



## PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

### Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

26 June 2025

#### MEDIA RELEASE

### Committee calls for improvement on voter participation and confidence

Voter participation and confidence is vital to a healthy democracy but is facing risks due to rising misinformation.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters has today published its report on increasing voter participation, confidence and engagement in elections in New South Wales. The report makes 22 recommendations to improve civics education, reduce voting barriers and enhance the security and integrity of the electoral process.

"New South Wales has the highest voter enrolment rate of any jurisdiction in Australia, but we cannot be complacent," said Committee Chair, the Hon Peter Primrose MLC. "We heard that many people face barriers to fully participate in democracy and our recommendations aim to address this."

The report highlighted voting barriers for historically underrepresented groups such as people with disabilities, First Nations communities, homeless people, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. To break down these barriers, the Committee has made recommendations focused on enhancing accessibility, including more polling booths in remote areas and voting materials that are accessible, culturally appropriate and in language.

The Committee also heard about the importance of civics education and the gaps in the high school curriculum.

"Civics education is crucial for people to meaningfully participate in elections. The NSW Department of Education should develop a civics education curriculum as a stand-alone mandatory subject. The NSW Electoral Commission should also be funded to provide civics education both during and outside election cycles." Mr Primrose said.

Another issue considered by the Committee was the high informality at the 2024 local government elections in Toomelah, an area with a high proportion of First Nations voters.

"The Committee was very concerned about the high informality rate in Toomelah at the 2024 local elections. The NSW Electoral Commission should modify its electoral material registration checklists to ensure that information provided to voters is clear and easy to understand. In particular, the approved how-to-vote cards should contain voting directions that clearly indicate the minimum number of preferences required for a formal vote," Mr Primrose added.

On electoral integrity, the report has made recommendations to provide stronger privacy protections for voters and candidates. The Committee also calls for the NSW Government to establish a working group to consider and respond to the recommendations in the Independent Commission Against Corruption's 'Operation Aero' report.

The inquiry received 36 submissions and heard from 35 witnesses across three hearings, including from young people, community groups, electoral and legal specialists and councils. The report can be found on the inquiry [webpage](#).

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