

# Referendums

## What is a referendum?

A referendum is when Australia votes on a proposed change to the Constitution—which sets out how Australia is governed.

## How many referendums has Australia had?

Since 1901 there have been 44 referendums. The last one was in 1999, over 20 years ago.

## Who needs to vote?

All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over must vote in a referendum. It's the law.

### You need to be enrolled to vote and update your info if:

- you've changed your name or address,
- turned 18, or
- become an Australian citizen.

## When and where to vote?

Voting is held on a Saturday from 8am to 6pm at polling places across the country.

The AEC will send teams to many remote areas to collect votes. If you can't make it to a voting place on the day, you may be eligible to vote at an early voting centre, or apply for a postal vote.

Visit [aec.gov.au](http://aec.gov.au) for more information.

## How to vote

When you vote in a referendum you only need to fill out one ballot paper. The ballot paper will have a question about a proposed change to the Constitution.

There is a box on this paper for your answer. To vote, you write **YES** if you approve the proposed change or write **NO** if you don't approve the proposed change.

Write **YES** if you approve the proposed change

OR

Write **NO** if you do not approve the proposed change

Commonwealth of Australia  
**BALLOT PAPER**  
State/territory

**Referendum on proposed Constitution alteration**

**DIRECTIONS TO VOTER**  
Write "YES" or "NO" in the space provided opposite the question set out below.

**A PROPOSED LAW:**  
There would be a description of the proposed constitutional change here.

**DO YOU APPROVE THIS PROPOSED ALTERATION?**

**YES**  
WRITE "YES" OR "NO"

AEC Australian Electoral Commission

SAMPLE

Sample ballot paper

Commonwealth of Australia  
**BALLOT PAPER**  
State/territory

**Referendum on proposed Constitution alteration**

**DIRECTIONS TO VOTER**  
Write "YES" or "NO" in the space provided opposite the question set out below.

**A PROPOSED LAW:**  
There would be a description of the proposed constitutional change here.

**DO YOU APPROVE THIS PROPOSED ALTERATION?**

**NO**  
WRITE "YES" OR "NO"

AEC Australian Electoral Commission

SAMPLE

Sample ballot paper

Don't worry if you make a mistake. You can ask for a new ballot paper and do it again.

## Need help?

At the voting place, you can ask a family member, friend or AEC staff for help if you need it.

### Mythbusting referendums

**MYTH:** You don't have to vote in a referendum if you don't want to.

**FACT:** You must vote if you're an Australian citizen aged 18 and over.

**MYTH:** You need to enrol to vote separately for a referendum.

**FACT:** If you're enrolled for elections, you're enrolled for referendums too. Just make sure your details, like your address, are up to date.

**MYTH:** A referendum needs 70% or more 'YES' votes to pass.

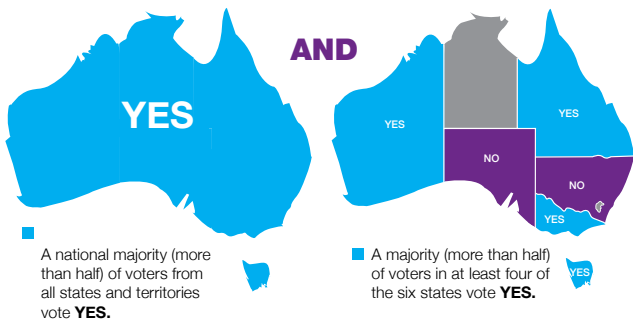
**FACT:** More than 50% of voters in Australia and more than 50% of voters in at least four out of six states must vote YES for the referendum to pass. This is called 'a double majority'.

### How the vote is decided:

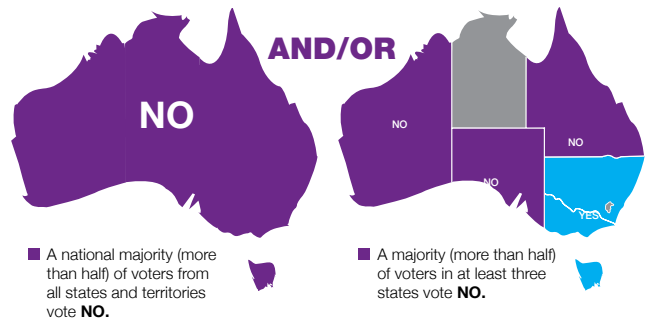
The proposed change to the Constitution must be passed by a 'double majority'. This is achieved when:

- more than 50% of voters in Australia (from all states and territories) vote YES, and
- more than 50% of voters from at least four out of six states vote YES.

#### A referendum is passed when:



#### A referendum is NOT passed when:



### What does the AEC do?

The Australian Electoral Commission (the AEC) is the independent agency that has the job of running the referendum.

The AEC's job is to give you easy access to info on how to enrol to vote and how to vote through ads, their website, social media, and call centre. If there is any wrong info about how to enrol or the voting process, the AEC will take steps to make it right.