



COMMONWEALTH

Electoral Authority: Australian Electoral Commission

House of Representatives
(Lower House)

Full preferential

Formal

- A ballot paper is formal if it has a number "1" marked on it and has consecutive preferences for the remaining candidates.
- A ballot paper may still be formal if one square is left blank provided it is marked as above and the vacant square is the voter's last preference.

Informal

- If the ballot paper is not authenticated by the initials of the presiding officer or by an official mark.
- If the ballot paper is not marked at all.
- If ticks or crosses have been used.
- If the ballot paper is marked in a manner that identifies the voter.
- If a duplication of numbers or a break of consecutive numbering occurs or two or more preferences are omitted.

(2007 Federal election)

Number the boxes from "1" to "N" (where N equals the number of candidates) in the order of your choice.

Remember... number every box to make your vote count.

Additional instructions are contained on postal ballot papers "Fold the ballot paper, place it in the envelope addressed to the Divisional Returning officer and fasten the envelope."

By-elections are held to fill vacancies in the House of Representatives resulting from death, resignation, absence without leave, expulsion, disqualification or ineligibility of a Member.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives has the power to issue a writ for the election of a new Member. There is no prescribed time period for the issuing of writs following a vacancy but it is not customary to hold a by-election if a general election is pending.



NEW SOUTH WALES
Electoral Authority: State Electoral Office

Legislative Assembly
(Lower House)

Optional preferential

Formal

- A number "1" is shown, once only, in or adjacent to a square opposite a candidate's name.
- The elector may indicate further preferences if they wish.
- Where the number "1" appears once only, the ballot paper is still formal even if there is a break or repeat in subsequent preferences.
- A single tick or single cross in or adjacent to a square opposite a candidate's name is accepted as a first preference vote. If a number "1" is also shown on the ballot paper it takes precedence over the tick or cross.

Informal

- The ballot paper is blank.
- A tick or cross appears with numbers in other squares (other than the number "1").

(2003 Legislative Assembly election – with any number of candidates)

Place the number "1" in the square opposite the name of the candidate for whom you desire to give your first preference vote.

You may, if you wish, vote for additional candidates by placing consecutive numbers beginning with the number "2" in the squares opposite the names of those additional candidates in the order of your preference for them.

A casual vacancy is filled through a by-election.



VICTORIA				
Electoral Authority: Victorian Electoral Commission				
Parliament which uses Preferential Voting	Name of Preferential Voting system	Formality/Informality points	Directions on the Ballot Paper	Casual Vacancies
Legislative Assembly (Lower House)	Full preferential	<p>Formal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number must be placed in every square, from "1" to the number of candidates on the ballot paper.• Numbers in squares may be spelt out as words ("one","two") or ordinals ("first","second") or Roman numerals ("I", "II").• One square may be left unnumbered; this is deemed to be the voter's last preference.• It must be initialled by the election official.• In general, any such markings that make the voter's intention clear are allowed. <p>Informal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If numbers are repeated or omitted.• Ticks and crosses are not allowed.• "Yes" or "No" are not allowed.	<p><i>(2006 Legislative Assembly election)</i></p> <p>Number the boxes "1" to "N" (where N equals the number of candidates) in the order of your choice. Number every box to make your vote count.</p> <p>Fold the ballot paper and put it in the ballot box or declaration envelope as appropriate.</p>	The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly must issue the writ for the by-election within one month of the occurrence of the vacancy. The by-election lapses if a State election is called during the by-election period.



