

# ELECTION 2007



Your **official guide** to the 2007 federal election  
**SATURDAY 24th NOVEMBER**

# **Your official guide to the 2007 federal election**

This Large Print version contains important information about the 2007 federal election.

The federal election will be held on Saturday 24 November 2007.

If you have any enquiries about voting in the election call the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) on 13 23 26 from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call.

The AEC call centre will be open from 8am to 8pm local time seven days a week until election day. On election day the call centre will be open from 7am to 11pm local time. On the day after election day the call centre will be open from 9am to 5pm local time. After that the call centre will be open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

This version was made by Vision Australia on 29 October 2007 on behalf of the Australian Electoral Commission.

The information in this publication is also available in Braille, audio CD or cassette or e-text. To order a free copy of these formats call the AEC on 13 23 26. In addition, you can download an audio MP3, e-text or a large print PDF version from the AEC website at **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**.

Copies of candidate information in audio and other accessible formats will also be available on the AEC

website or on request after the declaration of nominations by calling the AEC on 13 23 26.

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## Introduction

Saturday 24 November 2007 is federal election day.

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

You can vote at any polling place in your electorate on election day.

If you cannot get to a polling place in your electorate, this booklet has information on other ways to vote.

You can contact the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to find your electorate and nearest polling place by phoning 13 23 26 or visiting the website **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**. Polling places will also be advertised in major newspapers before election day.

Voting is compulsory for Australian citizens on the electoral roll aged 18 years and over. If you do not vote and do not have a good reason, you may face a penalty.

Your vote is a valuable thing. Make sure your vote counts - this booklet has information on where and when to vote, and how to vote correctly.

This booklet is available in other accessible formats. You can phone the AEC on 13 23 26 to request a Braille, audio (CD or cassette), e-text or large print version. You can download an audio MP3 or a large print PDF version from the AEC website **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**.

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can call the AEC through the National Relay

Service: TTY users phone 13 36 77 and ask for 13 23 26, Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) voice only users can phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 13 23 26.

## **When and where to vote**

### **When do I vote?**

The federal election is on Saturday 24 November 2007.

### **Where can I vote?**

Usually, voting takes place at a polling place. If you are in your local area on election day you can vote at any polling place in your electorate. All polling places will be open from 8am to 6pm.

Find out where to vote locally with the polling place locator at **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**, or phone the AEC on 13 23 26. Polling places will also be listed in major newspapers.

### **Polling places with disabled access**

Over the last few elections the Australian Electoral Commission has significantly increased the number of polling places with full or assisted disabled access.

To find out which polling places will have full or assisted disabled access, go to **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)** or phone the AEC on 13 23 26. The AEC advertising in major newspapers will also indicate which polling places have disabled access.

Each polling place has at least one wheelchair access table top voting screen.

## **What if I cannot get inside the polling place?**

If you are unable to enter a polling place because of a physical disability or other conditions, you may vote outside close to the polling place, for example, in your car. If the Officer in Charge of the polling place is satisfied that you cannot enter the polling place, someone will bring the ballot papers to you.

## **What if I need help to vote?**

You can ask someone to help you vote. Polling place staff are trained to assist you, or you can nominate any person (except a candidate) to assist. This person could be a friend or relative or a party worker.

## **Trial of electronic voting for people who are blind or who have low vision**

At the 2007 federal election there will be, for the first time, a trial of electronic voting in 29 locations around Australia to allow people who are blind or who have low vision to cast a secret and independent vote.

To find the trial location nearest to you, phone the AEC on 13 23 26 or visit **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**

Electronic voting will be available for two weeks leading up to election day, and on election day. The machines accept a vote for any electorate in Australia, so if you

live near one of the trial locations, but it is not in your electorate, you can still take up this opportunity.

To cast an electronic vote, you listen to instructions through headphones and respond on a telephone style keypad to complete your ballot papers. The vote is printed in code and then placed in an envelope before being put in the ballot box. Your vote will be completely secret.

A practice session is available before you record your actual vote, and a polling official will be able to assist you to the seat and explain how the machine works.

## **Are there other ways to vote?**

Depending on your circumstances, you **may** be eligible to vote:

- **at an early voting centre or AEC office.** Early voting centres allow you to vote in person before election day. Early voting centres are in convenient locations such as shopping centres and airports and some will be open outside normal business hours. For more information visit **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**.
- **by post.** You can apply for a postal vote by filling out an application form. Ballot papers will then be posted to you and once you have completed them, send them to the AEC in the reply paid envelope provided. Postal vote application forms can be found at any post office, AEC office or **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**.

