

PRESS RELEASE

Hours Before Rolls Close, AEC Reveals 143,000 More Australians Locked Out of Election

At precisely the time that the electoral roll should have been swelling with new enrolments, the AEC has revealed only hours before the roll closes that it has actually unenrolled 143,000 Australians in recent months, **many of whom are not aware of it, despite many having made efforts to correct their enrolment.**

“While our population grows, the proportion of eligible voters is decreasing – that is not a feature of a vibrant democracy,” said Executive Director Brett Solomon. “Why isn’t the Government bending over backwards to ensure as many people are enrolled as possible, instead of passing laws that disenfranchise.”

The electoral roll is already 200,000 people smaller than it should be, had it increased apace with the population since the 2004 election, and changes to the *Electoral Act* mean hundreds of thousands more may miss out.

“The argument that these people are simply lazy is offensive – many of those removed from the roll made the effort to change their details, but using the old enrolment forms that predate the new rules which our polling shows 82% of people are unaware of.

“On top of that the Prime Minister has misled the nation into thinking the cut-off date for enrolling is next week, not tonight. The new rules mean the AEC is busy focussing on removing those who may have incorrect details, while we hear reports of people trying to enrol and change their details but the system being too inundated to cope.

“The story of the 2007 federal election should not be about large swathes of the population not even getting a say in the policies and promises our leaders are proffering, said Mr Solomon.

“Why are today’s headlines reading “Record numbers to vote in this election” rather than revealing just how many eligible Australians *aren’t* voting this election. It should not be so much easier to be unknowingly taken off the electoral roll than to get on it.”

For more information please contact Brett Solomon on 0407 419 320.

About GetUp: *GetUp.org.au is an independent movement to build a progressive Australia. GetUp brings together like-minded people who want to bring participation back into our democracy. GetUp has over 200,000 members nationwide, more than every political party combined.*

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