ELECTORAL
COUNCIL
of AUSTRALIA

PREFERENTIAL
VOTING SYSTEMS
of AUSTRALIA'S PARLIAMENTS

QUEENSLAND
Electoral Authority: Electoral Commission Queensland

Parliament which uses Preferential Voting	Name of Preferential Voting system	Formality/Informality points	Directions on the Ballot Paper	Casual Vacancies
Legislative Assembly	Optional preferential	<p>Formal</p> <p>A casual vacancy is filled through a by-election.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The voter's intention must be clear.• It must have a "1" or a "✓" or a "x" against the name of one candidate. <p>Informal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If it has no marking on it.• If it has a combination of two or more of "1" or "✓" or a "x".• If it has a mark or writing which identifies the voter.• If it is discarded.	<p><i>(2009 Queensland State General Election)</i></p> <p>Place the number one ("1") in the square opposite the candidate of your choice.</p> <p>You may if you wish indicate your preference for additional candidates by numbering the other squares in your preferred order.</p>	A casual vacancy is filled through a by-election.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Electoral Authority: Western Australian Electoral Commission

Legislative Assembly
(Lower House)

Full preferential

Formal

- All squares opposite the names of candidates have been numbered consecutively.
- Some ballot papers with non-consecutive preferences can be formal. Preferences must start with the number "1" and can be distributed until there is a break in the sequence. Preferences can be distributed up to the repeated number.
- The ballot paper clearly indicates the voter's intention with respect to the order of preference for all candidates.
- If the ballot paper has only two candidates, and one square is marked to indicate clearly for whom the elector wishes to vote.

Informal

- No vote has been marked.
- No first preference is indicated.
- Two or more squares have not been numbered.
- It contains unauthorised markings which could identify the voter.

(2008 Legislative Assembly election)

Number the boxes from "1" to "N" (where N equals the number of candidates) in the order of your choice.

Remember... Number every box to make your vote count

A casual vacancy is filled through a by-election.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Electoral Authority: Electoral Commission of South Australia

House of Assembly
(Lower House)

Full preferential

Formal

- Consecutive numerical preferences are indicated against the names of all candidates commencing with the number "1".
- A "✓" or a "x" constitutes a "1" on the ballot paper.
- If one square is left blank it is presumed that candidate is least preferred by the voter.
- If the last number is not consecutive (eg, 1, 2, 3, 4, 19) it is presumed that the candidate against which that last number is marked is least preferred by the elector.
- Numbers placed outside the square are acceptable if the voter's intention is clear.

Informal

- The number "1", a ✓ or a x or any combination of these appears in or against two or more squares.
- If a ballot paper is marked in a manner that identifies the elector.
- No vote marked on the ballot paper.
- No first preference indicated.
- A duplication of numbers or a break of consecutive numbering occurs or two or more preferences are omitted.
- A ballot paper is not authenticated by the initials of the issuing officer or by an official mark.
- A ballot paper not deposited in a ballot box.

NB: South Australian electoral legislation allows candidates to lodge one or two voting tickets. A voting ticket is a written statement of a particular order in which a voter might allocate preferences in an election and is used to interpret the votes of a voter who does not indicate an order of preference covering all candidates. A voting ticket can therefore render a vote formal that would otherwise be informal.

Number the squares from 1 to N in the order of your choice (where N equals the number of candidates).

You are not legally obliged to mark the ballot paper.

After voting, fold the ballot paper and place it in the ballot box or declaration envelope.

(2010 House of Assembly ballot paper)

A by-election is held to fill a casual vacancy caused by the death, resignation or disqualification of a member or when an election to fill a vacancy is declared void by the Court of Disputed Returns. The Speaker of the House of Assembly must issue the writ for a by-election.



