AEC
Australian Electoral Commission

EPH
ELECTION PROCEDURES HANDBOOK
FEDERAL ELECTION

STATIC POLLING PLACE
Polling Place Liaison Officer (PPLO)
Officer-In-Charge (OIC)
Second-In-Charge (2IC)

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Message from the Electoral Commissioner

Congratulations on being selected to be a part of our election workforce.

Australia's electoral system is considered to be one of the fairest and most open of any in the world and elections are a fundamental part of our democratic process.

As part of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) team, your role in this election will be significant.

To maintain the confidence of Australian voters, the AEC is focused on ensuring we deliver trusted, consistently reliable, high quality, high integrity elections.
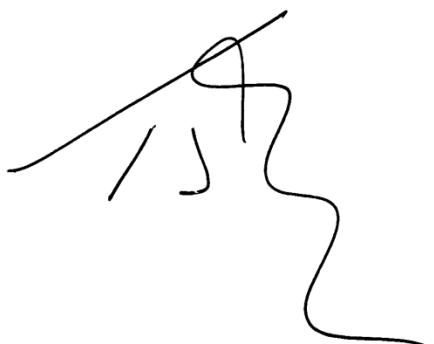
This may be your first election, or you may be a veteran of many elections.

Regardless of your level of experience, it is important you study this handbook carefully. From election to election procedures change. It is critical to our success that all the procedures detailed in this handbook are strictly followed at your polling place. There are no exceptions to this; should you not strictly follow the relevant procedures, it may put the election result at risk.

The AEC has introduced a range of safety measures for voters, staff and other participants for the election due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes physical distancing and hygiene measures that conform with federal and local health advice and are also within the legislative framework of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. Your role will include specific tasks to ensure these measures are implemented in polling venues. The safety of our staff, voters and all participants in the election remains the utmost priority for the AEC.

All staff in the AEC have adopted the mantra 'every task matters' which applies to every single task – no matter what it is. I encourage you to also adopt this mantra in the role you are undertaking this election.

I wish you every success as you help the AEC deliver another election and in ensuring our electoral processes are of the highest standard for all Australians.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

Election delivery principles

As a polling official, you play an important role in supporting the AEC perform its role in helping eligible Australians to vote. There are a number of processes that occur in order to deliver an election. Every task you do – no matter how small – matters. Even a minor error can have significant consequences. The election delivery principles summarise the key priorities for your role as a polling official.

The 'election delivery principles' are:

1. Integrity of the result, which means:
    a. Safe custody and handling of ballot papers
    b. Maintaining integrity of a person's right to vote (prevention of voter disenfranchisement)
    c. Ballot paper formality
2. Efficient processes and procedures
3. Good customer service and positive customer experience.

It is important to remember that all three principles are fundamentally important to your role but there are priorities. For example, while good customer service is very important, it should never come at the expense of electoral integrity, so although it may be distressing for a voter if they have dropped something personal into the ballot box, you must never open the ballot box to retrieve it as the integrity of the result is first priority.

Watch the videos

A series of videos which demonstrate the procedures outlined in this handbook is available on the AEC website.

www.aec.gov.au/election-training-videos

⚠ COVID-19 safety measures for the election

The AEC is committed to delivering the election to ensure the integrity of electoral services and participation, and to support the welfare of voters, staff and other participants during the COVID-19 pandemic environment.

The election will be held in accordance with electoral legislation, however additional measures are in place for this election that implement federal and state health advice and physical distancing requirements. The infection-control advice the AEC is following has been provided by relevant federal, state and territory health authorities. Polling staff will play an important role in the implementation of the COVID-19 safety measures.

The following key principles are to be followed in the polling place. You will be provided with parameters specific to your polling place, including the total square metres and maximum number of people allowed inside at one time.

- 1.5 metre distancing wherever possible.
- Capacity limits as required by health guidance.
- Regular touchpoint cleaning to take place throughout the day.
- Sanitisation of hands for staff, voters and anyone entering and leaving the polling place, and between interactions.
- Availability of personal protective equipment for staff who choose to use it.
- Requirement for all staff working at a polling place to be fully vaccinated or have an approved medical exemption.

It is not the role of polling place staff to ensure that voters entering the polling place comply with COVID-19 safety measures. Polling place staff should encourage and support voters to adhere to measures for the health and safety of the community, but it is not our role to enforce them and we cannot be seen to be denying the franchise of any Australian citizen who is eligible to vote.

Procedures in this handbook that specifically relate to COVID-19 measures are marked by an alert icon like this:

⚠

The officer-in-charge (OIC) basic timetable

If for any reason you cannot work on polling day or are not able to stay for the duration of the day please advise the divisional office immediately.

Before polling day

As soon as possible: Review and complete the activities in the OIC Preparation Guide.

As soon as possible: Complete your polling official training.

As soon as possible: Inspect and finalise access arrangements with the polling place.

As soon as possible: Check the materials inventory.

Polling day eve

With assistance from the Second in Charge (2IC) – or another staff member if there is not a 2IC for the polling place – set up the polling place. You will also need to telephone each polling official working at your polling place to confirm their start time for polling day.

Polling day prior to 8am

By 7am: OIC arrives to commence pre-opening set up and complete the Safety Inspection Checklist. All other staff arrive and are ready to start their pre-opening preparations.

Brief staff and scrutineers.

Polling day after 8am

- At exactly 8am, open the polling place.
- People are voting.
- OIC monitors staff and materials.

Prior to 6pm: prepare for closing of polling place and post 6pm activities.

Polling day after 6pm

At exactly 6pm, close the polling place

- Brief scrutiny staff and scrutineers.
- Declaration vote issuing officers complete ballot paper and declaration vote envelope reconciliation.
- Staff prepare for and conduct scrutiny.
- Results are phoned in to the Election Night Results Team.

After scrutiny, materials are packed, OIC finalises the OIC return (EF027) and final duties are performed.

Staff can leave once directed by the OIC. The OIC follows the materials return plan advised by the divisional office, which may include transferring custody to a Scrutiny Assistant (Return of Materials (RoM)).

NOTE: The exact finish time for each polling place is not known, and can be quite late in the evening.

Polling official roles

Introduction

Polling officials are accountable to the OIC of a polling place.

The OIC is responsible to the polling place liaison officer (PPLO) and, ultimately, the divisional returning officer (DRO) of an electoral division.

The DRO is an employee of the AEC and is responsible for the electoral roll and conduct of electoral events for an electoral division.

If your polling place is issuing votes for more than one Division (known as a dual or multi polling place), each division will operate as a separate polling place sharing the premises - with its own OIC and polling place staff accountable to their respective PPLO and DRO.

Polling place liaison officer (PPLO)

PPLOs act as agents for the DRO on polling day. They visit a group of polling places to observe and advise on proceedings and report back to the DRO.

The PPLO is there to provide assistance to the OIC and ensure that polling and the scrutiny (counting of the ballot papers) is carried out according to the correct procedures.

It is critical that the PPLO understands all functions of the OIC's role as they are expected to assist the OIC to rectify any issues or incorrect processes they witness in the polling place.

If a PPLO is aware of any issues or has any concerns in the lead up to polling day they should discuss them immediately with the divisional office.

PPLO duties

Prior to polling day

Before polling day, the PPLO should:

- complete online and face-to-face PPLO election training and familiarise themselves with the election procedures handbook
- attend an election readiness briefing (the divisional office will advise PPLOs of session details). This will include a discussion with the DRO about the schedule of polling places for the day, and the likely level of assistance each OIC will need
- check count all materials allocated and record the details in the PPLO Return. This includes counting individual Senate and the House of Representatives ballot papers. Note that if House of Representatives ballot papers (only) are supplied shrink-wrapped or padded with numbered butts, it can be assumed that each pack/pad contains the number of ballot papers advised on the packing slip, so only

the number of bundles need to be check counted

- contact each OIC to introduce themselves and offer any assistance the OIC may need
- ensure each OIC understands the correct procedures for securing ballot papers in their home, vehicle and polling place

- review the information supplied in the PPLO Return to ensure they are aware of;
  - vote estimates for each polling place,
  - the number of staff required at each polling place,
  - PPLO instructions for polling day and night.
- assist with the set-up of polling place(s) on Friday evening, where required
- ensure their mobile telephone is charged.

Polling day

The DRO will make PPLOs aware of any local factors, expected problems and last minute changes.

The DRO will advise the PPLO on a polling day schedule. This may be subject to change based on support needs of OICs and broader circumstances.

The PPLO should keep in regular telephone contact with the DRO and OICs throughout the day and evening until all allocated polling places have returned their results and their materials to the out-posted centre/hub.

Visiting polling places

PPLOs are expected to visit each polling place twice throughout polling day and at least one polling place from 5:50pm to support the closing of the polling place, scrutiny and pack-up.

The PPLO Return includes a report that must be completed each time the PPLO visits a polling place. This helps the AEC fulfil their responsibilities to assess the performance of each polling place and OIC and address any future requirements.

PPLOs should ensure they follow COVID-safe procedures during each visit, including QR code check-in using the relevant state/territory's mobile phone app, using hand sanitiser on entry and exit, maintaining physical distance and respecting any capacity limits.

On polling day the PPLO should:

- introduce themselves to the OIC on entering the polling place,
- examine the OIC return and ensure that instructions are being **accurately** followed and the return is being progressively completed,
- ensure the OIC has set-up and signposted a polling place ballot paper secure zone (secure zone) and that the ballot paper transport containers are being stored inside the secure zone,
- ensure the layout allows for a single direction of movement through the polling place so that voters flow through easily with minimal crossover,
- make sure mini-queues are being used where applicable,
- if necessary, suggest to the OIC possible improvements to the polling place layout

to ensure the smooth flow of voters,

- ensure the OIC has a plan in place for staff meal breaks,
- ensure the OIC has a plan for the scrutiny or assist in planning if required,

- during the day gauge the capacity of the OICs in each polling place and ensure they are available where most needed at close of poll to help organise the scrutiny, discuss this with the DRO, as they will know each OIC's previous experience,
- ensure that work health and safety, including COVID-safe, procedures are being implemented and followed by all staff,
- ensure that ordinary vote issuing officers are following correct procedures - specifically that they are asking the 3 questions, marking the certified list and issuing ballot papers correctly,
- ensure that declaration vote issuing officers are following the correct procedure when using the division finder and issuing declaration votes,
- ensure that all issuing officers are telling every voter how to fill in their ballot papers correctly, initialling each ballot paper, and telling voters what to do if they make a mistake,
- ensure that ballot papers held on issuing tables are under close supervision by the issuing officer or another AEC officer at all times and, if necessary, are securely stored by the OIC when an issuing point isn't being used,
- ensure that all ballot boxes are being closely guarded throughout polling,
- ensure that the OIC is aware of the role and responsibilities of scrutineers,
- discuss plans with the OIC for the packaging of ballot papers and election materials for handover to the scrutiny assistant (RoM) to return to the location advised by the divisional office,
- supply additional materials to polling places and/or liaise with the out-posted centre staff, as required,
- supervise and support the set-up and conduct of the House of Representatives scrutiny, Senate count and packaging of materials as required,
- provide a written assessment of the OIC's performance during the day. This is done in the *Polling place visits – checklist* of the PPLO Return.

On return of results from all allocated polling places, or when instructed to do so, the PPLO should pack their materials and return to the out-posted centre.

Managing issues

PPLOs will deal with a wide range of personalities and temperaments and as such must use good communication and interpersonal skills to ensure that each polling place is being managed efficiently and consistently.

If a staff member or OIC needs support in adhering to a particular process, the PPLO should approach the situation in a positive and encouraging way. Ensure that the staff member concerned is advised on the correct process.

At the same time, it is important that the PPLO reports accurately on the management and performance of the polling place.

PPLO Return

The PPLO Return is a set of forms that outline the general duties before and during polling. It is also used to track the materials received from the divisional office and those given to polling places throughout polling day, and includes checklists to complete during each polling place visit.

List of polling places to visit

The PPLO should contact each OIC on the list prior to polling day to ensure the OIC is prepared and to give them the opportunity to ask any questions.

Check count of materials to be carried

The divisional office will provide each PPLO with a materials inventory. The inventory is to be used to ensure the PPLO has received the correct quantity of materials. The PPLO should update their inventory list with any corrections, and contact the divisional office if they are missing materials or if the materials have been damaged in any way.

Transporting ballot papers

PPLOs may be required to carry an allocation of spare ballot papers.

When transporting ballot papers they must be inside a sealed ballot paper transport container with a completed *Record of security seals* form placed in the plastic window on the container and stored out of sight in a fully enclosed, locked vehicle.

Ballot papers that are stored in the PPLO's home/accommodation overnight (prior to polling day) must be kept in a secure zone. This must be a secure area in your home that is out of public view and unlikely to be accessed by others.

Distribution of election materials

Each time the PPLO issues ballot papers to a polling place, they must take the sealed transport container into the polling place and open it in the presence of the OIC. The number of ballot papers transferred to the OIC should be counted by the PPLO on allocation, check counted by the OIC on receipt, and the following information recorded:

- **Ballot papers**: Complete the *Cover note for the supply/receipt of ballot papers* form. The PPLO retains the original copy and the OIC keeps the duplicate with their Return.
- **Declaration envelopes**: Record the polling place, time and number of additional declaration vote envelopes allocated in the PPLO Return.

The transport container must then be re-sealed and the *Record of security seals* form completed and then witnessed by the OIC.

Use hand sanitiser before and after handling materials.

PPLO Polling place checklist

The Polling place checklist is a multi-page report that <u>must be completed for every visit to every polling place</u>. OICs must countersign the report for their polling place each time you visit.

The PPLO should ensure they provide as much information as possible to assist the divisional office with future planning. It will also assist in providing an accurate rating on the performance of the OICs at the end of the day.

Officer-in-charge (OIC) and second-in-charge (2IC)

OIC duties

As the OIC, your primary function is to **manage** the polling place.

You are responsible for the conduct of polling at your polling place.
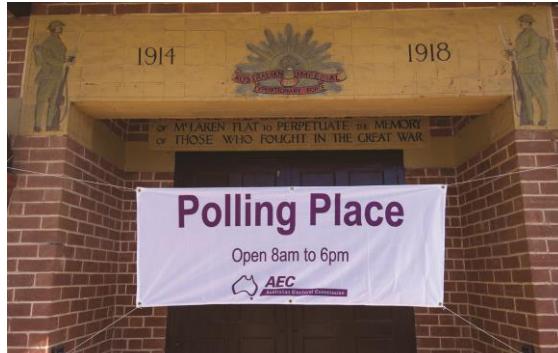
You have responsibility for and authority over all aspects of polling operations in your polling place.

Key responsibilities of this position include:

- overall management of the polling place
- ensuring security of materials (ballot papers, certified lists)
- promoting safety and wellbeing of staff and electors
- completing and certifying the OIC return
- staff assessments
- timely and accurate return of results.

You should exercise your authority and carry out your responsibilities in a professional and politically neutral manner at all times.

You are responsible for ensuring that polling is conducted in accordance with this Election Procedures Handbook (which reflects the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918)* and any instructions from the divisional office.

OIC Preparation Guide

The OIC Preparation Guide is a set of documents that will assist you prior to polling day.

It includes forms that need completing and checklists to follow to assist you in the planning and set up of the polling place.

OIC Return

The OIC return consists of checklists that will walk you through the activities of polling day and forms that you will use to create your polling place records. These records are very important for overall reconciliation after polling day and for planning future elections.

You should refer to the Return frequently and complete as required to ensure you are following correct procedures and providing assurance to the AEC of same See page 28 for more information on the OIC return.

COVID-19 vaccination for polling place staff

As part of COVID-19 safety measures, all staff working at a polling place are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have a medical exemption. As OIC, you are required to sight evidence of vaccination status or medical exemption for staff working at your polling place. This should be done at the beginning of the day prior to polling commencing, or for staff that commence throughout the day, at the beginning of their shift.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination status can include:

- Digital or printed COVID-19 vaccine certificate
- Immunisation history statement
- Some jurisdictional apps used to check in to venues will also display a person's vaccination status

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination status is required to be sighted. If someone qualifies for a medical exemption, this will be recorded on their COVID-19 vaccine certificate, immunisation history statement or evidence issued by the Australian Immunisation register.

Note that 2ICs and declaration vote issuing officers may have already provided their COVID-19 proof of vaccination status at their face-to-face training session, however you should sight their proof of vaccination as well.

Contacting your polling place staff

The OIC return will include a list of the names and contact details of staff (polling officials) once recruitment is complete. You should contact all of your staff before polling eve to ensure they are prepared for polling day and remind them they will need to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination status.

If any staff inform you that they are unavailable, inform the divisional office immediately so that a replacement can be organised.

Staff management

You are responsible for briefing, monitoring and directing all of your staff. This includes:

- Allocating duties, ensuring staff know how to perform these duties, and rotating staff where applicable.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and complete all relevant forms and records.
- Ensuring staff wear official vests and ID badges.
- Ensuring staff understand ballot paper security requirements, including that ballot papers and the certified list must be returned to you in an issuing point storage box if an issuing point is left unsupervised.
- Briefing staff before polling and again before scrutiny.
- Organising staff meal breaks, staff should not work more than 5 hours without a 30 minute break, and
- Monitoring the performance of staff to ensure that procedures are being followed correctly, including the COVID-19 safety measures.

During peak times you may be required to issue votes, direct voters or clear voting screens of how-to-vote material left behind by voters to ensure that the polling place is operating efficiently.

Substitute OIC

If you are required to leave the polling place at any time during voting (such as when you have a meal break), the 2IC, or the most senior polling official, must be formally appointed as substitute OIC.

The appointment form is in the OIC Return. Prior to the start of polling, you, the substitute OIC and a witness sign the form. It should then be completed by you and the substitute OIC every time a substitute OIC is required.

Second-in-charge (2IC) duties

In all but small polling places, a 2IC will be appointed to assist the OIC. The OIC may delegate responsibility for any function, except those that can be ONLY carried out by the OIC (see key responsibilities above).

It is recommended that the 2IC manage declaration voting at the polling place, but they can be asked to perform a range of duties on polling day.

The 2IC will assist the OIC to set up the polling place on polling day eve. For polling places that do not have a 2IC, the OIC should ask another staff member to assist with set up and record their additional hours on the attendance record.

Roles of all other staff

A number of polling place roles have been adjusted to assist with implementation of physical distancing and COVID-19 mitigation requirements:

- Queue controller - you will be allocated at least one queue controller to your polling place as they will undertake additional responsibilities related to ensuring adherence to COVID-safe measures in the polling place. It will be important to rotate staff throughout the day.

  – Queue controllers - are responsible for managing voter flow, queues and physical distancing, and ensuring capacity limits within the polling place are met. They will also be encouraging voters to use the hand sanitiser provided, to collect a clean pencil at the entry of the polling place, and assist with voter check-in if required.
  – Hygiene officers – you will be allocated at least one polling official to undertake the hygiene officer role, ensuring sanitiser is available and conducting regular touchpoint cleaning of issuing areas and voting screens plastic inserts, as well as sanitising pencils and pens for reuse. Hygiene officers are required to wear gloves at all times while filling this role.

- Ballot box guard - in addition to guarding the ballot box, the ballot box guard will be reminding voters to use hand sanitiser as they exit the polling place.

- The OIC and 2IC (if applicable) will be responsible for monitoring and ensuring all COVID-19 requirements are implemented in the polling place.

All polling staff will be required to wear the following identification:

- yellow vest and relevant badge: OIC/2IC,
- purple vest and relevant badge: All other polling staff (ordinary issuing officer, declaration issuing officer, ballot box guard, queue controller, hygiene officer, inquiry officer, scrutiny assistant).

No vests or badges are to be shared between staff. Additional badges will be provided for staff rotating positions so that they have their own.

Ordinary issuing officer/ballot box guard/queue controller/hygiene officer

Throughout the day you should rotate these staff between the four roles and ensure that they are following correct procedures.

After the close of poll (i.e. 6pm), these staff will assist with the scrutiny of ordinary votes and tidying the polling place.

Ordinary vote issuing officer

The primary function of the ordinary vote issuing officer is to issue votes to voters who are on the certified list. See Issuing ordinary votes on page 47. This also involves:

- recording the total number of ballot papers allocated by the OIC on the *Certified list coversheet*
- keeping ballot papers and the certified list secure
- encouraging voters to update their enrolment if required
- completing and signing all required forms and paperwork, especially the certified list coversheet
- directing silent electors to the OIC or 2IC to cast a declaration vote, and
- sanitising hands after every ten voters, contact with another person, coughing, sneezing or touching their face.

Ballot box guard

There MUST be a ballot box guard on duty at all times between 8am and 6pm.

The primary function of the ballot box guard is to monitor the ballot boxes for ordinary votes. This involves:

- stand in close proximity to the ballot box (maintaining appropriate physical distancing from voters),
- ensuring ordinary voters place ballot papers in the correct ballot boxes, particularly important for dual and multi polling places, and do not leave the polling place with ballot papers,
- counting voter flow using the clicker provided,
- ensuring that nobody attempts to retrieve anything from rubbish bins ,
- directing voters to use hand sanitiser when exiting the polling place, and
- ensuring ballot boxes are not opened until after 6pm on polling day.

Queue controller

Queue controllers are based beside the queuing sign and are responsible for managing the queue and flow of voters. This involves:

- organising voters at entry of polling place to ensure capacity limits and physical distancing requirements are observed,
- encouraging voters to sanitise their hands on entry, and collect a pencil for completing their ballot papers,
- directing voters to mini-queues of one voter in front of each issuing point. Mini-queues are a very effective way to increase the throughput of voters and decrease wait times,
- ensuring that voters from other divisions are directed to the declaration vote issuing point,
- ensuring sufficient supplies of sanitised pencils are available for voters at entry,
- every hour, on the hour, recording the total number of voters waiting in the queues (including mini queues),
- assisting voters to check in to the polling place using the QR code or manual registration system, as required, and
- escorting elderly and frail voters to the head of the queue and identifying other voters who require assistance and assisting them, or referring them to the inquiry officer, or OIC.

In larger or busier venues, a second queue controller can be used to assist in the above duties.

Hygiene Officer

The primary functions of hygiene officers are:

- spraying and wiping plastic voting screen inserts after every 10th voter (or every 15 minutes if there is a constant voter flow),
- spraying and wiping the voter side of ordinary issuing tables after every 10th voter (or every 15 minutes if there is a constant voter flow),
- spraying and wiping the declaration issuing table after every 10th voter (or every 15 minutes if there is a constant voter flow),
- removing any material left behind in voting screens between voters,
- ensuring there is adequate hand sanitiser at the entrance, exit, and issuing tables (shared between staff),
- sanitise pencils used by voters between uses, and return pencils to entry for queue controller distribution; and cleaning used pens at the declaration vote issuing table, and
- maintaining the polling place in a clean and safe condition.

Declaration vote issuing officers and inquiry officers

Throughout the day you should rotate staff between these roles and ensure they are following correct procedures.

These staff also assist with the count of ordinary ballot papers. Inquiry officers can assist with the count straight away, but declaration vote issuing officers can only assist after completing the checking, balancing, paperwork and packaging of all declaration vote materials.

Declaration vote issuing officer

Voters who do not reside in divisions issuing ordinary votes or whose names are not on the certified list are directed to declaration vote issuing officers for the issue of absent and provisional votes. Only the home division will issue declaration votes in a dual or multi polling place see Issuing declaration votes on page 51.

The declaration vote issuing officer also:

- accounts for all ballot papers allocated and keeps them secure,
- uses the division finder to determine the voter's enrolled division,
- ensures voters' ballot papers are placed in the correct declaration envelope which is then placed in the correct ballot box,
- guards the declaration envelope ballot box,
- files counterfoils progressively,
- sanitises hands after every ten voters, contact with another person, coughing, sneezing or touching their face,
- sanitises pens issued to voters after each use or alerting the hygiene officer to perform this task,
- completes the *Ballot paper tracking form* and *Elector information reports,*
- completes the After 6pm checklist for staff reconciling declaration votes, and
- sorts declaration vote envelopes and counterfoils and reconciles their ballot papers after close of poll.

Inquiry officer

An inquiry officer moves around the polling area to assist as necessary to:

- attend to the needs of voters waiting in the queue,
- make regular announcements to those in the queue "remember to number <u>every</u> box on your green ballot paper and number at least 6 boxes above the line or at least 12 boxes below the line on the white ballot paper",
- answer voter inquiries, including how to cast a formal vote,
- use the division finder to assist voters in determining their enrolled division,
- assist voters who require help in casting a vote,
- assist voters to update their enrolment if required, and
- complete *Elector Information Reports*.

Part-day staff

Part-day staff are employed for shifts of 5 or 8 hours on polling day.

Discuss starting times with these staff before polling day. They must not work for more hours than they have been employed to work.

They perform the same role as issuing officers and are helpful to rotate in to help cover staff breaks and can be asked to perform most tasks except declaration vote issuing and OIC/2IC tasks. You will need to provide on the job training for issuing ordinary votes or working during the scrutiny.

Ensure you sight their proof of COVID-19 vaccination status or medical exemption evidence at the commencement of their shift.

Scrutiny assistant

Scrutiny assistants are employed on polling night from 5pm until 11pm. Where a scrutiny assistant has been assigned the task of returning materials they may continue working after 11pm.

Upon arrival at the polling place, scrutiny assistants must report to you and sign an attendance record. Ensure you sight their proof of COVID-19 vaccination status or medical exemption evidence at the commencement of their shift.

They may then be asked to:

- remove materials from voting screens,
- progressively dismantle cardboard voting screens and stack them in a storage area,
- assist with preparation for scrutinies, including pre-filling sort cards, labels and setting up tables if they do not interfere with the operation of the polling place, and
- replace queue controllers and ballot box guards while they have a break.

