



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mr Peter Cain MLA on 24 November 2023: Mr Daniel Ng took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 24 November 2023 [PAGE 9]

In relation to: Overseas telephone voting

THE CHAIR: Okay. I just have a couple more questions on the overseas voting system. Are you aware whether overseas telephone voting would be available as per the Recommendation 6 of the JACS Committee's Inquiry into the Electoral and Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill?

Mr Steel: I believe that is the case. Do you want to—

Mr Ng: I might take that on notice, Mr Cain, and come back to you if I can—

Mr Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

In accordance with the ACT Government's response to Recommendation 6 of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Report No. 19 Inquiry into Electoral and Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, the ACT Government noted the Committee's recommendation and acknowledged its desire to ensure overseas electors are not disenfranchised if overseas e-voting is suspended. However, in its response, the ACT Government did not recommend overseas voters be able to access telephone voting.

The ACT's telephone voting system has been specifically designed for use by individuals who are blind or vision impaired and have experience in navigating similar technology.

Where the electronic overseas voting system is suspended, overseas voters may be able to utilise postal voting, as an alternative or, where available, voting in person through Australian embassies and high commissions.

The ACT Government notes the Electoral Act also includes a safeguard at section 129(2) which provides that being overseas at the time of an ACT election is a valid reason for failing to vote. Overseas voters would not face a fail to vote penalty where overseas e-voting is suspended and they are unable to cast a vote.

The ACT Government is committed to improving the enfranchisement of all individuals who are eligible to vote in an ACT election. The government will continue to work with the ACT Electoral Commission on improving enfranchisement for overseas voters.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature: 

Date: 30/11/23

By the Special Minister of State, Chris Steel MLA