New South Wales



ANNO VICESIMO QUINTO

ELIZABETHÆ II REGINÆ

Act No. 20, 1976.

An Act to amend the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, in relation to voting outside New South Wales for State elections and the appointment and functions of a Principal Returning Officer, and in certain other respects. [Assented to, 31st March, 1976.]

BE it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of New South Wales in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the "Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment) Act, 1976".

Commencement.

- 2. (1) This section and section 1 shall commence on the date of assent to this Act.
- (2) Except as provided in subsection (1), this Act shall commence on such day as may be appointed by the Governor in respect thereof and as may be notified by proclamation published in the Gazette.

Schedules.

3. This Act contains the following Schedules:—

SCHEDULE 1.—Amendments to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912.

SCHEDULE 2.—Amendments to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, of a Formal Nature.

Amendment of Act No. 41, 1912.

4. The Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, is amended in the manner set forth in Schedules 1 and 2

SCHEDULE 1.

Sec. 4.

Amendments to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912.

(1) (a) Section 3, definition of "Postal voting officer"—

Before the definition of "Prescribed", insert :—

"Postal voting officer" means a postal voting officer appointed under Division 3 of Part V.

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(b) Section 3, definition of "Principal Returning Officer"—

After the definition of "Prescribed", insert :—

"Principal Returning Officer" means the person appointed as such under section 21A (10) (a).

(c) Section 3, definition of "Returning officer"—

After "place", insert ", but does not include the Principal Returning Officer".

(2) (a) Section 21A (10) (a)—

Omit "such officers", insert instead "a Principal Returning Officer and such other officers".

(b) Section 21A (12)—

After section 21_A (11), insert:—

- (12) Section 78E applies to and in respect of the Principal Returning Officer, as if a reference in that section to—
 - (a) a postal voting officer were a reference to the Principal Returning Officer; and
 - (b) a prescribed person were a reference to a justice of the peace.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

(3) Part V, Division 3—

After section 78, insert :-

DIVISION 3.—Postal voting officers.

Appointment of postal voting officers. 78A. The Electoral Commissioner may, by instrument in writing, appoint one or more persons to be a postal voting officer, or postal voting officers, at a place outside New South Wales (whether overseas or in Australia), for the purposes of the election or elections referred to in the instrument.

Deputy to postal voting officer

- 78B. (1) A postal voting officer shall, as soon as practicable after his appointment, appoint, by instrument in writing, a person to be his deputy.
- (2) In the event of the absence or incapacity of a postal voting officer, his deputy shall have and may exercise or perform the powers, authorities, duties and functions of the postal voting officer during that illness or incapacity.

Postal voting officer not to be candidate.

78c. No postal voting officer, nor any person who has been a postal voting officer and has not, by writing under his hand addressed to the Electoral Commissioner, resigned his office at least 14 days before the

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

day of nomination for the election, nor any deputy of a postal voting officer, shall be a candidate, or be elected or returned, at an election, or be or continue a member.

- 78D. (1) A person ceases to hold office as a postal Vacation voting officer—

 office.
 - (a) if he dies;
 - (b) if he resigns his office by writing under his hand addressed to the Electoral Commissioner;
 - (c) if he is removed from office by the Electoral Commissioner; or
 - (d) upon the return of the writ or writs for the election or elections for the purposes of which he was appointed.
- (2) A person ceases to hold office as the deputy of a postal voting officer—
 - (a) if he dies;
 - (b) if he resigns his office by writing under his hand addressed to the postal voting officer;
 - (c) if he is removed from office by the postal voting officer or the Electoral Commissioner; or

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (d) if the postal voting officer ceases to hold office as such.
- (3) The Electoral Commissioner may, for any cause that appears to him to be sufficient, remove any person from office as a postal voting officer or deputy of such an officer.
- (4) A postal voting officer may, for any cause that appears to him to be sufficient, remove any person from office as his deputy.

Postal voting officer to make declaration.

