

Western Australia

Clearance Record

[Urgent/Routine] Routine

File number: W15/114
Exec ref:

Subject: Voting Services on Barrow Island for the 2016 Election

Action required: EC to note

Return to: Not required

Due date: NA

Cleared by	Signature	Comments	Date
Electoral Commissioner			
Deputy Electoral Commissioner			
First Assistant Commissioner Network			
If MinBrief, has it been cleared & logged with MP&IS?*			NA
SM Western Australia		Tom, for information and as background for any new requests for information	27 April 2016

Minute

File reference: W15/114
To: Electoral Commissioner
Through: Deputy Electoral Commissioner
CC: First Assistant Commissioner Network

Subject: **For Information –**
Voting Services on Barrow Island for the 2016 Election

Purpose

To update you on a meeting held today with Chevron Australia.

Background

Previous correspondence from various WA members of parliament, a question at the recent WA political parties briefing session, and a recent question on notice all indicate a level of concern that electors who will be on Barrow Island at the next election and, to a lesser extent those working on the Wheatstone project, may find it difficult to access their vote. Similar concerns were raised at the time of the 2013 and 2014 elections.

The WA office has been working with Chevron Australia, which holds the licence to conduct business on Barrow Island. I met with representatives of Chevron today to clarify arrangements that will be in place for the 2016 election to enable its workers to access their vote.

Both Barrow Island and the Wheatstone project are located in a remote area of north-western Australia (see the map at Attachment A), and voters in those locations experience issues similar to electors located in other remote areas of Australia and overseas. Chevron has confirmed that we are not able to establish in-person voting facilities on Barrow Island.

Chevron has been very accommodating in the past in disseminating voting information materials on behalf of the AEC and has agreed to do so again this year, however it remains the very clear responsibility of the AEC to facilitate voting services for electors, and for the electors themselves to determine the best means of accessing their vote.

Issues

For those employees who will be on-island on election day:

- Barrow Island workers depart from the Cobham terminal at Perth airport. An early voting centre will again be established at Cobham in the two weeks prior

to election day, and the daily opening hours will be finalised in consultation with Chevron to ensure that most employees will be able to cast their votes in person before their flights depart;

- Barrow Island employees work on-island in 28-day shifts, therefore it can be assumed that some will find themselves on the island for the entire early voting period. Those employees will need to cast their vote by post:
 - we will provide, in consultation with Education and Communications Branch where necessary (many of the resources developed previously remain fit for purpose), materials to inform electors about the on-line postal vote application facility and to encourage electors to apply as early as possible. Chevron will distribute the materials via established staff communication channels such as notice boards, site newsletters, in-house TV and via letters to contractors (channels that have all been used in the past);
 - Chevron has advised that mail generally gets to the island within two days of posting from Perth; and that mail is sorted to individual mailboxes on the same day it arrives. Alternatively we will work with Chevron to have postal vote packages despatched via daily charter flights;
 - postal votes can be received back in AEC offices for up to 13 days post election. Chevron has advised that post is despatched from the island daily.

Consultation

Chevron Australia; Divisional Returning Officer for Durack.

Recommendation(s)

That you note the information contained in this Minute.

(by email)

Marie Neilson
Australian Electoral Officer
and State Manager for Western Australia

27 April 2016

Noted

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

May 2016

Wheatstone Project

