



**AEC**

Australian Electoral Commission

Referendum 2023

# Print specifications

for members of Parliament  
preparing the Yes and No cases

# Introduction

These print specifications are designed to assist members of Parliament preparing the cases for and against the proposed law to alter the Constitution.

The *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984* (the Act) includes the requirements for the preparation and distribution of the pamphlet containing the Yes and No cases (section 11(1)).

The Act provides that where within four weeks after the passage of the proposed law – Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) 2023 – there is forwarded to the Electoral Commissioner:

1. an argument in favour of the proposed law, consisting of not more than 2,000 words, authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted for the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument – the Yes case, or
2. an argument against the proposed law, consisting of not more than 2,000 words, authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted against the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument – the No case

the Electoral Commissioner shall cause to be printed a pamphlet containing those arguments and the textual alterations proposed to be made to the Constitution in preparation for sending the pamphlet to electors by no later than 14 days before the voting day for the referendum.

The Electoral Commissioner's obligation is to cause to be printed and to be sent the arguments forwarded to the Electoral Commissioner. The Act does not limit or otherwise direct the Electoral Commissioner in relation to the appearance of the pamphlet (including font, size, colour and positioning).

These specifications provide specific information about the style and format of the pamphlet to assist parliamentarians (members) preparing the Yes and No cases.

The AEC has no role in preparing the cases.

# The process

## The AEC requests:

1. Members preparing the official Yes or No cases prepare the argument on the Word template included with these specifications.
2. Members preparing the official Yes or No cases complete the pro forma authorisation to be provided to nominated chairs. This will enable the AEC to ensure that a case is authorised by a majority of those members who voted for/against the proposed law and desire to forward a case.

## Please note:

3. The authorised case must be 'forwarded to the Electoral Commissioner' by the deadline (section 11(1)(b)). The version provided to the AEC will be treated as final. Refer to [How to submit](#) below.
4. As per section 11(1) of the Act, only one submission will be accepted by the AEC for the Yes case and only one submission will be accepted by the AEC for the No case.

## Role of the AEC:

1. On receipt of the final content, the AEC will import the cases into a Word document for typesetting.
2. The AEC will cross-check the Yes/No cases, to ensure that they are as lodged, and finalise the pamphlet.
3. As required by section 11(2) of the Act, the pamphlet will be printed and sent by the AEC to each address on the electoral roll as early as practicable and no later than 14 days before voting day.

# What can be submitted?

1. The words provided will be the exact words printed. There will be no corrections or editorial changes made by the AEC for accuracy, grammar, sense or any other reason.
2. As required by section 11(1) of the Act, the word limit for each case is 2,000 words. A case with more than 2,000 words will not be printed or distributed to electors.
3. The Act requires that a case be authorised by 'a majority of those members of Parliament who voted for (or against) the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument'. Refer to [How to submit](#) below for forms of authorisations the Electoral Commissioner will accept.
4. As required by section 11(1) of the Act, each case must contain only text. The AEC will not publish graphics, icons, photographs, pictures, cartoons, tables, graphs, diagrams or anything similar in nature.
5. Numerals will be counted as words. Refer to [Counting of words](#) below.
6. While the Electoral Commissioner's decision will be final, the AEC will refer to the *Macquarie Dictionary Eighth Edition* when determining the acceptability of hyphenated words. Refer to [Counting of words](#) below.
7. The pamphlet design allows three levels of headings, followed by text. Members are welcome to use the headings, subheadings and text styles in the document. A sample pamphlet is at [Attachment A](#).
8. Content of each case is at the discretion of members preparing each case. However, members may wish to consider the points outlined in the [Content considerations](#) below.
9. A case cannot be accepted after the deadline, which is four weeks after the passage of the legislation to alter the Constitution (the deadline is by 11:59PM AEST on Monday 17 July 2023).

# Content considerations

The AEC has conducted market research to test the pamphlet layout, readability, accessibility and impartiality. The market research recommended cases use:

- simple language (use plain English and avoid jargon and complex language)
- short sentences and paragraphs
- subheadings and dot points
- respectful language.

The above recommendations will also assist in the translation of the cases into other languages.

Further resources that may be useful to support content development include:

- the Australian Government [Style Manual](#) – for guidance on [plain English](#) and [readability](#)
- the [Australian Government Language Services Guidelines](#) – for guidance on material for translation.

# Design and typesetting

The AEC will manage the design and printing. Some sample pamphlet pages are included in [Attachment A](#).

The printed pamphlet will be 210mm wide x 275mm high (undersize A4) and the text for each case will be printed in black ink. Design elements will clearly identify the Yes case and the No case.

The pamphlet will contain:

1. the proposed alteration to the Constitution
2. the text of the cases

The pamphlet will be printed in a document that also includes the AEC's *Official guide to the 2023 referendum*, immediately following the Yes/No cases. The official guide has details about voting formality, enrolment and where people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can find information.

# Microsoft Word template

The AEC requests that members send their cases in the Word template to



The AEC will use this file to typeset the pamphlet, including text styles and standard fonts.

