

Community Electoral Education Kit

Speaking notes and Optional activities

TOPIC 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

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Goal

On completion of this topic participants will understand it is compulsory for all Australian citizens aged 18 years and over to enrol and to vote 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.

You can email any questions to community@aec.gov.au, and you will receive a response within three business days.

Please note: If you run the optional activities, this topic should take twenty minutes to deliver. If you do not run the activities, it should take about five minutes.

Preparation Checklist

These tasks should be completed prior to presenting this session	
Task	✓
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 2 'Do I have to enrol and vote?' slide show presentation from www.aec.gov.au/community	
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>	

Background notes

Voting is compulsory

The *Australian Electoral Act (1918)* requires that all Australian citizens aged 18 and over are required to enrol and vote.

Voters who are enrolled under the Electoral Act will also be entitled to vote at a referendum.

Non-voters

A voter will be guilty of an offence under section 245 of the Electoral Act and section 130 of the Referendum Act if the voter fails to vote at an election or a referendum without a valid and sufficient reason.

A penalty notice will be posted to a voter advising that he or she appears to have failed to vote and that it is an offence to fail to vote at an election or referendum without a valid and sufficient reason. The voter is further advised that if he or she does not wish to have the matter dealt with by a court, the voter may, within a specified time either:

- advise the Australian Electoral Commission of the circumstances in which they did in fact vote
- advise the Australian Electoral Commission of the valid and sufficient reason why they did not vote, or
- pay to the Australian Electoral Commission a penalty.

If the voter pays the penalty for failing to vote, then the matter ends there. Where a voter responds to the penalty notice and provides a reason for not voting, the Australian Electoral Commission must be satisfied that the reasons provided were valid and sufficient. If the reasons are not found to be valid and sufficient the Australian Electoral Commission may prosecute the voter.

History of compulsory voting in Australia

- Compulsory enrolment for federal elections was introduced in 1912.
- Compulsory voting for state elections was introduced in Queensland in 1915.
- Compulsory voting at federal elections was introduced in 1924.
- When Queensland introduced compulsory voting in 1915, it became the first place in the then British Empire to do so.
- Indigenous Australians gained the right to enrol and vote in 1962, however it was not compulsory for them to enrol until 1984.

Enrolling to vote is compulsory

Under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918)* it is compulsory for all eligible Australian citizens to enrol to vote in federal elections, by-elections and referendums.

Eligibility

To enrol to vote a person must be:

1. an Australian citizen **AND**
2. over 16 years of age.

Note: while a person can enrol at 16 they must be 18 to vote.

Getting enrolled

Enrolling to vote is quick and easy. It can be done by filling in an online form on the AEC website (www.aec.gov.au/enrol) or by filling in a paper copy of the form which is available at Australian Electoral Commission offices and is downloadable from the Australian Electoral Commission website. If you are enrolled you can witness forms for participants where that is a requirement.

Changing address/name

Every time an enrolled voter changes their address or their name they must update their details with the Australian Electoral Commission so that the electoral roll is accurate. Changes can be made quickly and easily on the Australian Electoral Commission website.

