

2019

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**RESPONSE TO ACT ELECTORAL COMMISSION SPECIAL REPORT TITLED
'A LIMITED ELECTRONIC VOTING OPTION FOR ELECTORS WHO ARE OVERSEAS'**

**Presented by
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Introduction

On 17 September 2019, the Speaker tabled a report entitled “A limited electronic voting option for electors who are overseas” (the report) on behalf of the ACT Electoral Commission (Electoral Commission).

The report outlined the risk of disenfranchisement of overseas electors due to delays associated with international postal services and examined potential options to address this risk. The options presented by the Electoral Commission were:

- Increasing the pre-poll period;
- Extending the time for the return of ballots;
- Attendance voting at overseas missions and embassies;
- Transactional database based online voting; and
- A limited electronic voting option.

Of the options presented, the Electoral Commission noted it considered the introduction of a limited electronic voting option for use by overseas electors in the ACT Legislative Assembly elections, underpinned by appropriate legislation, as the most appropriate solution to address the risk of disenfranchisement of overseas electors. The Electoral Commission expressed that this option best meets the requirements related to electoral security and integrity, cost effectiveness, risk minimalisation, and practicality.

Government response to the report

Electoral Commission's conclusion

The Committee intends to offer a limited electronic voting option to overseas electors for the 2020 ACT Legislative Assembly election, utilising the funds provisioned for this purpose in the 2018-19 budget.

Government response

The ACT Government welcomes the report by the Electoral Commission.

The Government supports the maximisation of voter participation in ACT elections to strengthen our electoral system. The Government is also conscious to ensure that a robust e-voting solution is introduced and understands that the Electoral Commission is working with Shared Services ICT and the Australian Signals Directorate to design and refine the cyber-security protocols and protections that will be in place, not only for the overseas e-voting option, but for all of the Electoral Commission's ICT electoral business systems.

Noting that the exact security measures to be implemented by the Electoral Commission are yet to be finalised, the Government provides in-principle support for the introduction of the overseas e-voting option. The Government will continue to consider the Electoral Commission's intended solution to the risk of disenfranchisement of overseas voters.