

# Community Electoral Education Kit

*Speaking notes and Optional activities*

*TOPIC 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted?*

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# Goal

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On completion of this topic, participants will understand how to complete their ballot papers correctly to ensure their vote will be counted.

## How to use this kit

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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.

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

# 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 5 'How do I make sure my vote gets counted?' 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>	
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# Background notes

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## Casting a formal vote for the House of Representatives (green ballot paper)

In House of Representatives elections, voters place a number '1' in the square beside the name of the candidate for whom the person votes as his or her first preference to be elected, and then must place consecutive numbers against the name of each and every other candidate on the ballot paper to show the order of the voter's preferences.

## Casting a formal vote for the Senate (white ballot paper)

To vote for Senators in your state or territory at the 2016 federal election, you must fill in your ballot paper in the order of your choice. You can do this by voting either above the line or below the line.

### **Voting above the line**

If you vote above the line, you must number at least six boxes from 1 to 6. By voting above the line, your preferences will be distributed in the order that the candidates appear below the line for the party or group you have chosen.

Your preferences will first be distributed to the candidates in the party or group of your first choice, then to candidates in the party or group of your second choice and so on, until all your preferences have been distributed.

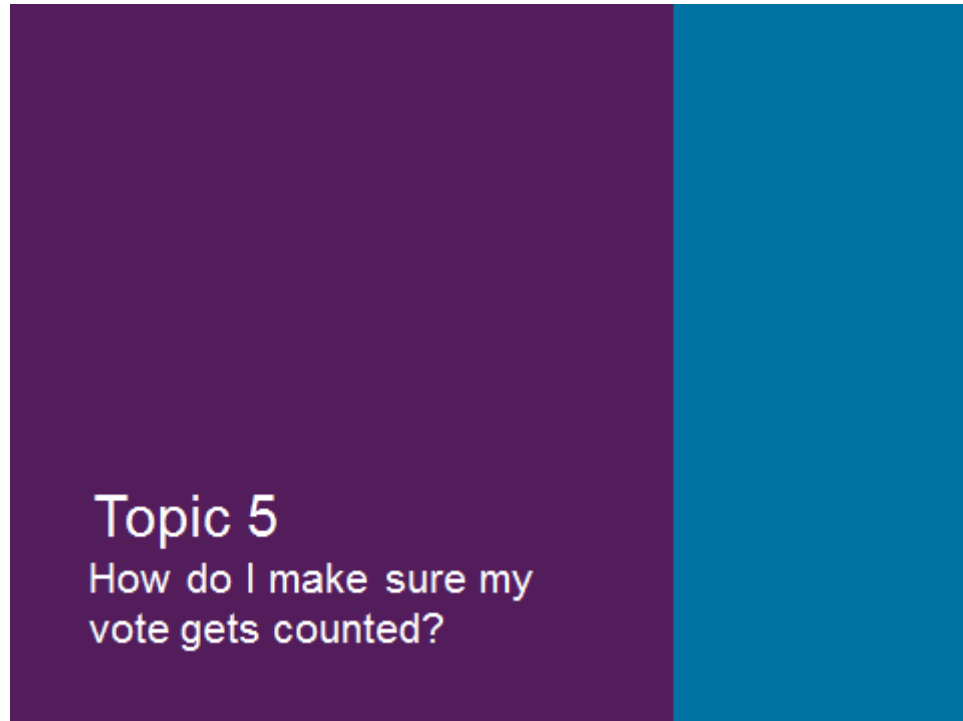
### **Voting below the line**

If you vote below the line, you must number at least twelve boxes from 1 to 12. By voting below the line your preferences will be distributed to the individual candidates as numbered on your ballot paper, in the order of your choice.

