

To: The Committee Secretary, JSCEM

Dear Sir,

Please accept this submission for the JSCEM's Inquiry into the 2007 Federal Election.

I was born in Werris Creek, NSW, and lived there until 1966, when I entered ANU to begin an undergraduate degree in Asian Studies. In 1973 I went to Harvard University to obtain a Ph.D in Japanese history. I married a US citizen and together my husband and I have raised a family of four children while working as educators in Japan.

My husband and I are nearing retirement. Our plan is to return to Australia for at least the first couple of years. I want to spend time with family and friends, enjoy living as a citizen in Australia, and I plan to regain and exercise my voting rights for the first time in close to 40 years.

But 40 years is a long time to wait. I ask the JSCEM to take account of the rights of Australians like me who live abroad and who, if denied voting rights in Australia, may spend an entire working life in a condition of permanent disenfranchisement.

Embracing a fuller vision of who constitutes a "real", fully-empowered Australian will be better for the disenfranchised, better for Australian political life, and it will add substance to Australia's image as a leading progressive democracy in the 21st Century.

Patricia Sippel
Tokyo, Japan

I would appreciate a response so that I know this issue is resolved.

Sincerely

Patricia Sippel