Prisoners' Legal Service

Prison News

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PEOPLE IN PRISON IN QLD
PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICE INC
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SPECIAL EDITION: 2023 REFERENDUM FIRST NATIONS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

On 14 October 2023, a national vote is being held about whether the Australian Constitution should be changed to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

This information sheet contains information that has been provided to PLS by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) about how eligible prisoners in Queensland can vote in the 2023 referendum.

Who can vote?

Prisoners who are eligible to vote in federal elections and serving a sentence of less than three years must vote in the 2023 referendum.

How can I enrol to vote or update my details?

PLS has been informed that electoral enrolment packs are being distributed to correctional centres across Queensland. These enrolment packs will help prisoners who:

- need to enrol for the first time; or
- update their enrolment details.

The enrolment packs include a printed version of a factsheet for enrolling and voting in prison, prisoner enrolment forms and reply-paid envelopes.

If you need to enrol or update your enrolment information for the referendum, you will need to submit an enrolment form by 8pm local time on Monday 18 September 2023.

This broadsheet is intended to provide legal information only and is no substitute for legal advice. If you wish to take any action arising from matters raised in this publication you should consult a lawyer immediately.

How can I vote once enrolled?
For the referendum, eligible people in a Queensland prison will be able to vote either through a mobile polling service or postal voting.

The AEC has informed PLS that Queensland Corrective Services has provided in-principle support for mobile polling to occur at all prisons and they are working through the details of providing this service.

Where mobile polling is unable to occur, a dedicated AEC support team will work directly with prison staff to provide information and support on the postal voting process, including legislative timeframes for completion.

Failure to vote
It is compulsory for all Australian citizens over 18 to enrol and vote in federal elections, by-elections, and referendums.

It is compulsory for all prisoners serving a sentence of less than three years to vote in federal elections by-elections and referendums.

If you do not vote and do not have a valid and sufficient reason for failing to vote, you may face paying an administrative penalty or prosecution.

Once you are released from prison, you should let the AEC know and update your details online at aec.gov.au or at any AEC office.

Where to get more information about the referendum
A Yes/No referendum pamphlet has been prepared by parliamentarians who voted for and against the proposed law.

The AEC has distributed the Official Referendum Guide including the Yes/No referendum pamphlet to every address on the electoral roll, including to prisons so that they can make it available to eligible electors.

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Justice Behind Bars