

2000

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

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL 2000 No 2

PRESENTATION SPEECH

**Circulated by authority of
Gary Humphries, Attorney-General**

This Bill provides for the introduction of electronic voting and voting counting for ACT Legislative Assembly elections.

After the last election the Electoral Commissioner undertook to investigate possibilities for the introduction of electronic voting (E-voting) and vote counting. As a result of these investigations the Commissioner recommended to the Government that electronic voting and vote counting be introduced for the 2001 ACT election.

The Government supports that recommendation.

It is anticipated that for the 2001 ACT election E-voting will be provided in a secure environment at pre-poll centres and a limited number of polling places on polling day. Voters at those polling places will be able to cast their vote using a computer. Paper ballots will also be available for those electors who do not wish to vote electronically.

E-voting will be combined with manual data entry of paper ballots completed at ordinary polling places on polling day or by postal voters. The data from these ballots will be manually entered into a computerised backend scrutiny system. This data combined with the E-voting data will provide for a fully computerised election count.

This Bill amends the *Electoral Act 1992* and the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994* to allow for:

- electronic ballot papers;
- electronic capture of ballot information; and
- electronic counting of ballots.

The Bill also allows for the use of electronic data to determine outcomes for recounts and for the filling of casual vacancies.

In addition, the Bill allows for:

- the security of electronic voting and vote counting processes;
- processes for disputed elections where electronic voting and counting have been used;
- offences related to interfering with electronic voting or vote counting; and
- publication of electronic voting statistics.

The ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to introduce legislation that will allow for electronic voting. While electronic vote counting has been used for the Senate and Upper House elections in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales, no other jurisdiction has extended their Electoral Act in

the way this Bill does. It is hoped in the future that when suitable and secure technology is available that electronic voting could be extended further to Internet voting.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this Bill which will allow electronic voting to be trialled in pre-poll voting centres and a limited number of polling places at the next ACT election in October 2001. It will also allow for the count for the election to be fully computerised.