

# Your official guide to the 2023 referendum



# When is voting day?

## For more information, scan the QR code or visit [aec.gov.au/referendums](http://aec.gov.au/referendums)

## [aec.gov.au](http://aec.gov.au)

## 13 23 26

Authorised by the Electoral Commissioner, 10 Mort Street, Canberra

# Message from the Electoral Commissioner

It’s been quite a while since we had a referendum. The last one was held in 1999, which means for many people reading this, it will be the first time they have voted in a referendum.

A referendum is a national vote on a question about a proposed change to the Constitution – in this case, whether to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Voting in a referendum is different from an election, and the result is based on how a ‘double majority’ votes – that is:

* a national majority (more than 50%) from all states and territories, and
* a majority (more than 50%) in a majority of states (at least four of the six states).

The AEC has developed this guide to help you plan for your vote at the referendum, including how to vote correctly, what happens at the polling place and tips on how to check information sources.

We will have over 7,000 polling places open across the country on voting day, early voting options, and more Remote Voter Services teams than ever visiting remote locations.

Being impartial and independent is the foundation of the Australian Electoral Commission. The transparency, security and accountability in the processes we conduct are significant and in full view.

I am proud of the role we play in delivering a referendum with integrity at every step of the process.

Visit [aec.gov.au/referendums](http://aec.gov.au/referendums) for more information.

**Tom Rogers**

Electoral Commissioner

Referendum statistics:

* More than 97% eligible voters on the electoral roll
* 7,000+ polling places
* 500+ early voting centres
* Up to 100,000 temporary referendum workers

# Stop and consider: Check the source this referendum

During the referendum period you may come across information about the voting process that isn’t supported by evidence, is missing context or is misleading.

The AEC is the independent agency tasked with running the referendum. We’ll communicate with voters about their requirement to participate, the purpose of referendums and voting options.

It’s important you carefully consider what you see, hear and read about the referendum process.

Take the time to consider whether the information is:

* from a reliable or recognisable source
* current
* safe (not a scam).

This is particularly important when on social media and online.

Go to [aec.gov.au/stopandconsider](http://aec.gov.au/stopandconsider) for more information and short videos with helpful tips.

# Plan ahead to vote in the referendum

# Polling places will open at 8am and close at 6pm sharp

## Who has to vote?

All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over are required to enrol and vote in this referendum.

## Where can I vote?

You can vote at any polling place in your state or territory on voting day. Polling places are open from 8am to 6pm.

Polling places are usually located at local schools, churches, community halls and public buildings. To find your nearest polling place visit [aec.gov.au/where](http://aec.gov.au/where)

If you have a mobility restriction or disability, or care for someone who does, you can check the accessibility details of polling places at [aec.gov.au/where](http://aec.gov.au/where)

For blind and low vision voting options, visit [aec.gov.au/assistance](http://aec.gov.au/assistance) or call **13 23 26**.

## What if I’m in another state or territory?

If you will be interstate on voting day you can vote at a designated interstate voting centre or consider early voting options.

## What if I can’t make it on voting day?

If you can’t make it to a polling place in your state or territory on voting day, you may be eligible to vote early in person or by post.

### How to vote early in person

If you are eligible, you can vote before voting day. Early voting centres open from the Monday two weeks prior to voting day. Opening dates and times vary, so visit [aec.gov.au/where](http://aec.gov.au/where) to check the details of each centre.

For more information on early voting and to check if you’re eligible, visit [aec.gov.au/early](http://aec.gov.au/early) or call **13 23 26**.

### How to vote early by post



Postal voting is available to eligible voters. Check your eligibility and apply online at [aec.gov.au/pva](http://aec.gov.au/pva) or by scanning the QR code.

Please call **13 23 26** if you don’t have online access and want to apply for a postal vote.

Complete your application for a postal vote so it reaches the AEC **by no later than 6pm on the Wednesday before voting day**.

# What happens at the polling place

1. When you reach the ballot paper issuing point a polling official will ask for your full name and address, and if you have already voted in the 2023 referendum. Your name will be marked off the electoral roll.
2. You will be given your ballot paper.
3. Read the instructions on the ballot paper carefully.
4. Complete your ballot paper.
5. Once you have completed your ballot paper, fold it and place it in the ballot box provided.
6. If you have used an AEC pencil, deposit it in the box on the way out. There will be hand sanitiser available near the exit.

**Remember, if you need help, you can bring someone you trust with you or ask a polling official.**

The AEC takes the safety of our voters and workers seriously. The AEC continues to monitor the COVID-19 environment and follows advice from relevant health authorities. Information in this guide reflects circumstances at the time of printing. This may result in changes to measures put in place.

Hand sanitiser will be available and you are encouraged to bring and wear a face mask and maintain physical distance. You can use a clean AEC pencil, or you can bring your own pencil or pen.

# How to make your vote count

## For this referendum you will receive a ballot paper with the proposed change to the Australian Constitution.

On the ballot paper:

Write **YES** if you approve the proposed change

**OR**

Write **NO** if you do not approve the proposed change

Don’t worry if you make a mistake. You can ask for another ballot paper and start again.

**Voting is compulsory for Australian citizens aged 18 years and older. If you don’t vote you may be fined or prosecuted. If you vote more than once it is a criminal offence.**

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