- 78E. (1) Every postal voting officer, deputy to a postal voting officer and clerical assistant appointed for the purposes of Division 11 shall, before he enters upon any of the duties assigned to him by this Act with regard to any election, make and sign before a prescribed person or a person of a prescribed class or description, a declaration to the effect following:
 - that I will faithfully and impartially, according to the best of my skill and judgment, exercise and perform all the powers, authorities, and duties reposed in or required of me by the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912, as Postal Voting Officer [or Deputy to a Postal Voting Officer, or a clerical assistant appointed for the purposes of Division 11, as the case may be with regard to the election of a Member or Members of the Legislative Assembly,

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

and I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will not at the said election attempt to ascertain save in the cases in which I am expressly by law authorised so to do for what candidate any person shall vote or have voted at the said election; and that if in the discharge of my duties at or concerning the said election I shall have learned, or have the means of learning, for what candidate any person shall vote or have voted thereat, I will not by word or or act, or by any other means whatsoever, directly or indirectly, divulge or disclose, or aid in divulging or disclosing the same, save in answer to any question which I am legally bound to answer.

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- (2) Every declaration made under this section shall be transmitted by the postal voting officer or his deputy to the Electoral Commissioner.
- (3) Part IV of the Oaths Act, 1900, applies to a declaration made under this section as if it were made under that Act.

(4) Section 88 (1)—

After "and clerical assistant", insert "(except a clerical assistant appointed for the purposes of Division 11)".

SCHEDULE

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SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

(5) (a) Section 114B (2) (b)—

After "is", insert "the Principal Returning Officer,".

(b) Section 114B (2) (b)—

After "substitute returning officer,", insert "a postal voting officer, a deputy to a postal voting officer,".

(c) Section 114B (2) (b)—

After "a clerical assistant appointed to assist a returning officer", insert "or postal voting officer".

(6) Section 114NA-

After section 114N, insert:—

Application of this Division.

114NA. Nothing in this Division applies to or in respect of a postal vote certificate or a postal ballot-paper, or an application therefor, under Division 11.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

(7) Part V, Division 11-

After section 114z, insert:—

DIVISION 11.—Voting by post (postal voting officers).

114za. (1) An elector who will not throughout Application the hours of polling on polling day be within New for a postal vote certifi-South Wales may make an application to a postal cate and voting officer for a postal vote certificate and a postal postal ballotballot-paper.

- (2) An application under subsection (1) shall-
 - (a) be in or to the effect of the prescribed
 - (b) be signed by the elector in his own handwriting;
 - (c) be witnessed by an authorised witness; and
 - (d) subject to section 114zB (3), be made on or before the same date as the day preceding polling day, but before the close of business on that date.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

(3) An elector shall not in an application under subsection (1) make any statement which is, to his knowledge, false or misleading as to a material particular.

Penalty: \$100 or imprisonment for one month.

(4) A person shall not persuade or induce an elector to make any statement in an application under subsection (1) which is, to the knowledge of that person, false or misleading as to a material particular.

Penalty: \$100 or imprisonment for one month.

- (5) A person shall not—
- (a) persuade or induce; or
- (b) associate himself with any other person in persuading or inducing,

an elector to make an application under subsection (1).

Penalty: \$100 or imprisonment for one month.

- (6) An authorised witness shall not witness the signature of an elector to an application under subsection (1) unless—
 - (a) he has satisfied himself as to the identity of the elector:

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (b) he has seen the elector sign the application in the elector's own handwriting; and
- (c) he knows that the statements contained in the application are true, or has satisfied himself by inquiring from the elector or otherwise that the statements contained in the application are true.

Penalty: \$100 or imprisonment for one month.

- (7) An authorised witness witnessing the signature of an elector making an application under subsection (1) shall sign his name in his own handwriting on the application in the space provided for that purpose, and shall add his address and the date.
- 114zB. (1) Where a postal voting officer receives Issue of an application made in accordance with section certificate and ballot-114zA, he shall deliver or post to the elector who paper. made the application—
 - (a) a postal ballot-paper that is in or to the effect of the form prescribed in Schedule 15; and
 - (b) an envelope bearing—
 - (i) the address of the postal voting officer; and

