

Read, Shane (REPS)

From: Robyn Jane Elliott [brianst@iserv.net]
Sent: Friday, 5 July 2002 12:45 AM
To: JSCem@aph.gov.au
Cc: brianst@iserv.net
Subject: Submission

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	112
Date Received	5/7/02
Secretary	Shane

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Message:

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

Dear Sir,

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.

I have been away from Australia for 6 months and came from electoral area of Cunningham. I moved to Michigan as this is my husband's home, however intend on returning to Australia on regular and lengthy visits. Cunningham, is where all of my immediate family members currently reside. Also, I am still a member of the Australian democratic Party. I am in constant contact with my family as I have a niece and nephew currently residing with an abusive mother and step-father. Despite, many applications to DOCS to have the children removed from there home for their safety, and despite reports from their schools, family and friends about evidence of abuse nothing has been done. This is an intense situation that effects us all in my family no matter where we are. I have been present in my parents home, when the children's step-father broke through a security grill door and then a solid wood door and physically attacked my mother while the children were also present. I fear what my have!

happened to them all if I had not been present and able to implement an intervention without violence. Thanks greatly to my training at the Australian Defence Force Academy. And been present throughout many court processes for my parents to even gain visitation rights to see their own grandchildren, and for two assaults the stepfather has made against my mother, Valmae Joy Elliott. I fear gravely for their safety when I am not with them. Any laws and policies that effect them effect me deeply.

I also operate a business in Australia, Enspiration, Employment Inspiration for many rehabilitation companies involed in the Workers Compensation process. This business is operated online when I am home or overseas. This contributes to getting injured NSW workers back to work sooner, a service in grave need that saves the NSW government money in the grand scheme of the NSW Workers Compensation Act. I complete my BAS statements and pay tax in Australia still. Once again any law changes have a direct impact on my life and my work.

I last attempted to vote in the November 2001 election. But I was heading for the States for 6 weeks, from mid October to the end of November. I attended the AEC office in Wollongong, Burelli Street. Where since no ballots had yet been printed, it took four staff members to figure out what I should do! I could not believe that I would be denied my right to vote, merely because the employees of that office were unsure what to do in the circumstances. After mentioning this to friends who travel abroad much more regularly than I, laughed and stated that even attempting to do the right thing was impossible and therefore a waste of time. I am not the only one who was treated this way, was travelling abroad even for a short period of time.

I am still on the Australian Electoral Roll, and have as yet not attempted to change to an Overseas Voter, merely due to too many things to do in a day. However, I intend to do so within the next week. (I have recently had surgery whilst here in the United States).

I feel the current time to Enrol as an Overseas Elector in 2 yrs is adequate. However, I am aware of many Australian friends have indured difficulties in enrolling. I believe that in this age of technology however, Australians who remain citizens should have the right to vote for much longer than 6 years, especially when every election effects their lives. The Australian Electoral Commission is currently not fulfilling it's role in providing an adequate service for Australian citizens to participate in the Electoral process. Therefore, jeopardising their rights as a citizen. I can pay my taxes online, you are willing to accept my money from overseas but not my vote after 6 years? I imagine my business will still be operating in one form or another (given constant changes by the NSW govt).

Merely because you are an expatriat should not mean you are no longer a member of the larger, global Australian community. The Australian Electoral Commission MUST update their procedures to meet the needs of the changing face of the Australian community at large.

In summary, I believe;

1. The AEC staff need updated training for Australians travelling overseas for a brief period of time, and better systems

need to be put in place to meet their needs.

2. Expatriat Australians are still Australians, having family ties and business links is much more accessible in this age. The AEC process must update to reflect that.

3. Once an Aussie, always an Aussie. (Yes, my family here were gathered around the computer to listen to the Dawn Service on ABC radio, at 3pm April 24th here, with printed out versions of the service from the War Memorial, and stood before the waving Australian flag and paid tribute to our ANZACS. And were up at dawn April 25th here. We will continue to do so, whenever I am here)

I have visions of Australia becoming a greater nation, to join pace with the global community and recognize the rights of ALL of her citizens. A great country deserves a people with the right to vote.

Regards

Robyn Elliott

as of March 02 2002, Robyn Stephenson.