

# How to vote in the 2023 referendum

An Easy Read guide



## How to use this guide



The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) wrote this guide.

The AEC is part of the government.

The AEC helps Australians have their say by organising elections.



When you see the word 'we', it means the AEC.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

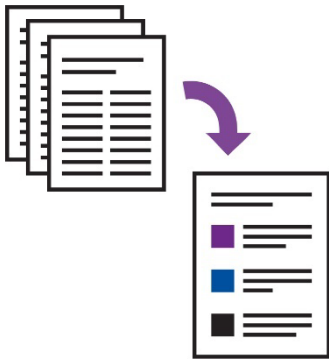
Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 32.



This is an Easy Read summary of the AEC official guide.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other AEC official guide on our website.

[www.aec.gov.au/referendums](http://www.aec.gov.au/referendums)



You can ask for support to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

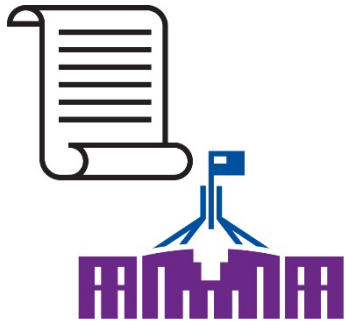
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## What is the 2023 referendum?



When you **vote**, you help to choose if the Australian people change the **Constitution**.



The Australian Constitution is a set of rules that the Australian Government uses to run Australia.



When you vote in a **referendum**, you help to decide if Australia should change the Constitution.



It's been a long time since the last referendum.  
This might be the first time you will vote in one.



The 2023 referendum is a question that asks if Australia should recognise the first peoples who live here.



And it asks if Australia should have a group of First Nations people who give advice to **Parliament**.



Parliament makes laws for Australia.



You can decide if you want to vote 'YES' or 'NO' in the referendum.



You must vote in the referendum if you're:

- 18 years old or older
- an Australian **citizen**.



A citizen is someone who has the **rights** and freedoms of the country where they live.

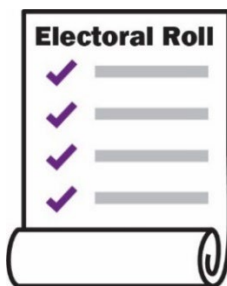


Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.

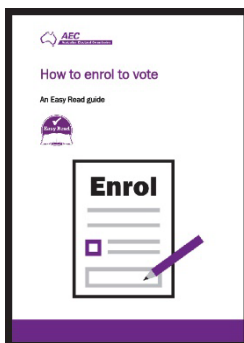


Before you can vote, you **enrol**.



When you enrol, we put your name on a list of **voters** – people who can vote.

We call this list the **electoral roll**.



We made a guide that explains how you can enrol to vote.

You can find it on our website.

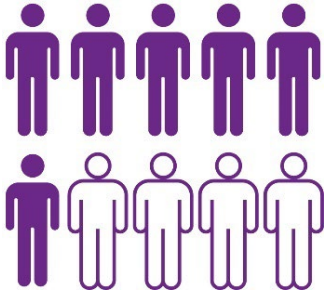
[www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/easy-read/](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/easy-read/)



## How do we know if the Constitution will change?



We will know that the Constitution will change when 2 things happen:



**1. More than half of the people in Australia vote 'Yes' to change the Constitution**

and



**2. More than half of the people in at least 4 states in Australia vote 'Yes' to change the Constitution**

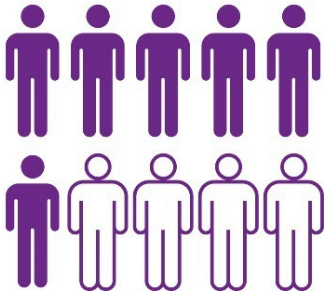


When both these things happen, we call it a 'double majority'.



The Constitution will change if there is a double majority.

The Constitution won't change if:



- more than half of the people in Australia vote no

or



- more than half of the people in at least 3 states vote no.

## When will you vote?



The Prime Minister has set the date for the referendum.



We call it 'voting day'.



Voting day is on Saturday 14 October 2023.

## Where do you vote?

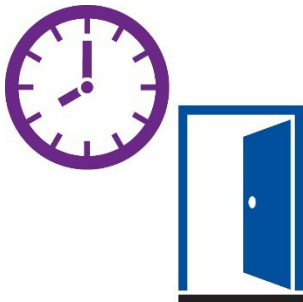


On voting day, you can vote at any **polling place** in your state or territory.