From 6pm, scrutiny assistants may be required to:

- assist with the scrutiny of House of Representatives ballot papers and count of Senate ballot papers, including unfolding, sorting and counting ballot papers,
- dismantle the remaining cardboard material and prepare cardboard for collection,
- assist with the packaging of material for return to the out-posted centre,
- remove signs and posters from the walls,
- tidy the polling place,
- inspect the polling place to ensure that no material has been overlooked,
- perform any other official tasks as directed by yourself or the 2IC, and
- take custody of material once the polling place is packed up and return it to the identified location.

Inspecting the polling place

Prior to polling day

Familiarisation with the polling place is an important part of your preparation.

Contact details for the person who holds the keys at your nominated premises are in your OIC return. It is essential that you inspect the polling place as soon as possible. Do not leave this task until the last minute. The night before polling day is too late. The DRO will also advise OICs if they are working in a dual or multi polling place, if they are the host or guest, and provide contact details for co-located OICs. The OIC of the host division is responsible for coordinating premises access and set-up with their co-located OICs.

During the inspection use the *OIC preparation guide* which contains a summary of the tasks to complete when conducting the inspection. If the venue cannot be inspected, contact the divisional office.

On polling day

Prior to the start of polling the *Safety inspection checklist* in the OIC return must be completed. The OIC can ask any staff member to complete it.

Polling place equipment

Receipt of cardboard and other voting equipment

The divisional office will advise you of the arrangements to supply equipment to the polling place. Usually, this equipment will be delivered directly to the polling place within the two weeks leading up to polling day.

You will receive cardboard equipment such as voting screens, ballot paper secure zone screens, ballot boxes, issue point storage boxes and a bin.

Depending on the size of the polling place you may also receive queuing equipment, issuing point signs, or cardboard tables.

Voting Screen   Bin

You should check that your whole allocation – including that for dual/multi polling - has been delivered before polling day. If you have been short-supplied or the equipment is damaged, advise the divisional office immediately.

Construction of cardboard equipment

1. All instructions for how to construct the cardboard polling equipment are printed on the actual equipment, and QR codes linking to video instructions are also provided

If you have any difficulty constructing any equipment, or have any concerns about the quality of the equipment, especially ballot boxes, transport containers or seals contact your divisional office for assistance.

Materials

The materials for the polling place will be provided at a time and location advised by the divisional office. If a dual or multi polling place, each division's OIC will be supplied with relevant materials, however all cardboard materials will be delivered direct to the premises.

Check that you have received the correct number of items against the election materials inventory provided in your OIC return and advise the divisional office of any shortages or if anything has been damaged.

Certified lists

A 'certified list' is the list of people who are eligible to vote in your division. You must distribute one to every ordinary vote issuing point before polling commences. It contains the name, address, gender and birth date of people enrolled to vote. Each ordinary voter's name is marked off the list when they are given their ballot papers.

After the election the lists are scanned electronically to detect these marks. Polling official errors may result in people who voted getting apparent non-voter or multiple voter notices so it is important to be as accurate as possible when marking voters off the certified list.

If a spare certified list has been provided it can be used to open an additional temporary issuing point during peak periods. The cellophane seal of the spare certified list should not be broken unless it is needed.

Certified list coversheet

The *Certified list coversheet*, located inside the front cover of each certified list, is one of the critical forms to be completed at the polling place. Every ordinary vote issuing officer who uses the certified list **must** sign it and update the details each time ballot papers are allocated to them.

This form assists with the completion of the OIC return. The *Certified list coversheet* helps accurately balance the number of ballot papers issued to voters with the number of ballot papers counted in the scrutinies, and to reconcile the number of ballot papers allocated to the polling place. It must stay with the certified list; it is used during the scanning process.

Any movement of certified lists between polling places must be approved by the DRO and noted in the OIC return. In the rare instance that a certified list has been reallocated from another polling place, the reallocation field of the Certified List coversheet must be updated.

Division finder

Division finders are an alphabetical listing of all localities and some streets within a state or territory and are used to determine a voter's enrolled division if they are casting a declaration vote.

Before issuing a declaration voter with ballot papers the issuing officer **must always** consult a division finder to determine their correct division and record the division finder reference on the declaration vote envelope.

For instructions on using a division finder, read the division finder guide on page 100.

Provisional voting statement

Voters casting a provisional vote must read the provisional voting statement on the back of the declaration vote envelope before voting.

The provisional voting statement explains the reasons for a provisional vote.

After reading the provisional voting statement, the voter may choose not to vote. If the declaration officer alerts the OIC of any such occurrences, this should be recorded on the *Reports on issues and miscellaneous matters* form in the OIC return.

Issuing point storage box

Each issuing point will be provided with an issuing point storage box. If an issuing point is being closed while an issuing officer is on a scheduled break, ballot papers and, if applicable, the certified list must be packed into the storage box and given to the OIC for storage in the secure zone.

How to vote guide

The *How to vote guide* has information in a range of languages (including English) to assist voters to cast a formal vote.

The guide must be made available to any voter who has trouble understanding how to fill in their ballot papers.

Polling places with a queue controller and/or inquiry officer should issue these roles with a *How to vote guide* for use when assisting voters.

Your polling place may be given extra copies of individual pages if it is in an area known to have a high number of voters who may benefit from the information. These pages should be easily accessible to voters within the polling place.

ID badge

All polling officials must wear a role appropriate identification badge so that other polling officials, scrutineers and members of the public can easily identify each official's role.

Badges should be changed when polling officials rotate into different roles. Lanyards and badges must not be shared for hygiene reasons.

AEC vest

Every polling official in your polling place must wear an AEC vest - yellow vests for the OIC and 2IC and purple vests for the remaining polling staff.

Vests remain the property of the AEC at all times and must be removed during breaks and returned at the completion of polling night. Vests must not be shared for hygiene reasons.

Packaging tape

Packaging tape is used on bags that do not have an adhesive seal, where the adhesive seal cannot be used (for instance the bag may be folded in a way that prevents the use of the seal) or if the adhesive seal isn't strong enough to hold the bag closed. Tamper evident tape is then placed over the packaging tape.

Tamper evident tape

Tamper evident tape is used on parcels of ballot papers and some packages for transfer. The tape is perforated and tears at equal lengths without the need for scissors.

Tamper evident tape should not be used to seal parcels or packages. It should be stuck over the final seal of the parcel or package to show it hasn't been tampered with. If someone attempts to remove this tape from a parcel it will leave an obvious residue as evidence of tampering.

Note: Tamper evident tape will also leave a residue on walls, windows and carpet etc., which is very difficult to remove, so it should ONLY be used for parcelling and packaging purposes.

Reserve stock of polling materials

To avoid running out of ballot papers or other material on polling day, you must check remaining supplies at regular intervals. Contact your PPLO if you suspect you will be short of any item.

If additional election forms, declaration vote envelopes or ballot papers are required but cannot be obtained from the PPLO or out-posted centre quickly enough to supply current demand, forms may be photocopied or amended in order to continue providing voting services. See the troubleshooting section on page 94 for more information.

Additional materials

In addition to normal materials, polling places will receive:

- cloth tape for floor markings
- voter screen plastic inserts
- bottles of hand sanitiser
- sanitising spray
- paper towels
- sanitising wipes (as backup/alternative to the spray)
- face masks
- gloves
- pencils for distribution
- *COVID-19 safety measures* signs
- venue capacity sign
- COVID-safe check-in signs
- extra bin liners, and
- extra bin for PPE disposal.

Hygiene requirements

The following provisions will be in place for **polling staff:**

- QR codes for check in and manual sign-in sheets if unable to use QR code,
- capacity limits indoors, and physical distancing,
- hand sanitiser to be used:
    - when entering (or re-entering) the polling place
    - by issuing officers every ten voters
    - immediately after coming into physical contact with a voter or other staff member
    - immediately after touching face, or
    - at any other time contamination could have occurred.
- masks will be available if staff want to wear them,
- masks should be replaced as soon as they become damp and should not be re-used,
- gloves will be required for hygiene officers, and available for other staff that want to wear them (for example if staff are concerned about the effect of sanitiser on their hands). If worn, hand sanitiser must still be applied to the outside of the gloves to the same regularity, and
- staff should wash their hands before, during and after breaks.

The following provisions will be in place for **voters:**

- QR codes for check-in and manual sign-in sheets if unable to use QR code,
- capacity limits indoors, and physical distancing
- hand sanitiser to be used on entry and exit (and as requested)
- regular touchpoint cleaning, and
- voters are welcome to wear their own masks and gloves but based on health advice, these will not be issued by the AEC.

The *COVID-19 safety measures* signs are to be placed around the polling place to remind everyone of the requirements.

Distribution of materials

Ensure issuing officers take time to familiarise themselves with the materials they will be using during the day.

The following materials can be allocated to issuing points on polling eve:

Ordinary issuing points

- Certified list ruler.
- A black pen specifically for marking the certified list.
- Elector information report.
- Spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelopes.
- Instructional placecard.

- Issuing point storage box.
- QR codes for enrolment, and
- Hand sanitiser and sanitising wipes (shared).

Declaration vote issuing points

- Issuing point storage box.
- Declaration vote envelopes.
- Counterfoil folder.
- Ballot paper tracking form.
- After 6pm checklist for staff reconciling declaration votes.
- Division finder.
- Instructional placecard.
- Spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelopes.
- Declaration ballot paper holder to store House of Representatives ballot papers during polling and dividers.
- QR codes for enrolment.
- Elector information reports.
- List of candidates booklet.
- A supply of pens for completion of declaration vote envelopes.
- Unsealed ballot box (each declaration issuing officer has their own ballot box), and
- Hand sanitiser and sanitising wipes (shared).

Ballot papers and certified lists are to be distributed on polling day.

OIC Table

- OIC return.
- Instructional placecard.
- List of candidates booklet, and
- List of polling places that can issue interstate votes.

The following items should be held in reserve at your table on polling day until needed:

- Reserve enrolment forms and reply paid envelopes.
- Reserve elector information reports.
- Reserve spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelopes, and
- Scrutineer badges.

Ballot paper handling

Ballot paper principles

The AEC upholds the sanctity of the ballot paper in all its forms and at all times.

As an AEC official, you have a responsibility to uphold the integrity of all ballot papers at all times in accordance with the following ballot paper principles:

1. All ballot papers remain 'live' from printing through to statutorily authorised destruction.
2. The security, integrity and accountability of ballot papers must be preserved at all times - including transit and storage by the AEC, contractors, or other third parties.

These two maxims of ballot paper handling must never be breached and must underpin AEC operations, culture and standards.

Collecting ballot papers

Ballot papers for each polling place will be packaged and sealed inside ballot paper transport containers with a *Record of ballot paper transport container seals* form.

If you are collecting polling material directly from the AEC you will be required to show identification at the time of collection:

- Drivers licence,
- Passport, or
- Your *Confirmation of Casual Employment* form AND a Medicare or credit card.

Where ballot papers are being sent via courier you will be informed of the estimated time of delivery. Once materials arrive you must sign the consignment form and send an email to the divisional office to confirm the receipt of polling materials.

Note that each OIC in a dual or multi polling place will receive their own allocation of ballot papers and other materials from their respective divisional offices. Advise the divisional office if polling material does not arrive within the expected timeframe.

Issuing ballot papers

The process for issuing ballot papers to electors are outlined below and on the placecards provided for each ordinary and declaration vote issuing officer. It is extremely important that issuing officers follow the script, and give electors the correct advice about completing ballot papers. If an elector asks a question relating to casting their vote or how their votes are counted and the issuing officer is unsure of the answer, the elector should be referred to the OIC or the AEC website.

Ballot paper check count and reconciliation

When you receive ballot papers you must check count your ballot paper stock following these steps:

- Unseal the transport container in the presence of a witness. Please advise the divisional office if you do not have anybody to act as witness so alternate arrangements can be made.

- Check count the individual Senate ballot papers to ensure that the correct number has been received.
- Check count the House of Representatives ballot papers, noting that if they are supplied shrink-wrapped or padded with numbered butts, it can be assumed that each pack/pad contains the number of ballot papers advised on the packing slip, so only the number of bundles need to be check counted.
- Write the total number of ballot papers received on the *House of Representatives* and *Senate worksheets* in the OIC return, and
- Seal the transport container and complete a *Record of ballot paper transport container seals* in the presence of a witness.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before and after.

Do not wait until polling day to count the ballot papers. Let the divisional office know immediately if the number of ballot papers does not match the ballot paper inventory.

Ballot papers that are stored in the OIC's home/accommodation overnight (prior to polling) must be kept in a secure zone. This must be a secure area in your home that is out of public view and unlikely to be accessed by others.

Ballot paper secure zone

During the polling place set-up the OIC must establish a secure zone. The secure zone is a designated area for the storage of ballot papers – it must be visible to the OIC but not readily accessible to the public. Ballot papers for each division in a dual or multi can be stored in the same secure zone but segregation should be maintained at all times.

Cardboard screens will be provided to each polling place which must be used to cordon off the designated area.

A lockable internal room may be used as an alternative secure zone provided the room remains locked and the only keys are in possession of the OIC.

Unallocated ballot papers must be kept in the transport container inside the secure zone. The transport containers must remain <u>closed</u> but do not need to be sealed during polling.

The OIC, PPLO or permanent AEC staff are authorised to access to the secure zone. No other staff should enter unless authorised to do so by the OIC.

Ballot boxes

Ballot boxes are cardboard or moulded plastic (polypropylene) containers. Although they are sealed, they are not a secure container, and should not be left unattended in public view at any time.

Travelling with ballot papers

Ensure that ballot papers and completed declaration envelopes are transported inside sealed containers, out of sight in a fully enclosed, locked vehicle.

Leaving ballot papers or certified lists in a vehicle overnight is strictly prohibited.

OIC records

Introduction

The records of your polling place are consolidated in two documents;

1. the OIC preparation guide, for the period before polling day and
2. the OIC return, for polling day.

It is essential that you complete these documents accurately in order to account properly for ballot papers, the conduct of polling and the scrutiny.

OIC Preparation guide

The OIC preparation guide has been designed to provide you with information to prepare for polling day.

It is broken into two sections:

1. *Section A: checklists*
   Outlines the tasks to be completed prior to polling day, such as the completion of training, inspecting the polling place and contacting staff. It also guides the OIC when setting up the polling place on the day before polling.
2. *Section B: preparation forms*
   Section B contains the forms that are required prior to polling day to ensure you are fully equipped, and to assist with setup of your polling place and managing polling staff.

Inventories

Section B of the OIC preparation guide will contain a materials inventory list and a ballot paper inventory list.

These inventories are used to ensure the OIC has received all materials and ballot papers for the polling place.

It is important that the inventory checks are conducted as soon as possible and that the OIC contacts the divisional office immediately if any items are missing or have been damaged.

When check counting ballot papers the OIC must follow the steps listed in Section A to ensure ballot papers are handled according to AEC policy. The number of ballot papers received by the OIC is recorded in the OIC return on the *House of Representative and Senate worksheets*.

Memorandum to OIC

This provides key details about your polling place – the details of the premises, the estimated numbers of votes, and staffing numbers

Staffing forms

Two forms provided include names and contact information for the staff allocated to your polling place, and a form for recording their emergency contact details prior to election day.

Polling place layout

Section B may also contain the polling place layout diagram which will instruct the OIC on how to set up the polling place.

The divisional office may have designed the polling place to allow for things such as privacy for voters when marking their ballot papers, a clear view of voting screens for issuing officers, a separate declaration vote issuing area and smooth voter flow from entrance to exit.

You should follow this plan as closely as possible. Discuss any modifications with the PPLO.

Hub and/or ROM locations

These forms provide details concerning where your materials should be delivered on polling completion.

The OIC Return

The OIC return is used on polling day and is a complete record of how the polling place functioned throughout polling and the scrutiny.

The return has four sections:

- *Section A: checklists* of all the tasks to be completed on polling day and night,
- *Section B: mandatory forms* to be completed throughout polling day and night,
- *Section C: circumstantial forms* that are only completed in certain circumstances, such as if a ballot box is opened prematurely, and
- *Section D: staffing and work health safety forms*.

When the OIC return is complete, sign the title page before packing the return for transport.

The OIC return is the appropriate place to document any accidents, complaints by voters or scrutineers, and any other incidents in your polling place.

You must complete the return throughout the day as events take place. It is important that you provide as much detail as possible; this assists in investigating any matters as required after polling day.

If you have any difficulties completing the return, contact your PPLO.

Section A of the OIC Return

Section A of the OIC return guides you through the tasks required of you as an OIC during and after polling. It also refers you to forms in other sections when required.

Section A is laid out according to the polling day timeline and starts prior to polling on polling day. Ensure you refer to Section A of the OIC return regularly so that your polling place is being managed according to AEC policy and procedure during and after polling.

The OIC should delegate tasks where possible, however it is still the OIC's responsibility to ensure all tasks are carried out as required.

The PPLO will be checking the OIC return to ensure it is being completed correctly and the divisional office will also review the return after polling day.

Section B of the OIC Return

Section B consists of the forms and records that the OIC is required to complete throughout the polling period.

When you receive your OIC return you should inspect Section B and ensure the forms listed on the table of contents have been included in your return, if any are missing inform your divisional office. Your divisional office may also include more forms if required.

Some forms will be allocated to issuing points or ballot boxes etc. and you will have multiple copies of these.

Substitute OIC

This form must be used each time the OIC leaves the polling place for a break. It should be pre-signed by the OIC, 2IC (or next most senior polling official) and a witness before polling starts and updated each time the OIC leaves the polling place.

House of Representatives and Senate worksheets

The *House of Representatives and Senate worksheets* are used before, during and after polling to reconcile the ballot papers allocated to your polling place. At the end of polling it is important to be able to account for all ballot papers. The two forms are used the same way, so we will use the *House of Representatives worksheet* as an example here. An explanation of each section is on the next page.

House of Representatives worksheet

Polling place ballot papers

Full allocation	Additional	Transferred to/from*		Total*
		Quantity	Polling place/PPLO	
2400 +		±= -100	PPLO	= 2300

*For transfers to another polling place/PPLO the quantity should be subtracted from the running total. For transfers from another polling place/PPLO the quantity should be added to the running total.

Issuing point ballot papers

	Allocation 1	Allocation 2	Allocation 3	Total allocated	Spoilt	Unused	Votes issued*
Certified list number				Ordinary ballot papers			
1001	200	+ 100	+ 100	= 400	- 6	- 73	= 321
1002	200	+ 100	+ 100	= 400	- 4	- 86	= 310
1003	200	+ 100	+	= 300	- 0	- 40	= 260
1004	200	+ 100	+	= 300	- 0	- 56	= 244
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
Subtotal	1400				10	255	1135 B
Issuing point number				Declaration vote ballot papers			
1	100	+ 100	+	= 200	- 9	- 81	= 110
2	100	+	+	= 100	- 2	- 10	= 88
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
		+	+	=	-	-	=
Subtotal	300				11	91	198 C
Total Add subtotals	1700				21 D	346 E	

*Cross check totals with certified list cover sheets and counterfoils.

Final reconciliation

Ordinary votes counted Transferred from results slip	1133 F	Discarded ordinary ballot papers	2 H	Total ballot papers C + D + E + F + G + H	2300 I
OIC's Unused ballot papers A - B - C - D - E	600 G	Discarded declaration ballot papers	0	Difference A - I	0

Polling place ballot papers section:

Polling place ballot papers

	Full allocation		Additional		Transferred to/from*			Total*
					Quantity	Polling place/PPLO		
	2400	+		± OR	-100	PPLO	=	2300 ^A

*For transfers to another polling place/PPLO the quantity should be subtracted from the running total. For transfers from another polling place/PPLO the quantity should be added to the running total.

As soon as you receive your ballot paper allocation and OIC return count the ballot papers and record the number received in the top section of the *House of Representatives and Senate worksheets*. If the DRO or PPLO allocates more ballot papers to your polling place, or takes any from your polling place, you must also record those figures on the top section. This gives you the total number of ballot papers you must account for after polling.

In the worked example 2400 House of Representatives ballot papers were initially allocated, and at some stage the PPLO transferred 100 ballot papers from this polling place to give to a neighbouring polling place.

Issuing point ballot papers section:

During polling: the left side of this section is used every time you allocate ballot papers to an issuing point. In this worked example there are 4 ordinary issuing points (identified by the certified list number). The ordinary issuing officer should have also recorded these allocations on the certified list coversheets. There are two declaration vote issuing points (identified by issuing point number) and they should have recorded the same figures on the *Ballot paper tracking* forms.

After polling: the right side of the worksheet is used to reconcile the ballot papers. Looking at the first ordinary issuing officer row we can see that issuing point 1001 was allocated 400 ballot papers over the day, had to replace 6 spoilt ballot papers and had 73 unused. This means 321 votes were issued by this issuing point. The subtotal for ordinary vote issuing points tells us how many ballot papers have been issued and it should balance with the number counted during the scrutiny plus any discarded ballot papers.

Issuing point ballot papers

Certified list number	Allocation 1	Allocation 2	Allocation 3	Total allocated	Spoilt	Unused	Votes issued*
				Ordinary ballot papers			
1001	200	+ 100	+ 100	= 400	− 6	− 73	= 321
1002	200	+ 100	+ 100	= 400	− 4	− 86	= 310
1003	200	+ 100	+	= 300	− 0	− 40	= 260
1004	200	+ 100	+	= 300	− 0	− 56	= 244
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
				Subtotal 1400	10	255	1135 B

Issuing point number	Allocation 1	Allocation 2	Allocation 3	Total allocated	Spoilt	Unused	Votes issued*
				Declaration vote ballot papers			
1	100	+ 100	+	= 200	− 9	− 81	= 110
2	100	+	+	= 100	− 2	− 10	= 88
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
		+	+	=	−	−	=
				Subtotal 300	11	91	198 C
				Total (Add subtotals) 1700	21 D	346 E	

Final reconciliation section:

This section can be fully completed once the scrutiny has been conducted. Complete the calculations on the form and ideally the difference field will be zero, meaning you have accounted for every ballot paper. If the balance is not zero you should double check calculations, quickly search the polling place for missing ballot papers and if required do one (only) quick recount of ballot papers, however there are a few reasons why you may not account for all ballot papers, as described on page 72.

There is a pre-filled example of this form in the OIC return that explains which sections are filled in during polling and which are filled in after polling.

Final reconciliation

Ordinary votes counted *Transferred from results slip*	1133 F	Discarded ordinary ballot papers	2 H	Total ballot papers *C + D + E + F + G + H*	2300 I	
OIC's Unused ballot papers *A - B - C - D - E*	600 G	Discarded declaration ballot papers	0	Difference *A - I*	0	

OIC result of count – House of Representatives and Senate

These forms are used to record the results for the House of Representatives first preference scrutiny and the Senate count. Once recorded the figures are phoned through to the divisional office.

Two candidate preferred forms

The TCP forms are supplied in a sealed envelope. They consist of the **Direction to count further preferences** form, which provides instructions for the OIC on the two candidates, and the **OIC two-candidate preferred worksheet** which is used to record the results of the TCP and then phone the figures through to the divisional office.

You are **not** to open the envelope until after 6pm.

OIC Identification

The OIC Identification is a unique code that you need to read out to the divisional office each time you phone through scrutiny results.

The OIC Identification will be provided to you in the sealed envelope with the TCP forms and should be kept secure at all times.

Ballot paper tracking form

A copy of this form is to be given to each declaration vote issuing point.

Each time you allocate ballot papers to the issuing point, you record it on the *House of Representatives and Senate worksheets*, and the declaration vote issuing officer must record it on this form, with House of Representative ballot papers tracked at division level.

At close of poll the total number of spoilt ballot papers, unused ballot papers and declaration envelopes issued must be totalled for each division.

Once complete, this worksheet is given to you and you must amalgamate the figures from each *Ballot paper tracking form* on the *Summary of declaration votes issued* form.

These worksheets must be placed in the OIC return on completion.

Summary of declaration votes issued

Using the *Ballot paper tracking* forms that have been completed by your declaration vote issuing officers, record the number of declaration votes issued at every declaration vote issuing point for each division.

The totals should balance with the *House of Representatives* and *Senate worksheets*.

Record of postal vote certificates

If any postal votes are handed in to the polling place, including any cancelled postal votes, record details on this page.

Record of voters in queue

This page is completed each hour and records the number of voters that have passed through (as recorded by ballot box guard clicker) and number of voters in the queue.

Section C of the OIC Return

Section C of the OIC return contains forms that you only need to fill in if the circumstance calls for it, such as if a ballot box opened prematurely.

Issues and miscellaneous matters

This form is to be completed if there are any issues, complaints, disturbances or unusual matters during polling or during the scrutiny. It should also be used for any additional notes for the divisional office, for example about the suitability of the polling place for electors or staff.

Report polling issues such as excessive queues or if tamper evident tape on parcelled ballot papers/packaged material has been broken while still in the polling place.

You should also record on this form any incidents that prevent a staff member from taking a required meal break e.g., they refuse to take a break even after the requirement is explained to them.

Prematurely opened ballot box report

The *Prematurely opened ballot box report* is to be completed if a ballot box is opened prematurely – that is before 6pm.

You must include as much detail as possible including the circumstances of the ballot box being opened and details of all witnesses.

This form is to be given to the DRO as soon as possible after the ballot box is opened, along with the ballot box and all ballot papers/declaration vote envelopes that have been removed from the ballot box (if any). See Troubleshooting on page 96 for more information on prematurely opened ballot boxes.

Section D of the OIC Return

Section D contains forms required for staffing and workplace health and safety, such as attendance records and the meal break roster.

Incident notification form

If there are any health and safety incidents or hazards identified during the day, record the details on the *Incident Notification* form. Please note the following broad definitions:

- hazard – the potential to cause harm to people, property or environment,
- near hit – incident that did not result in harm to a person, property or the environment, and
- incident - harm to people, property or environment.

You must provide comprehensive details about the incident.

Attendance record

This record is to assist the divisional office in processing payments. You must ensure all staff sign this form on arrival.