TASMANIA

Electoral Authority: Tasmanian Electoral Commission

Legislative Council (Upper House)	Partial preferential	Formal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where there are more than 3 candidates, at least the numbers 1, 2 and 3• Where there are 3 candidates, at least the numbers 1 and 2• Where there are 2 candidates, at least the number 1	Number the boxes from 1 to N in order of your choice. Your vote will not be counted unless you number at least X boxes. (N= number of candidates, X= number of preferences required under formality rules)	A writ for a by-election is to be issued within 40 days of a casual vacancy occurring. However, if the vacancy occurs between 1 January and the issue of writs for the periodic elections in that year <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a by-election is to be held concurrent with those elections; or• if the periodic election for that division is due, a by-election is not required.
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NORTHERN TERRITORY

Electoral Authority: Northern Territory Electoral Commission

Legislative Assembly	Full preferential	<p>Formal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A ballot paper is formal if it has a number "1" marked on it and has consecutive preferences for the remaining candidates.• A ballot paper may still be formal if one square is left blank provided it is marked as above and the vacant square is the voter's last preference.• Similarly, if there are only 2 candidates, and only one square is marked with the number "1", it is formal. <p>Informal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If no vote is indicated.• It does not indicate a voter's 1st preference for one candidate and preferences for other candidates.	<p><i>(2008 Legislative Assembly election)</i></p> <p>Number the boxes 1 to N (where N equals the number of candidates) in the order of your choice. Remember, number every box to make your vote count.</p>	<p>A casual vacancy is filled through a by-election where the vacancy occurs less than 3 years and 6 months after the first meeting of the Assembly following the last preceding general election.</p>
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Preferential Voting Systems

In Australia, preferential voting systems are majority systems where candidates must receive an absolute majority, more than 50% of the total formal votes cast, to be elected. If the absolute majority is not gained on the first count, then preferences are distributed until an absolute majority is obtained.

The term "preferential voting" means voters can indicate an order of preferences for candidates on the ballot paper, ie. who they want as their 1st choice, 2nd choice and so on.

Full Preferential Voting

The elector must show a preference for all candidates listed on the ballot paper. In some electoral systems which use full preferential voting, the voter can leave one box empty if the voter's intention with regard to the other preferences is clear. The empty box is treated as the voter's last preference, eg: voting for the Victorian Legislative Assembly.

Optional Preferential Voting

The number "1" preference must be shown and other preferences may be indicated, eg: voting for the NSW and Queensland Legislative Assemblies.

Partial Preferential

The elector must show a minimum number of preferences as set out on the ballot paper. eg: voting for the Tasmanian Legislative Council.

The Full Preferential Count

Count ballot papers

Polling officials sort and count formal and informal votes. Informal votes are set aside and do not take further part in the count.

The formal votes are counted according to the 1st preferences given by voters. This is the primary count and the results are made available.

Not all votes are counted immediately as absent, postal and pre-poll votes including declarations received by post after the close of polling need to be processed and checked before they can be admitted to the count.

If no candidate receives an absolute majority (more than 50% of the total 1st preference votes) after all valid votes have been admitted to the count, then subsequent preferences have to be distributed.

Distributing preferences

First (Primary) Count

Formal votes received by each candidate are counted according to where the voter placed number "1" for each candidate.

In this example there are 100 000 formal votes. The absolute majority is, more than 50% of the total formal votes cast, ie. 50 001 votes.



Sally 33 000



Jo 21 000



Lee 16 000

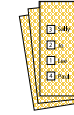
Lee with the lowest number of 1st preference votes is excluded.



Paul 30 000



Sally 33 000
+ 7 000 from Lee
40 000



Jo 21 000
+ 4 000 from Lee
25 000

Jo with the lowest number of votes is excluded.



Paul 30 000
+ 5 000 from Lee
35 000

Second Count

No candidate received an absolute majority in the first count, so the candidate with the lowest number of 1st preference votes is excluded. In this case Lee has the lowest number of votes, 16 000. Those votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the next available preference. In this case, this is where voters placed their number "2" preference.

Third Count

Still no candidate has an absolute majority, so the counting procedure continues.

Again the candidate with the lowest number of votes is excluded.

In this case Jo has the lowest number of votes, 25 000. Those votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to where voters placed the next available preference for the candidates remaining in the count.



Sally 40 000
+ 6 000 from Lee
46 000

from Jo (these will include ballot papers from voters who originally voted "1" for Lee).



