

Helen McMartin

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Electoral Reform Secretariat
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

My submission relates to **Chapter 7 – enrolment and participation**.

I would like to express my disagreement in the strongest terms to the view put forward recently by Senator Bob Brown, that the voting age should be lowered to 16 years.

As a mother of young adults, my view is that the voting age should not be lowered from the current 18 years.

At 16 years of age, these individuals are still children, although moving towards being adult. We all know that human brains do not mature until the early twenties, and so to put this responsibility on children, when they are still moving through an often tumultuous period of growth and maturing, is unfair. Are the proponents of this idea looking for more votes?

Our society seems to have been going through a very rapid period in recent years of 'pushing down' many things onto younger and younger children. For example, young children are being pressured to grow up quickly and are being presented with teenager type music, fashion, educational methods, and leisure activities. Teenage children are having pressure applied to grown up quickly to adulthood through undertaking part time paid work from the mid teens (as well as being expected to complete Year 12), and being exposed to adult themes in music, movies, fashion and magazines.

I believe we need to support our children in a healthy age-appropriate childhood, and not put more pressure on them to be adults before they are really ready. This will enable them to become balanced adults once they have enjoyed their childhood years.

Yours sincerely