

From: Ingrid Folger
Sent: Wednesday, 30 April 2008 10:25 PM
To: Committee, EM (REPS)

Subject: Submission

Message:

To: The Committee Secretary, JSCEM

Dear Sir,

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

I left Australia in 2000 to travel. In the meantime, I met my Austrian husband and now live in Austria. In 2002 we returned to Australia and lived there for 6 months until circumstances required for us to return back to Austria. I have 2 children who both have Australian Citizenship through descent. In Australia I have my direct family with whom I have contact on a weekly basis. When I left Australia I was living in Canberra, but my place of residence would be considered where my parents live, in the Blue Mountains, NSW.

When I left Australia I did not know about the requirement to contact the Electoral Roll within 3 years. When I went to vote in the Federal Election after I left I was informed that I was no longer on the Roll and would be unable to enroll while not living in Australia.

I return to Australia every few years. I am currently a Masters Student at the University Of New England. Eventually I plan on returning permanently to Australia. I feel it is important to have a vote now on matters which affect me now as an Australian citizen, such as further education, pension systems (I still have money in a Superannuation fund in Australia). I believe that my children as Australian citizens should also have access to a vote when they become of age. Issues which may affect their rights as Citizens by Descent are issues which affect them directly. It is my opinion that the vote should be available based on citizenship, not residency. Issues and rights as a citizen should not change if one leaves the country. The right to vote should be available indefinitely, even if living overseas.

It should be noted that my father is an Austrian citizen living in Australia for nearly 40 years. He is still required to vote in Austrian elections from Australia.