

ELECTORAL SYSTEM — REFORMS FOR BLIND OR VISION-IMPAIRED ELECTORS

**217. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Minister for Electoral Affairs:**

I refer to the announcement by the federal government to reform Australia's electoral system to allow electors who are blind or have low vision to properly cast a secret ballot. Are there any plans for a similar system to be implemented in Western Australia?

**Hon NORMAN MOORE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The Western Australian Electoral Commission is working with the commonwealth, other states, and agencies representing people who are blind or who have a vision impairment to develop a common approach in providing services to the blind voting community. This includes broad principles such as secret voting and systems development, thereafter. Additionally, general changes to the Electoral Act 1907 will be considered to allow ballot papers to be produced in other formats, including electronic and possibly braille, and to allow for the implementation of electronically assisted voting in certain circumstances.

The Western Australian Electoral Commission has the “‘Be Involved’: Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2007–12”, which is compliant with the Disability Services Act's requirements and acknowledges the commitment to ensure that the needs of electors with a disability are considered and that access requirements are a priority. The WA Electoral Commission has made many improvements to address the needs of people with disabilities.