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (ii) a postal vote certificate that is in or to the effect of the prescribed form.
- (2) Before delivering or posting a ballotpaper under subsection (1), the postal voting officer shall, if the particulars of the candidates are not already printed thereon, enter on the ballot-paper—
 - (a) the name of the electoral district for which the elector has declared that he is enrolled; and
 - (b) the names of the candidates for that district in the order in which those names were drawn by ballot held pursuant to section 82A.
- (3) Notwithstanding anything in this Division, an elector who has made an application under section 114za (1) shall, notwithstanding that the application complies with section 114za (2), not be entitled to be sent by post a postal ballot-paper and postal vote certificate unless the postal voting officer received the application before the close of business on the same date as the third day preceding polling day.
- (4) Notwithstanding anything in this Division, an elector who has made an application under section 114za (1) to a postal voting officer

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

at a place outside Australia shall, notwithstanding that the application complies with section 114zA (2), not be entitled to be sent by post a postal ballot-paper and postal vote certificate if the address to which they are to be sent is within New South Wales.

- 114zc. (1) The postal voting officer shall number Numbering all applications for postal ballot-papers and postal vote tions and certificates issued by him in consecutive order, and certificates shall number each postal vote certificate with a number corresponding with the number on the application.
- (2) The postal voting officer shall sign on the back all postal ballot-papers issued.
- (3) The signature shall be placed in such a position as to be easily seen when the ballot-paper is folded so as to conceal the vote.

114ZD. The following directions for regulating Directions voting by means of postal ballot-papers are to be for postal substantially observed:—

voting.

(a) The elector shall exhibit his postal ballotpaper (in blank) and his postal vote certificate to an authorised witness.

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SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (b) The elector shall then and there, in the presence of the authorised witness, sign his name in his own handwriting on the postal vote certificate in the place provided for the signature of the voter.
- (c) The authorised witness shall then and there sign his name in his own handwriting on the postal vote certificate in the place provided for the signature of the authorised witness, and shall add the title under which he acts as an authorised witness and the date.
- (d) The elector shall then and there in the presence of the authorised witness, but so that the authorised witness cannot see the vote—
 - (i) mark his vote on the ballot-paper in the manner directed on the ballotpaper;
 - (ii) fold the ballot-paper so that the vote cannot be seen; and
 - (iii) place the ballot-paper in the envelope addressed to the postal voting officer and fasten the envelope.
- (e) After the envelope has been fastened, the elector shall forthwith post or deliver it or cause it to be posted or delivered to the postal voting officer.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

Amendments to the Parliamentary Electorates and ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (f) If the elector's sight is so impaired that he cannot vote without assistance, a person appointed by the elector shall mark the elector's vote on the ballot-paper in the presence of the authorised witness, and shall then and there fold the ballot-paper so that the vote cannot be seen, place it in the envelope addressed to the postal voting officer, fasten the envelope, and hand it to the elector who shall forthwith post or deliver it or cause it to be posted or deli-vered to the postal voting officer.
 - (g) If the elector fails to appoint a person as provided by paragraph (f), the authorised witness, if so requested by the elector, shall take the action required by that paragraph, and in taking that action shall mark the ballot-paper according to the instructions of the elector.

114ze. (1) Each application for a postal ballot-Applicapaper and postal vote certificate received by a postal tions, etc., to be voting officer shall—

(a) if a ballot-paper and certificate were issued and in pursuance of the application—be returning endorsed by him with the date of issue officer. thereof and sent by him to the Electoral Commissioner as soon as practicable but not later than polling day; or

sent to Electoral Commis-

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (b) if a ballot-paper and certificate were not so issued—be endorsed by him to that effect and sent by him to the Electoral Commissioner as soon as practicable.
- (2) The postal voting officer shall, forthwith after receiving a completed postal ballot-paper and postal vote certificate, send them to the Electoral Commissioner.
- (3) When an application and the corresponding ballot-paper and certificate are received by the Electoral Commissioner after being sent under this section, the Commissioner shall send them to the returning officer for the electoral district for which the elector has declared that he is enrolled, unless the Commissioner directs the Principal Returning Officer to deal with them under section 114zg.

Returning officer to note issue of ballot-papers, etc.

