



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2020

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**State General Election**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (10.04 am): I am pleased to update the House regarding preparations for the 2020 state general election. The ECQ will significantly expand voting services during the two-week early voting period. More early voting centres, approximately 200 across the state, will be established throughout Queensland with early voting commencing on 19 October. Hours will be expanded until 9 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays of both weeks; and, in a first for a state election, early voting centres will also open on the Saturday a week before the ordinary election day.

The ECQ is encouraging Queenslanders to plan well ahead and with the extended hours of early voting, voters are asked to consider attending outside of peak times to assist with social distancing. For this election we are focusing on an election period rather than an election day.

The ECQ is expecting very high demand for postal voting and has already procured adequate stock, providing flexibility to adapt to varying public health circumstances should they arise. Today I can announce to the House that the ECQ will commence accepting postal vote applications from Monday, 14 September. I can advise the House that the ECQ will be accepting postal vote applications until 16 October, a period of five weeks, so there is more than adequate time for people to get their postal vote applications in prior to the election.

It is an unprecedented step to open postal vote applications prior to the issuing of the writs, but we live in unprecedented times. Opening applications early will ensure that those who want their ballots mailed to them or are unable to attend a polling place have plenty of time to apply. Of course, ballots will not be mailed out to households until the close of nominations, so I encourage all members and candidates to remind people who do make applications early not to constantly ring saying, 'Where is my ballot?' because ballots will not be sent out until after nominations close. It may not be until four weeks after they apply.

Importantly, an application can be made in writing or online or by phone. However, the community should be aware that due to changes in the service model of Australia Post there may be some delays in the return of applications being made by post, meaning anyone who does plan on using Australia Post services should not leave the return of their application or their postal ballot till the last minute. On that basis, the ECQ is encouraging people who wish to apply for a postal vote to apply online, or they can apply via telephone.

We live in extraordinary times. The local government elections demonstrated that we can exercise our right to vote in a COVID-safe manner. With more time to plan, the ECQ are well equipped to deliver a COVID-safe election on 31 October 2020.