

Media release



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CUSTODIAL INSPECTOR PRAISES EFFORTS TO FACILITATE PRISONER VOTING IN STATE ELECTION

Custodial Inspector Richard Connock has commended the work of the Tasmania Prison Service and the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to enable prisoners to vote in the upcoming State Election.

“This is the first time in more than a decade that prisoners who are eligible can cast their vote in an election for the House of Assembly, which is a great step forward in enabling their democratic rights,” Mr Connock said. “This follows a successful trial of mobile polling in the recent Legislative Council elections.

“Democracy is about public participation. Being able to vote on who governs us – our representatives at the local, state and federal levels of government – and proposed changes to the Australian Constitution are core features of that participation.”

In the Office of the Custodial Inspector’s [*Overcoming barriers to voting in prison – review report 2025*](#), released earlier this year, Mr Connock made “seven recommendations designed to improve people in custody’s ability to engage in the democratic process and the community as, ultimately, this is where they will return on their release”.

Mr Connock said while mobile polling in the state’s prisons was a positive step forward, more still needed to be done.

“People in custody still face barriers to exercising their right to vote and, for some, their participation is restricted throughout their term of imprisonment. While the TPS has made some inroads into making voting easier and more available to people in custody in Tasmania, there are still some significant challenges that need to be overcome,” Mr Connock said.

“While the right to vote is unlikely to be a primary concern for some in custody, with far more basic conditions not being consistently met such as access to the open air, every right deserves to be upheld.”

“Importantly, the right to vote does ensure people can have a say on the delivery of government services, which include prison services. Removing barriers to voting will likely mean people in custody will be more able, as well as willing, to have a say.”

Mr Connock also called for changes to the laws on the eligibility of people in prison to vote to reduce disenfranchisement.

“People with a sentence of three years or more are ineligible to vote in Tasmania in local, state and federal elections,” he said. “The disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal people makes these voting restrictions essentially discriminatory.”

“We believe sufficient factors exist to review the current restriction at state and local government levels and have made a recommendation to state parliament related to this.”

Voting in Tasmanian prisons for the upcoming State Election will occur this week.

***Issued by Paula Catchpole on behalf of the Office of the Custodial Inspector.
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Please note the Custodial Inspector is unable to make further comment than what is in this release and the reports.