

How to vote by mail

An Easy Read guide



How to use this guide



The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) wrote this guide.

When you see the word 'we', it means AEC.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold
Not bold

We wrote some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 30.



You can find other Easy Read guides on our website.

www.aec.gov.au



You can ask for support to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this guide?

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Voting in a referendum



When you **vote**, you help to choose if the Australian people change the Constitution.



The Australian **Constitution** is a set of rules that are used to run Australia.



When you vote in a **referendum**, you help to decide if Australia should change the Constitution.



The Prime Minister will set the date for the referendum.

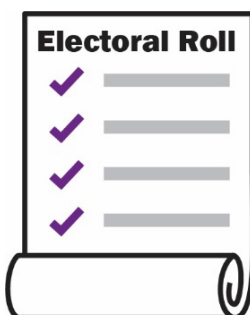
It will be on a Saturday.



On that day, Australians will vote 'YES' or 'NO'.



Before you can vote, you **enrol**.

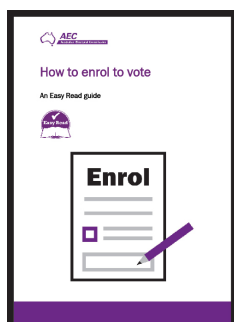


When you enrol, we put your name on a list of **voters** – people who can vote.

We call this list the **electoral roll**.



If you are on the electoral roll, you are also enrolled for referendums.



You can read our guide that explains how to enrol – *How to enrol to vote*.



You must enrol and vote if you are:

- an Australian **citizen**
- and
- aged 18 years old or older.



A citizen is someone who has the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



Voting lets you have your say about the decisions people make in our country.

When do you need to vote?



The Prime Minister will set the date for the referendum.

We will tell people what the referendum date is once we know.



If you want to find out when voting day is, you can:

- visit our website www.aec.gov.au
- call us on **13 23 26**.

You can also:



- ask a family member, friend or neighbour



- watch the news on TV



- search online

What if you can't vote on voting day?



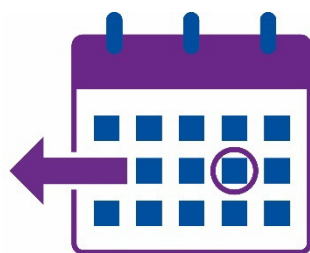
Sometimes, people can't vote on voting day.



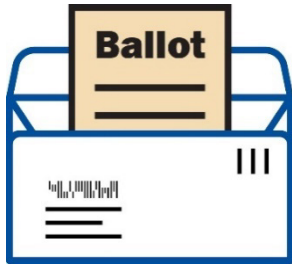
This might be because they are going away on holiday.



Or maybe they will be in hospital.



If you can't vote on the day, you can vote before voting day.



You can send us your vote in the mail.

This is called a **postal vote**.



You can apply for a postal vote.

We explain how to make a postal vote on page 12.



You can also vote at some **polling places** before voting day.



A polling place is a building where people go to vote.

For example, a:

- school
- community centre.



When we know the date of the referendum,
we will put a list of polling places on our website.

www.aec.gov.au



If you call us, we will help you find
a polling place.

13 23 26

How do you ask for a postal vote?



You can ask us for a postal vote by filling out a form.

We call this a postal vote application.

You can fill out your postal vote application:



- online



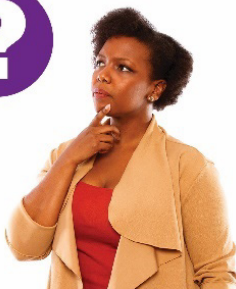
- on paper.

How to fill out your postal vote application online



You can fill out a postal vote application on our website once we know when voting day is.

www.aec.gov.au/pva



You need to answer some questions.

We explain these questions on page 16.



You can ask for help to fill out your postal vote application online.

Submit

When you finish, use the 'Submit' button to send your application to us.

How to fill out your postal vote application on paper



You can get a postal vote application form at any AEC office.

Or you can print one from the AEC website.



If you call us, we can send you a form in the mail.

Our number is **13 23 26**



You need to answer some questions on the form.

We explain these questions on page 16.



You can ask for help to fill out your postal vote application form.



When you finish, you need to return the form to us.



You can post it to us.

AEC

Reply Paid 9988

In your capital city

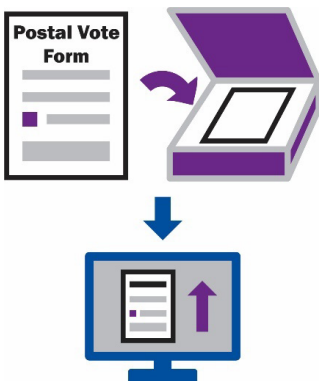
You don't need to use a stamp.



You can take the form to an AEC office.

If you call us, we can help you to find an AEC office near you.

