

SUBMISSION 91

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From: MARGARET FRANCES WEIRICK [mfwc@libero.it]
Sent: Friday, 16 May 2008 7:16 AM
To: Committee, EM (REPS)
Cc: mfwc@libero.it
Subject: Submission

From: MARGARET FRANCES WEIRICK
E-mail: mfwc@libero.it
Phone: +3911 4342540

Address:

VIA AURELIO SAFFI,9
10138 TORINO
ITALIA

Message:

To: The Committee Secretary, JSCEM

Dear Sir,

Please accept this submission for the JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2007 Federal Election. Despite the fact that I havenot taken an active part in an Australian Federal Election for over 40 years, I beg you to take note of my submission. Strong family and personal links keep me in regular touch with my homeland . I also keep myself updated on Australian issues through Media internet pages and journals. The November 1999 Referendum was a landmark in Australian politics and I made every possible attempt to express my opinion. To no avail. My local Australian representatives (viz. Embassy in Rome and Consulate General in Milan) supplied absolutely no information whatsoever. The Consulate General staff did not even know it was being held! I received information from London only to discover it was impossible for me to take part in the Referendum. I consider was difinetly deprived of a natural right. Thus I no longer attempted to vote in the 2001,2004 and 2007 Federal elections. An expatriate who is a permanent resident abroad has a very slim chance of being able to express his vote. My opinion is that expatriates should be given the opportunity to choose, as do Australian residents, as to whether they wish to express themselves politically or not. A large number of democracies give their citizens this option and I fail to understand why Australia continues to have such a complex and rigid system. Forty years in another country haven't reduced my strong sense of "belonging" to my homeland.

I believe over one million expatriates are deprived of their right to vote. They cover all fields of life. I can only vouch for myself and although I do not have any formal role representing my country, I feel that I have always been a highly informed ambassador for my country in Italy.