

# ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

## Question Taken on Notice

**Question Number:** 1.5

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**Date:** 10/06/2025

**From:** Mr Brian O’Gallagher

**To:** Hon. Lia Finocchiaro

**Portfolio:** Chief Minister

**Agency:** Northern Territory Electoral Commission

**Subject:** How to vote cards for Nelson electorate in Palmerston

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### QUESTION:

Why were candidates unable to hand out how-to-vote cards for Nelson in Palmerston despite that electorate encompassing Marlow Lagoon?

### ANSWER:

There are no restrictions under electoral legislation to candidates handing out how-to-vote cards outside voting centre prohibition zones. For early voting centres the prohibition zone is 10 metres and for election day voting centres the prohibition zone is 100 metres.

Pamphlet holders at the entrance of voting centres were introduced by the NT Electoral Commission (NTEC) when landlords of early voting centre venues (in shopping centres) requested no campaigning within their shopping centres. The pamphlet holders were provided as a compromise, so voters could have access to candidate information where campaigning was not permitted.

Due to the size and capacity of the pamphlet holders, they have always been limited for use by candidates contesting the division where the voting centre was located, as well as some adjoining divisions as determined by the NTEC. The decisions were based on the estimated votes to be taken at each voting centre, noting that providing space for all divisions would make it difficult for election staff to manage materials and for voters to find campaign material for their divisions.

At the 2024 Territory Election, based on vote estimates, pamphlet space for the division of Nelson was provided at:

- Early: Coolalinga and Yarrowonga (Gateway Shopping Centre).
- Election day: Berry Springs, Coolalinga, Howard Springs, Humpty Doo and Yarrowonga

Following a request received on 9 August 2024 to review the original decision not have pamphlet space for Nelson at Gateway and Palmerston shopping centres, Nelson was added to Yarrowonga early and election day voting centres. This decision was made on 10 August, prior to early voting opening on 12 August.

The pamphlet holder at Palmerston Shopping Centre provided space for the divisions of Blain, Brennan, Drysdale and Spillett which was a combined total of 10 candidates.

The total number of votes counted for Nelson was 5,336 with 6.5% of these cast at the Palmerston voting centre.