not sit well with two tenets of our national collective conscience. Nonetheless, and particularly within the sphere of business, funding to specialised vocational courses would directly benefit Australia and enrich our workforce. In this regard Denmark appears to hold a distinct advantage.

### **Needs and concerns as an overseas Australian**

I enjoy the many services offered through the Australian Embassy in Copenhagen including the passport service; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Tradings' daily dissemination of the reports from the press and radio news; arrangement of year round activities; and, the upholding of the ANZAC anniversary (special thanks to Jodie Littlewood and her colleagues). Despite this dialogue with the embassy I would not know where to begin taking part in voting in a federal election.

I have not significantly been affected by any domestic changes and welcome the 2002 repeal of section 17 of the Australian

Citizenship Act allowing me to take up dual citizenship if and when it is necessary.

**Australians-we will (almost always) return**

Working within other cultural frameworks allows for comparison and critical reflection on Australia and the principles and beliefs that underlie the organisation of our society. Naturally Australia appears favourably in any comparison (and so I applaud this committee in taking steps to make the best even better). Yearly, I return to Australia and take tremendous pleasure in doing so. This sense of returning to the mother country is nicely, if pessimistically articulated by Keneally:

In a way Australia is like Catholicism. The company is sometimes questionable and the landscape is grotesque. But you always come back.

-----Quotations, Thomas Keneally

I do look forward to returning for good.

David Morris  
Malmö  
Sweden  
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