OIC and Staff assessment

The OIC uses this form when assessing polling staff performance of their duties. Ratings are to be recorded against each staff member using the rating scale on the report. Ensure you read the rating scale carefully in order to accurately apply the correct rating to each staff member. Include comments for all staff.

Meal break roster

The meal break roster allows you to plan your staff breaks ahead of time by blocking out the half hour break for each staff member.

Polling place set-up

One of your duties is to prepare the polling place on polling eve.

The OIC preparation guide provides instructions of the tasks to be completed when setting up the polling place.

Do not erect external signs until polling day.

The polling place will need to be set up to encourage 1.5m distancing where possible. The following measures will assist in implementing the physical distancing and sanitisation requirements:

- Mark the floor with cloth tape (do not use tamper evident tape for this), to identify where voters should stand. Cut 20cm length strips of tape to create crosses on the ground:
  o at issuing points,
  o in mini queues of one, 1.5m from the first mark (if space permits),
  o in the main queue outside the polling place. It is suggested that at least 6 marks 1.5m apart be put on the floor so that there is clear distancing for voters arriving at the polling place. Depending on the venue, it may be more effective to use long strips of tape to mark lines rather than crosses for the external queue
- A table at the entry of the polling place for hand sanitiser. Please ensure this is in a prominent spot.
- A table at the exit of the polling place for hand sanitiser.
- Each issuing point must have easy access to hand sanitiser (within reach while seated). Hand sanitiser on issuing desks should not be placed near the ballot papers.
- Voting screens set up:
  o 1.5m distanced standalone against a wall,
  o Two screens back-to-back 1.5m distanced, or
  o Screen bank established with issuing officers to manage distancing (least preferred)

Note: If the floor is wooden, vote screens may move during the day. The OIC must ensure that voting screens are re-positioned as needed. Tape can be used to assist with fastening to floor, if required.

- Every voter screen should have a plastic insert.
- A separate table for declaration voters to complete their envelope, in front of the declaration vote issuing table.
- COVID-19 safety measures posters placed outside near the queue, and at locations inside the polling place.
- Venue capacity poster at the entrance to the polling place.
- QR code signs for checking in to the polling place at intervals along the path of travel to the entrance to the polling place. This encourages people to check in before reaching the entry of the polling place and avoiding a bottleneck.

Use the sanitising spray to wipe down tables and voting screens and other equipment as necessary, once you have set up the polling place on polling eve. The hygiene officer should always spray onto the paper towel rather than directly onto election equipment. Used personal protective equipment (PPE) should be disposed of in a dedicated PPE bin that is double lined.

Polling place access

Where parking is limited, polling staff, scrutineers and party workers should be asked to park further away from the polling place during polling hours.

At polling places that do not have permanent disabled parking spaces, and where safe to do so, the disabled parking signs should be placed in a car park close to the entrance of the polling place first thing in the morning on polling day.

Rubbish bins

The AEC provides cardboard bins in polling places.

AEC bins should be placed at the exit of the polling area so that voters must walk past the ballot boxes before they reach the bin and where the ballot box guard is able to view the bins.

Used PPE should be disposed of in a separately marked bin, with two bin liners. Your polling place has been provided with:

- a second cardboard bin,
- two bin liners for this bin, and
- a sign indicating this bin is for used PPE only

When disposing of used PPE:

- remove mask (or gloves),
- place in labelled cardboard bin,
- when bin is full seal both bin liners, and
- dispose of as part of general waste.

Used sanitising wipes can be disposed of with general waste.

Layout
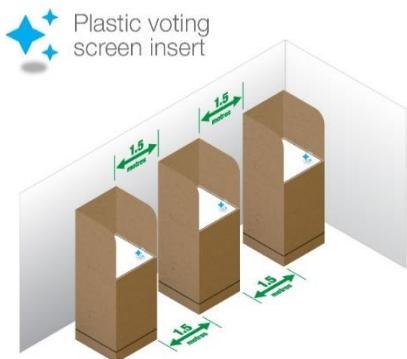
The OIC preparation guide may contain a plan for the layout of the polling place. You should follow this plan as closely as possible. Discuss any modifications with your PPLO.

The layout of the polling place should allow:

- orderly access (if the polling place has two doors, use one as the entry and the other as the exit) with a single direction of movement throughout the polling place so that voters flow through easily with minimal cross over,
- physically distanced bank-style queuing of voters (a single queue at one point, away from the issuing points but well within the polling place when possible) and mini queues at each issuing point (where space permits). To ensure the continuous flow of voters, mini queues of one voter should then be maintained in front of each issuing officer so there is minimal delay while the voter walks to the issuing point,
- a clear view of the voting screens for issuing staff, so they can control voter flow,
- privacy for voters while they mark their ballot papers,
- constant supervision of the ballot boxes,
- space to set up an additional issuing point if lengthy delays occur during peak periods,
- a separate declaration voting area with its own ballot box and voter flow that does not interrupt the ordinary issuing voter flow,
- a separate voter flow for any guest divisions issuing votes in a dual/multi polling place, and clearly sign-posted ballot boxes for each division,
- hand sanitising stations and pencil collection/drop-off at the entry and exit of the polling place,
- bins placed at the exit of the polling premises, past the ballot boxes, for general waste and used PPE,
- the OIC table located with a view of all areas of the polling place, and
- ballot paper secure zone that is visible to the OIC but not accessible to the public and maintains segregation of ballot papers for host and guest divisions.

The layout of voting screens has been remodelled to reflect COVID-19 safety measures. OICs should aim to set up a minimum of one voting screen per 100 voters, using the vote estimates provided in the *Memorandum to OIC* in your OIC static preparation guide. You will have been supplied with extra screens which can be assembled if there is room to do so.

The configuration used will depend on the size and layout of the polling place. At all times, the most important consideration is to ensure physical distancing between voters. Following are suggested configurations in order of preference:

1. Against a wall

Voting screens are set up against a wall with 1.5m separating each screen.

The wall provides stability for each screen and provides a clear 1.5m separation.

This layout provides ease of management for issuing officers.

2. Back to back

Two screens back-to-back, secured at the top with a fold back clip (fold back clips used to secure Senate ballot papers can be used for this purpose).

The fold back clips assist to provide stability to voting screens.

3. Bank of screens

This layout should be used if the polling place does not have a suitable wall to place screens against.
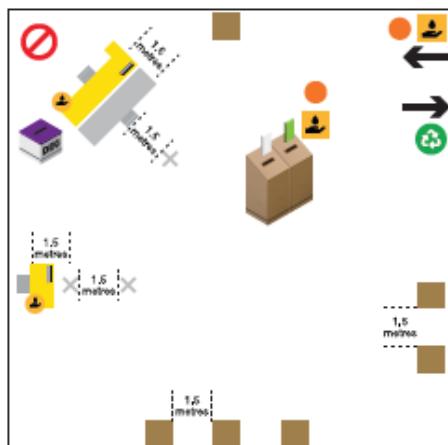
If using this layout issuing officers should direct voters to the most appropriate vote screens to manage physical distancing between voters.

This layout requires greater staff management of voters.
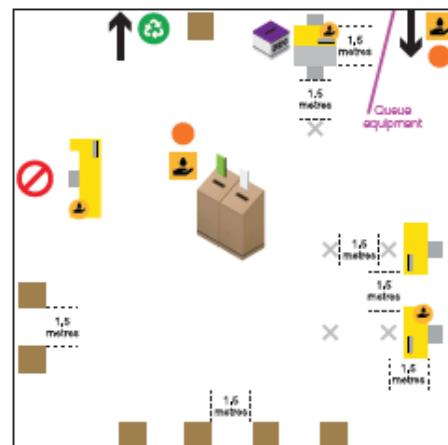
Extra supplies of other cardboard (issuing point boxes, ballot boxes, queuing equipment) should be used on an as needed basis. Due to COVID-safe measures pencils with string should NOT be attached to voting screens as voters are instead encouraged to collect a clean pencil at the entrance to the polling place.

The examples shown below incorporate these principles. Consider them when setting up your polling place if the divisional office has not provided a plan.
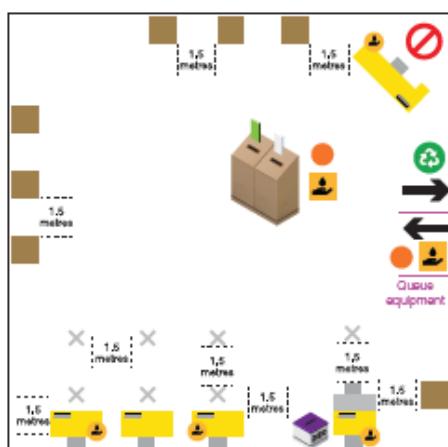
1. Single ordinary issuing point
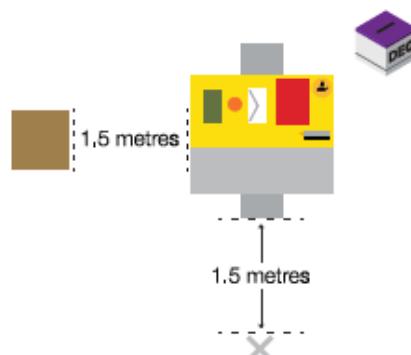
2. Two ordinary issuing points
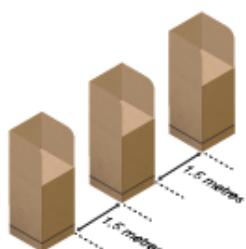
3. Three ordinary issuing points
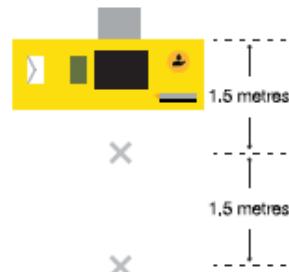
4. Declaration issuing table

5. Voting screens

6. Ordinary issuing table

Ordinary ballot boxes	Ordinary vote issuing table	Voting screen	Chair
Declaration vote ballot boxes	Declaration vote issuing table	Placecard	Hand sanitiser table
Ballot paper secure zone	OIC table	Recycling bin	Hand sanitiser
			Pens or pencils

Prior to 8am

The OIC return provides guidance for polling day before 8am to ensure the polling place and staff are ready for polling to commence at 8am.

OIC arrival

Both the OIC and the 2IC must arrive at the polling place no later than 7am.

You must bring your *Confirmation of casual employment* form, all polling materials, a fully charged mobile phone (and charger) and all the keys required to open the polling place.

Staff arrival

Polling staff should arrive and be ready to start work by 7am so they can be briefed and assist with the preparation for the start of polling. **It is critical that all staff arrive on time.**

If any staff member has not arrived by 7:50am, contact the PPLO.

On arrival, you must sight their *Confirmation of casual employment* form, proof of COVID-19 vaccination status and issue them with their identification badge and the appropriate vest. If a staff member does not produce their confirmation form, confirm their employment using the latest staffing list provided. Collect any forms provided to you by staff and store them in Section D of the OIC return. All polling place staff will be allocated a vest and ID badge corresponding to their role when on duty. These must be removed on breaks, and returned at the end of their shift.

Staff must sign the attendance record **before** commencing duties.

Allocation of duties

As outlined in *Roles of all other staff* on page 14, polling officials will have been allocated to one of two groups:

- ordinary issuing officer, ballot box guard, queue controller, hygiene officer and part day staff
- declaration vote issuing officer or inquiry officer.

Staff can be rotated between various functions, but only within their group, as they have not been trained to perform the duties of another group.

Only in emergency situations (such as non-attendance), should you move staff between groups. In such cases, consult your PPLO. You must then provide on-the-job instruction for the polling official.

In addition to the materials allocated to ordinary and declaration issuing points during set-up, the following are required:

Ballot box guard materials

Ballot box guards require a clicker (counter) to count ordinary voters as they place their ballot papers in the ballot boxes.

Queue controller materials

Queue controllers require a queuing record and a pen.

Inquiry officer materials

Inquiry officers require a division finder and a How to Vote Guide.

Hygiene officer materials

Hygiene officers require gloves, sanitising spray and paper towels.

Distribution of ballot papers and certified lists

Ballot papers must be distributed to ordinary issuing and declaration issuing points before polling commences. Once the transport container has been unsealed to distribute ballot papers it must remain <u>closed</u> within the secure zone, but does not need to be sealed during polling. Certified lists are allocated to each ordinary issuing point.

Materials at ordinary and declaration vote issuing points should be set out close by so that repetitive reaching or twisting is minimised. Staff should take into account whether they are left or right handed when working out where to place ballot papers on their table so that they can easily initial them and hand over when issuing to voters.

Note: If an issuing officer is on a scheduled break or an issuing point is being closed, ballot papers and, if applicable, the certified list must be packed into the storage box and given to the OIC for storage in the secure zone.

Ordinary issuing point

OICs must allocate no more than half of their total ballot paper allocation to ordinary vote issuing officers at the start of the day.

Additional ballot papers are to be allocated as required throughout the day.

These steps should be followed every time ballot papers are provided to issuing officers:

- Count the individual ballot papers and record the total number of ballot papers provided to each issuing point on the *House of Representatives – Worksheet* and *Senate – Worksheet* in the OIC return, and
- The issuing officer should count and record the number of ballot papers received on the certified list coversheet. If there is a discrepancy, it should be checked and, if necessary, adjusted using your reserve.

The issuing officers are to retain the stubs from fully used booklets and return them to you with their unused ballot papers after the close of polling.

Declaration vote issuing points
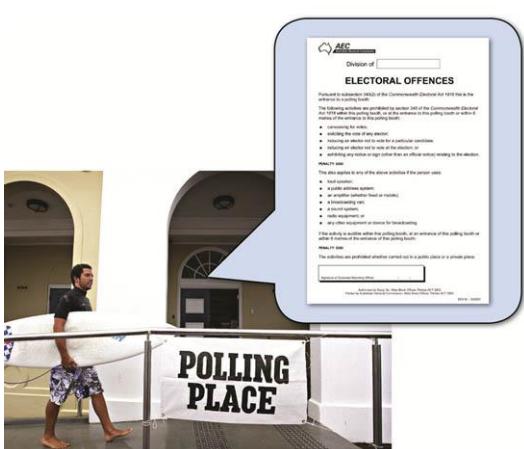
Declaration vote issuing points receive the following ballot papers before polling begins:

- a supply of House of Representatives ballot papers for the division in which the polling place is situated (for provisional voters),
- absent packs - packs of fully printed House of Representatives ballot papers for all other divisions within the state/territory. These should be stored in the declaration ballot paper holder and divided, by division, using the ballot paper dividers,
- 'open' House of Representatives ballot papers (for use as a last resort only). These are blank ballot papers that can be turned into a ballot paper for any division by copying the **exact details of the candidates** for a division as shown in the list of candidates booklet, and
- Senate ballot papers.

These steps should be followed every time ballot papers are provided to declaration issuing officers:

- count all the ballot papers allocated, including those provided as declaration packs, and record the total number of papers provided to each issuing point on the *House of Representatives and Senate Worksheets* in the OIC return,
- the issuing officer must count and record the number of each ballot paper received on the *Ballot paper tracking form*.

Prepare outside of polling place

Polling place boundary

The divisional office will advise you if the building or the entire grounds will be designated as a polling place.

If the entire grounds are to be considered as the polling place, the electoral offences sign must be displayed at each entrance to the grounds.

If only the building is considered the polling place, the electoral offences sign must be displayed at each entrance to the part of the building in which polling is conducted.

Party workers must remain at least six metres away from the boundary.

The sign should be placed so that it is easy to see and read when voters enter the polling place.

EXAMPLE: If a school building is used as a polling place and notices are displayed at each entrance to the grounds, the entire school grounds are part of the polling place. The school boundary fence becomes the perimeter of the polling place. If this is the case party workers must remain at least six metres outside the school grounds.

Ask your staff to:

- make sure that all designated entrances and exits, including doors and gates are unlocked,
- erect all the necessary outside signs, for example 'polling place' banner and 'electoral offences' poster, and
- rectify any hazardous areas that may lead to accidents.

Briefing staff and scrutineers

Staff

Staff must be briefed on their duties and responsibilities before the polling place opens at 8am. This is especially important for staff working in the ordinary issuing officers/ballot box guards/queue controller roles as they have not received training.

The OIC return instructs you on the timing of the brief and the script you should follow when briefing your staff.

Taking time to brief staff before polling can prevent mistakes during the day and allow time for staff to familiarise themselves with the materials they will be using during the day.

Ensure staff are ready to commence polling duties at 8am sharp.

Ensure staff know that they cannot access the secure zone unless explicitly authorised by the OIC. Otherwise, only the OIC, PPLO, or permanent AEC staff can access the secure zone.

Ensure staff know that ballot papers and certified lists must be supervised at all times and, if leaving the issuing point, must be returned to the OIC in the issuing point storage box for secure storage in the secure zone.

Scrutineers

If there are any scrutineers appointed to observe polling use the OIC return to assist with their briefing.

All scrutineers must wear a designated scrutineer identification badge attached to a lanyard whilst in the polling place.

Sealing of the ballot box

It's important that the ballot boxes are sealed and ready for use before the first voter is ready to place their ballot papers in the ballot boxes. If it is a dual or multi polling place, separate ballot boxes must be set-up for each division, and clearly marked and managed accordingly.

For each ordinary ballot box:

Ordinary ballot boxes are made of cardboard

- Show the empty ballot box to any scrutineers or staff present.
- Close and seal the ballot box by threading numbered plastic security seals through the holes at each end.

- Record details of the security seal numbers on the *Record of ballot boxes and Security Seals* and file in the OIC return.
- Have a witness (scrutineer or polling official) sign your entry.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before and after, and
- Repeat this process during the day if additional ballot boxes are required.

A sealed ordinary ballot box must **NOT** be opened until after 6pm on polling day. If a ballot box is opened prior to 6pm there are strict procedures that must be followed by the OIC. See Troubleshooting on page 96 for more information.

For each declaration ballot box:

Declaration ballot boxes are made of plastic and have a lid that is sealed to the container, with a slot that is open during polling for the ballot papers, in declaration envelopes, to be inserted.

- Show the empty ballot box to any scrutineers or staff present.
- Close and seal the ballot box by threading numbered plastic security seals through two opposing sides of the lid.
- Record details of the security seal numbers on a *Record of security seals* form.
- Have a witness (scrutineer, party worker or polling official) sign the entry, and
- Place the *Record of security seals* form in the plastic window on the ballot box, this form must always stay with this ballot box and
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before and after.

Note that declaration ballot boxes must **NOT** be opened until after 6pm on polling day. If a ballot box is opened prior to 6pm there are strict procedures that must be followed by the OIC. See Troubleshooting on page 96 for more information.

During polling

Open the polling place

8am

Just before 8am check the time so that the polling place opens at exactly 8am. Visiting https://time.is/ will give an accurate time.

At precisely 8am, the OIC opens the polling place and admits anyone waiting to vote. The OIC then signs the declaration in the OIC return to declare that the polling place was opened at the correct time.

Monitoring

Staff and procedures

As soon as possible after 8am and again at regular intervals, you should move around the polling place, listening to the questioning method used by staff, ensuring they are explaining how to correctly fill in each ballot paper, watching what they are doing, and checking forms and other paperwork. Also check that the specific COVID-19 procedures are being followed, such as physical distancing, sanitising after every 10th voter, and voters and staff using hand sanitiser.

If there are problems, speak to the relevant staff member and explain the correct procedure. Check periodically that the problems do not recur. If they do, it may be necessary to move that person to a different position.

Section A in the OIC return will prompt you to monitor staff several times over the day. Of high importance is:

- following COVID-19 safety measures,
- marking certified lists correctly,
- completing the certified list coversheet (ordinary issuing points) and ballot paper tracking form (declaration issuing point) as soon as ballot papers are allocated
- queues being managed correctly including the use of mini-queues,
- asking the 3 questions (ordinary issuing officers),
- following the declaration vote issuing procedure (declaration vote issuing officers), and
- directing silent electors to the OIC or 2IC.

If there is a 2IC they should be responsible for monitoring the issue of declaration votes.

The polling place should be maintained in a neat and tidy and fully serviceable condition at all times (pencils sharpened, posters correctly displayed, voting screens cleared of litter, etc.).

Staff ratings

As an OIC, you are required to assess staff in the performance of their duties and assign them a rating. These ratings are important for future election staffing and need to be carefully considered. You must ensure that you observe staff throughout the day to assist in completing the assessment.

After polling, ratings are to be recorded on the *OIC and staff report* that is included in the OIC return.

Please provide a comment beside staff that should be considered for promotion to the next level, and if possible indicate staff who should be considered first for promotion.

Ballot paper security

All polling staff must take every precaution with allocated ballot papers in their care and never leave ballot papers unattended. The OIC must never leave the reserve stock of ballot papers in public view. The reserve stock must be stored in the transport container within the secure zone.

If issuing officers have to leave their issuing point or an issuing point is closed at any time, ballot papers and certified lists must be removed from issuing points, put into issuing point storage boxes and given to the OIC for safekeeping in the secure zone.

Ballot boxes that are full must remain with the ballot box guard or, if that restricts voter flow, in the secure zone.

Staff breaks

If you close an issuing point to allow staff to have a break, leave the same issuing point closed for all breaks and rotate staff through the open issuing point(s) where applicable.

Issuing points must be sanitised when there is a changeover of staff. The declaration moulded ballot box should also be wiped over with changeover of staff. **Spray onto the paper towel, not onto the ballot box.**

Queue control and voter flow

The queue controller(s) and, where employed, inquiry officer should work together to control the flow of voters through the polling place. Issuing officers can assist by not issuing ballot papers to voters until a voting screen is available.

- Generally the start of the queue will be at the entrance to the polling place, to promoted adherence to capacity limits. A queue controller will be at the head of the queue managing voter flow into and within the polling place, and monitoring the external queue to ensure voters are maintaining 1.5m distance.
- The queue controller will be directing voters to available issuing points. If issuing points are busy, the voters will be directed to a mini queue of one person behind each issuing point, if space permits.
- The queue controller will be responsible for ensuring the maximum number of people allowed inside the polling place at one time is not exceeded. Larger polling places will be allocated a second queue controller for this purpose, to ensure a strict one–out, one–in policy is followed if the polling place is at capacity. The second person will be monitoring the exit, the overall number of voters in the polling place, and communicating with the queue controller at the entrance regarding any issues with numbers or voter flow.
- It is important that the queue controller/s are monitoring the overall voter flow in the polling place so that queueing inside the polling place is minimised.
- Sometimes voters arrive in family groups. These voters will be expected to queue separately once inside the polling place and should not be encouraged to approach an issuing point together, unless a voter requires assistance. Children can stay with an adult but will count towards the total number of people inside the polling place.
- Voters requiring help may request assistance and can be sent to the front of the queue. This may include voters with a disability or those who are elderly or pregnant.
- Queue controllers direct voters to collect pencils at entrance.

  Queue controllers can also assist with manual registration of voters for COVID-tracing purposes if necessary.

Issuing ordinary votes

The ordinary issuing process includes the following safety measures:

- ordinary issuing officer to sanitise hands every 10 voters,
- the hygiene officer will be required to sanitise the issuing area every 10 voters or every 15 minutes, and
- ordinary issuing officers are to assist in keeping track and alert the hygiene officer when required. The issuing officer table should be sanitised whenever there is a changeover of staff.

Issuing votes to ordinary voters involves 3 steps:

1. Asking the voter the three questions,
2. Marking their name off the certified list, and
3. Handing the initialled ballot papers to the voter with instructions on how to complete each ballot correctly.

Step 1 - Ask the voter the three questions

Ordinary vote issuing officers must ask voters the following three questions prior to marking their name off the certified list:

Question 1 'What is your full name?

If the voter's name is found on the certified list, ask the voter question two.

If the voter's name cannot be found on the certified list, confirm the correct spelling or ask if they may be enrolled under a different surname. If the voter still cannot be found, the voter should be directed to the declaration vote issuing point.

See the Troubleshooting section of this manual for more information on finding a voter's name on the certified list.

Question 2 'Where do you live?'

Note: Included in the certified list are names for which address details are not shown. These are silent, itinerant or designated electors who must be directed to the OIC or 2IC to be issued with a declaration vote. These entries **must not** be marked on the certified list. See electors with address suppressed on page 54 for more information.

If the address given is the same as the one on the certified list, ask the voter question three.

If it is a previous address for the voter, they should be asked to update their enrolment online. Then ask them question three as an ordinary vote can still be issued.

If the address is a place where the voter has never lived, the entry is probably for a different person. Direct the voter to the declaration vote issuing point.

Question 3 'Have you voted before in this election?'

If the voter answers 'No', they are issued with an ordinary vote.

If the answer is 'No', but the name is already marked as having voted on the certified list, direct the voter to the declaration vote issuing point.

If the answer is 'Yes', you must first be sure that the question is understood. Rephrase the question; for example, 'When and where did you vote in *this* election?' If the answer is still 'Yes' the voter cannot vote again; you must advise them that the law allows a voter to vote only once in an election.

Questions over voter identity

If there is any question as to the identity of a voter they should be referred to the OIC. If, after making enquiries, you cannot find the person on the certified list, the usual procedure is to issue the person with a declaration vote.
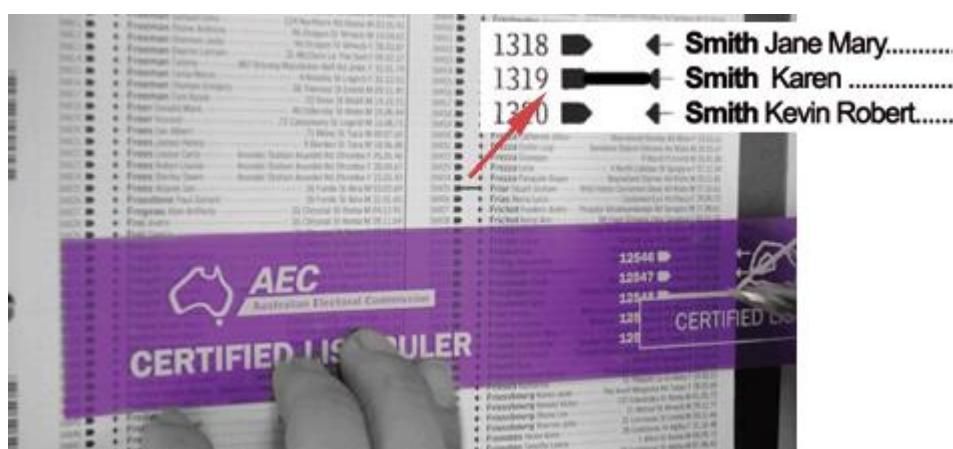
See the Troubleshooting section of this manual for more information on voter identity.

