



Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Department of House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Vienna
8 February 2014

Dear Committee Secretary:

As President of an organisation of more than 100 Australians living and working in Austria, I wish to submit that it is totally unfair and unAustralian that we can be disenfranchised because our lives have brought us here.

Many of our members are professionals who move from place to place due to our work. Our members include lawyers, teachers, professional engineers and geologists employed in the oil industry and UN employees. In my particular case, I live in Vienna because my wife, also Australian, is employed at the International Atomic Energy Agency. I have retired as a journalist and diplomat, but still regard Australia as my home. As a former political journalist in Canberra for 11 years, I continue to take a deep interest in Australian political affairs and find it most disheartening that I cannot vote because I have lived here more than three years. Whether it be three years or 13 years, I remain Australian but deprived of my Australian rights.

I call upon the JSCEM to recommend the repeal of Section 94A(2)(c) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 so that expatriate adult Australians who left Australia to reside abroad more than three years ago can enrol to vote.

I believe that following the High Court's decisions in Roach in 2007 and Rowe in 2010, Section 94A(2)(c) may well be unconstitutional, because it excludes a significant part of the Australian people from the electorate.

Yours sincerely,

Brett M Bayly
President OzCon-The Australian Connection (www.ozcon.at)