- 114zf. (1) The returning officer for the district in respect of which postal ballot-papers and postal vote certificates have been issued shall, if there is time conveniently to do so, note on the certified copies of the roll the names of all electors to whom postal ballot-papers and postal vote certificates have been issued.
- (2) An elector to whom a postal vote certificate has been issued shall not be entitled to vote at any polling booth unless he first delivers to the returning officer or deputy for cancellation his postal ballot-paper and postal vote certificate.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

> 114zg. (1) At the scrutiny the returning officer Scrutiny or the officer assisting him shall produce all applica- of postal ballottions for postal vote certificates and postal ballot-papers. papers received by him, and shall produce unopened all envelopes containing postal votes received by him up to the end of the period of 10 days immediately succeeding the close of the poll, and shall—

- (a) compare the signature of the elector on each postal vote certificate with the signature of the same elector on the application for the certificate, and allow the scrutineers to inspect both signatures;
- (b) if he is satisfied that—
 - (i) the signature on the certificate is that of the elector who signed the application for the certificate;
 - (ii) the signature purports to have been witnessed by an authorised witness;
 - (iii) the envelope bearing the certificate and containing the ballot-paper, if delivered otherwise than by post, was endorsed by the postal voting officer as received by him before the close of business on the same date as the day preceding polling day or, if delivered by post, bears a postmark clearly indicating that it was posted to the postal voting officer before the close of the poll; and

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

Amendments to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912—continued.

(iv) the elector is enrolled for the district,

accept the ballot-paper for further scrutiny, but if he is not so satisfied, disallow the ballot-paper without opening the envelope;

- (c) withdraw from the envelopes bearing the postal vote certificates all postal ballot-papers accepted for further scrutiny, and, without inspecting or unfolding the ballot-papers or allowing any other person to do so, place them in a locked and sealed ballot-box by themselves for further scrutiny;
- (d) seal up in separate parcels—
 - (i) all envelopes bearing postal vote certificates relating to postal ballotpapers accepted for further scrutiny; and
 - (ii) all unopened envelopes containing postal ballot-papers disallowed; and
- (e) proceed with the scrutiny of the postal ballot-papers which have been accepted for further scrutiny—
 - (i) by removing those ballot-papers from the ballot-box in which they were placed in accordance with paragraph (c); and

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

- (ii) by opening the ballot-papers so removed and allowing and counting those which are formal and disallowing and rejecting those which, by virtue of section 122, are informal.
- (2) Where the Electoral Commissioner has directed the Principal Returning Officer to deal with any postal ballot-papers and postal vote certificates under this section, the Principal Returning Officer shall deal with those ballot-papers and certificates under this section as if references in subsection (1) to the returning officer were references to the Principal Returning Officer.
- (3) The Principal Returning Officer shall notify the returning officer of the results of his action under this section, and the returning officer shall proceed as if those results had been obtained by the returning officer.
- (4) The Principal Returning Officer shall, as soon as practicable after dealing with any ballot-papers and certificates under this section, send them to the returning officer, together with the corresponding applications for the ballot-papers and certificates.

114zH. A postal ballot-paper shall not be informal Postal because in the case of any candidate his surname only ballot-paper has been written thereon if no other candidate has not to the same surname, or by reason of any mistake in be inspelling, if the elector has made clear his intention.

Postal ballotpaper not to be informal because of certain omissions or mistakes.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

Amendments to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912—continued.

Spoilt postal ballot-paper.

- 114zi. (1) If an elector to whom a postal ballot-paper has been issued, satisfies the postal voting officer who issued it that he has spoilt his postal ballot-paper by mistake or accident, he may, on giving it up, receive a new postal ballot-paper from the postal voting officer, who shall cancel the spoilt ballot-paper.
- (2) The postal voting officer shall send the cancelled ballot-paper forthwith to the Electoral Commissioner, who shall send it to the returning officer.

Applications to be available for public inspection. 114zJ. The returning officer shall retain every application sent to him under section 114zE (3) or 114zG (4) until the election can no longer be questioned and shall, on being requested to do so by any person attending his office at any time during the ordinary business hours of that office from and including the third day after polling day or after being received (whichever is the later) until the election can no longer be questioned, make any such application available for inspection by that person.

Reference to postal voting officer deemed to include clerical assistant. 114zk. Every reference in this Division to a postal voting officer shall be deemed to include a reference to a clerical assistant appointed to assist the postal voting officer in the performance of his duties.