Step 2 - Mark the certified list

The voter's name must be marked off the certified list by the ordinary issuing officer before ballot papers are issued. The OIC must ensure the issuing officer is marking the certified list correctly as follows:

Mark the certified list only with the special black pen provided. Using the certified list ruler, **draw one continuous line between the arrowheads to the left of the voter's name**.

Do not draw through the number or the name. If this happens make sure to also draw between the arrow heads.

See the Troubleshooting section of this manual for procedures to correct a mistake when marking the certified list.

Step 3 – Issue ballot papers

Before ballot papers are issued, the issuing officer must initial the circle on the **front** of each ballot paper given to the voter.

The issuing officer should use their real initials and ballot papers are **not** to be pre-initialled.

Wait until there is a vacant voting screen. This is important to control voter flow.

Tell the voter the following:
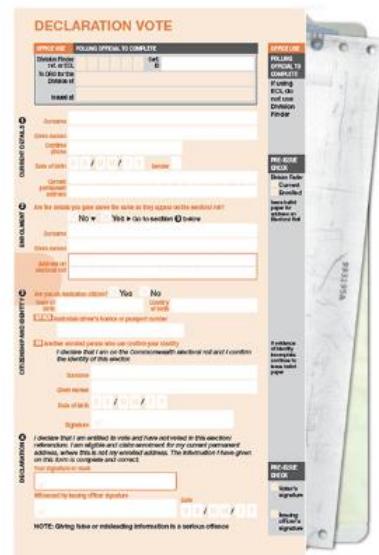
> "*For the House of Representatives, complete the ballot paper by placing a number one in the box next to the candidate who is your first choice, and then number every box in the order of your choice.*
>
> *For the Senate, complete the ballot paper by numbering at least six boxes above the line OR by numbering at least twelve boxes below the line, in order of your choice. You can continue numbering as many additional boxes as you choose.*
>
> *If you make a mistake, bring the ballot paper back to me and I will give you another one.*"

Note: there will be a placecard at each issuing point that includes the above script, so issuing officers don't have to memorise this.

Before being directed to an empty voting screen, the voter should be informed that assistance is available if required and that they must fold their ballot papers and put them in the correct ballot boxes after voting. Also advise the voter to ensure they take everything with them out of the polling place, and to dispose of pencils in the receptacle provided at exit.

See page 58 for information on assisting voters who need help completing their ballot papers.

The golden rules for issuing ordinary votes

Ensure that you ask the three questions.

Initial both ballot papers before handing them to the voter, do not pre-initial ballot papers.

Take care to mark the correct voter off the certified list between the arrow heads.

Ensure the security of ballot papers and certified lists by returning them to the OIC if your issuing point will be left unsupervised.

Assist with voter flow by only handing the ballot papers to the voter when there is a vacant voting screen.

Declaration votes

The following describes how to issue a declaration vote. This will be done by a declaration vote issuing officer/inquiry officer or 2IC/OIC only.

The declaration issuing process includes the following safety measures:

- declaration vote issuing officer to sanitise hands after every 10 votes,
- declaration voter should collect a clean pen to complete declaration envelope and ballot paper (unless they brought their own). When returned the declaration vote issuing officer should ensure the voter deposits the pen in the used pens container. The declaration vote issuing officer should ensure there is a stock of clean pens and may need to advise the hygiene officer to sanitise used pens,

- where possible, an additional table will be placed in front of the declaration issuing desk so that the voter completes their declaration envelope at a separate table to the issuing officer,
- the hygiene officer will be required to wipe down the declaration issuing area after every 10 votes or 15 minutes.

Introduction

Declaration votes are issued to voters who cannot cast an ordinary vote on polling day. See 'Absent vote' and 'Provisional vote' below for more information.

Before they are given ballot papers, declaration voters must record their details on a declaration vote envelope. The front of the declaration envelope can be seen in detail on page 117.

The declaration vote envelope has a counterfoil (non-carbon copy paper) inside it that is removed after the envelope has been completed.

Once the declaration voter has voted, their completed ballot papers are inserted into the declaration vote envelope which is sealed and inserted into the ballot box and will later be forwarded to the division in which the voter is claiming to be enrolled.

Types of declaration votes

Absent vote

An absent vote is issued to voters from the same state/territory but a different division to the polling place.

Provisional vote

A provisional vote is issued when the voter claims to be enrolled for the issuing division, but:

- their name cannot be found on the certified list,
- their name on the certified list is already marked as having voted,
- their name, but not their address, is on the certified list (a silent elector), or
- their identity cannot be confirmed for an ordinary vote.

If a voter could not be found on the certified list, they can be advised they can check their enrolment online at aec.gov.au. They should be offered a declaration vote if there is any doubt or they believe they are enrolled in the division.

Interstate vote

A voter who is enrolled in a division in a state or territory other than the state or territory you are in will require an interstate vote.

Your polling place cannot issue votes for other states/territories. This voter must be referred to a polling place that can issue interstate votes. A list of these locations will be supplied by the divisional office.

Secrecy of the vote

Voters may ask how their vote can be kept secret if their ballot papers are enclosed in a declaration vote envelope that shows their name.

Advise them that strict procedures are followed for the removal of ballot papers from declaration envelopes to prevent any name being linked with any ballot paper and that those procedures may be witnessed by scrutineers.

Issuing declaration votes

Step 1 – Provide the voter with a pen if required. The voter completes sections 1 to 3 on the declaration vote envelope.

Ask the voter to print legibly and firmly.

The issuing officer may assist a voter who has difficulty writing or understanding the process. See page 58 for more information on assisting voters.

The issuing officer checks the declaration vote envelope, ensuring that all relevant details have been completed legibly with:

- full name,
- permanent address where the voter normally lives (except silent electors),
- former name (if applicable),
- voter's address on the electoral roll, if different from the permanent address. **This is the address that you must check in the division finder**, and
- evidence of identity. **Note**: this is not compulsory; if the voter cannot provide evidence of identity, continue to issue the vote.

Step 2 - Use the division finder.

Using the voter's **address on the electoral roll**, the issuing officer determines the voter's correct division in the division finder.

A division finder reference must be recorded on every declaration vote envelope, except in the case of silent electors. For example, the reference is written as 016028 (Page 16, Entry 28).

Write the enrolled division on the envelope.

For instructions on using a division finder, read the division finder guide on page 100.

Step 3 - Determine the type of declaration vote to be issued.

If the voter is claiming enrolment for an address in another division within the same state or territory, they are to be issued an **absent** vote. Ask the voter to sign section 4 of the declaration vote envelope then go to step 5.

If the voter is claiming enrolment at an address in the division of the polling place, they require a **provisional** vote. The issuing officer ensures that the certified list has been checked before proceeding to issue a provisional vote and then goes to step 4.

Step 4 – The provisional voting statement.

The voter must read the provisional voting statement on the back of the declaration envelope.

The issuing officer may read the statement to the voter if they request assistance.

Ask the voter to sign section 4 of the declaration vote envelope.

Step 5 - Complete the polling official sections.

The issuing officer ensures that the polling place name is recorded in the **Issued at** box and signs AND dates as issuing officer in the '**Witnessed by issuing officer**' box.

The issuing officer ticks the pre-issue check boxes down the right hand side of the envelope (pictured) to confirm that the division finder reference has been completed and the voter has signed the declaration vote envelope.

Note: a declaration vote envelope that is completed in error and is not required should be discarded. It is not included in the 6pm reconciliation.

Step 6 - Select and initial the correct ballot papers.

The issuing officer must select a House of Representatives ballot paper that matches the division written on the declaration vote envelope and a Senate ballot paper.

The issuing officer initials the **front** of each ballot paper within the circle provided.

The issuing officer must use their correct initials and **does not** pre-initial ballot papers.

Step 7 - Issue the ballot paper and instructions.

The issuing officer waits until there is a vacant voting screen to hand over the ballot papers. This is important to control voter flow.

Note: The declaration vote envelope must remain with the issuing officer, it is not given to the voter.

The issuing officer tells the voter:

> "*For the House of Representatives, complete the ballot paper by placing a number one in the box next to the candidate who is your first choice, and then number every box in the order of your choice.*
>
> *For the Senate, complete the ballot paper by numbering at least six boxes above the line OR by numbering at least twelve boxes below the line, in order of your choice. You can continue numbering as many additional boxes as you choose.*
>
> *If you make a mistake, bring the ballot paper back to me and I will give you another one.*"

Note: issuing officers will be provided with a placecard for their issuing point that includes the above script, so will not have to memorise this.

The voter should be informed that assistance is available if required and that they must fold their ballot papers and return them to the same issuing point to be placed in their declaration vote envelope.

The voter can use the pen they have been provided with to complete their ballot papers. Remind the voter not to leave anything behind in the voting screen.

Step 8 - While the voter is completing their ballot papers, the issuing officer checks the declaration envelope.

- A. Has the voter signed the declaration section? Has the issuing officer signed and dated as witness?
- B. Did the issuing officer use the enrolled address to determine the correct division?
- C. Did the issuing officer issue ballot papers for the correct division?

Step 9 - File the counterfoil.

Remove the counterfoil from the envelope. Check that it can be read. If anything on the counterfoil cannot be clearly read, write over the information based on the declaration vote envelope. Do not attempt to copy over the voter's signature.

File it in the declaration records counterfoil binder in alphabetical order, first by division and then by family name and given names.

Step 10 - When the voter returns with ballot papers:

- the issuing officer asks the voter to repeat their name to ensure that their ballot papers are placed in the correct declaration vote envelope
- the issuing officer inserts **BOTH** ballot papers into the envelope, seals it and places the envelope in the declaration vote ballot box
- the voter should be requested to return their pen for sanitising and further use
- use hand sanitiser at least every 10 voters, alert the hygiene officer to regularly wipe down the table and chair the voters use.

The golden rules for declaration vote issuing

Always use the division finder to determine the correct division.

Always use the address shown in the **Address on Electoral Roll** field. Do not use the permanent address unless the voter has confirmed that it is also the enrolled address.

Ensure that the division on the ballot paper matches the division on the declaration vote envelope.

Ensure that the declaration vote envelope is signed by the voter and witnessed and dated by the declaration vote issuing officer.

Ensure that **both** ballot papers are folded and placed in the declaration envelope.

Electors with address supressed

Silent electors

Silent electors are those electors whose address details do not appear on the certified list. The privacy of a silent elector is to be observed at all times.

Silent electors are directed to the OIC or 2IC for the issue of a declaration vote. For these electors, follow the declaration vote issuing process except:

- **do not** complete the address sections of the declaration vote envelope. Write 'SILENT' in the address sections before giving the declaration vote envelope to the elector. If the elector enters their address or telephone number, it **must be completely covered** with black pen on both the envelope AND the counterfoil so it cannot be read, and
- ask the elector to identify their division using the division finder – you must explain the use of the division finder to the silent elector and once they tell you the division you record it on the declaration vote envelope. The division finder reference is **not** recorded on the declaration vote envelope.

Silent electors **must not** have their name marked off the certified list.

Other electors with address supressed

Other voters with their address supressed may be itinerant voters (voters who have no fixed address) or designated electors.

Depending on their situation itinerant electors are enrolled at the address for which they were last eligible to enrol for, at the address of their next of kin, or the division they were born in or are most closely connected to. An itinerant elector's enrolled address will not be shown on the certified list. An elector whose address is not shown on the certified list **must** be referred to the OIC or 2IC who issues them a declaration vote in the same way as a silent elector, except if the elector knows their enrolled address, they can complete the address fields on the envelope. Some voters may only be able to provide a division. In this case the division finder reference field is left blank.

Electors with their address suppressed **must not** have their name marked off the certified list.

Spoilt or discarded ballot papers

Note: When processing spoilt or discarded ballot papers, you must use a separate 'spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelope' for each ballot paper.

Spoilt ballot papers

If a voter makes a mistake on a ballot paper they can return it to an issuing officer who should:

- cancel the spoilt ballot paper by writing 'SPOILT' on the back
- in full view of the voter, place the spoilt ballot paper in a spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelope
- seal the envelope
- complete the fields on the envelope:
    - tick the type of ballot paper spoilt (House of Representatives or Senate), record the division or state/territory as appropriate and seal the envelope
    - tick the type of voter (ordinary or declaration)
    - tick the '**Spoilt**' box on the envelope
    - sign as issuing officer
- issue a new ballot paper, remembering to initial it.

If a voter loses a ballot paper they cannot receive a second one.

Keep spoilt ballot paper envelopes at the issuing point with unused ballot papers, to be counted and reconciled after polling.

Discarded ballot papers

During the day, polling officials or voters may find ballot papers that have been dropped in the polling place or left in a voting screen.

These must be given to you, they must NOT be put in the ballot box. They are not included on the certified list coversheet reconciliation or as part of the declaration vote reconciliation.

As the OIC you will:

- write 'DISCARDED' on the back of the ballot paper
- place it in a spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelope
- tick the type of voter if known
- tick the '**Discarded**' box on the envelope
- tick the type of ballot paper discarded (House of Representatives or Senate) and record the division or state, as appropriate, and
- seal the spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelope.

You will count and record discarded ballot paper envelopes after polling.

Postal votes

Some voters who have applied for a postal vote may wish to:

- lodge their postal vote
- cancel the postal vote and vote in person, or
- advise that they did not receive their postal vote and wish to vote in person.

Voters in these circumstances should be directed to the OIC.

Receiving a completed postal vote

If a voter wants to lodge their postal vote at your polling place, you should take the completed postal vote and:

- on the front of the postal vote return envelope (under the return address), write the words 'Received by me at [name] polling place', sign it, and include your position title, the time and the date of receipt
- record the details on the 'completed postal votes' section of the *Record of Postal Vote Certificates* form in the OIC return
- place the sealed postal vote envelope in the declaration vote ballot box,.

Cancelling a postal vote

If a voter has been issued with a postal vote but would like to have an ordinary vote at your polling place, the postal vote can be cancelled.

You should take the postal voting material and:

- write 'CANCELLED' in large, clear letters on the postal vote return envelope
- place the postal ballot papers and the postal vote certificate in the envelope and seal it
- record the details in the 'cancelled postal votes' section of the *Record of Postal Vote Certificates* form in the OIC return, and
- place the cancelled postal vote in the declaration vote ballot box.

The voter can then cast an ordinary or declaration vote as appropriate.

Postal vote not received

People should be directed to cast an ordinary or declaration vote as appropriate where they advise they have:

- applied for a postal vote but did not receive it
- received and misplaced postal ballot papers, or
- received postal ballot papers and filled them out but are unsure if they have returned them to the AEC.

Details of such cases must be recorded on the 'postal votes not received by voters' section of the *Record of postal vote certificates* form in the OIC return.

Recording voter information

Electoral enrolment

A voter's enrolment must be updated if their details have changed from those on the certified list in cases where:

- their address has changed
- their name has changed, or
- their name has been omitted.

If the voter is directed to complete a declaration vote envelope do **not** ask them to complete an enrolment form – the envelope will be used to update their details.

For remaining voters, they should be encouraged to update their details online by scanning the QR code provided or visiting aec.gov.au.

Where neither of the above options are available, the OIC has a small supply of paper enrolment forms and reply paid envelopes. Encourage the voter to fill in their enrolment form on the spot.

- It must be legible.
- They cannot use a postal address for their residential address.
- The voter provides evidence of identity (EOI). They can provide a driver's licence number, passport number or have an enrolled voter confirm their identity and sign the form.
- The voter must sign and date the form.
- Some states/territories will require a witness to sign the form as well. The form will make this obvious.

Make sure any completed enrolment forms are filed in the completed enrolment forms envelope.

If the voter is unable to complete the form on the spot, ask them to complete it and post it to the divisional office or update their details via the AEC website.

Elector information report

The elector information report form should be completed when:

- there are errors in the voter's enrolment details on the certified list
- the voter's name is spelt incorrectly
- there are inaccurate address details (such as a wrong house number)
- the voter's name is on the certified list twice, or

- advice is received about the inability of other people to vote, such as because of illness, death or other circumstances.

A ballot paper must **never** be issued to allow a person to vote on behalf of another person.

Avoid commenting on whether people may be fined for not voting, as this will be determined after the election.

Note: the elector information report is not used to change a voter's address. The electoral enrolment form or declaration vote envelope is used for this purpose.

Assisted voting

A voter who seeks assistance to complete a ballot paper should be directed to the OIC, 2IC, or inquiry officer. Issuing officers should not leave their issuing point unattended to assist.

You should assist a voter if you are satisfied that they require help to vote. Any voter may seek help, but the following groups have been identified as those most likely to require assistance:

- the elderly
- people with a physical injury or disability that makes it difficult for them to complete a ballot paper
- people who are blind or have a vision impairment
- people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment
- people with low literacy
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

You should attempt to identify voters requiring assistance as soon as possible. Use common sense to advise electors that there is help available to them should they need assistance.

Assistance to voters

The voter can nominate any person (except a candidate) to help them. That person could be a friend or relative, a scrutineer, a party worker or a polling official. If the voter declines to nominate someone, you should provide assistance or delegate a polling official to assist the voter.

Assistance by a person nominated by voter

Where a person nominated by the voter provides assistance:

- the voter and the nominated assistant enter an unoccupied voting screen, and
- the nominated assistant helps the voter to complete their vote, which may include completing, folding and depositing the ballot paper in the ballot box.

In this situation, scrutineers are not allowed to enter the voting screen while the ballot paper is being completed (unless the scrutineer has been nominated as the assistant).

Assistance by a polling official

Where you or a delegated polling official is assisting a voter, the following rules apply:

- one scrutineer from each candidate is entitled to listen to the instructions given by the voter and to observe how the ballot paper is completed
- the voter may provide written instructions on how they want to complete the ballot paper (for example, a how-to-vote card). Confirm that the voter is aware of the contents of the written instructions
- a witness must be present when the polling official completes the ballot paper. A scrutineer or, if there is no scrutineer, another polling official or a person nominated by the voter may be a witness, and
- an interpreter is entitled to be present at all times if the voter needs such help.

Take care not to suggest particular answers or to ask leading questions.

Assistance must be provided to voters if requested. While in this instance it may not be possible to maintain a strict 1.5m distance, ensure there is no physical contact, use appropriate personal protective equipment such as a face mask, and sanitise hands immediately afterwards.

Assistance to complete a declaration vote envelope

Where assistance is being provided to a declaration voter the above instructions apply for voting, but only the delegated polling official should complete the declaration vote envelope. They must:

- complete the required details on the declaration vote envelope
- if required, read the details and the provisional voting statement to the voter and have them confirm that the information is correct
- if the voter has a hearing impairment, give them the declaration envelope and show them the provisional voting statement (if required) to read and confirm the information
- have the voter sign the declaration. If they are not able to sign, follow the instructions in 'voters unable to sign' below
- sign and date in the space provided at 'witnessed by issuing officer', and
- obtain the signature of a witness and their title (for example, 'scrutineer', 'polling official' or 'voter') on a blank area of the envelope.

Assisting voters who are unable to sign

If a voter is unable to sign, they may make their 'mark' as a signature. The polling official must add the words 'his mark,' or 'her mark,' or 'their mark' above the voter's mark and print the voter's given name(s) to the left of the mark, and the voter's family name to the right of the mark.

I declare that I am entitled to vote and have not voted in this election/ referendum. I am eligible and claim enrolment for my current permanent address, where this is not my enrolled address. The information I have given on this form is complete and correct.

Your signature or mark

His mark
Jeff ✕ Wilson

Witnessed by issuing officer signature
MSmith

Date 10 / 10 / 18

The issuing officer must then sign and date as the witness.

A person who holds power of attorney for a voter is NOT permitted to sign the declaration vote envelope on behalf of that voter.

Assisting voters outside the polling place

A voter may vote outside (but within close proximity to) the polling place if you are satisfied that the voter is unable to enter the polling place because of any condition that prevents them from entering the polling place, such as:

- physical disability
- illness, or
- advanced pregnancy.

If the voter can vote without assistance they are entitled to the same privacy as inside the polling place. If a voter requires assistance the same 'rules' apply to assistance inside the polling place.

The ballot papers are handed to the polling official who then returns to the polling place and places them in the ballot box.

Discrimination and communication

People living with disability

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (the Discrimination Act), which came into effect on 1 March 1993, makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of disability. This Act recognises that people with disability have the same fundamental rights as other people and should have equal opportunities to participate in community life.

People with disability are no different from any other Australians and have the right to be treated in the same way that you would wish to be treated.

- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, almost one in five Australians reported as living with disability at the 2016 census. That is 18.3 per cent of the population, about 4.3 million people. Disability can be: physical – affecting a person's mobility or dexterity.
- Intellectual – affecting a person's ability to learn.
- Psychological – affecting a person's thinking process.
- Sensory – affecting a person's ability to hear or see.
- Neurological – affecting the person's brain and central nervous system, or
- Immunological – the presence of organisms causing disease in the body.

When providing electoral services to someone living with disability, always:

- treat adults as adults
- treat the person as you would any other
- address the person by their first name only when extending the same familiarity to all others
- speak directly and clearly to the person with disability, including when they are accompanied by a person without disability
- offer assistance if it appears necessary, but don't assume they will accept it
- ask, if you are unsure about the best way to communicate with the person
- speak clearly, without raising your voice, to assist voters who are deaf or have a hearing impairment
- have writing paper and pens ready.

Remember that people living with disability should not be treated differently. People may appreciate understanding, but be intolerant of sympathy or people being condescending.

- Do not tell an individual that you admire their courage or determination.
- Never stare at or avoid looking at a physical disability.
- Do not express sympathy for the individual or presume that they are more fragile or sensitive than others.
- Do not assume that someone with a speech or hearing impediment is intellectually impaired.
- Never feel uncomfortable using the word 'see' when addressing a blind person, or 'hear' when addressing a hearing impaired person.
- Never raise your voice or yell at someone who is having difficulty hearing you.
- Above all, as in any new situation, use common sense, be respectful and considerate, offer assistance and do not hesitate to ask questions.

People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background

When providing electoral services to voters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, it is important to have patience, understanding and a supportive attitude.

Show consideration for all voters:

- be aware that cultural differences exist; for example, in some situations it is considered more appropriate for women to be served by women
- some voters may mistrust and/or be suspicious of government processes
- some voters may be nervous about their English proficiency.

If a voter shows confusion or concern in being directed to a declaration issuing point, take time to carefully explain the process to them.

Be aware of multilingual staff employed at the polling place and the languages they speak, so that you can refer voters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to them if necessary. OICs should ask the staff at the morning briefing if anyone is fluent in another language and happy to support multilingual voters who may speak the same language.

Where voters indicate a need for assistance in completing forms or papers provided, polling staff should offer to assist accordingly.

Where multilingual staff are not available, the following points may assist with communication in English:

- speak slower than normal and as clearly as possible
- do not raise your voice
- do not be patronising
- ask whether there is someone with the voter who can help
- simplify your language by using smaller words or phrases such as 'Where do you live?'
- if necessary, use hand gestures or simple drawings to support what you are saying
- ask the voter to write down their name to help you to find it on the certified list (if applicable)
- ask the voter whether they have some form of identification with their name and address on it (if applicable), and
- use the *How to vote guide*.

Preparing for the close of polling

The OIC return includes a list of tasks that should be completed to prepare for closing the polling place.

Depending on the size of the polling place and how busy you are, during the latter part of the afternoon you may arrange to dismantle some voting screens and close down some issuing points. The dismantled voting screens should be stacked ready for collection. At least one ordinary and one declaration point must remain open until the close of polling.

Make sure that you and your staff take the opportunity to vote *before* 6pm.

Scrutiny assistants

Scrutiny assistants should arrive by 5pm. As they arrive, brief them on their duties (which include dismantling voting screens, tidying the premises and preparing materials for post 6pm activities) and ensure that they sign the attendance record and their proof of COVID-19 vaccination status is sighted. Scrutiny assistants can also be used to replace queue controllers and ballot box guards while they have a break.

After 6pm they will also be required to assist with the scrutiny and count of ballot papers and other duties as directed by you. One scrutiny assistant per polling place will also be identified by the DRO to return materials on behalf of the OIC once the polling place is packed up.

Close of polls

Just before 6pm, check the time so that your polling place closes at exactly 6pm. Visiting https://time.is/ will provide the accurate time.

Have a second person (preferably a scrutineer) witness the time check and confirm the time of closure of the polling place by signing the *Polling place declaration* in the OIC return. When the doors of the polling place are closed at 6pm sharp, any person still in the polling place has a right to vote. If there is a queue and it is not possible for all voters to be in the polling place, a polling official should join the end of the queue at 6pm sharp and no other person should be allowed to join the queue or vote.

Preparation for scrutiny

Section A of the OIC return provides a guide to the tasks to complete once all voters have left the polling place and the doors are locked.

Ordinary issuing staff must complete their ballot paper reconciliation before helping with the scrutiny.

Declaration vote issuing staff must complete their ballot paper reconciliation and declaration vote envelope reconciliation before helping with the scrutiny of ordinary votes.

If the premises has more than one division operating at it, each OIC will run a separate scrutiny of ordinary votes with their allocated staff (unless otherwise instructed,).
Ballot papers from the different divisions must be kept separate at all times.

