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Ms Mary Porter AM MLA
Chair, Standing Committee on
Education, Training and Young People
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

 A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
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Dear Ms Porter,

Thank you for your letter of 19 May 2006 to the Electoral Commissioner where you provided background on the Voting Age Eligibility Inquiry currently being undertaken by the Legislative Assembly for the ACT, and extended an invitation to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to provide comment on this issue. The Commissioner has asked me to reply on his behalf, and I apologise for the delayed response.

As you would be aware, young people are currently eligible to provisionally enrol from age 17, and at April 2006 a total of 52,745 17 year olds were provisionally enrolled. The AEC undertakes and, will continue to, a range of activities to encourage eligible young people to fully participate in our electoral system.

You also raised in your letter the 'Youth Electoral Study' (YES), which is currently being undertaken by a team of researchers from the University of Sydney and the Australian National University in conjunction with the AEC and the Australian Research Council, and whether this national study would have any results relevant to your current inquiry.

This four-year project seeks to find reasons why young people are less likely to enrol than older groups and to look at what does motivates young people to participate in our electoral system.

The research published to date by the Youth Electoral Study does not canvass the direct issue of voting age eligibility. However, the first report did ask respondents if they would enrol at 17 or 18 years of age. An interesting finding was that the intention to enrol for the under-17s was higher than actual enrolment for those who were 17 years or older.

This project commenced in 2003, and preliminary research findings have been published in reports in December 2004 and October 2005. The published YES reports are attached, and can also be found on the AEC website at www.aec.gov.au/_content/what/publications/index.htm.

I wish you all the best in the conduct of the Voting Age Eligibility Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Hallett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brien Hallett
Assistant Commissioner Communications

29 June 2006