13 23 26



You can scan it and upload it to our website.

www.aec.gov.au/pva

Questions on the postal vote application



We will ask you for your address.

You need to use the same address you gave us when you enrolled to vote.



Another question we will ask you is where to send your **ballot paper**.

A ballot paper is a form that you fill out to show how you want to vote.

You can give us:



- the address where you live



- another address where all your mail goes



- an address you will be visiting in another state or country.



We will also ask you a security question.

It is like a password.

You can:



- choose your security question



- write your own answer.



You need to remember your answer.



You might want to write it down and keep it safe.

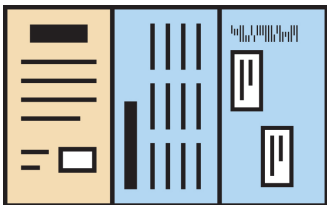
When will you get your ballot paper?



We will send your ballot paper to you when it's time to vote.



You will get it in the mail.



We will give you a referendum ballot paper.

It will be attached to a **blue certificate**.

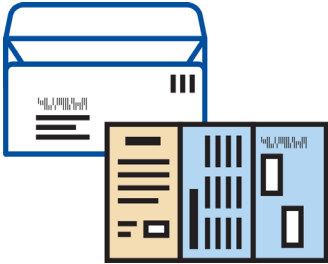
Your blue certificate explains who you are.

It will include:



- your name
- your address
- the security question you gave us in your application.

We will also give you a white return envelope.



You can put your:

- ballot paper in it
- blue certificate in it.

Then you can send it back to us.

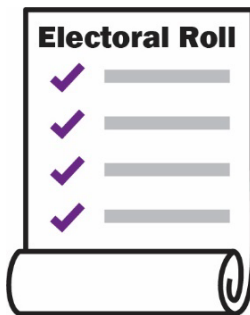


We will also give you a guide to voting by mail.

What do you do with your ballot paper?



Before you can vote, you need to get a **witness**.



Your witness needs to be on the electoral roll.



For example, they could be your:

- family member
- friend.



Your witness needs to make sure you fill out your own ballot paper.

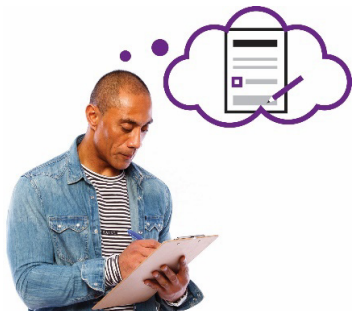


Before you fill them out, show your witness your:

- ballot paper
- blue certificate.



You can also answer the security question.



You need to write the same answer to the security question that you gave us on your application.

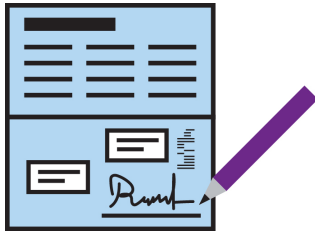


After that, you need to sign your name.



You can ask your witness to help you.

When you finish, your witness needs to:



- sign the blue certificate

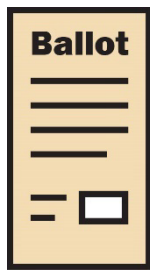


- write the date.



When you've done this, you're ready to vote.

How do you fill out your ballot paper?



You need to follow the instructions on the ballot paper for your vote to count.

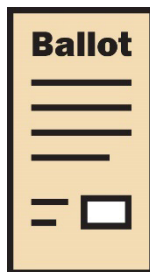
The instructions will ask if you want the Constitution to change.



Your vote is secret.

No one can tell you how to vote.

It's your decision.



You can write 'YES' or 'NO' in the box at the bottom of your ballot paper.



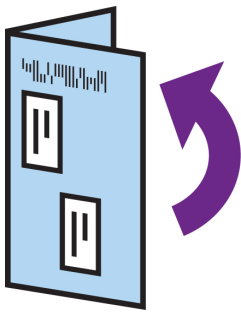
If you agree to changing the Constitution, write 'YES' in the box.



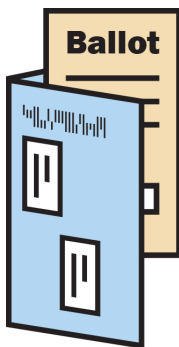
If you don't agree to changing the Constitution, write 'NO' in the box.

Where do you put your ballot paper?

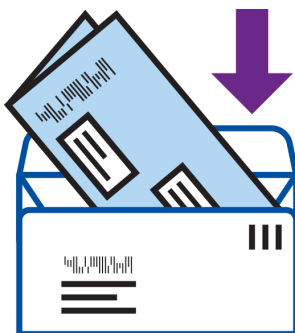
When you have filled out your ballot paper you need to:



- fold your blue certificate in half



- place your ballot paper inside it.

