

## Ideas for Your Submission

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.*

Some of the points you might like to consider in preparing your submission are listed below. We suggest you print this page out and have it next to you as you compose your comments using the [e-mail submission template](#) on our website. Not all the points below will be applicable to you. Some you may prefer not to address.

The most important thing to remember is that the JSCEM needs to hear your personal story and your individual experiences with the electoral system as an overseas Australian.

1. Provide Background on your Circumstances:

- ***The Joint Standing Committee requires that you provide your name, current postal address and phone number. You should also include your e-mail address. For that reason, the e-mail message below cannot be sent if you do not complete the blocks marked with an asterisk (\*).***
- How long have you been away from Australia and from what Australian sub-division (electorate) did you come?
- Do you visit Australia regularly, have personal, family or strong business links there, expect to settle back in Australia, have property or pay taxes in Australia?
- How well do you keep up with Australian issues and how? (Media Internet pages, journals, business or personal contacts, correspondence, etc.)
- Are there other family members living with you who are affected by the current arrangements on overseas voting?

2. Enrolment and the Right to Vote

- When did you last vote in an Australian federal election and from where?
- Did you vote or try to vote in the November 1999 Referendum on the Republic?
- Are you currently on the Electoral Roll? (If you are not sure, consult our page [Are You Disenfranchised?](#))
- Were you already on the Electoral Roll before leaving Australia, or did you seek to enroll after leaving? Were there difficulties in finding information on the correct procedures to follow?
- Are there difficulties in finding and completing the required Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) form to [register as an overseas elector](#) or the [application for enrolment from outside Australia?](#)
- Is the availability of these forms over the Internet an adequate solution?

- Has your name at any time been removed from the Electoral Roll because you did not know what you had to do to stay on the Roll while overseas?
- What is your view on the time limitations allowed under the *Electoral Act* for:
  - (a) Enrolling from overseas (within 2 Years of date of departure);
  - (b) registering as an overseas voter (within 2 years of date of departure); or
  - (c) remaining on the Roll while overseas (6 years from date of departure)
- Should any of these time limitations be changed or removed, and why?
- Is the current regime for overseas voting appropriate for a democratic nation such as Australia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### 3. Availability of Information on Future Elections

How good have you found the AEC or other Government agencies in providing information about upcoming elections (Federal, State and Territory)?

- Was it readily available?
- Was it timely?
- Was it easily understandable?
- How did you become aware of it?
- Do you think that the AEC is adequately fulfilling its [vision, purpose and role](#) vis-à-vis overseas voters?

### 4. Casting your Vote

What procedures were available to you to cast your vote from overseas? (Postal vote; attendance at Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate, etc)

- Was it convenient?
- Was it unduly expensive?
- Were there noticeable flaws in the system?
- Was there sufficient time available for the process to run its proper course?
- Have you noticed changes over recent times? (1998 and 2001 federal elections, Republic referendum, State or Territory elections)
- Did you feel you had sufficient information regarding candidates, policies, etc on which to decide your vote?

### 5. Other Issues

- As an overseas Australian have you been penalised for failing to vote? Did you feel that this was reasonable under the circumstances?
- If you lost Australian citizenship under Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* while it was still in force, but now intend to apply for resumption, or have already resumed your Australian citizenship, do you believe that you should also have a right to be newly entered on the Electoral Roll? If so, why?

- Do you believe that there are things to be learned, good or bad, from the electoral processes of your present country of residence as they apply to its expatriates, or the electoral processes generally?

6. Your Conclusions

Your submission will have most impact if you are able to conclude with a brief summary of the changes you would like to see in the Australian electoral system with regard to its application to overseas Australians.

- What you think should stay as is.
- What you think should be changed.

Don't forget: the deadline for submissions is **Friday 5 July 2002**.

[www.southern-cross-group.org](http://www.southern-cross-group.org)