

Media release



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More options for voters with disability

West Australian voters with disability will have an additional option to cast their vote this election, with the trial of a specially designed accessible early-voting service in Perth. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is partnering with longstanding West Australian disability service provider Activ to trial accessible early-voting centres in Wembley and Bentley.

The Australian Electoral Officer for Western Australia, Fleur Hill, said the trial is an important step in looking at ways for voters with disability to exercise their electoral rights with dignity, in an environment that meets a range of physical and sensory needs.

“Attending a polling place on polling day can be a barrier to participating in elections for some people with disability,” Ms Hill said. “Postal voting and the existing Blind and Low Vision telephone voting service are both good options, but we are keen to grow our service offering and make in-person voting a more accessible and welcoming experience as well.

“We are absolutely delighted Activ is partnering with us in such a meaningful way on this important initiative.”

The accessible early-voting centres will operate out of Activ premises, ensuring very strong physical accessibility, adjustable lighting and varied layouts to meet the needs of different voters. AUSLAN interpreters will be available via Skype at both sites and staff, which include Activ volunteers, will receive targeted training to ensure they can provide voters with an inclusive service that allows full participation in the electoral process. Activ has worked with the AEC on physical layouts and accessibility features, operating hours and staffing. The West Australian Government is also supporting the service, with a Local Coordinator from the Department of Communities seconded to the AEC to oversee the trial.

The Activ Chief Executive Officer, Danielle Newport, said Activ is proud to support its customers’ right to participate in the democratic process. “We are the first organisation to partner with the AEC in this way to facilitate accessible voting,” she said. “Making it easier for people living with a disability to exercise their right to vote in the Federal election strongly aligns with Activ’s values and purpose.”

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Editor's notes:

- ***The accessible early-voting centres will be open in the week before polling day.***
- ***Further information on voter services available for people with disability is available at www.aec.gov.au > Voting > People with disability***
- ***Anyone who needs assistance at a polling place can ask for help. Polling place staff are trained to assist or voters can nominate another person.***