

Please accept this submission for the JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2010 Federal Election.

I am an Australian citizen living and working in Brussels, Belgium.

I have been living outside Australia since 31 August 2008.

I am currently on the Commonwealth electoral roll, and submitted my vote for the last election

My experiences with the Australian federal electoral system while offshore are as follows: Although it was clear from the AEC website which electorates I belong to, it was not clear if my overseas voting was valid. I therefore called the AEC to check. Once confirmed, I waited until the election was formally announced and then waited until voting in the Australian embassy to Belgium was allowed. Once I arrived, it was fine but I felt that the AEC's website should provide better facilities for overseas voters (more than just about the process of postal or embassy voting). I choose not to use the postal voting because I couldn't be sure that I would receive the ballot papers in time to fill in and return to the AEC by election date, unless I spent over €30 on express postage at the Belgian postal service.