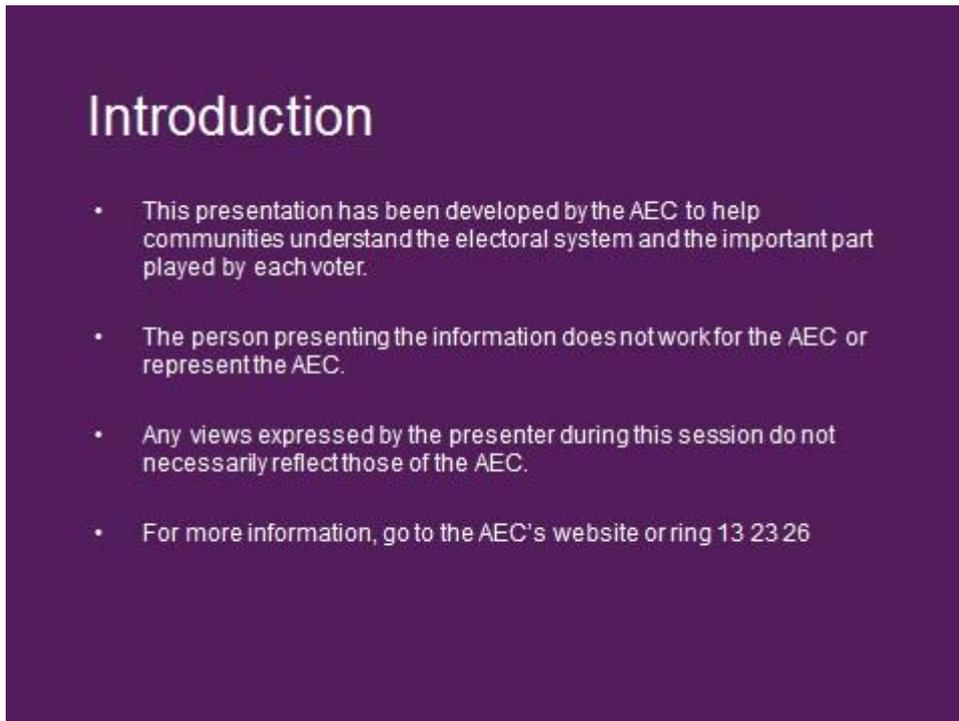
Speaking Notes

Slide 1 of 10 Do I have to enrol and vote?



- This topic will tell you all about your responsibility to enrol and vote in federal elections.

Slide 2 of 10 Introduction



Introduction

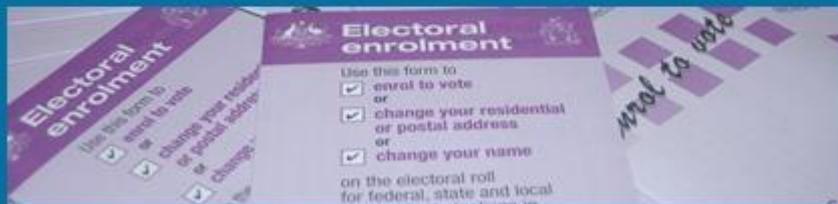
- This presentation has been developed by the AEC to help communities understand the electoral system and the important part played by each voter.
- The person presenting the information does not work for the AEC or represent the AEC.
- Any views expressed by the presenter during this session do not 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 10 Do I have to enrol and vote?

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

- All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over are required to vote. It is the law.
- To vote you must be enrolled on the Electoral Roll.



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Slide 4 of 10 Do I have to enrol and vote?

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

- If you are aged 18 years and over and an Australian citizen you must enrol to vote.
- If you are 16 or 17, you can enrol.

- If you are 18 years and over and an Australian citizen you must enrol to vote.
- If you are 16 or 17, you can enrol now so that you'll be ready to vote at the first election after your 18th birthday.

Slide 5 of 10 Do I have to enrol and vote? Cont.

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

- Everyone who is eligible to vote must be enrolled.
- If you have never enrolled, you can do it now and you won't be fined.

- If eligible to vote you must be enrolled.
- If you have never enrolled, you can do it now and you won't be fined.
- If you are not sure whether you are enrolled to vote you can check on the Australian Electoral Commission website.

Slide 6 of 10 Do I have to enrol and vote? Cont.

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

- Enrolling to vote is quick and easy.
- You can enrol by filling in an enrolment form, either online or using a paper version of the form.

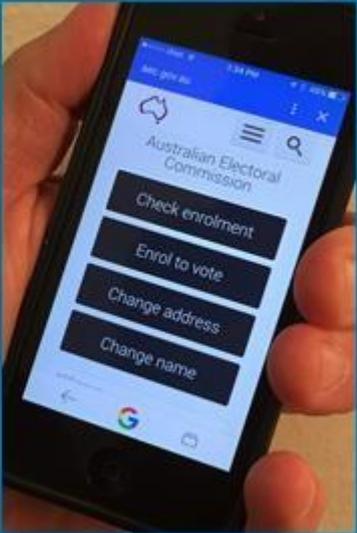


- Enrolling to vote is quick and easy.
- You can enrol by filling in an enrolment form, either online or a paper version of the form.
- Paper enrolment forms are available from any Australian Electoral Commission office.