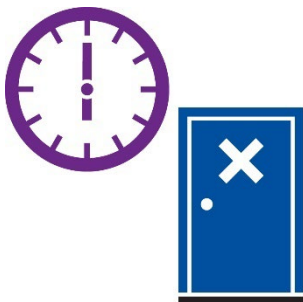
For example, a:

- school
- community centre
- council building.



Polling places will open:

- at 8 am
- on Saturday 14 October.



They will close:

- at 6 pm
- on Saturday 14 October.



We will have over 7,000 polling places open across Australia on voting day.



You can visit our website to find polling places in your local area.

[www.aec.gov.au/where](http://www.aec.gov.au/where)



If you are blind or have low vision, you can visit our website for support to vote.

[www.aec.gov.au/assistance](http://www.aec.gov.au/assistance)



You can also visit our website to find out which polling places are **accessible**.

When a polling place is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- move around.

[www.aec.gov.au/where](http://www.aec.gov.au/where)



You can also call us for support.

**13 23 26**



You can call us from Monday to Friday:

- before the referendum
- after the referendum.

You can also call us on:



- voting day, on Saturday 14 October



- the day after, on Sunday 15 October.

## What if you can't make it on voting day?

### Voting early



If you can't make it to a polling place on voting day, you might be able to vote early.

This is when you vote before voting day.



You can visit our website to check if you can vote early.

[www.aec.gov.au/early](http://www.aec.gov.au/early)



You can also call us.

**13 23 26**



There will be a place in your area where you can vote early in person.

We call them 'early voting centres'.

Early voting centres will open on  
Monday 2 October in:



- Victoria
- Western Australia
- the Northern Territory
- Tasmania.

Early voting centres will open on  
Tuesday 3 October in:



- the Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- South Australia
- Queensland.



You can visit our website to learn about  
early voting centres in your area.

[www.aec.gov.au/where](http://www.aec.gov.au/where)



## Voting early by post



You might be able to vote early by post.



You can scan our QR code to check if you can vote early by post.

Our QR code will take you to our website.



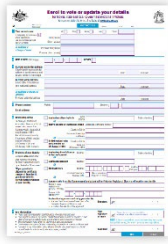
You can also visit our website to check if you can vote early by post.

[www.aec.gov.au/pva](http://www.aec.gov.au/pva)



Or you can call us.

**13 23 26**



You will need to fill out an **application** to vote early by post.

An application is a form you need to fill out.



It's important that your application reaches us before 6 pm on Wednesday 11 October.

This is the Wednesday before voting day.

## If you're in another state or territory



If you will be in another state or territory on voting day, you can still vote.



There will be a place in the state or territory where you can vote on voting day.

We call it an 'interstate voting centre'.



You can also think about voting early instead.

## What happens at the polling place?



When you get inside the polling place,  
AEC staff will be there.



They are people who work at polling places  
on voting day.

It is their job to help you.



When you get inside the polling place,  
you might need to wait in line.



If there is no line, the AEC staff will ask you to:

- go straight to a table
- and
- talk to the AEC staff sitting there.



There will be hand sanitiser you can use.

We also encourage you to:



- wear a face mask



- stay at a safe distance from people.

## What will the AEC staff do?



The AEC staff will ask you **3** questions.

### 1. What is your full name?



Tell the AEC staff your:

- first name
- last name.

### 2. Where do you live?



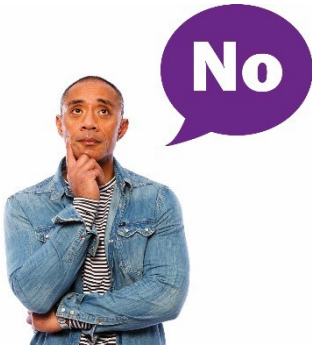
Tell them the address of your home.



The AEC staff will:

- look for your name on the electoral roll  
and
- mark it off.

### 3. Have you voted before in this referendum?



Say 'No' if you haven't already voted:

- on voting day
- before voting day, such as by a postal vote.



Say 'Yes' if you have already voted.



The AEC staff will give you a **ballot paper**.

A ballot paper is the form that you fill out to show how you want to vote.

## What do you do with your ballot paper?



Take your ballot paper to one of the cardboard voting screens.



The screens let you fill out your ballot paper where no one else can see.

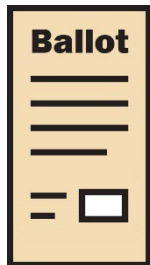


There will be a pencil for you to use.

But you can use your own pen or pencil if you want to.

