

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

I am an Australian citizen living in the United States of America.

I have been living outside Australia since August 1999.

I am not currently on the Commonwealth electoral roll.

My experiences with the Australian federal electoral system while offshore are as follows:

1. I have not participated in any Australian election since moving to the United States.
2. At the time I moved to the United States it was my understanding I was eligible to participate in Local, State and Federal elections through the absentee ballot system as I had logged a ballot in the 1998 Federal Elections at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC while in DC on a consulting assignment. With that experience behind me it did not occur to me when I moved to the US in 1999 that my eligibility to participate in Australia's political life would be forfeited.
3. I am still very much an Australian and it makes no sense to me that I, and others in my situation, have been disenfranchised in this way. There is some irony in that I am now living in a country where fewer than half the eligible population bother to vote while I want to participate in my country's politics but because of my home address, I am not allowed to.
4. I strongly encourage the JSCEM to recommend to Parliament:
 - a. All eligible voters living in other countries be allowed to participate in Local, State, and Federal elections within the electorate of their primary domicile when last domiciled in Australia.
 - b. This eligibility be optional in that Australian citizens living overseas who wish to vote in Australian elections be given the responsibility for contacting the AEC to enroll as an EOE and for maintaining contact with the AEC while living overseas. Australian citizens living overseas who do not wish to participate in Australian elections need not register with the AEC.
 - c. The AEC be responsible for alerting registered EOE's of upcoming elections and providing the means with which EOE's can cast their vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this submission.

Regards,

Thomas James McCann