SCHEDULE 1—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912—continued.

114zl. Nothing in this Division applies to or in Application respect of a postal vote certificate or a postal ballot- of this Division. paper, or an application therefor, under Division 9.

(8) Section 122 (1) (a)—

After "deputy", insert "or duly signed by the postal voting officer, as the case may require".

(9) Section 122A (3)—

After "deputy", insert ", or it is not duly signed by the postal voting officer,".

(10) Schedule 15—

Omit "addressed to the Returning Officer", insert instead "provided".

SCHEDULE 2.

Sec. 4.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912, OF A FORMAL NATURE.

(1) Section 1—

Omit the matter relating to Part V, insert instead:

PART V.—Conduct of Elections—ss. 68–154

Division 1.—Writs—ss. 68-74.

SCHEDULE

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SCHEDULE 2-continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912, OF A FORMAL NATURE—continued.

DIVISION 2.—Returning officers—ss. 75–78.

DIVISION 3.—Postal voting officers—ss. 78A—78E.

DIVISION 4.—Nominations—s. 79.

Division 5.—When poll to be taken—ss. 80–81A.

DIVISION 6.—Ballot-papers—ss. 82–83.

Division 7.—Polling-places, poll clerks, etc.—ss. 84–91.

Division 8.—General provisions for the regulation of voting—ss. 92–114.

Division 9.—Voting by post (returning officers)
—ss. 114A-114NA.

Division 10.—Pre-poll voting—ss. 114P–114Z.

DIVISION 11.—Voting by post (postal voting officers)—ss. 114za-114zl.

DIVISION 12.—Absent voters—ss. 115-120.

SCHEDULE 2-continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912, OF A FORMAL NATURE—continued.

DIVISION 13.—Compulsory voting—ss. 120A-120H.

Division 14.—Proceedings after close of poll—ss. 121–129.

Division 15.—Adjournment of poll—ss. 130-132.

DIVISION 16.—General provisions—ss. 133–136.

DIVISION 17.—Bribery, treating, intimidation, etc.—ss. 147–154.

(2) Part V, Division 1, heading-

Omit the heading before section 68, insert instead "DIVISION 1.—Writs.".

(3) Part V, Division 2, heading-

Omit the heading before section 75, insert instead "DIVISION 2.—Returning officers.".

(4) Part V, Division 4, heading—

Omit the heading before section 79, insert instead "DIVISION 4.—Nominations.".

(5) Part V, Division 5, heading-

Omit the heading before section 80, insert instead "Division 5.—When poll to be taken.".

SCHEDULE 2—continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912, OF A FORMAL NATURE—continued.

(6) Part V, Division 6, heading—

Omit the heading before section 82, insert instead "Division 6.—Ballot-papers.".

(7) Part V, Division 7, heading—

Omit the heading before section 84, insert instead "DIVISION 7.—Polling-places, poll clerks, etc.".

(8) Part V, Division 8, heading—

Omit the heading before section 92, insert instead "DIVISION 8.—General provisions for the regulation of voting.".

(9) Part V, Division 9, heading—

Omit the heading before section 114A, insert instead "DIVISION 9.—Voting by post (returning officers).".

(10) Part V, Division 10, heading-

Omit the heading before section 114P, insert instead "DIVISION 10.—Pre-poll voting.".

Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment).

SCHEDULE 2-continued.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT, 1912, OF A FORMAL NATURE—continued.

- Omit the heading before section 115, insert instead "DIVISION 12.—Absent voters?".
- (12) Part V, Division 13, heading—

 Omit the heading before section 120A, insert instead "DIVISION 13.—Compulsory voting.".
- Omit the heading before section 121, insert instead "DIVISION 14.—Proceedings after close of poll.".
- (14) Part V, Division 15, heading—
 Omit the heading before section 130, insert instead "Division 15.—Adjournment of poll.".
- (15) Part V, Division 16, heading—
 Omit the heading before section 133, insert instead "DIVISION 16.—General provisions.".
- (16) Part V, Division 17, heading—
 Omit the heading before section 147, insert instead "Division 17.—Bribery, treating, intimidation, etc.".