The first preference and two candidate preferred (TCP) counts will need to be set up and conducted so that 1.5m distancing is maintained as much as possible.

The following measures are to be in place during the scrutiny:

- where possible, staff to work on individual tables and remain 1.5m apart
- where possible, staff can be seated
- use the sanitising spray to wipe the tables before and after the scrutiny
- use the sanitising spray to wipe the ballot box (including the seals) before opening after 6pm. **Always spray onto the towel rather than the election material**
- hand sanitiser to be readily available
- staff to sanitise their hands at the start and end of the count, and regularly during the count including when ballot papers are moved between tables, and
- if 1.5m physical distancing cannot be maintained, masks should be worn, including by scrutineers.

Before 6pm

To assist in the preparation of the scrutiny, during the afternoon of polling make sure that staff have been assigned specific tasks for the scrutiny and they understand how to carry out these tasks. Sort cards and packaging labels can also be prepared before 6pm.

Staff and scrutineers

Briefing

You are in control of the scrutiny and must therefore explain the order of tasks to be carried out to polling officials and scrutineers before beginning the scrutinies. The OIC return assists in delivering the briefing.

Scrutineers during the count

Entitlement

For guidelines on eligibility and appointment of scrutineers please see 'Candidates, party workers and scrutineers on page 87.

As OIC, you will be the point of contact for scrutineers during the count. You must check appointment forms when scrutineers arrive and issue identification badges. You will need to exercise discretion to ensure that reasonable requests by scrutineers are met, while not unduly delaying election results from your polling place.

In a polling place with more than one division operating, scrutineers are only entitled to monitor activities for the division for which they were appointed.

Rights and responsibilities

All proceedings at the scrutiny are open to inspection by scrutineers and they can inspect any ballot paper without touching it.

Scrutineers may enter and leave the polling place at any time during the scrutiny provided they have shown you a completed appointment form.

Scrutineers must not:

- remain in a polling place without a scrutineer's badge
- touch ballot papers
- help with clearing voting screens or the removal of material from the polling place, or
- unreasonably delay or interfere in the progress of the scrutiny of votes.

When a scrutineer leaves the polling place, they must return their badge.

Objections to ballot papers

If a scrutineer objects to the formality of a House of Representatives ballot paper, it should be set aside for you to examine.

After examining the ballot paper and making a determination on its formality, you must write on the back of the ballot paper 'ADMITTED' or 'REJECTED' according to your decision, and add your initials and the date. The ballot paper is then sorted to the candidate if admitted or to informal if rejected.

Decisions on the formality of Senate ballot papers are not made at the polling place. This means that scrutineers cannot object to the formality of Senate ballot papers at a polling place. Scrutineers will have the opportunity to object to the formality of Senate ballot papers at the Central Senate Scrutiny conducted under the authority of the Australian Electoral Officer for each state/territory.

Work area

The following diagrams show key principles to follow when setting up the work area. Please note:

- As a principle, unfolding is marginally faster than sorting so you should have slightly more staff sorting than unfolding. If sorting staff are being starved of unfolded ballot papers in the production line, they can be allocated a small bundle of ballot papers to unfold and then sort on their individual table.
- To minimise cross over of staff, sorters should generally stay seated and the unfolder/runners move the ballot papers as required. This includes assisting the OIC to allocate bundles of ballot papers ready to be counted/check counted, and
- Unfolder/runners can also assist with counting ballot papers if required.

After 6pm
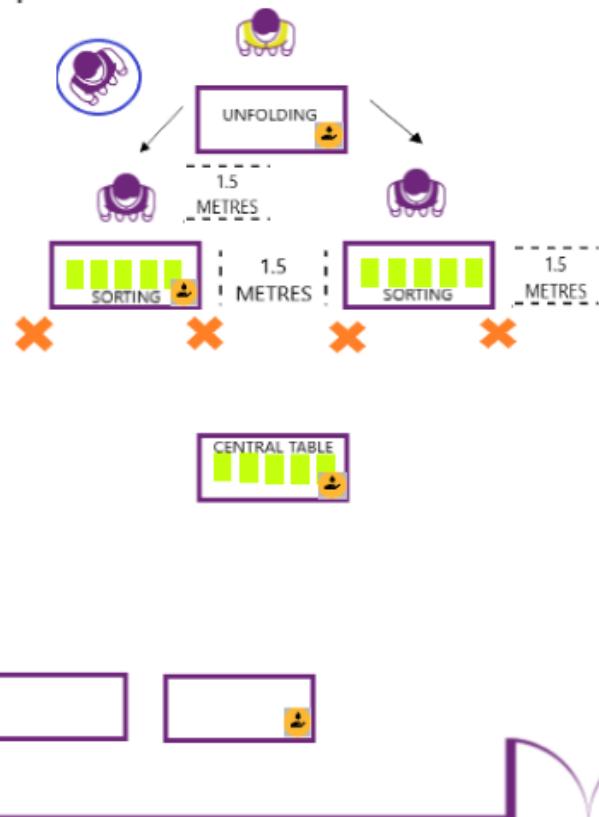
After 6pm on polling day, instruct any staff not involved in the collection and reconciliation of material, or the reconciliation of declaration votes, to dismantle remaining cardboard polling equipment and set up all tables needed for the scrutiny (if not already done).

You need to organise your available space so that you have room for:
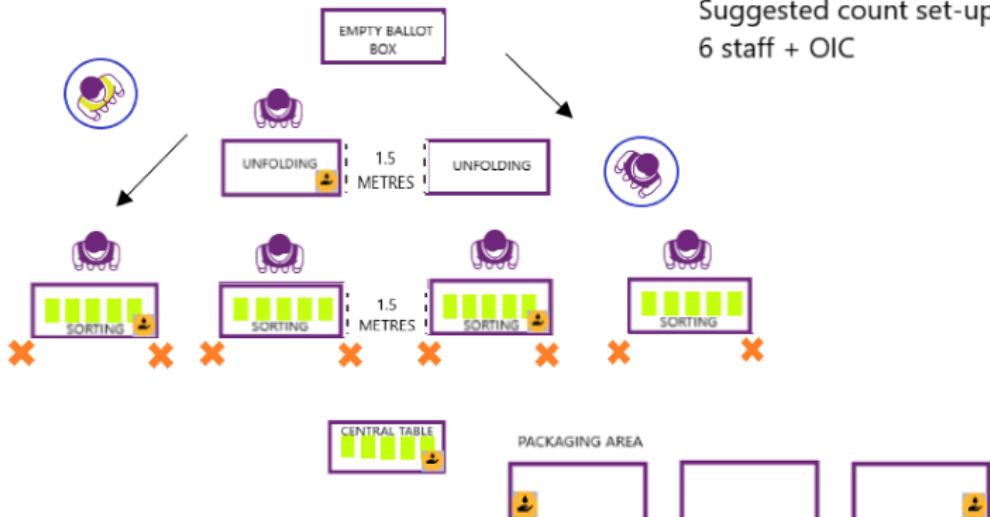
1. House of Representatives area for unfolding and sorting/counting
2. Senate area for unfolding and sorting/counting (this can progressively get bigger as the House of Representatives scrutiny finishes)
3. completion of returns and other paperwork, and
4. packaging of election materials.

Suggested count set-up:
3 staff + OIC

UNFOLDING

1.5 METRES

1.5 METRES

1.5 METRES

SORTING

SORTING

CENTRAL TABLE

PACKAGING AREA

Suggested count set-up:
6 staff + OIC

EMPTY BALLOT BOX

UNFOLDING

1.5 METRES

UNFOLDING

SORTING

SORTING

1.5 METRES

SORTING

SORTING

CENTRAL TABLE

PACKAGING AREA

	Hand sanitiser		Unfolder/runner		Sorter/counter
	Table	✖	Scrutineer		Sort cards

Reconciliation of material

Before you begin the scrutiny, instruct ordinary and declaration vote issuing officers on the procedures for reconciling material and returning it to you, keeping each issuing point's material separate. Only after reconciling at issuing point level and recording on the relevant worksheets and forms, may material be merged. If there is a 2IC, they should coordinate the reconciliation of declaration voting material.

As material is returned to you, arrange it ready for packaging. More information is provided on page 79.

Reconciliation of ordinary votes

Ordinary issuing officers should be instructed to count all unused ballot papers and complete the *Certified list coversheet* fields by tallying total ballot papers received, spoilt, unused and then issued.

Reconciliation of declaration votes

At 6pm the declaration vote ballot boxes are opened and each declaration vote issuing officer is to check and reconcile ballot papers, counterfoils, and declaration envelopes on the *Ballot paper tracking* form.

Give each declaration vote issuing officer an *'After 6pm checklist for staff reconciling declaration votes'* found in your OIC return to help with this task. Every declaration vote issuing point must be reconciled separately.

The number of envelopes for each division should match the ballot paper reconciliation for votes issued as well as match the counterfoils.

- Counterfoils should have been sorted progressively throughout polling day into alphabetical order, first by division, then by voter's family name and then given name.

- If there is more than one declaration vote issuing point, after reconciling the issuing points separately, all counterfoils must be merged and sorted alphabetically by family name for each division and filed in the declaration vote counterfoil folder(s).

- Declaration envelopes from all issuing points must then be merged and sorted alphabetically, first by division, then by family name and bundled behind a completed *Declaration vote packaging card* (EF097) for each division.

- The bundles of declaration votes, counterfoil binders and any postal votes extracted earlier are to be packaged for return of materials. The same plastic ballot box(es) used for declaration voting will be used for this purpose. If envelopes/counterfoils don't reconcile, the declaration vote issuing officer should alert the OIC who should record the details in their OIC return.

Order of the scrutinies/counts

Ballot papers must be counted in the following order:

1. House of Representatives – first preference
2. House of Representatives – two candidate preferred (TCP), and
3. Senate.

You must phone the results through separately to the election night results team as soon as possible after **each** count has been completed.

When counting one type of ballot paper, it is essential that the other types are kept separate and secure. However, the opening of the Senate ballot boxes and unfolding of all Senate ballot papers should occur **before** the completion of the count of the House of Representatives, to check for ballot papers that may have been put in the wrong ballot boxes.

House of Representatives Scrutiny and Senate Count

Scrutinies/counts are conducted using a production–line system that has three main tasks:

1. unfolding
2. sorting, and
3. counting.

The sorting phase is the most time consuming component and can become congested depending on the space available. It is recommended that once a small number of ballot papers have been unfolded, gradually move some staff to sorting and then counting to form a production line. If some staff seem slower at sorting ballot papers than others, swap them to a different task if possible.

The areas should be set up so that any scrutineers have full access to observe and record the results of the count.

Opening the ordinary ballot boxes

Note: Ensure that there are no voters in the polling place when a ballot box is opened.

Wash hands or use hand sanitiser before and after handling security seals.

Before you open a ballot box you must check the seals in the presence of polling officials and scrutineers.

You, as the OIC and a witness must sign the *Record of ballot boxes and security seals* in the OIC return.

Sort cards

The sorting area should be set up making sure:

- there is a sort card for each candidate or group as appropriate for House of Representatives or Senate ballot papers, and
- there is a sort card for informal ballot papers and for 'queries' for you to examine if a scrutineer has objected to a ballot paper.

Sort cards should be placed along the table in the same order as the candidates/groups appear on the ballot paper.

Ballot paper formality

There are principles and guidelines that must be followed when deciding if a ballot paper is formal and can therefore be counted. Please read the Ballot Paper Formality guide starting on page 102.

House of Representatives scrutiny procedure

Following the close of poll, the counting of ballot papers must be undertaken using the following process and taking account of physical distancing requirements.

Sort cards should be laid out on individual sort tables in order of the candidate names on the ballot paper. Then:

Unfolding

- Empty ballot box onto initial table.
- Unfolder/runner takes ballot papers from initial table, unfolds at their individual table into neat piles. Sorters can also be allocated a small bundle of ballot papers initially to unfold to get started.
- As piles of unfolded ballot papers are generated, unfolder/runner delivers to any of the sort tables.

Sorting

- Allocated staff will sort ballot papers on their individual tables to sort cards. Raise hand for unfolder/runner to deliver more unfolded ballot papers as required.
- If any ballot papers are being challenged by scrutineers, the unfolder/runners can periodically take them from the sort tables to the central table for the OIC to review.

Once a staff member has sorted all available ballot papers, the staff member should raise hand for unfolder/runner to collect ballot papers and place them on central table. When sorting ballot papers, make sure that:

- each ballot paper is examined for formality
- ballot papers are sorted and placed in piles according to first preferences by candidate
- informal ballot papers are placed in a separate pile to one side for you to check, this includes ballot papers where staff are unsure as to the formality
- if the formality of a ballot paper is objected to by a scrutineer, the ballot paper should be placed in a 'queries' pile for you to check and determine whether they are formal or informal. You must write on the back of the ballot paper 'admitted' or 'rejected' and add your initials and the date,

- ballot papers for other divisions are placed on the queries pile.
  - ballot papers for guest divisions (i.e. ordinary votes) are admissible and should be collated with a clearly marked sort card for transfer to the correct count. If occurring on-site, this can be given to the relevant supervisor. If not, the ballot papers should be parcelled, details recorded on the Discrepancies form in the OIC return, packaged with other House of Representatives ballot papers, and returned with other materials to the OPC
  - ballot papers for divisions who were not guests in the polling place are informal

Counting

- Once all ballot papers are placed on central table, OIC allocates individual candidate piles back to sorters to count. Unfolder/runners to assist with moving ballot papers. OIC will need to consider size of piles and potentially split the major candidates across multiple tables to count. Unfolder/runners can also be allocated ballot papers to count at their individual tables.
- As the ballot papers are being counted the polling official is re-checking that the number '1' is for the correct candidate.
- Formal ballot papers for each candidate are counted into bundles of 50 then secured with a rubber band. It is recommended counting into 5 piles of 10 ballot papers, then combining the piles to make a bundle of 50.
  Any bundle with less than 50 should have the amount recorded on a post-it note which is stuck to the top of the bundle and secured with a rubber band. Raise hand to notify OIC.
- Unfolder/runners or OIC return ballot papers to central table. OIC then allocates to a different staff member to check count each candidate. (Note: staff to raise hand during counting if any mis-sorts are identified so that the runner can reallocate to the correct candidate/informal).
- Whilst ballot papers are being counted, the OIC can check the informal pile and review any remaining queried ballot papers.

- Once check counted, staff raise hand to notify OIC. Unfolder/runners assist with returning ballot papers to central table where OIC writes the total number of ballot papers on the sort card which is placed on the top bundle and secured with a further rubber band around all bundles for that candidate.
- Informal ballot papers are then counted and bundled the same way as the formal ballot papers.

Do not write on ballot papers (except to note 'Rejected' or 'Admitted' on the back of ballot papers that were challenged by a scrutineer). Use rubber bands to bundle House of Representatives ballot papers – **do not fold or roll ballot papers**.

You may find that not all staff are utilised once you get to the counting phase. Progressively move staff from the House of Representatives scrutiny to the Senate count once they have completed.

Recording results

When counting is finished the OIC records the number of first preference votes for each candidate and the number of informal ballot papers on the *Result of count - House of Representatives* sheet in the OIC return.

Reconciliation

You must check that the total count of ordinary ballot papers agrees with the number of ballot papers issued on the *House of Representatives – Worksheet* form in the OIC return.

If the total number of formal, informal, spoilt, and unused ordinary ballot papers is less than the number issued, staff should check to see whether any ballot papers have been overlooked.

You should check all ballot boxes and conduct a general check of the premises.

Do not check bins, due to potential risks from discarded objects.

If necessary, do one recount. If there is still a small difference, it may be due to voters not placing both their ballot papers in the ballot boxes.

Balancing errors commonly occur because of:
- inaccurate counting of ballot papers before polling
- a miscount of unused ballot papers at the end of polling
- ordinary votes placed in incorrect division's ballot box (if a dual or multi)
- including discarded declaration ballot papers in the total figures, or
- not including the OIC's unallocated ballot papers in the total number of unused papers in the ballot paper reconciliation.

Do not take any more time by searching or recounting again. This will delay the release of results.

When satisfied with the figures the details are to be recorded on the *House of Representatives worksheet* form in the OIC return.

Telephoning results

A dedicated phone number for results will have been provided in your OIC return. You will need to provide your name, polling place name and OIC Identification. The OIC Identification is provided in the TCP envelope in the OIC return.

You must make **three separate** phone calls in total to the divisional office; one at the conclusion of each count. Phone in the results of each count as soon as possible.

Do not end the phone call until told to do so by divisional staff.

If there is no phone or mobile phone coverage inside the polling place, you must remain in the room and have another polling official make the phone call.

Two candidate preferred scrutiny procedure

Introduction
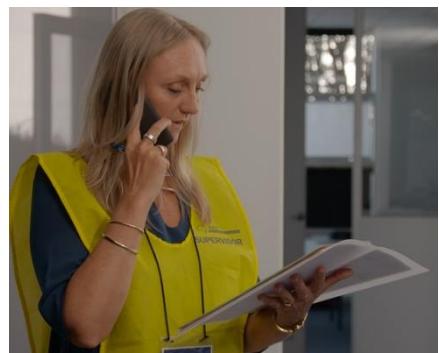
The two candidate preferred (TCP) scrutiny takes place in all polling places where more than two candidates are contesting the election on the House of Representatives ballot papers. The AEC selects two 'major' candidates and provides you with their names in a sealed envelope which is not to be opened prior to 6pm. This envelope will be included with the OIC return.

Preferences from the ballot papers for all other 'minor' candidates are distributed between the two major candidates.

The TCP count should be performed by you and/or the 2IC, and if necessary another polling official selected by yourself. It takes place after the first preferences of all House of Representatives ballot papers have been counted and phoned in.

The TCP count provides an indication of the likely outcome of the poll in that division.

All staff not involved in the TCP should be moved on to the Senate count.

Procedure

At the completion of the House of Representatives scrutiny of first preference votes the TCP scrutiny should be conducted by the OIC/2IC at the central table. In larger polling places the second officer involved in the scrutiny can assist from a separate table.
The process is as follows:

1. Set aside the first preference ballot papers for the two candidates selected by the AEO as being the most likely to be elected and the informal ballot papers. These ballot papers are not touched as part of the TCP count. The ballot papers from other candidates are not amalgamated with these ballot papers at any time.
2. Choose a remaining candidate and sort ballot papers to the selected candidates. To determine the correct candidate to sort the ballot papers to:
   a. examine the preference marks against the two selected candidates to determine which is more preferred. The candidate that is more preferred will be represented by the number closest to 1, i.e. 2 is more preferred than 5.
   b. Sort the ballot papers to the more preferred candidate.

3. Count the number of ballot papers allocated to each selected candidate and record the result on the *TCP worksheet*.
4. Return the ballot papers to their original first preference bundles, sorting back to piles of 50.

Repeat this process for all candidates other than the two selected candidates.
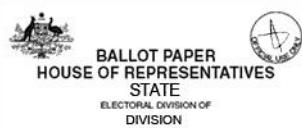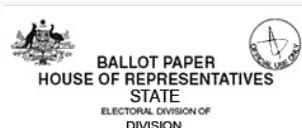
TCP preference examples

In the following examples, Peters and Mathews have been selected as the major candidates. The following ballot papers were sorted to minor candidates and will be sorted to the major candidates as described:

Example 1: Mathews is the more preferred candidate, as the voter has given fourth preference to Mathews, whereas Peters is fifth preference. *The paper is sorted to Mathews.*

Example 2: Peters is the more preferred candidate, as the voter has given third preference to Peters, whereas Mathews is fifth preference. *The paper is sorted to Peters.*

Example 3: Peters is the more preferred candidate, as the voter has given Peters second preference before third preference to Mathews. *The paper is sorted to Peters.*

1)

2)

3)

Recording results

Record the TCP figures on the *Result of Count – two candidate preferred* worksheet in the OIC return.

For each minor candidate, ensure that:

- their preferences are counted to one of the major candidates, and
- the total number of votes distributed to major candidates agrees with the total number of votes recorded for the minor candidate.

		PETERS		MATHEWS		
		Party		Party		TOTAL
1st Prefs >		593	+	459	=	1052

OTHER CANDIDATES	V	+	+	
JONES (PRT)	117	50 +	67 =	117
COOPER (PRT)		+	=	
MAYER (PRT)		+	=	
LEE (PRT)		+	=	
O'BRIEN (PRT)		+	=	
WEBB (PRT)		+	=	

The ballot papers for each minor candidate are then placed back with their original sort card (1st preference sort) in rubber banded bundles of 50.

Do not amalgamate these ballot papers with those of other candidates – keep them bundled separately by first preference for each candidate.

Continue these steps until all the minor candidates have had their preferences counted.

Ensure that the figure shown in the TCP total column agrees with the 'Total 1st preference' recorded on the *Result of Count - House of Representatives* sheet.

Telephoning results
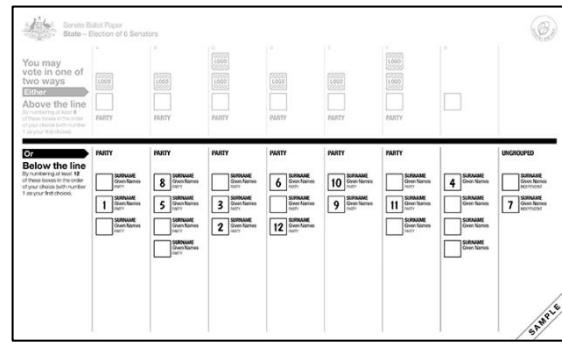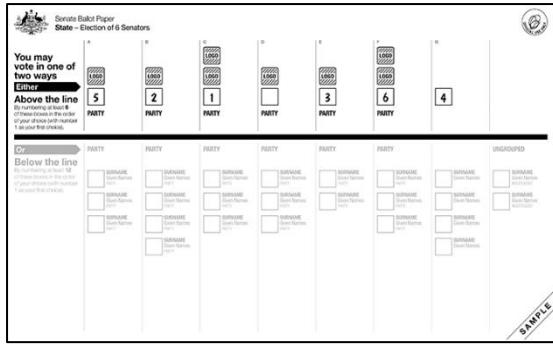
Once the totals are recorded, phone the results through to the divisional office immediately, do not wait for all three scrutinies to be complete.

You will be required to provide your name, polling place name and OIC identification when you phone in your results.

Senate count

The count of Senate ballot papers carried out at polling places is not considered a scrutiny. This means that at the polling place you do not make decisions on the formality of Senate ballot papers. You will, however, need to separate out the obviously informal ballot papers which cannot be allocated to any group because they are blank, indicate more than one first preference or do not indicate a first preference for any candidate. The scrutiny of Senate ballot papers is undertaken at the Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS) centre in the weeks following polling day. Scrutineers have the opportunity to challenge the formality of Senate ballot papers at the CSS.

Polling officials are doing a preliminary count by first preference. Only those ballot papers that are obviously informal (i.e., no first preference or more than one first preference) will be included in the informal pile.

The Senate ballot paper consists of two sections – above the line and below the line (see figure below). The boxes above the line represent the group of candidates listed vertically below the line. Electors can vote above the line for groups (whether these group boxes are endorsed and thus labelled with a party name or not); or for individual candidates below the line.
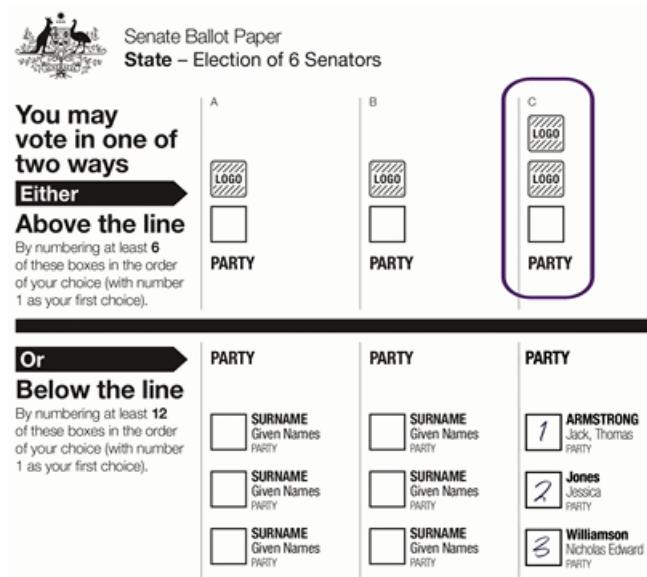
When preparing for the count, sort cards should be laid out for the four major groups above the line, one card for the remaining above the line groups, and one card for all votes below the line on sorting tables. Then there should be central tables for each of the four major groups. The procedure for the Senate count is as follows:

Unfolding

- Empty ballot box onto initial table.
- Unfolder/runner takes ballot papers from initial table, unfolds at their individual table into neat piles. Sorters can also be allocated a small bundle of ballot papers initially to unfold to get started.
- As piles of unfolded ballot papers are generated, unfolder/runner delivers to any of the sort tables.

Sorting

- Sorters sort ballot papers at their individual tables according to the first preferences shown for each group. It is quicker to initially sort to these top three or four groups and place all other ATL votes in a separate pile, as well as a separate pile for BTL and informal. Any ballot papers marked both ATL and BTL should be sorted to the BTL pile. Raise hand for unfolder/runner to deliver more unfolded ballot papers as required.
- Once a sorter has completed all ballot papers, raise hand for unfolder/runner to collect ballot papers and place them on central sort table.
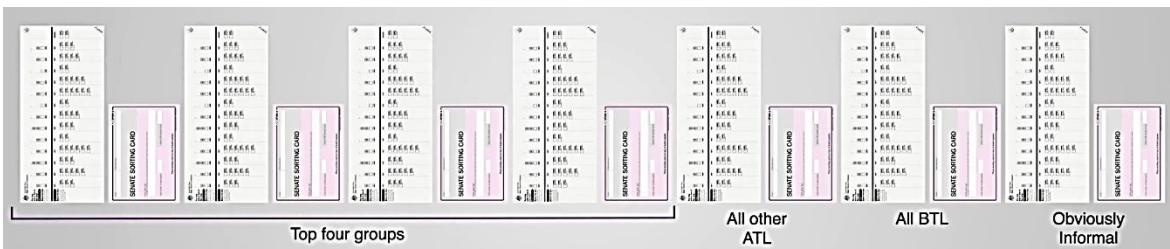
- The first four piles can then be transferred to individuals to count (below) while a small group of sorters can then progressively be moved to sort the 'ATL Other' pile. Use sort cards across a number of tables, sorters will need to move around and place the ballot papers with their sort cards in group order.

