

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Gaming Reform

Member for Murrumbidgee

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Questions on Notice Paper No 7

16 May 2025

Question No. 469

MR RATTENBURY: To ask the Minister for Corrections —

1. What is the process to allow people who are of voting age the opportunity to vote in (a) the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and (b) Bimberi in (i) ACT Government and (ii) Federal Government elections.
2. How do they receive the information necessary to inform their voting choices in (a) AMC and (b) Bimberi for (i) ACT and (ii) Federal elections.
3. How many people detained in (a) the AMC and (b) Bimberi were eligible to vote in this year's Federal election during the pre-polling period, and on election day.
4. How many people detained in the (a) the AMC and in (b) Bimberi who were eligible to do so during the pre-polling period, and on election day, voted in this year's Federal election.
5. How many of those detainees referred to in part (4) identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
6. What reasons are provided for those detainees who were eligible to vote, not voting.
7. How do the figures in parts (3) and (4) compare to the previous two Federal elections, and if this is too resource intensive to answer, then can the Minister provide the comparison for the previous Federal election.

MARISA PATERSON MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1.
 - a. Alexander Maconochie Centre
 - i. As per the 'Prisoner enrolment and voting' Fact Sheet available on the Elections ACT website, mobile teams of polling officials may visit prisons

before each ACT election to enable prisoners to vote. For ACT Legislative Assembly elections, a mobile team visits the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

Prisoners can register as General Postal Voters to receive postal ballots for federal and ACT elections.

ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) facilitates polling teams and applications for postal votes, communicating dates when voting can occur and options for obtaining postal votes if detainees miss or are unable to attend the mobile polling.

- ii. As per the 'Enrolling and voting while in prison' factsheet on the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) website, eligible prisoners can vote in-person with AEC staff if a mobile polling team is visiting the facility. The AEC attended the AMC to facilitate voting for detainees for the Federal Election in May 2025.

If a mobile polling team is not visiting during an electoral event, prisoners can vote by mail. Prisoners can register to be a General Postal Voter and automatically receive ballot papers in the post or can apply for a single event postal vote once an election has been announced. Prisoners can register as a General Postal Voter through the AEC's prisoner enrolment form or Postal Vote Application form, depending on the option chosen.

Correspondence between prisoners and the AEC is exempt from monitoring by staff.

ACTCS facilitates polling teams and applications for postal votes, communicating dates when voting can occur and options for obtaining postal votes if detainees miss or are unable to attend the mobile polling.

b. Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

Young people of eligible enrolling age are asked if they would like to enrol to vote. The Bimberi Supports and Services Team support the young people to understand the process and provide appropriate information from the Australian Electoral Commission and Elections ACT.

If they choose to enrol, once this process is complete, they will then be asked if they would like to be registered as a postal voter if there is an upcoming election.

Young people who were enrolled in the community but are in custody at the time of an election are asked if they would like to be registered as a postal voter. Postal voting allows young people in custody to vote.

2.

a. Alexander Maconochie Centre

Approved detainees have access to PrisonPC, a secure software on desktop computers. Detainees can use PrisonPC for educational and legal purposes, as well as

to access email and approved news, sport and electoral websites. Websites accessible to AMC detainees include:

- ABC News online
- SBS News online
- ESPN
- Elections ACT
- Libraries Australia.

Detainees also have access to televisions in their accommodation areas that may feature information regarding the federal election. Finally, candidates may provide election materials to the AEC or Elections ACT which will be made available to detainees in the Library.

b. Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

Young people in Bimberi have access to free-to-air television channels which gives them access to information available to the public through this media format. They can also request information about candidates and political parties they are interested in. This information will be printed and provided to them by Bimberi staff.

3.

a. Alexander Maconochie Centre

ACTCS do not maintain records of detainees who participate in elections. Please note that some of the information requested on AMC detainee voting throughout this Question on Notice may be available from the Australian Electoral Commission.

b. Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

Due to low numbers of young people of voting age at Bimberi, providing specific details could be personally revealing for young people involved. There were less than 5 young people (18 -21 years old) in Bimberi who were eligible to vote at the times asked.

4.

a. ACTCS do not maintain record of detainee participation in elections.

b. Due to the low number of young people of voting age at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre (Bimberi), a specific number has not been provided to protect the identity of those involved.

5.

a. ACTCS do not maintain record of detainee participation in elections.

b. Due to the low number of young people of voting age at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre (Bimberi), a specific number has not been provided to protect the identity of those involved.

6.

- a. ACTCS is unable to comment upon any reasons detainees enrolled to vote in the ACT may have given for not voting, and do not respond to notifications from the AEC on behalf of detainee electors who may not have voted.

As per the AEC website, if a detainee who is enrolled is found to have not voted in the Federal Election, they will be contacted by the AEC. If they are subsequently found to have voted, or they provide a valid and sufficient reason for failing to vote, or pay the \$20 administrative penalty within the prescribed time in the notice, the matter will be finalised and they will receive no further correspondence from the AEC regarding their apparent failure to vote.

- b. CSD is unable to comment upon any reasons young people enrolled to vote in the ACT may have given for not voting, and do not respond to notifications from the AEC on behalf of young people in Bimberi who may not have voted.

7.

- a. ACTCS do not maintain record of detainee participation in elections thus are unable to provide a comparison between Federal Elections.
- b. CSD records indicate that the figure in questions 3 is comparable between the 2024 ACT election and the 2020 ACT election for Bimberi.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Marisa Paterson MLA
Minister for Corrections

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This response required 1hrs 20mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$120.71