

## SUBMISSION 26

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From: Astrid Fauchon

Sent: Wednesday, 31 May 2006 12:40 PM

To: Committee, EM (REPS)

Subject: Inquiry into civics and electoral education

Committee Secretary

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Dear Committee Secretary,

I have been living overseas for 8 years now, and have thankfully always been near enough to a Consulate to vote in every election and thus avoid becoming disenfranchised. To this day I still feel as passionately about Australia as I did before I left, and I cherish the ability to continue exercising my democratic right.

Unfortunately becoming disenfranchised is so easy and I have spoken with many Australians who have unknowingly and regrettably suffered this, almost exclusively due to lack of information. Given the fact that we clearly consider voting to be important enough that it is compulsory, with no significant push to change this, I find it remarkable that information about the possibility of becoming disenfranchised isn't plastered all over government agencies travellers often visit-passport offices, High Commissions, Consulates, government websites, airports. Even pamphlets handed out with passports or travel tickets would be a great idea.

From my own experience, when I was looking in to how to vote overseas I don't recall seeing anything about becoming disenfranchised at the time. It was only after looking at other information that I discovered what could have happened to me. Both pieces of information go hand in hand. Anywhere how-to-vote overseas information is available, details about becoming disenfranchised should appear on the same page/in the same document. It must be made patently obvious. This would save a lot of Australians from significant grief and frustration.

Yours Sincerely,

Astrid Fauchon