

From: Jason Caley
Sent: Saturday, 1 June 2002 8:44 PM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au
Cc:
Subject: Expatriate Voting - Against

From: Jason Caley

Message:

1st June 2002

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

Dear Sir, Madam,

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.

As an expatriate national residing in Québec province, Canada, I have become aware of the campaign of the Southern Cross Group to seek to modify existing expatriate voting rights so as to allow non-resident citizens of Australia to become eligible to vote in Federal elections and referendums irrespective of the pre-existing determinations of intent to return and time abroad as set out in current voting legislation.

I would like to make it known, that I am opposed to any changes proposed by the Southern Cross Group (SCG) or other parties and individuals seeking to bypass and/or modify existing electoral processes and to reiterate my support for the existing voting procedures upheld by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Henceforth, I make my opinion known and publicly available that I do **not** support the amendment of any electoral proceedings with regard to the eligibility criteria of non-resident Australian citizens wishing to seek the right to vote in future Federal, State or Local elections.

In essence, I find it totally unreasonable that expatriate Australians should seek to change or gain additional voting rights with concern to Australian National affairs. I remain a believer in Australia and the well-being of the economy but I cannot condone the actions of my counterparts in seeking to create a means of gaining a right to vote while they themselves remain non-resident in Australia and have yet indicated a desire to return to Australia within a pre-determined timeframe as defined by current legislation.

For my part, the desire to participate in any level of governmental electoral process, being Federal, State or Municipal election is unacceptable unless Australian-citizens meet the preexisting conditions as determined by current

eligibility requirements as determined by the current interpretation of the Australian Electoral Act.

Anything else would result in voting influence exercised by individuals that do not represent an invested and longstanding interest in Australian sovereign affairs. In fact, any modification of Australian Electoral law could conceivably lead the way to abuses of voting procedures by way of manipulation, vote-sharing, bribery, coercion or extortion thus embedding the interests of foreign groups, possibly including but not limited to terrorist organisations, into the Australian political agenda. As an Australian citizen and expatriate, I wish to make it known that I believe the right to vote rests squarely with those residing in Australia and those eligible under the pre-existing terms of the Australian Electoral Act.

My beliefs as indicated above include and are not limited to:

- ? The right to self govern and determination
- ? The democracy and stated intent and virtues of the Australian Constitution
- ? The belief that resident Australians should determine their own fate
- ? The belief that no external entity, including long term Australian Expatriates, affiliates and organizations, may determine or participate in the outcome of Australian sovereign affairs pertaining to such matters as referendums and federal elections

Furthermore, as a secondary measure, I wish to make it known that should current legislation be modified, contrary to my preceding stated position, to support increased voting privileges for expatriate Australian citizens, I fully support and recommend the establishment of an ?expatriate voting riding? implemented in an identical fashion to that of the Italian Legislative and Electoral system. Such an endorsement remains contingent on the basis that pre-existing federal electoral procedures can no longer be maintained and in no way supports any proposal for eligibility criteria being modified with regard to State or Municipal Electoral eligibility.

Sincerely,

Jason S. Caley