If you decide to do a postal vote you must remember to leave plenty of time for your ballot papers to be posted to you. You must apply for a postal vote before Thursday 22 November and your completed ballot papers must be postmarked before 6pm on election day. If not, your vote cannot be counted.

## **What if I am away from home on election day?**

You can still vote.

If you'll be in your home state or territory on election day but outside your electorate, you can vote at any polling place. This is called an absent vote.

If you'll be in another state or territory on election day you can vote at any AEC divisional office or interstate voting centre. It's important to remember you can't vote at just any polling place; it has to be a special interstate voting centre. Alternatively, you can vote before you leave at an early voting centre or by post.

If you'll be overseas on election day you can vote in person or by post at most Australian overseas embassies or missions (check before you visit). You can also vote before you leave Australia at an early voting centre or by post.

Contact the AEC by phoning 13 23 26 or visiting **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)** for more information on the locations of polling places, early voting centres and interstate voting centres.

## **What if I'm in hospital or a nursing home on election day?**

Some hospitals and nursing homes are visited by mobile polling teams during the days before the election or on election day. If this is not the case at your hospital or nursing home, you can apply for a postal vote. Application forms are often available from hospital or nursing home receptions.

## **What if I'm in a remote area on election day?**

Many remote townships and communities are visited by mobile polling teams. This usually starts about 2 weeks before election day. Check for posters at your local council office, listen to the radio or read your local paper for times and dates mobile teams are visiting your area. You may also be able to apply for a postal vote if a mobile team isn't coming near you.

## **What if I have another reason why I can't vote on election day?**

There may be other reasons why you are unable to vote on election day. For example:

- being more than 8km from a polling place in your state or territory
- approaching childbirth
- having a serious illness or caring for someone who is ill
- having religious beliefs that prevent you from attending a polling place on election day
- working or travelling on election day

In these cases you can vote in person before the day at an early voting centre or by post.

Some defence service personnel serving overseas will have the opportunity to vote electronically as part of a secure electronic voting trial—This trial is an Australian first.

A person serving a prison sentence of under three years is entitled to vote. Prisoners may be able to use mobile polling services or vote by post.

## **At the polling place**

### **What happens at a polling place?**

At the polling place a polling official will:

- ask for your full name and address and if you have voted before in this election, and
- check your name on the electoral roll

You will be given two ballot papers:

- a House of Representatives paper
- a Senate paper

### **Completing the ballot papers**

There are different ways to complete each ballot paper. Ask a polling official for help if you are unsure.

For the green smaller House of Representatives ballot paper you must number every box. Do not use ticks, crosses or leave boxes blank on the House of Representatives ballot paper or your vote won't count.

For the larger white Senate ballot paper you have a choice of ways to vote.

You can either:

- just mark 1 in a box above the line for the party or group of your choice. By doing this, you're following their Group Voting Ticket and allowing the order of your votes to be determined by the party or group. To find out more about the Group Voting Ticket visit **[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)**.
- or, you can choose to fill in every box below the line in the order of your preference. You must put a number 1 in the box beside the candidate who is your first choice, number 2 in the box beside your second choice, and so on, until you have numbered every box.

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

Once you have completed your ballot papers, fold and place each ballot paper in the separate ballot boxes provided.

If you are interested in how votes are counted go to [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au).

Outside the polling place political party workers may give you how-to-vote cards, suggesting you vote for a particular candidate or party. You do not have to follow these cards. How you choose to vote is your decision.

## **What if the polling official cannot find my name on the electoral roll?**

You can still vote—this is called a provisional vote.

To cast a provisional vote you will need to provide proof of identity—either at the polling place or by close of business on the first Friday after election day. It's a good idea to bring identification with you to the polling place—just in case. A range of identification is acceptable such as a driver's licence, Medicare card or student card.

A provisional vote is a vote that is sealed in an envelope when a voter's name cannot be found on the electoral roll. The envelope is signed by the voter and the voter's name is checked against the electoral roll to see if their vote can be counted.

## **Changes to electoral boundaries**

### **Do you live in New South Wales, Queensland, or the Australian Capital Territory?**

If so, your electoral boundaries may have changed.

Since the 2004 federal election there have been changes to some of the electoral boundaries in ACT, NSW and QLD. You may now be in a different electorate, even if you haven't moved address. To check which electorate you will be voting in visit [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au) or phone 13 23 26.

## More information

Contact the AEC by phoning 13 23 26 or visiting [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au) for more information on:

- election day polling places
- early voting centres
- interstate voting centres
- mobile polling details
- AEC divisional offices
- postal voting information

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) conducts federal elections and referendums, maintains the Commonwealth electoral roll and provides a range of electoral information and education programs.

The AEC is an independent statutory authority.

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