# Speaking Notes

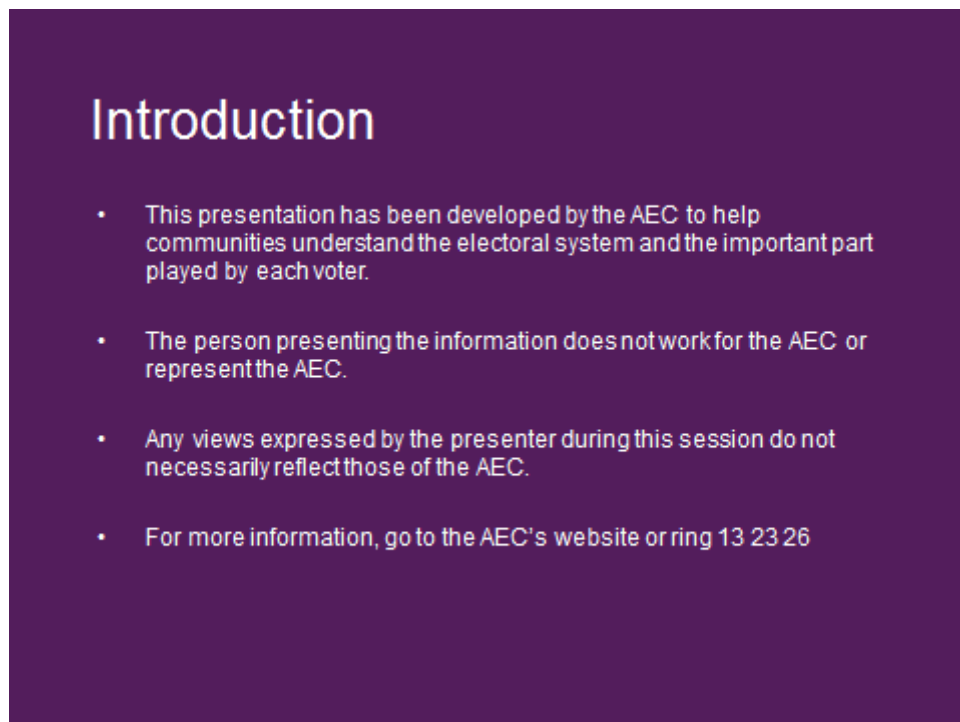
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Slide 1 of 10 What happens on election day?



- In this topic, we are going to talk about how you can make sure that your vote will be counted.

## 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 How do I make sure my vote gets counted? Cont.

Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted



- In a federal election you vote for representatives to the House of Representatives and to the Senate.
- Your vote can only be counted if you correctly complete both your ballot papers.

- In a federal election – that is, an election for a national government based in Canberra – you will usually vote to choose representatives to both the House of Representatives and the Senate. That is why you will be given two ballot papers to complete.
- Your vote can only be counted if you complete your ballot papers correctly. If you do not complete them correctly your vote will not be counted.
- We will now look at how to correctly complete each ballot paper.




## Slide 4 of 10 House of Representatives voting

Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted

### House of Representatives voting

- To vote in a House of Representatives election you will be given a green ballot paper.
- Follow the instructions.
- Number every box in the order of your choice.



- To vote in a House of Representatives election, you will be given a green ballot paper.
- The ballot paper will list the names of all the candidates who are hoping to be elected in your electorate. If the candidate belongs to a political party, the party name and logo will also be shown.
- Only one of the candidates named on the green paper will be elected to the House of Representatives to represent your electorate.
- To make sure your vote will count, you have to number the candidates from your first choice to your last choice.
- Write the number '1' in the box next to your first choice. Write the number '2' in the box next to your second choice, and so on until all the boxes have been numbered.

## Slide 5 of 10 Senate Voting

Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted

### Senate voting

- To vote in the Senate election you will be given a white ballot paper.
- This ballot paper has a black line across it.
- You can vote above the line OR below the line.



- To vote in a Senate election you will be given a white ballot paper.
- Some of the candidates named on the white paper will be elected to the Senate to represent your State or Territory.
- The number of candidates elected will usually be either six or two, depending on whether you live in a State or a Territory.
- This paper has a black line across it. Above the line is a list of political parties and groups, and below the line are the names of all the candidates. You can vote above or below the line.

## Slide 6 of 10 Senate voting – above the line

Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted

### Senate voting – above the line

If you want to vote above the line, you must number at least six boxes from 1 to 6.

The image shows a sample ballot for the Senate State Paper, State - Election of 6 Senators. The ballot is divided into two main sections: 'Above the line' and 'Below the line'. The 'Above the line' section is for voting by numbering at least six boxes from 1 to 6. The 'Below the line' section is for voting by marking an 'X' in the box of your choice with the number of your choice with number 1 to 6. The ballot is marked with a 'SAMPLE' watermark.

- If you vote above the line, you must number at least six boxes from 1 to 6, with 1 being your first choice, 2 your second choice and so on.
- By voting above the line, your preferences will be distributed in the order that the candidates appear below the line for the party or group you have chosen.
- Your preferences will be distributed to the candidates in the party or group of your first choice, then to the candidates in the party or group of your second choice and so on, until all your preferences have been distributed.

## Slide 7 of 10 Senate voting – below the line

### Senate voting – below the line

If you vote below the line you must number at least twelve boxes from 1 to 12.

The image shows a sample ballot paper for the Senate election. It is divided into two main sections: 'Above the line' and 'Below the line'. The 'Above the line' section is for party voting, with boxes for 'LIBERAL', 'CONSERVATIVE', 'NEW DEMOCRATIC', 'GREEN', 'BLOOMBERG', 'INDIAN', and 'OTHER'. The 'Below the line' section is for individual candidate voting, with boxes numbered 1 through 12. Each box contains the name of a candidate and a small box for the voter's mark. The ballot is marked 'SAMPLE' in the bottom right corner.

