

Read, Shane (REPS)

From: John Griffin [john.griffin@posten.se]
Sent: Tuesday, 9 July 2002 5:54 PM
To: JSCEM@aph.gov.au
Cc: john.griffin@posten.se
Subject: Submission

From: John Griffin
E-mail: john.griffin@posten.se
Phone: (8)-740 7045

Address:

Lindholmsbacken 171
SE-127 49 Skärholmen
Sweden

Message:

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

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	139
Date Received	
Secretary	

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 read with considerable satisfaction that Bruce Ruxton has been named Victorian of the Year. My satisfaction with this decision is not because I agree with his politics, quite the contrary in fact. He, together with Pauline Hanson and my mother, was one of the few Australians opposed to repeal of section 17 of the Immigration Act (1948), this amendment allowing me to apply for Swedish citizenship, which I expect to be granted in September or October this year. No, Ruxton deserves this accolade because of his INVOLVEMENT, because of his long and passionate involvement in Servicemen's rights and Australian politics in general. And involvement is just what Australia needs. In a country where blank votes and donkey votes are far too many, I can for my life not understand why involved Australians are prohibited from showing their involvement at Federal elections.

I am an Australian citizen, disenfranchised many years ago. (I have been living in Sweden since 1989). Disenfranchisement was something about which nothing could be done at the time. Now, when it appears that the Australian Diaspora is acknowledged and listened to, I write in the hope that I may in the future be allowed to exercise my birthright. That I may be allowed to influence Australian politics for the good of the country and her citizens, as well as for my own satisfaction.

I am engaged in the Southern Cross Group, an organization founded and managed by Anne MacGregor in Brussels. I have read her draft submission to you and I can state that I could not possibly write such an impressive and comprehensive submission. All I can offer is my agreement with her logic and her sentiment. I am sure that Anne will not mind that I plagiarize her conclusion, and submit it here as my own:

In conclusion, the following amendments should be made to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918:

-  The two-year limitation on enrolment from overseas should be deleted and enrolment should be possible for Australians overseas at any time;
-  The two-year limitation on applying for eligible overseas elector status should be deleted and application for this status should be possible at any time from overseas, as long as the Australian citizen is still on the electoral roll;
-  The requirement that a person has left Australia for employment reasons or that of his or spouse, in order to qualify for enrolment from overseas, should be deleted;
-  The intention to resume residing in Australia should no longer be a requirement for either enrolment from overseas or the attainment of eligible overseas elector status;
-  The six-year limitation on absence from Australia should be deleted from the provisions on overseas enrolment and eligible overseas elector status in the Act.

These amendments would restore the right to vote to all Australian citizens of voting age living overseas, resulting in massive benefits to Australia. We would receive the thoughts and views of a large number of ambassadors whom for whatever reasons have left Australia but as the saying goes “Still call Australia Home”. And why do I still call Australia home? Home is where the heart is, and although I love my adopted country of Sweden I do not like to have to choose between my two countries. I have three children and two grandchildren; no one could ask me to choose between them?

Yours faithfully,

