

# Community Electoral Education Kit

*Speaking notes and Optional activities*

*Topic 1: Australian Democracy*

# Table of Contents

---

Goal.....	2
How to use this kit .....	2
Preparation Checklist.....	3
Speaking Notes .....	4
Disclaimer.....	11

# Goal

---

At the end of this topic, participants will have explored the connection between voting and representative democracy in Australia.

## How to use this kit

---

It is important that all Australian citizens understand how to participate in the Australian electoral system. Thank you for your role in helping your community find out more.

The Community Electoral Education Kit provides everything needed to conduct engaging and informative electoral awareness workshops. The kit covers five topics which seek to answer questions participating groups might have about the Australian electoral system:

- Topic 1: Australian democracy
- Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?
- Topic 3: Where do I go to vote?
- Topic 4: What happens on election day?
- Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted?

Each of the topics features:

- speaking notes in plain English
- presentation slides
- background notes to support deeper understanding.

Some topics also feature engaging learning activities.

The kit is designed to be flexible. Presenters can deliver all topics in a single session, or pick and choose the elements most relevant to their community. The topics are numbered in the order they are intended to be followed.

Topics may require preparation, such as printing activity resources or arranging projectors and screens. We recommend presenters allow at least a day to read each topic and prepare before presenting it to an audience.

Background notes can be found at the end of this topic. Supporting resources and further information can be found on the Australian Electoral Commission website at [www.aec.gov.au/community](http://www.aec.gov.au/community).

You can email any questions to [community@aec.gov.au](mailto:community@aec.gov.au), and you will receive a response within three business days.

*Please note: This topic will take about five minutes to deliver.*

# Preparation Checklist

<i>These tasks should be completed prior to presenting this session</i>	
<i>Task</i>	✓
Read the topic content in full to ensure you are comfortable with the speaking notes.	
Print off hard copies of the workshop topic and speaking notes.	
Download 'Topic 1: Australian Democracy' slide show presentation from <a href="http://www.aec.gov.au/community">www.aec.gov.au/community</a>	
Prepare your presentation space, including any technology you are planning to use.	
Ensure you are comfortable with the speaking notes and any activity procedures.	
<i>You may wish to add further checklist items below:</i>	
-----	
-----	
-----	

# Speaking Notes

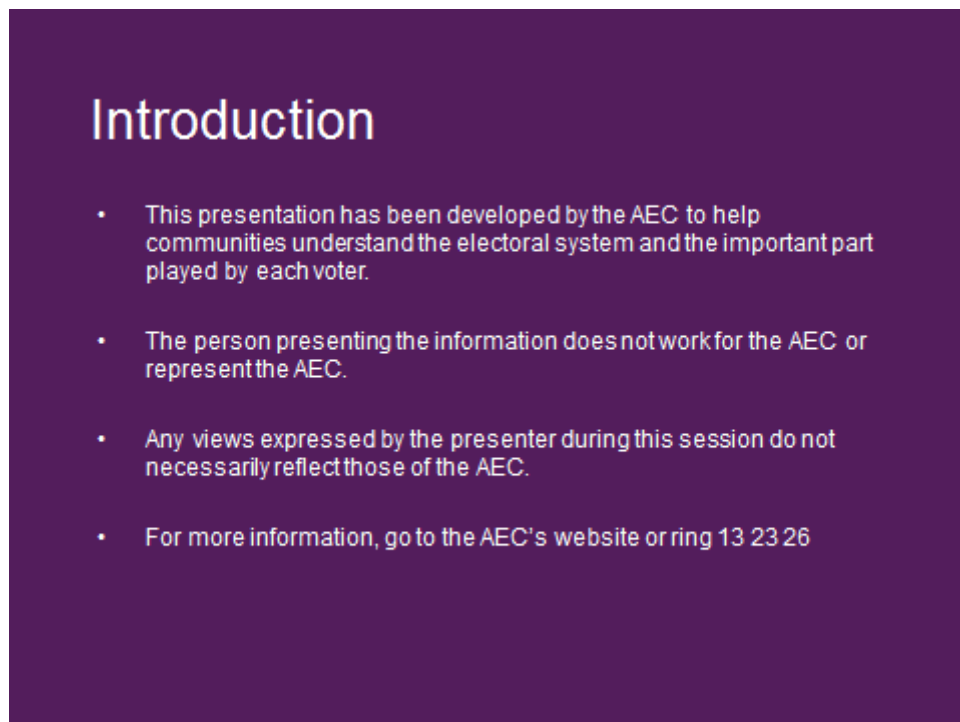
---

## Slide 1 of 7 Australian Democracy



- The first topic is called 'Australian Democracy'.
- This is an introduction to how government is structured in Australia, and will help you better understand your role in Australian democracy.