Paul 35 000
+ 19 000 from Lee
54 000

from Jo (these will include ballot papers from voters who originally voted "1" for Jo).

Result

Paul is declared elected as he has a majority of votes, 54 000.



**ELECTORAL
COUNCIL**
of AUSTRALIA

**PREFERENTIAL
VOTING SYSTEMS**
of AUSTRALIA'S PARLIAMENTS

**For further information about Electoral Systems and
Parliaments in Australia:**

Electoral Commission NSW

Level 25, 201 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 832, Sydney NSW 2001
Phone (02) 9290 5999
Facsimile (02) 9290 5991
www.elections.nsw.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission

505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VICTORIA 3000
Phone 03 9299 0520
Facsimile 03 9629 8632
www.vec.vic.gov.au

Electoral Commission Queensland

Level 6, Forestry House
160 Mary Street
Brisbane QUEENSLAND 4000
GPO Box 1393 BRISBANE QLD 4001
Phone 1300 881 665
Facsimile 07 3229 7391
www.ecq.qld.gov.au

**Western Australian Electoral
Commission**

Level 2
111 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
GPO Box F316 PERTH WA 6841
Phone 08 9214 0400
Facsimile 08 9226 0577
Email waec@waec.wa.gov.au
www.waec.wa.gov.au

**Electoral Commission of South
Australia**

Level 6, 60 Light Square
Adelaide, South Australia 5000
GPO Box 646 ADELAIDE SA 5001
Phone 08 7424 7400
Fax 08 7424 7444
www.ecsa.sa.gov.au

Tasmanian Electoral Commission

Level 2 Telstra Centre
70 Collins Street
Hobart TASMANIA 7000
GPO Box 300 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone 03 6233 3749 or 1800 801 701
Facsimile 03 6224 0217
Email ballot.box@tec.tas.gov.au
www.tec.tas.gov.au

**Northern Territory Electoral
Commission**

2nd Floor AANT Building
79-81 Smith Street
DARWIN NT 0800
GPO Box 2419, DARWIN NT 0801
Phone 08 8999 5617
Facsimile 08 8999 5845
Email ntec@nt.gov.au
www.ntec.nt.gov.au

ACT Electoral Commission

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London Circuit, Civic Square
Canberra City ACT 2601
PO Box 272 Civic Square ACT 2608
Phone 02 6205 0033
Facsimile 02 6205 0382
Email elections@act.gov.au
www.elections.act.gov.au

Australian Electoral Commission

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The ECA is guided by three key directions

1. The need to keep pace with the Australian community's changing expectations regarding the delivery of electoral services through modernisation and innovation.
2. Cooperation and coordination across electoral authorities, where statutes allow, to enhance the individual and collective delivery of electoral services to the Australian community.
3. Informing the community and other political stakeholders through credible research and other information programs of the implication of electoral changes consistent with the challenges outlined in this document.

Australian Electoral Commission Offices

**Local call for enrolment and voting enquiries from
anywhere in Australia 13 23 26. www.aec.gov.au**

Central Office

West Block
Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600
PO Box 6172
Kingston ACT 2604
Phone 02 6271 4411
Facsimile 02 6271 4558

NSW

Level 4
Rodden Cutler House
24 Campbell Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone 02 9375 6333
Facsimile 02 9212 7659

Victoria

Level 8, Casselden Place
2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone 03 9285 7171
Facsimile 03 9285 7174

Queensland

7th Floor
488 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Phone 07 3834 3400
Facsimile 07 3834 3403

Western Australia

Level 3
111 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Phone 08 6363 8080
Facsimile 08 6363 8051

South Australia

9th Floor
1 King William Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone 08 8237 6555
Facsimile 08 8231 2664

Tasmania

2nd Floor
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86 Collins Street
Hobart TAS 7000
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Northern Territory

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80 Mitchell Street
Darwin NT 0800
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