



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY  
Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson (Deputy Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into 2020 ACT Election and the Electoral Act

**Submission Number: 006**

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**From:** [Kerry Burton](#)  
**To:** [LA Committee - JCS](#)  
**Subject:** Feedback on the ACT Election in 2020  
**Date:** Wednesday, 7 April 2021 5:19:04 PM

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To

The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, ACT Legislative Assembly

Re: ACT Election in 2020 feedback

From: Kerry Burton

Address: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

I'd appreciate if you would consider the following feedback – which is based on my observations handing out **HOW TO VOTE** information at WODEN during the three week EARLY VOTING period in September/October 2020.

**NUMBER OF POLLING PLACES and LOCATION of POLLING PLACES/EARLY VOTING CENTRES which has links to the Impact of COVID-19 on the ACT election**

My feedback pertains to the EARLY VOTING CENTRE located on the First Floor of BONNER HOUSE, WODEN.

My overall assessment: This was a dreadful, poorly managed decision. In fact, it was nothing short of shambolic and caused a number of people difficulty and extreme frustration.

I spent three weeks standing in/around the WODEN SQUARE area – well outside the 100 meters from the EARLY VOTING CENTRE handing out HOW TO VOTE information for one of the candidates.

I estimate I spent approximately SEVENTY percent of my time guiding people to the EARLY VOTING CENTRE on the First Floor of BONNER HOUSE.

A significant number of the people who asked me for directions had a variety of mobility issues. The signage provide by ACT Election Commission was highly inadequate.

Two or three days into the three-week period, I was told signage had been placed **ONLY** at the shopfront on the First Floor of BONNER HOUSE.

On my second day of standing in the WODEN SQUARE precinct a woman come up to me IN TEARS! This woman had managed to find BONNER HOUSE, but she told me there was nothing indicating where EXACTLY the EARLY VOTING CENTRE was located. She and her husband had to leave Canberra and were desperate to ensure they cast their vote before leaving as they weren't returning until after polling day on the 17<sup>th</sup> October.

I chose to make contact with a woman from the WESTFIELD management team who advised me

they were UNABLE to allow ANY signage on their property because doing so would be in contravention of their tenant guidelines.

What I failed to understand about that logic/arrangement is: If WESTFIELD were being paid by the ACT Electoral Commission for use of the EARLY VOTING CENTRE in BONNER HOUSER – surely it wouldn't have been unreasonable to allow some direction signage in/around the entry/exit points of their building for such a short window of time. I fully acknowledge and understand that they Are bound by their guidelines but would not find it unrealistic to expect some compromise for that three-week duration.

I also made contact with a man (whose name I've now forgotten) from the ACT Electoral Commission. What I got from him was pretty much that his hands were tied. Although with that said he may have been the person who organized that (very) small A-Frame at street level outside McDonalds.

[REDACTED]

### **SYSTEME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING**

I believe this system worked well with the following ONE exception:

When I was casting my vote at the WESTON CREEK EARLY VOTING CENTRE location – I discovered that the name of one of the GREENS candidates on the electronic form didn't match the name of the candidate on the **MURRUMBIDGEE** GREENS HOW TO VOTE leaflet.

Name on the GREENS HOW TO VOTE – **MERLIN BAKER**

Name on the ELECTRONIC VOTING FORM – **TERRY BAKER**

When I asked one of the men who was supposedly there to assist people with enquiries – he simply shrugged his shoulders and said he didn't know why that was or whether they were the same person.

I felt it wasn't unreasonable to have expected him to either be able to answer a fairly straightforward question and/or made some effort to find out. But he seemed completely uninterested and walked away.

While I didn't know this at the time, I later learned the reason was because the name **MERLIN** was deemed by the ACT Electoral Commission, at a late stage, to be an 'inappropriate first name'.

This information could have easily been shared among the EARLY VOTING CENTRE volunteers.

Finally and with regard to - **the efficacy of the six-week campaign period, including restrictions on roadside signage**

Having a three week EARLY VOTING window was FAR too long – especially when combined with the 100 meter rule.

I understand this was implemented to address the issue of social distancing and minimizing the number of people turning out to vote on polling day, 17<sup>th</sup> October. However I'd be interested in any feedback you are able to provide on whether the numbers justified this decision.

With regard to road-side signage – I believe there is an issue of TOO many corflutes which is something I believe the committee should definitely consider looking into for future ACT elections. Consider a more environmentally and/or less 'tamper proof' options.

Sincerely  
Kerry Burton