- Note: Sort cards should be marked with the letter(s) that represent that group on the ballot paper, for instance A, B, C etc., as it is easier to sort to the letter(s) than to the group party name.

- The BTL votes are then to be sorted to their Group, i.e., a first preference for any BTL candidate under Group C will be sorted to Group C. Ungrouped candidates are to be sorted to individual candidates.
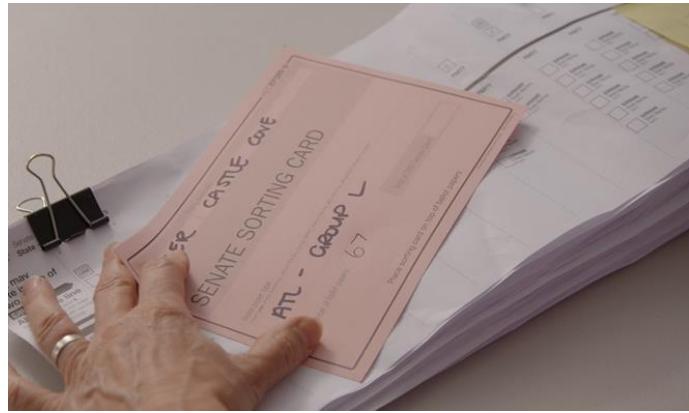
Sort to piles next to the ATL piles (do not merge ATL with BTL) and to separate piles for any ungrouped candidates.

Counting

- Once all ballot papers are placed on central table, OIC allocates individual piles back to sorters to count. Unfolder/runners assist with moving ballot papers. OIC will need to consider size of piles and potentially split the major candidates across multiple tables to count. Unfolder/runners can also be allocated ballot papers to count at their individual tables.

- To count the ballot papers, individuals should place them face up so that the first preference can be checked as you count.

- Count the ballot papers into bundles of 50 and secure with a foldback (or bulldog) clip. Any bundle with less than 50 ballot papers should be identified by writing the number of ballot papers on a post-it note, and sticking it to the top of the bundle, then securing the bundle with a foldback clip. (Note: staff to raise hand during counting if any mis-sorts are identified so that the runner can reallocate to the correct candidate/informal).

- The counter should then raise hand to notify OIC. Unfolder/runners or OIC return ballot papers to central table.

- Do not fold or roll ballot papers.

- The OIC will then write the number of ballot papers for each group on the sort card and secure the card with the foldback clip on the top bundle. **Do not write on ballot papers**.

- Record each total first preference vote for each group on the *Result of count – Senate* worksheet in the OIC return.

- Whilst ballot papers are being counted, the OIC can check the informal pile and deal with any remaining queried ballot papers.

- Unfolder/runners assist with returning ballot papers to central table where OIC completes sort cards and records first preference results on the results slip.

- Once all ballot papers, including informals, have been counted, and totals recorded on the *Senate Result of count phone-in slip*, BTL ballot papers should be merged into one bundle and packaged as "BTL".

Top four groups | All other ATL | All BTL | Obviously Informal

1. Use a new sort card labelled "BTL".
2. Merge all BTL bundles into one, make new bundles of 50 from any bundles that did not add up to 50 in the sort (for example if you had 20 ballot papers in a bundle from Group A and 30 in a bundle for Group D, merge these together). Ensure all post-it notes are removed except if there is one remaining bundle that has less than 50 ballot papers.
3. Record the total number of BTL votes for the polling place on the sort card and secure it with the foldback clip to the top bundle.

Unused Senate ballot papers

Unused ballot papers that are still in bundles of 100 from the original allocation do not need to be re-bundled after polling.

All other unused Senate ballot papers are to be counted into bundles of 50, with any remainders on top with the number recorded on a post-it note. Foldback clips should be used to secure bundles. **Do not fold or roll ballot papers.**

Write the total number of unused ballot papers on a sort card labelled "Unused" and secure the card to the top bundle with the foldback clip.

Telephoning results

Once you are satisfied with the calculations on the *Senate Result of count phone-in slip,* phone these totals through to the divisional office. You will be asked to provide your name, polling place name and OIC Identification.

Once results are phoned through the ballot papers and remaining election materials need to be parcelled and packaged ready for return of materials to the hub/out-posted centre. That process is covered in Packaging election materials, see page 79.

Final duties

As staff finish their scrutiny duties, they should help with the following:

- dismantling any remaining polling place equipment
- removing any remaining signs or posters
- inspecting the premises to make sure no election material has been overlooked
- returning furniture to its proper place, and
- making sure that premises are left tidy and in the condition agreed to when the building was hired.

No staff should leave until all packaging and tidying is complete.

You are responsible for returning premises keys according to the agreed arrangements.

OIC returns

Once you have completed your last day of polling you must complete your OIC return, see page 28 for details on completing the return.

Once completed the OIC return is packaged with the materials that are returned as instructed

Packing election materials

Introduction

You will be provided with plastic bags, labels, tamper evident tape and various other packaging materials.

Material is to be packaged using these supplies and in accordance with packaging instructions. The *Parcelling and packaging quick reference guide handout* can be provided to staff to assist.

You **must** comply with these instructions. Failure to do so may result in staff re-packaging material at the designated delivery point.

Returning materials

Remember to follow specific instructions issued in the Preparation Guide for the return of all materials.

Unless otherwise directed OICs will transfer custody of all material to the designated Scrutiny Assistant for return to the location as instructed.

Election material must be securely transported inside an enclosed vehicle (improvised enclosures such as tarpaulins over open tray utilities are not permitted), and supervised at all times.

If the material is to be returned by a courier, <u>all</u> materials must be collected by the approved courier with consignment labels attached to all packages being returned.

Preparation

Following polling you should set aside an area for packaging of materials. This area needs to be large enough for you to lay out all labels and bags side by side. When you have finished with any particular item, place it next to the label that has that item listed on it. At the end of the night, it should then be a simple exercise to place the materials into the bag or transport container with the appropriate label.

No rubbish or recycling should be placed near ballot papers and materials to be packaged.

Approved labels for polling material

Only approved labels may be used for packaging of election materials.

Each label describes the contents of the parcel or package. Strict attention is to be paid to ensure the correct material is placed with the right labels.

Record the polling place name on every label if it's not already printed on there and ensure you complete any necessary information on the label and sign it.

Label 1 – Administration records

Label 1 package should be the last to be sealed (with tamper evident tape). It must include the OIC return as well as the polling place attendance record, which must be signed by all polling staff.
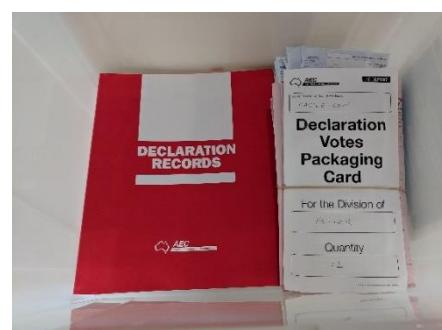
Ensure that the OIC return has been completed accurately and that it has been signed and witnessed as required.

Label 2 – Declaration vote materials

Label 2 package must contain the completed *Absent and provisional vote envelopes*, declaration counterfoils in the red counterfoil folder(s), completed postal votes and cancelled postal votes. The plastic declaration ballot box(es) are to be used as the secure containers for packaging declaration vote materials.

Containers must be sealed with plastic seals and the *Record of security seals* form completed. Complete the label and place it in the container window.

Only folders containing counterfoils should be packaged in Label 2. Once counterfoils have been merged, any empty folders should be packaged with Label 8.

Label 3 – Enrolment

Label 3 package must contain all elector information reports, the envelope containing completed enrolment forms and scrutineer appointment forms and be sealed with tamper evident tape.

Label 4 – Certified lists

When completing Label 4 ensure you include the number of certified lists that have been included in the package, then seal with tamper evident tape.

Label 5 – House of Representatives ballot paper stubs parcel

Label 5 is used for House of Representatives ballot paper stubs. The ballot paper stubs must be placed in an individual parcel, labelled with Label 5 and sealed with tamper evident tape. The Label 5 parcels are placed into the Label 5A ballot paper transport container.

Label 5a – Ballot paper transport container (House of Representatives) package

Label 5a is for all securely fastened containers that contain House of Representatives ballot paper bundles, bundled spoilt/discarded envelopes and the Label 5 ballot paper stubs parcel. Containers must be securely fastened with plastic seals and the *Record of security seals* form completed. Complete the label and place it in the container window.

Label 6a - Ballot paper transport container (Senate) package

Label 6a will be used for all ballot paper transport containers that contain bundles of sorted Senate ballot papers, including formal, unused, informal and spoilt and discarded ballot papers. Ballot paper transport containers must be sealed with plastic seals and the *Record of security seals* form completed.

Complete the label and place it in the container window.

Label 8 – Materials

This package should contain all other materials, such as badges, handbooks, unused enrolment forms, calculators, voter screen plastic inserts etc., as listed on the label. It must be sealed with tamper evident tape.

Bundling, parcelling and packaging of ballot papers

Bundling

During the House of Representatives and Senate scrutinies, ballot papers are sorted to individual candidates or groups and bundled to 50s. There will also be bundles of informal, spoilt, discarded and unused ballot papers.

Each sorted bundle must include the sort card.

To prevent them becoming unbundled in the transport container, place any large House of Representatives bundles (usually just the top 2-3 candidates) into separate plastic bags with the sort card visible. These do not need to be labelled or sealed with tamper evident tape.

Parcelling

House of Representative ballot paper stubs must be parcelled into a sealed bag before they can be packaged for transport.

A completed Label 5 (House of Representatives) indicating the contents must be affixed to the front of the parcel, with tamper evident tape used to secure the parcel.

No other ballot papers will be parcelled.

Packaging

Bundles of House of Representatives and Senate ballot papers must be packaged ready for transport using the following steps:

- place bundles into the relevant ballot paper transport container

- complete Label 5a (House of Representatives) or Label 6a (Senate) listing the contents of the transport container, have it witnessed by a scrutineer (or polling official if a scrutineer isn't available) and place the label in the container window, and

- seal the container and complete the *Record of security seals* form, placing the form behind the label in the container window.

When packaging Senate ballot papers, any groups that add up to more than 500 will have to be packaged into more than one transport container. If this happens use another sort card to identify the remaining bundles from the group, for example if your polling place has 600 ballot papers sorted to ATL Group C, 500 of them should go in one transport container with a sort card that says "ATL Group C" and 600 as the total. The remaining 100 will go in the next transport container with a sort card that says "ATL Group C", but does not identify how many ballot papers. Ensure only one sort card records the number of ballot papers in the group.

Packaging declaration vote envelopes

Place reconciled and sorted declaration envelope bundles into the plastic container (ballot box) used for declaration voting, along with the counterfoils folder(s) that contain counterfoils and postal votes handed in.

Complete Label 2, have it witnessed by a scrutineer (or polling official if a scrutineer isn't available) and place the label in the container window.

Seal the container with plastic seals (ensure it is sealed on two sides and the top flap) and complete the *Record of security seals* form, placing the form in the container window behind the label.

Packaging other election materials

Continue packaging all other election materials using the following steps:

- complete the label indicating the contents of the package (label must be signed and witnessed)

- affix the label to the front of the package, do not cover the label with tamper evident tape, and

- **Label 1** package should be sealed last as this is the package that contains the OIC return. Ensure that the OIC return is complete and the attendance record is signed before sealing this parcel.

Note: If the contents of any label require more than one package, ensure you label each of them and note the total number of packages.

Employment conditions

Work health and safety

Under Commonwealth legislation, staff have a general work health and safety duty of care to themselves and to others. To enable OICs and their staff to take responsibility for ensuring that the polling place is a safe and healthy area for all staff and members of the public, here are a number of WHS actions that must be undertaken:

1. Instructing a polling staff member to complete the *Safety Inspection checklist* prior to the start of polling.
2. Providing a WHS briefing to all staff prior to the start of polling, with a check-in at the end of the workday.
3. On polling day if an incident occurs, this needs to be reported by using the *Incident Notification Form* in the OIC return.
4. If at any time you feel you are unfit to continue work on polling day/night you should inform the PPLO or divisional office.

Preventing injuries

To avoid potential injuries or illnesses, you must monitor staff workloads and fatigue levels, and ensure they take their scheduled breaks. You must also identify the safest and most convenient access route into the polling place, particularly for people with a disability or less mobile.

To prevent slips, trips and falls, during the inspection ensure that:

- entrances to the polling place are clear
- electrical cords on floors have been taped down
- any rubbish on floor areas is promptly removed
- mats placed on a slippery floor have a non-slip backing
- torn carpets or uneven floor surfaces are covered or appropriate warning signs provided
- traffic areas within and immediately outside the building are well lit, and
- other hazards, such as fatigue, are mitigated in consultation with the PPLO or divisional office.

To prevent back injuries the OIC should ensure that staff use a trolley, or team lift, to move heavy or awkward items. Staff should be advised to:

- avoid bending, twisting and rushing when lifting
- stretch regularly
- take breaks from prolonged standing or sitting, and
- alternate task/duties where it is practical to do so.

Other safety considerations for managing incidents/injuries

If a serious incident occurs, call the emergency services first and then contact the DRO immediately. Your primary duty is to ensure, as far as possible, the safety of all persons within the polling place. Procedures to follow for different types of emergencies are located in the Emergency Procedures booklet (also listed in Attachment 4). The DRO will assist with any further requirements.

Note: For the safety of others, and to ensure legislative compliance, please cordon off the incident scene where it is reasonably practicable to do so until advised by the DRO that it is safe to release the area for use again.

Every polling place will be provided with a basic first aid kit. These kits contain products to assist in treating minor injuries (e.g. paper cuts, splinters). If an injury requires more attention or treatment then you must call 000.

Liability for injuries that occur will be determined by the AEC's regulator/insurer and will depend upon the circumstances relating to individual incident. Under no circumstances should an injured person be provided with an expectation that the AEC will pay medical accounts and/or make reimbursement for loss or damage to personal effects. Any queries, from voters, of this nature should be directed to the DRO.

Harassment and bullying

Workers, who include polling officials and scrutineers, are individually responsible for promoting a work environment free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Workplace bullying is repeated and inappropriate behaviour that could reasonably be considered to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating, threatening or demeaning to a person or group of persons, which creates a risk to health and safety.

Workplace harassment is any unwelcome, unsolicited and usually unreciprocated behaviour. It makes the workplace unpleasant, humiliating and intimidating and makes it difficult for effective work to be done.

If there are any allegations of harassment and/or bullying you will need to complete the Incident Notification Form included in the OIC return, as this will allow the AEC to contact involved parties so that a review of the allegation can be conducted.

Personal security

All staff should be aware of the potential danger in exiting buildings late at night.

If lighting is not adequate you should arrange to have someone accompany staff to their cars, with a torch if available.

Bins

Under no circumstances are scrutineers, party workers or polling officials to rummage through bins inside the polling place in order to recycle party literature, such as how–to-vote cards.

There are health and safety reasons for this, and in addition the bins may contain discarded ballot papers placed there by voters.

Smoking in the polling place

Smoking in the polling place is strictly prohibited. This includes the 6-metre section immediately surrounding the premises.

Workplace diversity

The AEC is committed to the principles and practices of workplace diversity. Through diversity, we foster an inclusive environment that values and utilises the contributions of people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

Diversity relates to gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation and religious beliefs.

Diversity also refers to the many ways people differ in other respects, such as educational level, job function, socioeconomic background, personality profile, geographic location, marital status and whether or not they have family or other care responsibilities.

As the OIC you are responsible for ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and equitably and that they are given the same opportunity to perform the same range of duties.

Customer service

All staff employed by the AEC will provide a certain level of service to all our customers. Our customers include voters, scrutineers, party workers and candidates.

As a temporary AEC employee you are required to be professional in your dealings with all our customers and to treat them with respect and courtesy.

Property

The AEC accepts no responsibility for the loss of property belonging to employees or for damage to their vehicles in getting to and from, or while at the polling place.

Staff must therefore ensure that their personal property is safe and secure at all times.

Meal breaks

All staff should ensure they have adequate food and refreshments for the day as there may be limited opportunities for polling staff to leave the polling place, and limited availability of nearby facilities. Staff may also like to take other small items for personal comfort (e.g. a cushion).

Requirement on polling day

Legislation and AEC policy requires that staff <u>must not</u> work more than 5 continuous hours without taking a break of at least 30 minutes. AEC employees are obligated to take such a break as directed by the OIC.

While it is preferable that a 30 minute meal break be provided to all polling staff, it is acceptable, during peak periods, for staff to have two 15 minute breaks for every 5 hours worked.

Staff should be aware that the nature of the work during polling makes it difficult to schedule official meal breaks that correspond to accepted mealtimes. Meal breaks are at the direction of the OIC and as far as possible the timing of breaks will be mutually agreed between you and your staff.

Managing meal breaks

It is the responsibility of OICs to ensure that all staff, including yourself, take regular breaks.

A break is considered to be time away from the actual polling area, in locations such as a tea room, kitchen, or outside the polling place. Staff should not eat or drink at the issuing tables to avoid the risk of spills on the certified lists or ballot papers.

You will need to develop a roster before polling begins to ensure all staff are scheduled to take the required breaks throughout the day. The roster should be developed in consultation with staff to ensure that, as far as practicable, the break times are mutually agreed to.

During peak polling periods (e.g. mornings on polling day), it may be more practical to provide staff with two 15 minute breaks rather than with a single 30-minute break, however, you must ensure that all staff take a break of at least 30 minutes duration at some point during the day. At no stage should a staff member have been on duty for more than 5 hours of continuous duty without having taken breaks of 30 minutes in total.

There is an expectation that breaks will be available to staff throughout the whole working day, this includes during the count after polling. Following is a suggested plan to manage breaks during the count:

- provide staff who are not directly involved in the reconciliation of ballot papers with a 15 minute break at 6pm
- as staff complete their reconciliation, they take a 15 minute break
- as each staff member completes that 15 minute break they resume after 6pm duties as required, and
- ensure all staff take an additional 15 minute break during the scrutiny to ensure the requirement is not breached.

Alternatively, scrutiny assistants arriving at 5pm may be utilised to cover the role of ballot box guard or queue controller to allow staff to have a break prior to the close of polling,

If a staff member refuses to take their allocated breaks, you must explain the requirement to them and advise them that they will be in breach of work health and safety legislation. If they still refuse, inform the PPLO, ensure you record the incident in the *Issues and miscellaneous matters* form in the return and have another member of staff witness this entry. You must also record on this form any other issues associated with meal breaks.

Candidates, party workers and scrutineers

Introduction

Candidates, party workers and scrutineers have very different responsibilities and rights at polling places.

Candidates

Rights and responsibilities

Candidates are not allowed to take part in any way in the conduct of an election for which they are a candidate.

They may not be scrutineers and they may not enter a polling place except to record their own vote.

They may, however, mix with party workers and voters outside the polling place in the approved area (i.e. 6 metres from the entrance to the polling place).

Party workers

Party workers will need to adhere to physical distancing measures and any health requirements in force at the time of polling.

Party workers are expected to provide their own masks if they choose to wear them or if there is a requirement to wear a mask.

Rights and responsibilities

Party workers distribute how-to-vote material and encourage voters to vote for the party or candidate that they support. This is called 'canvassing'.

At polling places on polling day candidates and party workers are prohibited by the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* from canvassing within 6 metres of an entrance to a polling place (see Electoral Backgrounder – Polling place offences at Attachment 5 for further information). This provision should be enforced if the activities of party workers obstruct voters.

At polling places on polling day, ensure that the 'electoral offences' sign is placed at the entrance to the polling place.

Party workers may enter the polling place only once, to record their vote.

An exception is made if a voter who needs help nominates a party worker to assist them. Party workers asked to assist voters must remove any political badges they are wearing and cover any political logos on clothing etc. before entering the polling place.

Scrutineers

Scrutineers will be asked to use hand sanitiser and maintain 1.5m distance when observing processes inside the polling place including the sealing of ballot boxes and scrutiny of ballot papers. Under no circumstances are scrutineers to touch ballot papers or ballot boxes.

The following hygiene provisions will be in place for **scrutineers**:

- QR code check-in on relevant state/territory mobile phone app and manual sign-in sheets if unable to use QR code
- hand sanitiser to be used on entry and exit (and as requested)
- masks should be worn if physical distancing is not possible, both during polling and the scrutiny
- scrutineers are expected to provide their own mask, and
- scrutineers should also maintain hand hygiene while in attendance.

Scrutineers play an important role in the election process. It is their job to observe that you are doing your job properly.

During polling each candidate can be represented by one scrutineer per issuing point.

During the scrutiny each candidate can be represented by one scrutineer per officer counting the votes.

It is your responsibility to ensure that scrutineers and party workers do not breach the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* or the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984.*

Identifying scrutineers

Scrutineers must present their appointment forms to you on arrival, and you must check to see that:

- the name of the polling place has been entered
- the 'undertaking by scrutineer' on the form has been signed by the scrutineer, and
- the form has been signed by the candidate (a rubber stamp, facsimile or photocopy is sufficient).

A scrutineer may also be appointed by fax or by an imaged signature attached to an email, but it must satisfy the above requirements.

If these matters are in order, issue the scrutineer with a scrutineer's badge. A scrutineer must always wear a scrutineer's badge when inside the polling place.

If there is no signature, the person cannot be appointed as a scrutineer. Anyone who seeks to be a scrutineer but who does not satisfy these requirements should be told to contact the party, candidate or campaign office.

Scrutineers may come and go during polling, or they may be replaced by another scrutineer provided appointment forms are in order.

Scrutineers are entitled only to exercise their responsibilities in the election for the candidate that appointed them. In a dual or multi polling place, this means only the division in which that candidate is running.

Rights and responsibilities

You should check with all scrutineers that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the *Scrutineers handbook*.

You will be provided with copies of the *Quick reference guides for scrutineers and party workers* to issue to scrutineers or party workers who ask for information about their duties on polling day.

Quick reference guides are also designed to help you provide accurate information to scrutineers and party workers on their rights and responsibilities during polling and scrutiny.

Scrutineers may:

- observe all voting procedures except the voter actually voting, unless the voter is being assisted by a polling official
- object to the right of any person to vote, and
- be nominated by a voter to help with the completion of a ballot paper.

Scrutineers must not:

- remain in a polling place without a scrutineer's badge
- touch ballot papers unless a voter nominates them to assist
- interfere with, or attempt to influence, any voter
- disclose any knowledge gained concerning the vote of a person
- wear a badge or emblem of a political party or candidate within the polling place
- deliberately show or leave in the polling place any how-to-vote card or similar direction as to how a voter should vote
- help with the clearing of voting screens or removal of material from the polling area or assist in transporting polling equipment, or
- undertake an action that creates a hazard or otherwise impacts the health and safety of voters and staff.

Objections

If a scrutineer objects to any procedure, or questions staff in any way, staff should immediately refer the matter to you.

Where a scrutineer objects to the right of any person to vote, the reasons must be recorded on the *Issues and miscellaneous matters* form in the OIC return. You must then advise the scrutineer that the person may still vote. The DRO will investigate in these circumstances.

Media

Media attendance at polling places

The three main reasons for media to attend a polling place are to report on:

1. high profile candidates voting
2. voting incidents, or
3. voter intentions (exit poll)

Each scenario is outlined below. It is essential that all media requesting access to a polling place, regardless of the scenario, comply with the behaviour requirements listed at the end of this section.

High profile candidates voting

It is quite common during an election for media to attend a polling place to capture footage of a high profile candidate casting their vote.

The AEC will endeavour, where possible, to gain advanced notice of this activity to inform polling staff of impending media presence. If a significant number of media is expected at a polling place the AEC will organise for representatives to be present to coordinate media requirements.

Advanced notice is not always able to be achieved. Polling staff could encounter requests for media access – in the case of particularly high profile candidates this could be a number of media outlets present at the same time.

Voting incidents

If an incident has been identified, media should not be admitted to the polling place unless approved by the state/territory manager. If approval is provided, it is essential that media are fully aware of the behaviour requirements.

In the event of a potential voting incident, no polling staff, including the OIC, should provide comment to the media under any circumstances. You should explain to the media that you are not authorised to provide comment and that they should contact the national media team on 02 6271 4419, 0419 294 893 or media@aec.gov.au.

Voter intentions (Exit polls)

Journalists often like to conduct 'exit polls' in which voters are asked, after they leave the polling place, how they have voted.

This activity should be conducted outside the polling place in accordance with the requirements outlined below. It is essential that exit polls do not disrupt the flow of the polling place and that voters are not pressured into revealing their secret ballot.

Journalist or camera crew requesting to enter a polling place

As the OIC, if you are asked by journalists and/or a camera crew if they may enter the polling place, you should:

- Grant access to the journalist, unless a potential voting incident has been identified, in which case DRO approval should be sought. If the polling place is particularly busy you should ask the media if they can either return later or wait until you have time to accompany them.

- Accompany the media while they are in the polling place and organise your 2IC to manage the flow of the polling place while you are busy. Alternatively, you can delegate your 2IC to accompany the media if there is another matter that requires your attention, and you are confident that your 2IC understands the behaviour requirements for media below and is able to enforce these.

- Highlight the following three guidelines to the media for particular attention:

  o the flow of voting must not be interrupted - this means that no interviews can be conducted inside the polling place
  o media are not allowed to photograph or film the ballot paper secure zone or selections on a voter's ballot paper
  o the wishes of people who do not want to be photographed or filmed must be respected.