No additional formatting, design or layout should be applied to the template. Text styles have been included in the template to indicate text hierarchy. The following text styles can be applied:

- Heading level 1
- Heading level 2
- Heading level 3
- Normal (text copy)
- Bullet list
- Numbered list
- List paragraph

Where appropriate, **bold** for emphasis and *italic* for citation may be applied to words within the body copy.

The AEC will remove any formatting or design elements that differ from those listed above.

Text flow, line breaks and page breaks will change.

# Counting of words

The AEC can only print and distribute a case to electors if the case consists of not more than 2,000 words. The Electoral Commissioner will use the following criteria in determining the number of words contained in an argument:

Category	Example	Number of words
Hyphenated words*	co-author sub-branch 1901–1902	one
Slashed words	Victoria/Tasmania 1901/1902 secretary/treasurer	one
Abbreviations	AGS GG eg ie	one
One-letter words	A I	one
Numerals	2 63 476 2,398	one (‘one million’ counts as two words, ‘one million dollars’ counts as three words, ‘\$64m’ counts as one word)
Years	1901 2023	one
Headings and subheadings		words used will contribute to 2,000-word total
Titles	Dr Professor Mr Ms	one (‘Dr Smith’ counts as two words, ‘Ms Jane Smith OBE’ counts as four words)
Honorifics	OBE AM	one
Symbols	%	nil (‘60%’ counts as one word, but ‘60 per cent’ counts as three words)
Punctuation	? . ! : “	nil
Hashtag	#word #twowords	one

\*Hyphenated words are only permitted when they are used according to standard usage. Hyphens will not be accepted where they are used in an attempt to reduce the number of words. The following examples are generally accepted hyphenations:

- for compound numbers, eg forty-six
- for two-part components, where one of the parts cannot stand as an independent word, eg sub-zero, re-election, non-standard
- for compound expressions, eg flow-on, multi-party, and
- to avoid ambiguity, eg three two-metre lengths.

# How to submit

A majority of those members of Parliament who voted for or against the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument must authorise in writing the relevant case.

The Electoral Commissioner is required to be satisfied that the relevant case is authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted for or against the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument. As authorisation, the Electoral Commissioner will accept:

1. the argument itself signed by the members authorising it
2. signed authorities sufficient to show that the argument is authorised by such members, or
3. authority given by a certificate signed by a nominated chair, which certifies to the authority given and the names of the members giving the authority.

The AEC strongly recommends that members of Parliament use option 3 to authorise the relevant case.

Cases must be received by the AEC no later than  
**11:59PM AEST on Monday 17 July 2023.**

## Email documents to

[REDACTED]

- Signed authorisation as an email pdf
- Completed case of up to 2,000 words in the specified Word template

Note: The AEC will also require a signed hard copy version of the authorisation and relevant Yes or No case. Collection of this will be coordinated with the nominated chairs.

# For more information

Contact the **Referendum Pamphlet Project Team** on email: [REDACTED]

# Attachment A

## The case for voting

Yes

The case for voting **YES** is presented on the **left hand pages**.

**A proposed law:**

Dit laut molupid maximendant dolorest, quoditatur, quas aut aut autatesto et id quodis diciam faccabo runtionet eos voluta netur molum hari rescidem untum fugit harcuis preris dolupta tibeat anducia ectatecus aut et alitatur.

Please note: The content of this argument was authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted for the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument. The text has been printed and presented without amendment by the Electoral Commissioner.

## The case for voting

No

The case for voting **NO** is presented on the **right hand pages**.

**A proposed law:**

Dit laut molupid maximendant dolorest, quoditatur, quas aut aut autatesto et id quodis diciam faccabo runtionet eos voluta netur molum hari rescidem untum fugit harcuis preris dolupta tibeat anducia ectatecus aut et alitatur.

Please note: The content of this argument was authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted against the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument. The text has been printed and presented without amendment by the Electoral Commissioner.

Your official referendum booklet | The case for voting YES

Your official referendum booklet | The case for voting NO

sample two-page spread

## The case for voting

Yes

### Heading 1

Et ex exere sum lam, cuptate none corrorro blat pro dolorru ptasim audiaspit assed et eum delest, quid ut dicis dolum quo ipsapriet facis dolupta tiatesto omnim expersp ereptatem fuga.

Et ex exere sum lam, cuptate none corrorro blat pro dolorru ptasim audiaspit assed et eum delest, quid ut dicis dolum quo ipsapriet facis dolupta tiatesto omnim expersp ereptatem fuga.

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### Heading 2

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An example XXXXX

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Please note: The content of this argument was authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted for the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument. The text has been printed and presented without amendment by the Electoral Commissioner.

The case for YES continues page 10 ©

## The case for voting

No

### Heading 1

Et ex exere sum lam, cuptate none corrorro blat pro dolorru ptasim audiaspit assed et eum delest, quid ut dicis dolum quo ipsapriet facis dolupta tiatesto omnim expersp ereptatem fuga.

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Please note: The content of this argument was authorised by a majority of those members of Parliament who voted against the proposed law and desire to forward such an argument. The text has been printed and presented without amendment by the Electoral Commissioner.

The case for NO continues page 11 ©

Your official referendum booklet | The case for voting YES

Your official referendum booklet | The case for voting NO

sample two-page spread





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