

**From:** r kneipp  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 June 2002 2:30 AM  
**To:** JSCEM@aph.gov.au  
**Subject:** overseas voting  
Dear Sir,

I wish to put forward my case as a non-voting Australian citizen.

I left Australia in 1975, at the age of 22 to become an assistant English teacher in France. Although I reached my majority at the age of 19, no elections took place between then and my departure. I was not given any information about voting rights when I left the country. During my first three years in France, I lived in provincial towns and not able to obtain information about elections very easily. It was only much later, when I was living in Greater Paris and wished to participate in a referendum that I learnt that I had been divested of my voting rights. I have never had the opportunity to return to Australia for the stipulated 6 weeks in order to get back my right to vote. Until very recently, I could not even have dual citizenship, which means that, at the age of 49, I have never voted in any country! I was particularly upset about not being able to participate in the referendum concerning Australia's status as a republic.

Not having the right to vote means that I am divested of one of a citizen's most basic rights.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Kneipp