## Slide 2 of 7 Introduction



### Introduction

- This presentation has been developed by the AEC to help communities understand the electoral system and the important part played by each voter.
- The person presenting the information does not work for the AEC or represent the AEC.
- Any views expressed by the presenter during this session do not necessarily reflect those of the AEC.
- For more information, go to the AEC's website or ring 13 23 26

- This presentation was developed by the Australian Electoral Commission, or AEC.
- The AEC is responsible for:
  - delivering federal elections and referendums
  - maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll
  - providing electoral information and
  - providing education programs.
- I do not work for the AEC, and I do not represent the AEC.
- Any opinions I express are my own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the AEC.

## Slide 3 of 7 The three levels of government



- Australia has three levels of government: Local, State or Territory, and Federal (or National).
- Each level of government makes laws and decisions which shape the way Australians live every day.
- This slide shows some examples of the responsibilities of each level of government. These are just a few, and sometimes responsibility is shared across the different levels.
- Government decisions affect all of us.
- When you drive a car - you are affected by government decisions.
- If you go to hospital – you are affected by government decisions
- When you send your children to school, when you put the rubbish bin out for collection, when you receive a government benefit – you are affected by government decisions.
- Governments make decisions which affect us all.

## Slide 4 of 7 Who makes the decisions?

Topic 1: Australian Democracy



### Who makes the decisions?

- Candidate
- Policy
- Party
- Independent

- At election time, the people of Australia choose who will represent them.
- There are many people who would like to be your representative. They are called candidates.
- A candidate's ideas about what decisions the government should make are known as 'policies'. Policies tell you what the candidate will do if they are elected as a representative.
- Some candidates work together as a team, called a political party. Political parties are a group which share the same ideas and policies.
- Some candidates are independent. They do not belong to a political party.
- When voting, your job is to choose which candidate you want to represent you and your community.



## Slide 5 of 7 How do you know which candidate to vote for?




- To make an informed choice you need to know about candidates' policies, so you can choose the candidate who you think will make the best decisions for your community.
- You can find out about candidates and their policies in many ways:
  - Television, newspapers and radio
  - Information from candidates in the mail
  - You can look them up on the internet
  - Talk to friends, family and colleagues.
- At election time you will be able to find out who the candidates are for your area on the Australian Electoral Commission website.
- Remember, it is always up to you who you vote for. Australians are free to make their own decisions when voting.

## Slide 6 of 7 Why should you vote?

Topic 1: Australian Democracy

### Why should you vote?

- If you are an Australian citizen and over 18 years of age you must enrol and vote. It is the law.
- Voting gives you a say about the issues which affect you every day.



- If you are asking yourself the question 'why should I vote?', you might think about this:
  - As we will see shortly, it is the law. All Australian citizens over 18 must enrol and vote.
  - Perhaps more importantly, voting gives you a direct say in how Australia is governed.
- How Australia is governed affects your life and the things and people that matter most to you.

## Slide 7 of 7 Conclusion of topic 1



- That concludes topic 1.
- If you have any questions you can visit the Australian Electoral Commission website or call their information hotline.

# Disclaimer

---

This material is general in nature. It is made available on the understanding that the Commonwealth is not thereby engaged in rendering professional advice.

Before relying on the material in any important matter, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purposes, and should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances.

In some cases the material may incorporate or summarise views, guidelines or recommendations of third parties. Such material is assembled in good faith, but does not necessarily reflect the considered views of the Commonwealth, or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action.

Links to other websites are inserted for convenience and do not constitute endorsement of material at those sites, or any associated organisation, product or service.