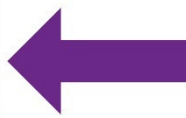
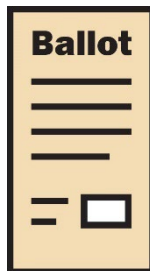


## How do you fill out your ballot paper?



You need to follow the instructions on the ballot paper for your vote to count.

The instructions will ask if you want the Constitution to change.



Write 'YES' or 'NO' in the box at the bottom of your ballot paper.



If you agree to changing the Constitution, write 'YES' in the box.



If you don't agree to changing the Constitution, write 'NO' in the box.

## What if you need help to fill out your ballot paper?

If you need help to vote, you can:



- take a family member or friend that you trust with you



- ask the AEC staff.



The AEC staff can help you fill out your ballot paper.



They can't tell you how to vote.



They will keep your vote a secret.

## What if you make a mistake?



It's okay if you make a mistake when you fill out your ballot paper.

If this happens, you can take it back to the AEC staff member who gave it to you.

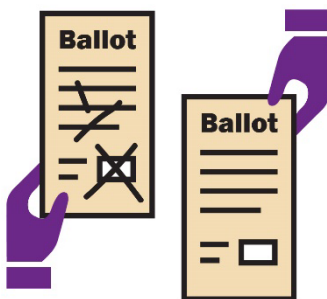
Tell the AEC staff member that you:



- made a mistake



- need a new ballot paper.



The AEC staff will:

- take the ballot paper with the mistake
- give you a new ballot paper.



Take the new ballot paper and fill it out.

## Where do you put your ballot paper?



When you have filled out your ballot paper, you need to put it in a **ballot box**.



A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot paper once they have filled it out.



If you need help, you can ask the AEC staff.



When you have put your vote in the ballot box, you have finished voting.



There will be hand sanitiser you can use near the exit of the polling place.

## Making sure the information you get is true



This year, you might come across information about the referendum that:

- isn't true
- tries to trick you.



For example, information on social media.



The AEC will contact voters about how the referendum works.



It's important to think about the information you get about the referendum.

You should think about whether the information is:



- from a place or person you can trust
- not trying to trick you
- up to date
- safe.



You can go to our website for tips about making sure the information you get is true.

[www.aec.gov.au/stopandconsider](http://www.aec.gov.au/stopandconsider)

## Word list

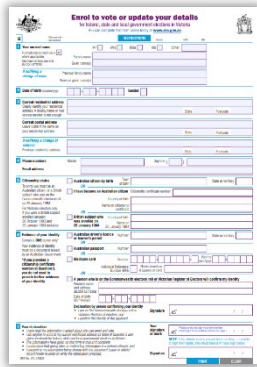
This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Accessible**

When a polling place is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- move around.



### **Application**

An application is a form you need to fill out.



### **Ballot box**

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot paper once they have filled it out.



### **Ballot paper**

A ballot paper is the form that you fill out to show how you want to vote.





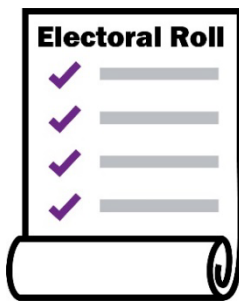
## **Citizen**

A citizen is someone who has the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



## **Constitution**

The Australian Constitution is a set of rules that the Australian Government uses to run Australia.



## **Electoral roll**

A list of voters.



## **Enrol**

When you enrol, we put your name on a list of voters.



## **Parliament**

Parliament makes laws for Australia.

A polling place is a building where people go to vote.



For example, a:

- school
- community centre
- council building.



## Referendum

When you vote in a referendum, you help to decide if Australia should change the Constitution.



## Rights

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



## **Vote**

When you vote, you help to choose if the Australian people change the Constitution.



## **Voters**

People who can vote.

## More information



You can call us for more information.

**13 23 26**



You can visit our website.

[www.aec.gov.au/referendums](http://www.aec.gov.au/referendums)



You can find us on Facebook.

[/AusElectoralCom/](https://www.facebook.com/AusElectoralCom/)



You can find us on Twitter.

[@AusElectoralCom](https://twitter.com/AusElectoralCom)



You can find us on Instagram.

[@auselectoralcom](https://www.instagram.com/auselectoralcom)

## National Relay Service



You can call the National Relay Service if you:

- are deaf or hard of hearing
- find it hard to speak using the phone.



TTY

**133 677**



Speak and Listen

**1300 555 727**



Ask these services to connect you to our phone number.

**13 23 26**

## Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)



If you speak a language other than English, you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

**131 450**



Tell them what language you speak.



Ask them to connect you to our phone number.

**13 23 26**



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Quote job number 5356.

Authorised by the Electoral Commissioner, Canberra.