Behaviour requirements for media representatives in polling places

To ensure the efficient conduct of both the voting and counting, access to a polling place granted by the AEC is conditional on the media complying with the polling place rules.

You can refuse entry or ask a member of the media to leave if the following conditions are not met.

- The operation of the polling place must be allowed to continue without disruption or any inconvenience to voters or polling officials.
- Media must adhere to the direction of the Officer in Charge at all times.
- Media are not allowed in the ballot paper secure zone.
- Media are not allowed to film or photograph items in the ballot paper secure zone.
- Any filming of a person voting must ensure that none of the voter's ballot paper selections can be identified.
- The media must not touch any ballot papers or interfere with the operation of the voting or the count.
- Particular scenes or results cannot be 'recreated' for better effect.
- Ballot papers and other AEC materials must not be removed from the polling place.
- The rights of voters, polling officials and other members of the public in the polling place who do not want to be filmed must be respected.
- The rights of scrutineers (candidate representatives) who wish to observe the count closely must be respected.

Guidelines for media coverage in polling places are available on the AEC website at http://www.aec.gov.au/media/media-services.htm.

Request for comment

If the media asks for comment regarding voting, the operation of the polling place or any other matter you should refer them to your DRO or national media team on 02 6271 4419, 0419 294 893 or media@aec.gov.au.

Do not hesitate to contact your PPLO or divisional office if you require further guidance on ANY issue before, during or after polling.

Issuing votes

You cannot find a voter's name on the certified list

Issuing officers can ask voters for a form of identification if they are having genuine difficulty in understanding the voter's name or locating the voter on the certified list.

If the name cannot be found, the following may help.

- Check the spelling with the voter.
- Ask the voter to print the name on a piece of paper.
- Ask the voter whether they might be enrolled under a different name.
- The voter may be enrolled in another division.
- On the certified list names beginning with 'Mc' are treated as if they are spelt 'Mac'. The apostrophe in names like O'Brien is ignored. Names beginning with 'St' are treated as if they are spelt 'Saint':

12340 Maas	22341 O'Brien	32340 Sahora
12341 Macadam	22342 Ocker	32341 Sailby
12342 McBride	22343 O'Day	32342 St James
12343 Macca	22344 Oddine	32343 St John
12344 Mace		32345 Saintsom
12345 Macey		32346 Saintta
12346 McFadden		32347 Saint Thomas
12347 Madden		32348 St William

Additional questions

The following additional questions should only be asked if you are unsure of the voter's identity after asking the first three questions.

- What is your date of birth? and/or
- What is your gender?

If you still cannot find the name on the certified list, direct the voter to the declaration vote issuing point.

The wrong name has been marked off the certified list

If you make a mistake and mark the wrong name off the certified list, you must follow a three-step correction procedure:

Step 1 Write the letter 'W' for 'wrong' in the left margin against the incorrectly marked name and indicate it clearly by drawing an arrow to the roll number.

Step 2 Draw a firm black line from arrowhead to arrowhead on the error correction indicator in the top left corner of the same page.

Step 3 Mark off the correct name.

Voter refuses to have a provisional vote

A voter that cannot be found on the certified list or is marked as already having voted, may choose not to have a provisional vote. If this happens, you must record the voter's name and why they were not issued a vote in the *Issues and miscellaneous matters* form in the OIC return.

If a voter wishes to complain, they should be asked to put their complaint in writing and submit it via the AEC website.

When checking a declaration vote envelope you realise the wrong ballot paper was given to the voter

If an incorrect ballot paper has been issued to a declaration voter, they must hand back the original ballot paper and be given the correct ballot paper using the spoilt ballot paper procedures, see page 54.

Declaration voter doesn't return their completed ballot papers

If a declaration voter leaves the polling place without returning to the issuing officer to hand in their completed ballot papers, the issuing officer must:

- seal their declaration vote envelope
- put it in the ballot box, and
- write '*ballot paper not returned*' on the counterfoil, and file.

Running low on ballot papers

You should monitor the allocation of ballot papers carefully throughout the day and inform the PPLO if you are getting low on unused ballot papers. The PPLO will provide more ballot papers as a priority.

Photocopying ballot papers

If you photocopy a ballot paper, it is **essential** that you initial it in the circle on the front before giving it to a voter. The OIC must record the quantity copied as an 'allocation' in their *House of Representatives Worksheet* and record details on the *Issues and Miscellaneous Matters* form in the OIC return.

Be careful not to leave the original in the photocopier.

Open ballot papers

The number of open ballot papers you should receive is included in the ballot paper inventory.

'Open' House of Representatives ballot papers are blank ballot papers that can be used if a polling place runs short of House of Representatives ballot papers and photocopying is not an option.

The list of candidates booklet is used in the preparation of an open ballot paper, as follows:

- **PRINT** the name of the state or territory and division at the top of the ballot paper
- complete the 'number the boxes' section on the ballot paper (for the number of candidates on the ballot paper)
- print the candidates' names and party affiliations **exactly** as shown in the list of candidates booklet
- recheck the ballot paper against the list of candidates booklet, and
- cross out the unused section of the ballot paper below the name of the last candidate you have listed, using a 'Z' (two horizontal lines connected by a diagonal line).

Amending ballot papers

If you do not have a photocopier or "open" ballot papers, a ballot paper for another division can be altered (as pictured) to represent the correct division by crossing out the candidates' names and party and following the steps in the open ballot paper instructions above.

Complaints/other issues

Disturbances during polling

If a disturbance occurs during the day, either inside or outside the polling place, you should try to solve the problem.

In any situation, common sense should prevail.

Contact your PPLO if you are concerned.

Adjournment

Voting may be adjourned or temporarily suspended if it is interrupted by a flood, fire, severe storm, outbreak of a riot or open violence, health hazard or any other reason related to the safety of voters.

If, for any reason, it is considered that voting should be adjourned or temporarily suspended, it is vital that you attempt to telephone the DRO immediately.

In this situation, the adjourned or temporarily suspended polling notice must be displayed at the polling place. The DRO will advise you of alternative voting arrangements, which may include resuming polling later that day or adjourning polling to another day.

Removal of a person

A scrutineer or any other person who commits any breach or misconduct, or who fails to obey your lawful directions, may be removed from the polling place at your request by the police.

If this happens, you **must** document details in the *Issues and miscellaneous matters* form in the OIC return and obtain a statement from witnesses. You must also advise the PPLO as soon as possible.

Cameras in the polling place

Polling officials and scrutineers are *not* permitted to use any image recording device (including cameras, video recorders and mobile phones) to record images of ballot papers or declaration vote envelopes, or any other images that might identify a voter and how they have voted, in a polling place.

You must be notified of anyone using an image recording device.

Queues

If queues are excessive and ongoing despite following the queue management and voter flow procedures, contact your PPLO to who can report the issue and see whether any assistance can be provided by the divisional office.

Political signs and banners

You may receive complaints from the public, or candidates, that large banners or signs are attached to buildings, fences or trees.

At a polling place on polling day, provided that the banners or signs are outside the area that has been proclaimed part of a polling place by your 'Electoral offences' sign, their placement is not your responsibility.

You should advise complainants that the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* does not address the placement of signs outside the proclaimed area (six meters from the entrance to a polling booth).

The removal or relocation of signs is a matter for the property owner and is covered by local government by-laws and/or state/territory legislation.

For example, if someone complains that there are political signs on electricity poles in a street, the person should take the matter up with the electricity supplier for that region, not the AEC.

However, if you consider that the banners or signs pose a danger to the public or obstruct access by voters, you should ask that they be relocated.

Polling officials and scrutineers are forbidden to wear political messages on badges and clothing when in the polling place.

However, voters are allowed to wear political messages on badges and clothing in the polling place.

Party workers asked to assist a voter or to witness such assistance must remove promotional badges before entering a polling place.

Ballot box opened before 6pm on polling night

Under **no** circumstances should a ballot box that has been used to collect votes be opened before 6pm on polling night. If this happens votes may not be included in the count and voters will be disenfranchised.

If a ballot box is opened prematurely the OIC must:

- secure the opened ballot box
- any ballot papers or declaration vote envelopes that have been removed must be placed in a bag and sealed with tamper evident tape and labelled with the 'For investigation' label. The OIC must complete and sign the label
- complete the *Prematurely opened ballot box* report located in the OIC return, describing the circumstances in which the ballot box was opened, including details of any witnesses, and
- the DRO must be informed immediately. If the ballot box was opened through a malicious act you must bring this to the DRO's attention.

All of the above, including the ballot box must be given to the DRO.

If a ballot box has been intentionally or maliciously opened prematurely it is classified as a security incident and the DRO will need your input to report as much information as possible.

COVID-19 issues

Outlined here and in Attachment 4 Polling place emergency procedures, there are a range of issues, incidents and disturbances that may occur at polling locations and appropriate responses, which may include calling authorities to assist. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, additional response measures must be put in place to protect the health and welfare of staff and voters. A range of scenarios are outlined below. Record details of <u>any</u> issues on the *Issues and miscellaneous matters form* (EF274) and/or the *Incident notification form* (EF270) as relevant and inform the PPLO immediately.

Staff member attends a polling place with flu-like symptoms

Ask them to go home. Staff and voters have been asked not to attend polling places if they are sick. Wash hands and sanitise any areas they were in contact with. Immediately inform the divisional office if additional staff members are needed.

Voter says they are sick or a voter appears to have symptoms of COVID-19

If someone seems ill, check if they are feeling ok first – do not make assumptions, there could be other reasons for their symptoms. If they are sick, advise the voter that people have been asked not to attend a polling place if sick. Ask the voter to leave and seek medical assistance and offer them a mask.

If this occurs during early voting (up until the Wednesday before polling day), advise the voter they can apply for a postal vote online.

Record the voter's details (name, date of birth and address) on an EF016 elector information report and advise them that the details will be passed on to the division for consideration during the non-voter process.

Direct the hygiene officer to sanitise any touch points the voter may have been in contact with.

Voter advises a family member or friend has not attended polling because they are sick or self-quarantining

If this occurs during early voting (up until the Wednesday before polling day), advise them the elector can apply for a postal vote online.

Record the voter's details (name, date of birth and address) on an EF016 elector information report and advise them that the details will be passed on to the division for consideration during the non-voter process.

Voter attends polling and says they have COVID-19

This issue must be taken seriously and may result in needing to adjourn polling.

If the voter is inside the polling place:
- Ask that they leave the polling place.
- If the voter is intentionally threatening or refuses to cooperate, call the police to assist in removing the person from the polling place, should the behaviour threaten the safe delivery of polling.
- Stop all voters from entering the polling place and advise them due to precautionary measures there will be a short wait until the polling place re-opens.

- Ask all voters already inside to leave the polling place. If they have received a ballot paper they can continue to finalise their vote, if they haven't, ask them to go back outside to the front of the queue while the polling place is quickly sanitised.
- Ask all polling staff to assist with touchpoint cleaning of all areas.
- Staff members involved in the transaction may dispose of and replace their PPE as a precaution. This is in addition to washing or sanitising their hands.
- When 15 minutes have passed and surfaces are clean, it will be safe to resume normal polling activities.
- Ensure the DRO is informed and incident report forms completed in the OIC return.

If the voter has not yet entered the polling place:
- The queue controller should call the OIC to assist in managing the voter.
- Ask that they leave the polling place.

Voter coughing or spitting on ballot paper

The OIC is authorised to remove a person from the polling place or request the police to do so, should their behaviour threaten safe delivery of polling.

If the ballot paper is then discarded

Use gloves to pick up the ballot paper and put it in a spoilt/discarded envelope and give it to the OIC for reconciliation.

The ballot paper is then placed into the ballot box

If the voter coughs or spits on a ballot paper and then puts it in the ballot box, ensure the incident is recorded and call the DRO. Extra precautions must be taken during the scrutiny. Instruct all officials involved in the count to wear gloves, regularly sanitise their hands and not touch their faces. Tables must be sanitised after the scrutiny.

Ensure the DRO is informed and incident report forms completed in the OIC return.

Voter intentionally coughing or spitting on polling officials or other voters, or general contact with someone else's saliva or other body fluid such as blood

The OIC is authorised to remove a person from the polling place or request the police to do so, should their behaviour threaten safe delivery of polling.

COVID-19 is known to be transmitted via saliva and other body fluids. The following steps need to be taken:
- wash the blood or saliva off your skin with soap and lots of running water
- wash the blood or saliva out of your eyes, nose or mouth with lots of cold water – if you wear contact lenses, rinse before and after taking them out, and spit the water out after washing your mouth, and
- if your skin is broken, encourage the wound to bleed and rinse it thoroughly under running water – but don't scrub or suck the wound.

Advise the affected person to seek medical advice as necessary.

The hygiene officer will also need to immediately sanitise the affected area(s) and dispose of the paper towel. Staff members involved should replace their PPE as a precaution.

Ensure the DRO is informed and incident report forms completed in the OIC return.

Surface or object contaminated with spit or other bodily fluid

COVID-19 is known to be transmitted via saliva and other body fluids. The contaminated areas must be sanitised immediately and dispose of the paper towel in the bio-waste bin. Direct any staff involved to wash their hands and replace their PPE as a precaution.

At an issuing point, if the top ballot paper at an issuing point is contaminated, use gloves to place it in a spoilt/discarded ballot paper envelope.

Attachment 1 Division finder guide

The division finder is an alphabetical listing of all localities and some streets within a state or territory and is used to determine a voter's enrolled division.

Staff **must always** consult it to determine the correct division for any address.

The division finder consists of three parts:

1. the front section, which includes instructions, a list of divisional office addresses and a list of institutions and establishments (such as universities and hospitals) that may be identified as a voter's place of residence,
2. the locality section, and
3. the streets section.

Note: the locality section should be the first section you refer to.

Locality section

Suburbs or localities wholly contained within a division will display the division name. In these cases the streets will not be listed in the division finder.

For example, in this division finder, if the voter's locality is Bartlet, their division is Waterford.

If a locality includes areas in more than one division, comments may be provided to determine the correct division.

For example, Rawland includes parts of the divisions of Milton and Brown, so it is necessary to ask the voter if they live in the Childers Council area, or the Suay Regional Council area.

The Locality section will refer to the Street section when more information is required.

For example, if the voter's locality is Ryans, you need to refer to the Street section.

Street section

Streets may also belong to more than one division.

For example, an address in Alder Ave, Fulsome may be in the division of Brown or the division of Waterford.

In this example, the house number determines the correct division.

Albert Street, Witherby	Milton	71
Alder Avenue		
Fulsome		
1. *Odd 1-39*	Brown	72
Or		
2. *Even 2-38*	Waterford	73
Alfreed Drive, Fulsome	Brown	74

Attachment 2 Ballot paper formality guide

If you are unsure of the formality of *any* ballot paper you should always include them with the other informal ballot papers.

Do not take unnecessary time examining ballot papers to determine formality. If on first examination you are unsure of formality, include it with the other informal ballot papers.

Do not enter into unnecessary discussion with scrutineers regarding formality as all ballot papers are re-examined after polling day.
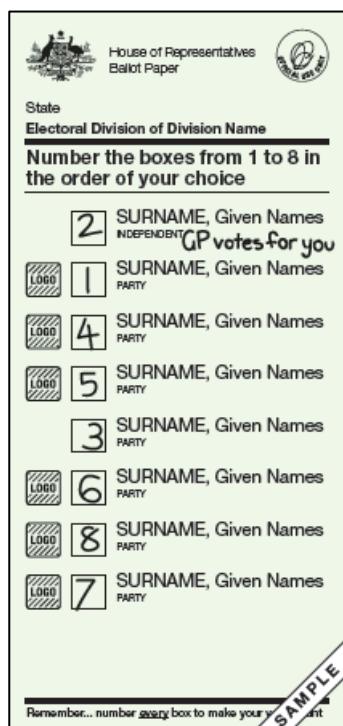
Authentic ballot papers

Generally, a ballot paper will carry an official mark (watermark or printed security pattern) and the initials of the issuing officer. However, ballot papers that do not carry these markings are not necessarily informal, for example the OIC may have observed an issuing officer not initial a ballot paper and needed to remind them to do so, in this case the OIC would expect a number of ballot papers may be missing the initials.

If you are unsure of the authenticity of a ballot paper, place it with the informal ballot papers in order for the DRO to decide if it is authentic or not.

Identification of voter

If, in your opinion, there is sufficient writing on the ballot paper for someone conducting a scrutiny to uniquely identify the voter, the ballot paper is informal. It may be easier to identify a voter if they have written their name on a ballot paper and come from a small community for example, however a common name in a large population would make it much harder to identify the voter.

This ballot paper is formal.

Principles

Introduction

The following is information on how to determine the formality of ballot papers that are authentic and do not identify the voter.

There are five over-arching principles that must be considered when determining the formality of any ballot paper:

Principle one

Start from the assumption that the voter has intended to vote formally

The assumption needs to be made that a voter who has marked a ballot paper has done so with the intention to cast a formal vote.

Principle two

Establish the intention of the voter and give effect to this intention

When interpreting markings on the ballot paper, these must be considered in line with the intention of the voter.

Principle three

Err in favour of the franchise

In the situation where the voter has tried to submit a formal vote (i.e. the ballot paper is not blank or defaced), the concept of reasonableness should be applied to questions of formality and wherever possible be resolved in the voter's favour.

Principle four

Only have regard to what is written on the ballot paper

The intention of the voter must be unmistakable, i.e. do not assume what the voter was trying to do if it's not clear – only consider what is written on the ballot paper.

Principle five

The ballot paper should be construed as a whole

By considering the number in each box as one in a series, not as an isolated number, a poorly formed number *may* be recognisable as the one missing from the series.

Guidelines
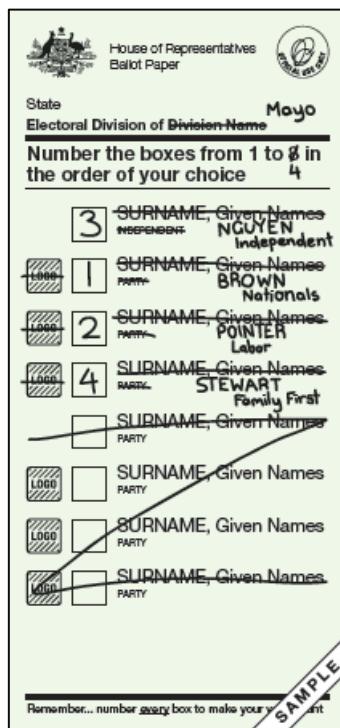
Introduction

The following guidelines are to be used when judging ballot paper formality.

Alteration by polling officials

A fully printed ballot paper for a division may be altered to become a ballot paper for another division (i.e. the names of the candidates are crossed out by the issuing officer and the names of candidates for the other division are written in their place).

- If a ballot paper does not contain the names of every candidate for the division, the vote is **informal**, irrespective of the way the voter has voted.

- A ballot paper is acceptable with the surname only of a candidate, as long as no two candidates share a surname, as shown in this example:

In the case of ballot papers prepared incorrectly by polling officials:

- If the candidate's given names only are listed on the ballot paper, the vote is **informal** irrespective of the way the voter has voted.

- If the political party names are not all correctly listed (e.g. wrong party names listed against the candidates or party names not listed) the vote is **formal** if the voter has otherwise recorded a formal vote.

- If a ballot paper has the names of any candidate spelt incorrectly (provided the identity of the candidate is still clear) the vote is **formal** if the voter has otherwise recorded a formal vote.

- If a ballot paper has the names of the candidates in the wrong order, the vote is **formal** if the voter has otherwise recorded a formal vote.

House of Representatives ballot paper

Consecutive series of numbers

A House of Representatives ballot paper is only formal if the voter has indicated a first preference and consecutively numbered all boxes. A number in the series may not be repeated or skipped. See example 1 below.

If one box is left blank and all other boxes have been numbered in a consecutive sequence starting with the number '1', the ballot paper is formal.

If any candidate has more than one vote, the ballot paper is informal.

Overwriting

Alterations to numbers will not make a ballot paper informal, provided the voter's intention is clear, for example a number can be crossed out and another number written beside it. See example 2 below.

If a number is overwritten in a way that makes it impossible to read, then the ballot paper is informal. See example 3 below.

Example 1.	Example 2.	Example 3.
The ballot paper above is informal. The number 7 has been repeated.	The ballot paper above is formal. There are eight consecutive numbers reasonably discernible.	The ballot paper above is informal. The overwriting is indecipherable.

Acceptable forms of numbering

Ticks (✓) or crosses (✗) are not acceptable forms of voting for House of Representatives and will result in informality, see example 1 below.
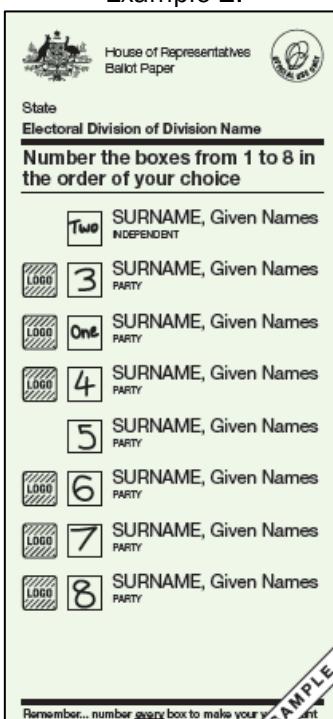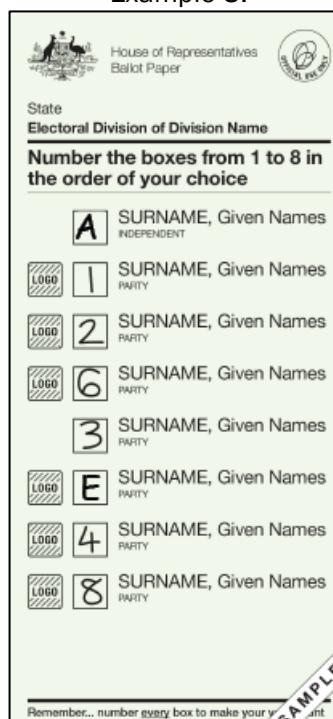
Voters may use a consecutive series in various styles – such as:

- numerals (1 2 3)
- words (one two three)
- roman numerals (I II III IV), and
- ordinal numerals (1st 2nd 3rd).

Provided the voter's intention is clear and no number is repeated or skipped, a mix of the above styles can be used on the same ballot paper and still be formal, see example 2 below.

Voters can use letters in a consecutive series (A, B, C etc.); provided A is the first preference and no letters are repeated or skipped.

A mixture of letters and numbers will result in an informal ballot paper, see example 3 below.

Example 1.	Example 2.	Example 3.

The ballot paper above is informal.
A tick is not a valid first preference mark

The ballot paper above is formal.
Numbers can be written as words or figures.

The ballot paper above is informal.
A mixture of numbers and letters has made the voter's intention unclear.

Two Candidates only

In the case of only two candidates on a ballot paper, if the voter has placed a "1" in the box beside a candidate and left the second box blank OR inserted any other number the ballot paper will be deemed formal.

Empty boxes

For House of Representatives ballot papers a single box may be left empty provided it is the last in the series and on the condition there is **no marking** in the box at all. A scribble or dot etc. in the final box will result in informality if it is not recognisable as the next number in the series. See example 1 below.

Two or more empty boxes on a House of Representatives ballot paper results in an informal vote. See example 2 below.

Placement of votes

The vote can be made inside the box or beside the box or candidate name, provided the intention of the voter is clear. See example 3 below.

Example 1.	Example 2.	Example 3.

The ballot paper above is informal.
No discernible figure in the eighth box, but there is a mark in it.

The ballot paper above is informal.
There are two empty boxes.
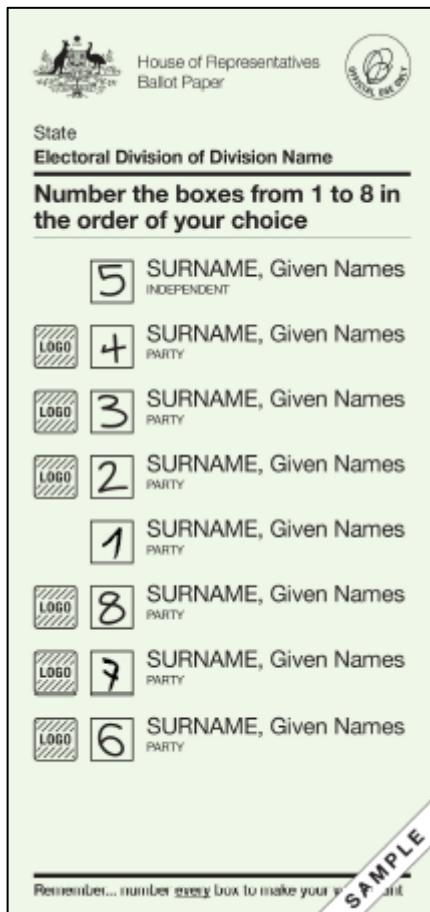
The ballot paper above is formal.
The figure beside the eighth box reasonably resembles a 7.

Variations in handwriting

Unconventional but recognisable variations in handwriting, such as placing a stroke through the vertical stem of the number 7 or an upward angular stroke before the familiar vertical stroke on the figure 'one', should not result in a ballot paper being informal, provided any variations result in a series of numbers and the voter's intent is obvious.

If a voter marks a ballot paper with words or figures in a language other than English, the ballot paper can be accepted if the voter's intention is clear.

The ballot paper above is formal.
The figure in the fifth box reasonably resembles a 1 and the figure in the seventh box reasonably resembles a 7.

Candidate name substitution

If the voter crosses out or replaces a candidate's name on a ballot paper, that ballot paper is informal, see example 1 below.

Note that this does not include cases where a fully printed ballot paper is altered to become a ballot paper for another division by a polling official.