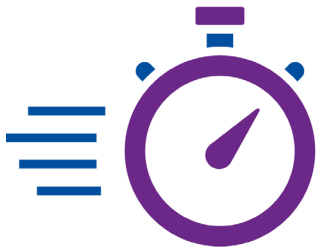


Place the folded blue certificate inside the white return envelope.



Take the white return envelope and put it into a mailbox.

You don't need to use a stamp.



Do this straight away so it gets to us quickly.



When you have put your white return envelope in the mailbox you have finished voting.

Do you need to apply for a postal vote each time?



You must apply for a postal vote before each referendum.



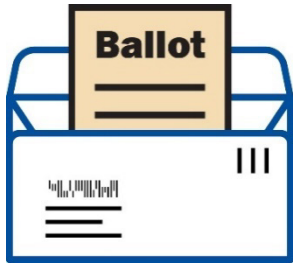
But you can apply to become a **general postal voter**.



This means you don't need to apply again every time you need to vote.



You need to meet our rules to become a general postal voter.



We send general postal voters their ballot papers in the mail each time they need to vote.



You can find more information and apply on our website.

www.aec.gov.au/gpv

Can you practise voting before the referendum?



If you want to practise voting, you can visit our website.

www.aec.gov.au/practice



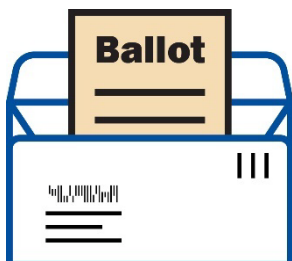
Your practice vote doesn't count.

You still need to vote:



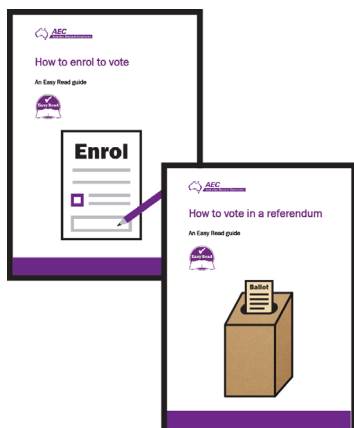
- at a polling place

or



- by mail.

How can you get more information?



If you want to find out more about voting, we have 2 other guides you can read:

- *How to enrol to vote*
- *How to vote in a referendum.*



You can find these guides on our website.

www.aec.gov.au/assistance



We also have information on our website for people who speak languages other than English.

Word list



Ballot paper

Ballot papers are forms that you fill out to show how you want to vote.

Blue certificate

Your blue certificate explains who you are.

It should include:

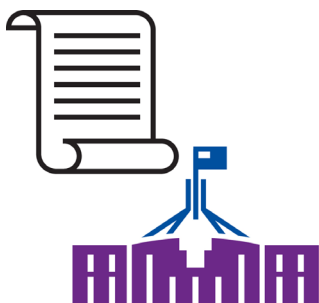


- your name
- your address
- the security question you gave us on your application.



Citizen

A citizen is someone who has the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



Constitution

The Australian Constitution is a set of rules that are used to run Australia.



Electoral roll

A list of voters.



Enrol

When you enrol, we put your name on a list of voters.



General postal voter

We send general postal voters their ballot papers in the mail each time they need to vote.

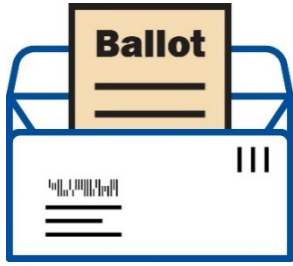
Polling place

A polling place is a building where people go to vote.



For example, a:

- school
- community centre.



Postal vote

You send us your vote in the mail.



Referendum

When you vote in a referendum, you help to decide if Australia should change the Constitution.



Vote

When you vote, you help to choose if the Australian people change the Constitution.



Witness

Your witness needs to be on the electoral roll.

For example, they could be your:

- family member
- friend.

More information



You can call us for more information.

13 23 26



You can visit our website.

www.aec.gov.au



You can find us on Facebook.

[/AusElectoralCom/](https://www.facebook.com/AusElectoralCom/)



You can find us on Twitter.

[@AusElectoralCom](https://twitter.com/AusElectoralCom)



You can find us on Instagram.

[@auselectoralcom](https://www.instagram.com/auselectoralcom)

National Relay Service



You can call the National Relay Service if you:

- are deaf or hard of hearing
- find it hard to speak using the phone.



TTY

133 677



Speak and Listen

1300 555 727



Ask these services to connect you to our phone number.

13 23 26

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)



If you speak a language other than English, you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

131 450



Tell them what language you speak.



Ask them to connect you to our phone number.

13 23 26



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Quote job number 5247-C.

Authorised by the Electoral Commissioner, Canberra.