- If you choose to vote below the line, you must number at least twelve boxes from 1 to 12, with 1 being your first choice, 2 your second choice and so on until you have numbered at least 12.
- By voting below the line your preferences will be distributed to the individual candidates as numbered on your ballot paper, in the order of your choice.

## Slide 8 of 10 Instructions on how to vote

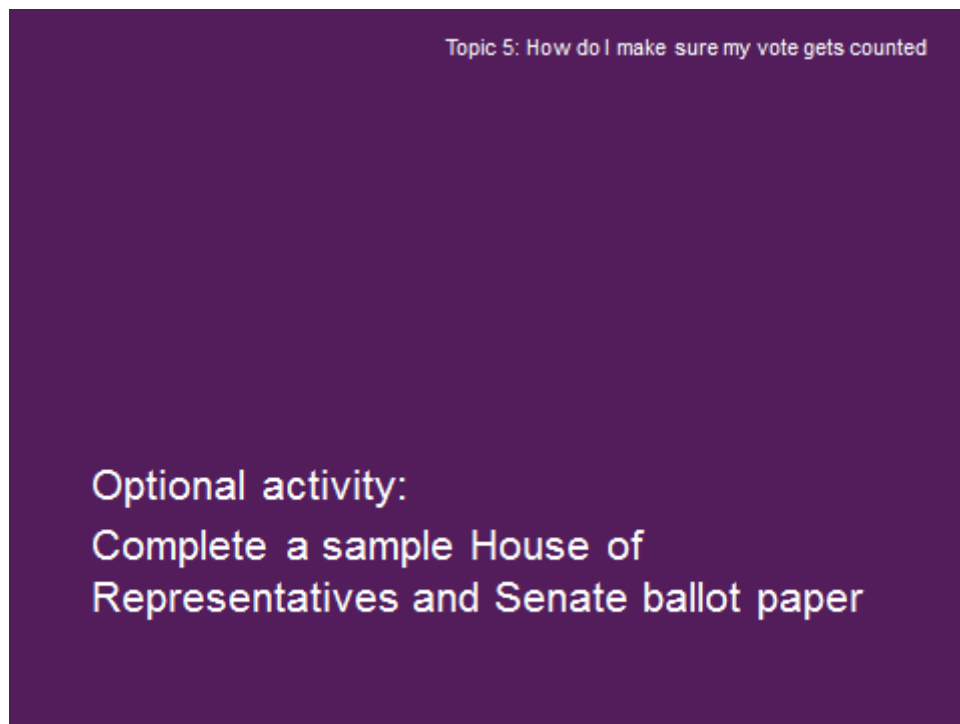
Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted

- Instructions are printed on the ballot papers.
- Follow the instructions and your vote will be counted.
- You can ask for help anytime.



- Instructions on how to vote are printed on the ballot papers.
- Simply follow the instructions and your vote will be counted.
- If you make a mistake or you are unsure what to do, just ask a polling official for help.
- Remember, to make your vote count you must correctly complete your ballot papers.

## Slide 9 of 10 Optional Activity



*This is a good time to run the optional activity 'Complete a sample House of Representatives and Senate ballot paper'.*

*Activity instructions and resources are provided on the website at [www.aec.gov.au/community](http://www.aec.gov.au/community).*

# Optional activity: Complete a sample House of Representatives ballot paper

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## Time required

10-20 minutes

## Resources and preparation

Printed House of Representatives practice ballot papers (1 per participant plus a few spares). These can be printed and copied from the samples provided below at page 6.

Pencil for each participant


## Procedure

1. Hand out ballot papers and pencils to participants.
2. Direct participants to the instructions on the ballot paper: Number the boxes from 1 to 4 in the order of your choice.
3. Ensure that these instructions are given slowly so that participants have time to complete each step before moving on to the next.
4. Say: "Choose the candidate who is your first choice. Put the number 1 in the box next to that candidate's name".
5. "Next, choose the candidate who is your second choice, and put the number 2 in the box next to their name".
6. "Now continue until you have numbered all the boxes".
7. Check each participant's ballot paper to ensure that it has been completed correctly.
8. If a participant makes a mistake or would like another turn, give them a spare ballot paper.


## Optional activity: Complete a sample House of Representatives ballot paper recourses

Blank House of Representatives-style practise ballot papers for Activity

Print and use as many as you need. Print in colour or on green paper if you can. If you are unable to print in colour or on green paper, be sure to emphasise to your participants that the real ballot papers are green.