Slide 7 of 10 Ensure your details are up to date

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

- Ensure your enrolled name and address details remain up to date.
- You can do this quickly and easily online:
www.aec.gov.au



- It is important that the Electoral Roll is up-to-date before each election so that everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so.
- If you change your address or your name, you must let the Australian Electoral Commission know. You can do this quickly and easily on their website.
- If you are on the Electoral Roll and you do not vote, you will receive a letter from the AEC and you may receive a fine.

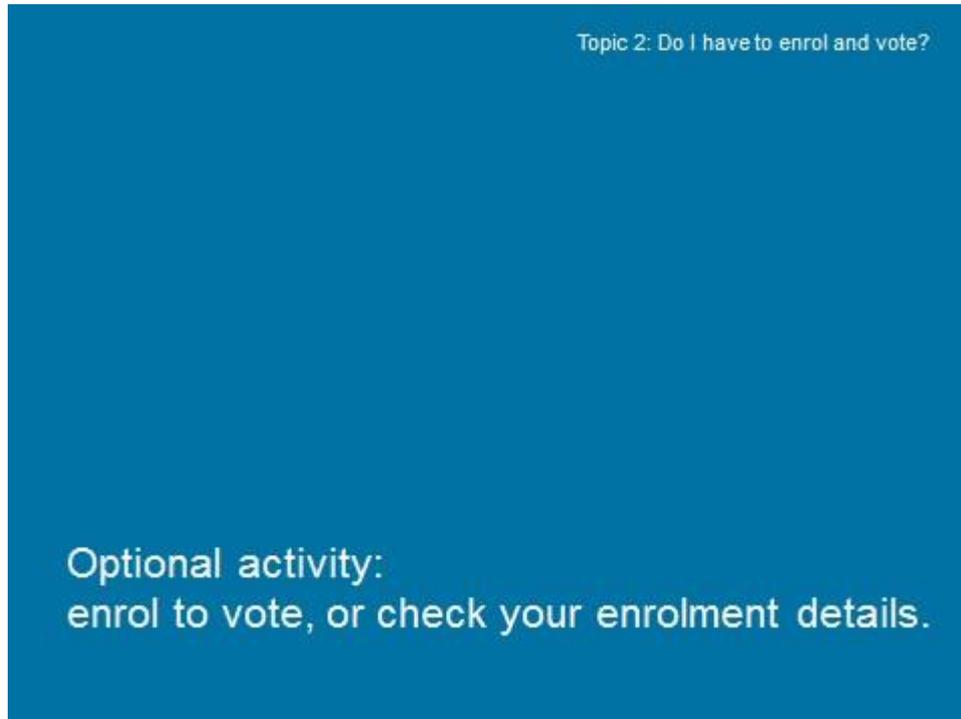
Slide 8 of 10

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

- It is compulsory for all Australian citizens aged 18 years and over to enrol and vote.
- It is your right and your responsibility.

- All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over have to vote. It is the law.

Slide 9 of 10 Optional activity



Now is a good time to run the optional activity 'check your enrolment and enrolment details'

Activity instructions and resources are provided on the website at www.aec.gov.au/community

Slide 10 of 10 Conclusion

Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

Conclusion
Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?

Question?

Visit www.aec.gov.au

or

Phone **13 23 26**



- That concludes Topic 2.

Optional activity: check / update your enrolment

Time required

15 minutes

Resources and Preparation

This activity will allow participants to check their enrolment on-line and to enrol if they are not already enrolled.

If you have internet access or participants have smartphones or tablets, follow the procedure in Column 1.

If there is no internet access or for people without smartphones use the procedure in Column 2.

Procedure

Column 1 With internet access (computer, smartphone, tablet or other devices)	Column 2 Without internet access
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct your participants to: <p style="text-align: center;">www.aec.gov.au</p>• Depending on the needs of your group you may:• Click on “check your enrolment” and follow the instructions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Click on “enrol to vote” and follow the instructions○ Click on “change my address” and follow the instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may provide your participants with paper enrolment forms in one of two ways:<p style="text-align: center;">Either</p>• Download the form from the AEC website and print multiple copies<p style="text-align: center;">Or</p>• Visit any AEC office and collect multiple copies.• Instruct your participants to follow the instructions depending on whether theirs is a first time enrolment or a change of details.• You can advise participants to drop the enrolment form at any AEC office or ask them if they would like you to drop them to an AEC office on their behalf.

Disclaimer

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