



## A.C.T. Electoral Act changes

Earlier this year the Federal Parliament passed the *Australian Capital Territory (Electoral) Amendment Act 1991*. Listed below are the major changes to the ACT electoral system contained in that Bill.

### Formality

The formality criteria of the modified d'Hondt electoral system have been changed so that a ballot paper will be *informal* if:

- . it is not properly authenticated;
- . it bears markings which identify the voter;
- . in the case of a declaration vote ballot paper, it is not contained in a declaration envelope;
- . it has no vote indicated on it;
- . a preference mark (ie a tick, a cross or the figure 1) has been placed in more than one square above the ballot-line;
- . preference marks have been placed below the ballot line against candidates of different parties;
- . a preference mark has been placed above the ballot line against an independent candidate, and another preference mark has been placed below the ballot line; or
- . a preference mark has been placed above the ballot line against a registered party, and another preference mark has been placed below the ballot line against the name of a candidate of another party.

### Party Registration

A party other than a Parliamentary party now needs to have at least 100 members entitled to vote at Legislative Assembly elections to be eligible for registration. A person can be the registered officer of only one registered party.

Parties which did not meet these requirements, that is, parties which are not parliamentary parties and did not satisfy the AEC that they had 100 or more eligible members, or had common registered officers, were required to be de-registered.

### Nominations

The nomination deposit is increased from \$100 to \$250.

### Scrutiny

First preference votes for each candidate within a party are no longer required to be counted at the first stage of the scrutiny. Only total first preference votes for the party will be counted. Votes for candidates are only counted at later stages for parties which have more first preferences than the cut off of 5.56%, in order to allocate seats to candidates.

No significant changes have been made to any other aspect of the scrutiny.

### Referendum

Part 4 of the *Australian Capital Territory (Electoral) Act 1988* now specifies the rules for the referendum to be held in conjunction with the ACT election to enable voters to choose between the single-member electorates system or the Hare-Clark system.

## 1992 ACT Election and Referendum: Election Dates

Pre-election period: 10 January  
until 14 February 1992

Election period:  
Nominations Open: 10 January  
Rolls close 6pm, 17 January 1992  
Nominations close 12 noon, 24 January 1992  
Polling Day 15 February 1992

### Postal voting:

Written postal vote applications available from 10 January 1992  
Pre-poll voting commences from Tuesday 28 January 1992

### Register of Political Parties:

The register closes on 9 January 1992. Any outstanding applications, or applications still being processed, are automatically frozen until after the election.

**Note:** *There are no writs for this election as the dates are set by legislation.*

## Redistribution Update

At the end of October 1991 the current status of the Redistributions were as follows:

### New South Wales

The New South Wales Redistribution Committee officially published its proposed redistribution on 11 September 1991 (see *Newsfile* No. 16, September 1991). At the close of objections on 9 October, 190 objections had been received. Public hearings into objections were held by the augmented Electoral Commission for NSW in Sydney on 23-25 October and in Wagga Wagga on 28 October. The augmented Electoral Commission will announce its proposed redistribution as soon as practicable.

### Queensland

The Queensland Redistribution Committee officially published its proposed redistribution on 28 August 1991 (see *Newsfile* No 15, August 1991). At the close of objections on 25 September, 60 objections had been received. Public hearings into objections were held by the augmented Electoral Commission for Queensland in Brisbane on 9-11 and 15 October. The augmented Electoral Commission will announce its proposed redistribution in the near future.

### South Australia

The South Australian Redistribution Committee officially published its proposed redistribution on 16 August 1991 (see *Newsfile* no 14, August 1991). At the close of objections on 13 September, 38 objections had been received. Public hearings into objections were held by the augmented Electoral Commission for South Australia in Adelaide on 1-3 October. The augmented Electoral Commission announced its proposed redistribution on 15 October. As this proposal was considered by the augmented Electoral Commission to be significantly different from the Redistribution Committee's proposal, objections were invited from previous participants and public hearings will be held into any further objections on 11 November. Following this hearing and consideration of any further objections, the augmented Electoral Commission will make a final determination of names and boundaries as soon as possible.

### Tasmania

The Tasmanian Redistribution Committee invited public suggestions and comments on 30 September 1991. The suggestions period closed on 30 October; comments on the suggestions can be lodged from 31 October to 13 November.

The members of the Tasmanian Redistribution Committee are:

Mr Brian Cox	Electoral Commissioner
Mr Nick Tall	Australian Electoral Officer for Tasmania
Mr Christopher Rowe	State Surveyor-General
Mr David Forster	Acting State Auditor-General

Further information: (002) 204 194

### Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory Redistribution Committee invited public suggestions and comments on 22 October 1991. The suggestions period closes on 21 November; comments on the suggestions can be lodged from 22 November to 5 December.

The members of the Committee are:

Mr Brian Cox	Electoral Commissioner
Mr Bill Chilvers	Divisional Returning Officer for Canberra
Mr Grahame Lindsay	Commonwealth Surveyor General
Mr John Wood	Director, Federal Bureau of Consumer Affairs

### Final Boundaries

*Newsfile* will publish the final determination of boundaries by the augmented Electoral Commission as they become progressively available. Copies of reports, statistics and maps will be available from the Australian Electoral Commission.

**Further information: Phil Green, Ph: (06) 271 4530**