House of Representatives  
Ballot Paper



State \_\_\_\_\_


**Electoral Division of Division Name**

**Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in the order of your choice**


 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names INDEPENDENT
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY

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

SAMPLE









House of Representatives  
Ballot Paper



State \_\_\_\_\_

**Electoral Division of Division Name**

**Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in the order of your choice**

<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names INDEPENDENT
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY
 <input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, Given Names PARTY

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

SAMPLE





House of Representatives  
Ballot Paper



State

Electoral Division of Division Name

Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in  
the order of your choice

☐ SURNAME, Given Names  
INDEPENDENT

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐ SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

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

**SAMPLE**



House of Representatives  
Ballot Paper



State

Electoral Division of Division Name

Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in  
the order of your choice

☐ SURNAME, Given Names  
INDEPENDENT

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐ SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

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

**SAMPLE**



House of Representatives  
Ballot Paper



State

Electoral Division of Division Name

Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in  
the order of your choice

☐ SURNAME, Given Names  
INDEPENDENT

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐ SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

☐  SURNAME, Given Names  
PARTY

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

**SAMPLE**

# Optional activity: complete a sample Senate ballot paper

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## Time required

10-20 minutes

## Resources and preparation

Printed Senate-style ballot papers (2 per participant plus a few spares). These can be printed and copied from the samples provided below at page 14.

Pencil for each participant

## Procedure

### Voting above the line

1. Hand out one ballot paper and pencils to each participant.
2. Ask participants to complete the first Senate ballot paper by voting 'above the line'.
3. Ensure that these instructions are given slowly so that participants have time to complete each step before moving on to the next.
4. Say "Choose the party or group which is your first choice. Put the number 1 in the box under that party or group".
5. "Next, choose the party or group which is your second choice, and put the number 2 in that box".
6. "Continue until at least six of the boxes have been numbered. You may number more than six boxes if you wish".

### Voting below the line

1. Hand out the second ballot paper to participants. Ask participants to complete the second Senate ballot paper by voting 'below the line'.
2. Say: "Choose the candidate who is your first choice. Put the number 1 in the box next to that candidate's name"
3. "Next, choose the candidate who is your second choice, and put the number 2 in the box next to their name".
4. "Continue until at least twelve of boxes are numbered. You may number more than twelve boxes if you wish".
5. Encourage participants to ask you for help if they are having difficulty with this activity.
6. Check each participant's ballot papers to ensure that they have been completed correctly.
7. If a participant has made a mistake or would like another turn give them a spare ballot paper.

## Optional activity: complete a sample Senate ballot paper recourses

Blank Senate-style practise ballot papers for Activity

Print and use as many as you need. Print on white paper if you can. If you are unable to print on white paper, be sure to emphasise to your participants that the real ballot papers are white.

Senate Ballot Paper

State – Election of 6 Senators

**You may vote in one of two ways**

**Either**

**Above the line**  
By numbering at least **6** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
  PARTY	  PARTY	   PARTY	  PARTY	  PARTY	   PARTY	 

**Or**

**Below the line**  
By numbering at least **12** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	UNGROUPED
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT

SAMPLE

Senate Ballot Paper

State – Election of 6 Senators

**You may vote in one of two ways**

**Either**

**Above the line**  
By numbering at least **6** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
  PARTY	  PARTY	   PARTY	  PARTY	  PARTY	   PARTY	 

**Or**

**Below the line**  
By numbering at least **12** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	UNGROUPED
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT

SAMPLE



Senate Ballot Paper  
State – Election of 6 Senators



**You may vote in one of two ways**

**Either**

**Above the line**

By numbering at least **6** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	

**Or**

**Below the line**

By numbering at least **12** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	UNGROUPED
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
	SURNAME Given Names PARTY					

SAMPLE



Senate Ballot Paper  
State – Election of 6 Senators



**You may vote in one of two ways**

**Either**

**Above the line**

By numbering at least **6** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	

**Or**

**Below the line**

By numbering at least **12** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	PARTY	UNGROUPED
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names PARTY	SURNAME Given Names INDEPENDENT
	SURNAME Given Names PARTY					

SAMPLE

## Slide 10 of 10 Conclusion

All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over must enrol and must vote.

Follow the instructions, make sure your vote gets counted.

For more information visit  
**[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**



- That concludes this topic, and is also the end of this information session.
- I would like to leave you with just three thoughts.
- [CLICK] If you are an Australian Citizen and over 18 years of age, you must enrol and you must vote.
- [CLICK] When you are voting, follow the instructions on the ballot paper and make sure your vote gets counted.
- [CLICK] If you have any questions or want to know more about the things we have heard today, visit the Australian Electoral Commission website.
- Thank your participants for attending. Direct any questions to the AEC website or information line – 13 23 26.

# Disclaimer

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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.