If a candidate name has been added to the ballot paper by the voter and been allocated any number except the last number, the vote is informal see examples 2 and 3 below.

Example 1.

The ballot paper above is informal.
The voter has not indicated a preference for all candidates.

Example 2.

The ballot paper above is formal.
The voter has indicated a preference for all nominated candidates.

Example 3.

The ballot paper above is informal
The voter has not indicated a first preference.

Senate ballot papers

As outlined on page 76, Senate ballot papers are to be sorted into first preference choice above the line (ATL), first choice below the line (BTL) (to group level) or <u>obviously informal</u>.

A strict formality assessment of Senate ballot papers does not occur until the Central Senate Scrutiny process in the weeks after polling day.

On election night if a Senate ballot paper does not have one and only one first preference either ATL or BTL then it is considered obviously informal.

A ballot paper that is obviously informal ATL can still be formal BTL and vice versa.

A ballot paper that has a first preference ATL and BTL should be sorted to the BTL pile.

The following are examples of how various types of Senate ballot papers should be categorised.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as obviously informal. There are two first preferences above the line.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as a first preference for Group B, ATL. There is a first preferences above the line for group B.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as a first preference for Group G, ATL. Unendorsed groups do not have a group name or logo. There is one first preference ATL.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as a first preference for the relevant ungrouped candidate BTL. There is one first preference BTL.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as a first preference for Group D, ATL. There is a single first preference mark ATL.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as obviously informal. There are two first preference marks ATL.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as a first preference for Group A, BTL. There is one first preference BTL.

The above ballot paper would be categorised as a first preference for Group A, BTL. There is one first preference BTL.

Attachment 3 Marking the certified list

Scenario.

Below is an example of the top of a page from a certified list. In this scenario, a voter with the name Alexander Scott Bellis provides you with his name and address and informs you that he has NOT voted previously in this election.

When marking the name of the certified list you accidently mark the name below: 'Merilyn Margaret Bellis'.

Using this example, mark off the name Merilyn Margaret Bellis and then use the correct procedure to mark off the correct name and indicate an error.

	56789 - Area Type & Name, Sub-Area Type & Name		
	List: 1		Roll Close: 21/08/2007

■ Ab

	ERROR		
1	Abbott Martin Naceur · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Hammett Ct Oakdale M 25.07.51	101	Bell Jeffrey Gustavo · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Crisp Cres Kings Park M 16.12.70
2	Abraham Milka Lee · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 27 Mcintosh Dr Newtown F 16.05.87	102	Bell Marcia Diem · 24 Keartland Dr Elliott F 06.05.76
3	Adamow Kate · 1 Kay Pl Parkville F 09.08.54	103	Bell Spiro Geoffrey · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 8 Bluebell Dr Balmoral M 07.06.85
4	Adams James Terrance · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Snowden Ct Parkville M 08.08.83	104	Bellis Alexander Scott · · · · · · · · · · · · · 15 Centaurus Dr Smithfield M 11.04.61
5	Adams Janet Rosamund · · · · · · · 258 Southern Cross St Abbotsford F 10.03.47	105	Bellis Merilyn Margaret · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 1 Pinkstone Ct Elliott F 06.03.43
6	Adamson Elizabeth Winsome · · · · · · · · · · · 6 Wisdom Ct Stratford F 28.11.83	106	Belmonte Alexandra · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 61 Lyttleton Crct Oxley F 28.04.47
7	Adamson Lindsey · · · · 23/30 Lakeside Rise William Hudson Crct Inglewood M 24.12.70	107	Belmonte Branko Rice · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 30 Mugga La Kings Park M 02.12.77
8	Agar Sukanya Margaret · · · · · · · · · · 23 Chirnside Cres Yarrawonga F 06.06.73	108	Belsa Irene Vera · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 64 Pokana Cres Windsor F 12.09.28
9	Agnew Colette Webster · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 13 Hinkler Dr Newtown F 05.06.41	109	Bennett Daniel James · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Sowden Dr Elliott M 22.06.66
10	Agnew Suwaiba Marie · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 4 Ella Pl Hamilton F 09.09.71	110	Bennett Lucy Catherine · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 15 Fihelly Dr Preston F 08.02.82
11	Agostini Maria Rita · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 17 Tantangara Dr Parkwood F 27.07.63	111	Bennett Mary-Ann · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 12 Du Faur Dr Kings Park F 27.10.82
12	Aguilera Gino John · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 20 Corrigan Ct Waverley M 09.04.75	112	Bennett Peter Andrew · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 12 Beggs Ct Glenorchy M 08.07.83
13	Aharoni Joan Jocelyn · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 10 Mills Ct Stirling F 01.05.39	113	Beresford Graham · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 119 Moorhouse Dr Balmoral M 09.01.46
14	Aitchison Laurie Peter · · · · · · · · · · · · · 19 Jelbart Dr Kings Park M 31.01.82	114	Bergmeier Jillian Ruth Lot 1 RP/10882 Ingoldsby-Newman Cres Cheltenham F 18.02.80
15	Aitken Bradley William · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 3 Alexandria Dr St Marys M 28.03.84	115	Betts Anne Lorna · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 70 Lindrum Crct Waterloo F 16.09.53
16	Akbari Benjamin James · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 13 Carron Dr Elliott M 23.10.35	116	Beverakis Godfrey John · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 4/5 Annan Pl Balmoral M 02.05.63
17	Aksila Harold James · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 2 Mcwhae Cres Parkville M 04.11.67	117	Beylaard Monica June · · · · · · · · · · 9/89 Britten-Jones St Waterloo F 20.10.57
18	Alchin John Stephen · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Wallis Ct Oakdale M 21.02.62	118	Bice Bryce · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 16 Blackett Crct Springfield M 01.05.72
19	Alimchandani John · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 4 Pearce Dr Waterloo M 17.12.56	119	Biec Luca Emma · 5 Huxham Ct Preston F 07.05.46
20	Allais Donatella Kathleen · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 3 Fern Ct Elliott F 02.07.49	120	Biggin Julia Maree · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 4B Stawell Dr Paddington F 17.03.77
21	Allen Dean · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 14 Whatmore Cl Newtown M 05.10.62	121	Birch Anthony Geoffrey · · · · · · · · · · · · · 19 Northcott St Oatlands M 05.03.72

Turn the page to see the corrections.

Marked certified list

This is the way a certified list page looks when the issuing officer has followed the correct procedure when an error is made:

- The incorrect name has been indicated with the letter **W** and an arrow pointing to the name.
- The error indicator on the top left of the page has been marked to show that this page contains errors.
- The correct name has been marked off the certified list.

56789 - Area Type & Name, Sub-Area Type & Name
List: 1   Roll Close: 21/08/2007

Ab

ERROR

1	Abbott Martin Naceur · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Hammett Ct Oakdale M 25.07.51	101	Bell Jeffrey Gustavo · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Crisp Cres Kings Park M 16.12.70
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5	Adams Janet Rosamund · · · · · · · 258 Southern Cross St Abbotsford F 10.03.47	W → 105	Bellis Merilyn Margaret · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 1 Pinkstone Ct Elliott F 06.03.43
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13	Aharoni Joan Jocelyn · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 10 Mills Ct Stirling F 01.05.39	113	Beresford Graham · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 119 Moorhouse Dr Balmoral M 09.01.46
14	Aitchison Laurie Peter · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 19 Jelbart Dr Kings Park M 31.01.82	114	Bergmeier Jillian Ruth Lot 1 RP/10882 Ingoldsby-Newman Cres Cheltenham F 18.02.80
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17	Aksila Harold James · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 2 Mcwhae Cres Parkville M 04.11.67	117	Beylaard Monica June · · · · · · · · · 9/89 Britten-Jones St Waterloo F 20.10.57
18	Alchin John Stephen · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · 7 Wallis Ct Oakdale M 21.02.62	118	Bice Bryce · 16 Blackett Crct Springfield M 01.05.72
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Attachment 4 Declaration vote envelope

DECLARATION VOTE

OFFICE USE	POLLING OFFICIAL TO COMPLETE		OFFICE USE
			POLLING OFFICIAL TO COMPLETE

Division Finder ref. or ECL		Cert. ID	
To DRO for the Division of			
Issued at			

If using ECL do not use Division Finder

❶ CURRENT DETAILS

Surname

Given names

Daytime phone

Date of birth D D / M M / Y Y   Gender

Current permanent address

PRE-ISSUE CHECK

Division Finder
☐ Current
☐ Enrolled

Issue ballot paper for address on Electoral Roll

❷ ENROLMENT

Are the details you gave above the same as they appear on the electoral roll?

☒ No ▼   ☒ Yes ► Go to section ❸ below

Surname

Given names

Address on electoral roll

❸ CITIZENSHIP AND IDENTITY

Are you an Australian citizen? ☒ Yes ☒ No

Town of birth   Country of birth

EITHER Australian driver's licence or passport number

OR Another enrolled person who can confirm your identity

I declare that I am on the Commonwealth electoral roll and I confirm the identity of this elector.

Surname

Given names

Date of birth D D / M M / Y Y

Signature

If evidence of identity incomplete continue to issue ballot paper

❹ DECLARATION

I declare that I am entitled to vote and have not voted in this election/ referendum. I am eligible and claim enrolment for my current permanent address, where this is not my enrolled address. The information I have given on this form is complete and correct.

Your signature or mark

Witnessed by issuing officer signature   Date

D D / M M / Y Y

NOTE: Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence

PRE-ISSUE CHECK

☐ Voter's signature

☐ Issuing officer's signature

Attachment 4 Polling place emergency procedures

Emergency procedures

These procedures replicate those in your *Emergency procedures* booklet.

Fire/smoke

- Remove anyone in immediate danger – if safe to do so.
- Call fire brigade (Dial 000) or activate break glass alarm.
- Attempt to control and extinguish fire – if trained and if safe to do so.
- Notify person in charge and/or fire warden.
- Standby for further instructions and prepare to evacuate building.

Evacuation

- The person in charge (or Chief Warden) will make the decision to evacuate (or not).
- On advice from the person in charge (or Chief Warden) begin to evacuate in an orderly manner to nominated Assembly Area.
- A thorough sweep (checking of rooms, toilets etc.) of the premises should be conducted and doors closed before leaving building.
- Account for staff and remain at assembly area until told otherwise.

Medical emergency

- Check surrounding area for danger or threatening situation, keep people away from area.
- First aider/s (if on-site) – provide treatment to person.
- Contact emergency services (Dial 000).
- Notify PPLO.
- Assist attending ambulance crews, as required.

Security threat

Do not do anything that can place yourself or others in danger of physical attack

- Restrict entry into the premises if possible – lock doors.
- Contact police (Dial 000) – inform them of situation.
- If safe to do so – make observations from safe distance. Obtain description of offender (physical appearance, mannerisms, verbal threats etc.).
- Protect others from harm – if safe to do so.
- Notify PPLO of type of emergency.

If confronted by an armed offender...

- Escape: Escape to a place of safety. If there's nowhere to go then...
- Hide: Turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can
- Tell: Tell the police. Dial 000 when it is safe to do so.

Aggressive confrontation

Do not do anything that can place yourself or others in danger of physical attack

- Restrict entry into the premises if possible – lock doors.
- Contact police (Dial 000) – inform them of situation.
- Attempt to restrict any contact between aggressors and other election officials, and members of the public – where feasible and safe to do so.
- Notify PPLO of type of emergency.

If confronted by an aggressive person

- Remain calm.
- Do not speak unless spoken to, and then only as necessary.
- Do as the aggressor demands.
- Do not be argumentative or make any suggestions to the aggressor.
- Try to be observant – take note of the aggressor's mannerisms, appearance and clothing.

Suspicious parcel or items

- Do not touch or move the item.
- Prevent any unauthorised persons accessing the area.
- Try to locate the owner of the item(s) by making appropriate inquiries.
- Clear the immediate area and prevent access to the item.
- Cover any contaminant with some suitable item such as an upturned waste receptacle, plastic sheet, blanket or coat if practicable.
- Contact police (Dial 000) – inform them of situation.
- Where applicable, turn off air-conditioners.
- Notify PPLO of type of emergency.

Internal emergency e.g. power/gas

- Remove any person in immediate danger – if safe to do so.
- Contact emergency services (Dial 000).
- If safe to do so – isolate affected services (Electrical, Gas, Water etc.).
- Standby for further instructions and prepare to evacuate building.
- Notify PPLO of type of emergency.

Bomb threat

- Keep caller on the phone for as long as possible, gather as much information as possible. DO NOT HANG UP THE PHONE.
- Notify other staff member of bomb threat via written note or hand signals.
- Contact police (Dial 000) – inform them of situation.
- Do not touch any suspicious objects/parcels/packages etc.
- Standby for further instructions and prepare to evacuate building.
- Notify PPLO of type of emergency.

External emergency

- If applicable – contact emergency services (Dial 000) and advise of current situation.
- Report external situation to PPLO.
- Monitor external situation – standby to either 'Shelter In Place' within or to evacuate building.
- Follow any instructions provided by emergency services.

On resolution of an emergency situation, when it's safe to do so, seek advice from the DRO/PPLO concerning subsequent activity - whether that be resumption of polling, or checking security of ballot papers and packaging for their return, or similar.

Attachment 5 Polling place offences

The Act, when describing offences uses different terms in different sections. In this Backgrounder definitions for these various terms are:

a. *A 'polling booth' is the location provided at a 'polling place' where voting screens are available at which voters mark their ballot papers.*
b. *A 'polling place' is the street address for the location at which a 'polling booth' is located and at which voting takes place.*
c. *The 'person in charge', 'person in charge of premises', 'officer in charge' and 'presiding officer' are all terms used to describe the AEC official responsible for electoral activities in particular locations.*
d. *The 'officer-in-charge' of each polling place is called the 'presiding officer' during polling, from 8am to 6pm on election day. From 6pm, however, during the counting of the votes (the scrutiny), this officer is called the 'assistant returning officer'.*
e. *A 'early voting centre' is a pre-poll voting office or office of a DRO at which applications for pre-poll votes may be made, or pre-poll ordinary voting is available for the election.*

Introduction

1. Electoral Backgrounders are published by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to provide a basic introduction to electoral law, policy and procedures for the information and guidance of all interested parties.

2. The AEC administers the conduct of federal elections under the provisions of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Act).

3. This Backgrounder provides introductory information in relation to offences under the Act relevant to polling. More information on some of the offences discussed below, or on those not directly relevant to polling activities, is contained in other Electoral Backgrounders.

4. Readers should not rely on the information in this document as a statement of how the law will apply in any particular case. Accordingly, if you are in doubt about the interpretation of the law in particular circumstances you should seek your own independent legal advice.

5. The Act is available on the Australian Government's Federal Register of Legislation website. Unless otherwise specified, all references to sections are to sections of the Act. Also please note, the words 'voter' and 'elector' are used interchangeably throughout this publication.

Offences

Compulsory voting s. 245

6. An elector is guilty of an offence if the elector fails to vote at an election unless they have a valid and sufficient reason. For more information on compulsory voting see Electoral Backgrounder: Compulsory voting.

7. However, the effect of sections 231, 233 and 234 is that the voter is actually required to take the issued ballot paper(s) and to retire to the polling booth to mark their vote. It is not sufficient compliance to merely have your name marked off and then to leave the polling booth.

8. If a person found guilty of this offence, a court may impose a penalty of 1 penalty unit. In addition, court costs may also be payable. The value of a penalty unit is set by section 4AA of the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth).

Influencing the votes of hospital patients or residents of nursing homes s. 325A

9. A person who is the proprietor of, or an employee of the proprietor of, a hospital or nursing home must not do anything with the intention of influencing the vote of a patient in, or resident at, the hospital or nursing home.

10. A person found guilty of this offence will be liable of a penalty of imprisonment for six months, or 10 penalty units, or both.

Bribery s. 326

11. A person must not ask for, receive or obtain any property or benefit of any kind for themselves or any other person on an understanding that any vote of the person will be influenced or affected.

12. A person found guilty of this offence will be liable of a penalty of imprisonment for two years, or 50 penalty units, or both.

13. A person shall not, with the intention of influencing or affecting the vote of any person, give, or promise or offer to give, any property or benefit of any kind to that other person or to a third person.

14. A person found guilty of this offence will be liable of a penalty of imprisonment for 2 years or 50 penalty units, or both.

Interference with political liberty s. 327

15. A person must not hinder or interfere with the free exercise or performance, by any other person, of any political right or duty that is relevant to an election under the Act.

16. A person found guilty of this offence will be liable of a penalty of imprisonment for 3 years, or 100 penalty units, or both.

17. A person must not discriminate against another person on the ground of the making by the other person of a donation to a political party, to a State branch or a division of a State branch of a political party, to a candidate in an election of by-election or to a group, by denying access to membership of any trade union, club or other body, by not allowing them to work or to continue to work, by subjecting them to any form of intimidation or coercion or by subjecting them to any other detriment.

18. If the offender is a natural person – they will be found liable of a penalty of imprisonment for 2 years or 50 penalty units, or both.

19. If the offender if a body corporate, they will be found liable of a penalty of up to 200 penalty units.

Misleading or deceptive publications s. 329

20. A person must not print, publish or distribute any matter or thing during an election period that is likely to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to the casting of a vote in an election under the Act. The scope of what amounts to "publish" includes not just the print media, but also by radio, television, internet or telephone.

21. A person found guilty of this offence may be subject to a penalty not exceeding 10 penalty units or a period of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both. A body corporate found guilty of this offence may be subject to a penalty not exceeding 50 penalty units.

General offences in relation to ballot papers s. 339

22. Subsection 339(1) of the Act provides for a number of offences in relation to ballot papers. These offences include impersonating any person with the intention of securing a ballot paper to which the impersonator is not entitled; and impersonating any person with the intention of voting in that person's name.

23. A person found guilty of one of these offences may be imprisoned for six months.

24. A person who votes more than once in an election is guilty of an offence which carries a penalty of 10 penalty units, while a person who intentionally votes more than once in the same election is guilty of an offence which carries a penalty of 60 penalty units, or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

25. Subsection 339(2) sets out that a person is guilty of an offence if the person defaces, mutilates, destroys or removes any notice, list or other document affixed by, or by the authority of, any Divisional Returning Officer.

26. A person found guilty of this offence may be subject to a penalty up to 5 penalty units.

Canvassing near polling booths s. 340

Note: That where a building used as a polling booth or early voting centre is situated in grounds within an enclosure, those grounds (by notice) may be deemed by the DRO to be part of the polling booth itself and the entrance to those grounds would become the entrance to the polling booth.

27. If a person engages in any of the following activities within a polling booth or early voting centre, or within six metres of the entrance to a polling booth or early voting centre, the person is guilty of an offence:

- Canvassing for votes,
- Soliciting the vote of any elector,
- Inducing any elector not to vote for any particular candidate,
- Inducing any elector not to vote at the election, or
- Exhibiting any notice or sign (other than an official notice) relating to an election.

28. A person found guilty of these offences can be subject to a penalty up to 5 penalty units.

29. If a person is engaging in any of the activities listed above and is using a loudspeaker, broadcasting equipment or other sound amplifier-type equipment, then if the activity is audible within a polling booth or early voting centre, or within six metres from the entrance to the polling booth or early voting centre, the person is guilty of an offence.

30. A person found guilty of this offence currently can be subject to a penalty up to 5 penalty units.

Displaying badges or emblems of candidates in polling booths s. 341

31. On election day, no officer or scrutineer is allowed to wear or display a badge or emblem of a candidate or political party in a polling booth.

32. A person found guilty of this offence can be subject to a penalty up to 10 penalty units.

Leaving how-to-vote cards in polling booths s. 335

33. Any person who exhibits or leaves a card or paper in a polling booth that has any direction or instruction about how an elector should vote, or about the method of casting a vote, will be committing an offence.

34. A person found guilty of this offence can be subject to a penalty up to 5 penalty units.

35. This prohibition does not apply to:

- Official instructions, for example posters put up by the AEC to assist voters in voting formally (so that the vote is counted); and
- Cases where a person is appointed by an elector to assist that elector to vote under the provisions in section 234. Section 234 provides that in cases where a person has low vision, physical disability or literacy issues such that he or she is unable to vote without assistance, the elector may appoint another person to assist them in marking their ballot paper. If the elector does not appoint a person to assist them, the presiding officer of the polling place may do so. The elector may indicate how the ballot paper is to be marked by presenting a how-to-vote card to the presiding officer. This presentation of a how-to-vote card does not contravene section 335.

Making false statements to voters about enrolment s. 330

36. A person commits an offence if, on election day, they knowingly make a statement to a voter, either orally or in writing, with respect to a voter's enrolment and that statement is false or misleading in a material respect.

37. A person found guilty of this offence may be liable for a period of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months, or a fine not exceeding 10 penalty units, or both.

Unlawfully marking ballot papers s. 338

38. If a person makes a mark or writes on a ballot paper of another elector (unless the person is expressly authorised by the Act), the person will be guilty of an offence.

39. A person found guilty of this offence can be fined up to 10 penalty units, or six months imprisonment, or both.

Disobeying lawful direction of the person in charge of polling premises s. 348

40. The person in charge of a polling booth is the presiding officer or the substitute presiding officer. A person in charge of an early voting centre is the Divisional Returning Officer or early voting officer.

41. In a polling booth or early voting centre, a person must not commit misconduct or disobey a lawful direction given by the person in charge of the premises.

42. A person must not enter or remain in a polling booth or early voting centre without the permission of the person in charge of the premises, with the exception of polling officials, scrutineers or electors who enter the polling booth for the purpose of voting, and who should remain no longer than is reasonably necessary to do so.

43. A person who contravenes any of these things at a polling booth may be lawfully removed from the polling booth by a police officer or a person authorised by the person in charge of the premises.

44. If a person is prosecuted and found guilty of this offence, they may be subject to a penalty up to 5 penalty units.

Officers and scrutineers to observe secrecy s. 323

45. Except in relation to Antarctic voting arrangements, an officer or scrutineer must not divulge or communicate any information with respect to the vote of an elector (acquired by him or her in the performance of functions under the Act) that is likely to enable the identification of the elector.

46. A person found guilty of this offence may be subject to a penalty of up to 10 penalty units, imprisonment for six months, or both.

Scrutineers influencing or communicating with voters in polling booths s. 218

47. A scrutineer must not interfere with or attempt to influence any voter within the polling booth, or communicate with any person in the polling booth except so far as it is necessary in the discharge of the scrutineer's functions.

48. The penalty prescribed for breaching this provision can be subject to a penalty of up to 10 penalty units, imprisonment for six months, or both.

49. The Act requires all scrutineers to wear a badge identifying them as a scrutineer whilst in the polling booth. The badges are supplied by the AEC.

50. A scrutineer who breaches these requirements, commits misconduct or fails to obey the lawful directions of the presiding officer, may be removed from the polling booth by a member of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the state or territory police force, or another person authorised by the presiding officer.

Obligations of persons present when pre-poll vote cast s. 200K

51. A person who is present when an elector signs a pre-poll vote certificate for declaration voting or marks a ballot paper must not interfere with the elector in relation to the elector's vote, do anything that would enable the person to find out how the elector marked the ballot paper or make any communication to the elector in relation to the elector's vote.

52. The penalty for breaching this provision is subject to a penalty up to 10 penalty units.

Possible repercussions for persons who commit offences

53. If the AEC becomes aware that a person is breaching the provisions of the Act during polling, any or all of the following actions may be taken.

Removal from the premises

54. Section 348 provides that where a person commits misconduct in a polling booth, counting centre or early voting centre, the person in charge of the premises may direct that person to leave the premises or have the person removed from the premises.

Injunctions

55. Section 383 of the Act provides that the Federal Court may grant an injunction to (amongst other things) prohibit a person from engaging in conduct that constitutes a contravention of the law in relation to elections.

56. The AEC and candidates in the election may make an application for an injunction to the Federal Court. If the AEC is informed or becomes aware that a person may have committed an offence, the AEC determines whether it is appropriate in the circumstances to apply for an injunction. The Federal Court is able to order injunctions at short notice on Election Day.

57. If an injunction is granted against a person, failure to comply with the injunction order may constitute contempt of court, for which the Federal Court can order arrest and detention.

Prosecutions

58. When the AEC becomes aware of a person engaging in activity that may constitute a breach of an offence provision, the AEC may refer the matter to the AFP for investigation. The AFP may then refer the matter to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions for consideration, in accordance with the Commonwealth Prosecution Policy, as to whether a prosecution is initiated.

Court of Disputed Returns

59. There is a risk that if a person has engaged in an 'illegal practice' (which is defined in section 352 to be a contravention of the Act or Regulations) the election of a candidate could also be challenged in the Court of Disputed Returns (CDR). Section 362 gives the CDR the power to void an election on the grounds of an illegal practice where the Court is satisfied that the results of the election was likely to have been affected as a result of the practice (see *Mitchell v Bailey (No.2)* [2008] FCA 692 and *Scott-Irving v Oakeshott* [2009] FCA 487).

Conclusion

60. Anyone with an interest in the laws on offences relating to polling, or their application in particular circumstances, should consult the exact provisions of the Act and seek their own legal advice.

61. The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* is available on the Australian Government's Federal Register of Legislation website. AEC parliamentary submissions relating to electoral law can be accessed through the AEC website.

62. Anyone who believes that the law governing polling place offences should be changed may make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters at Parliament House.

Endnotes

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* can be accessed through any major public library, or the Australian Government's Federal Register of Legislation.

Further information in relation to compliance with the Act is set out in the AEC's Electoral Backgrounder publications.

Above the line (ATL)	On the Senate ballot paper, voters may vote for the party or group of their choice by numbering at least six boxes above the black line (or all boxes if there are less than six). They may continue to number as many boxes as they choose. See also vote savings provisions.
Absent vote	Issued to a voter who claims enrolment for an address outside the polling place division but within the same state or territory.
Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)	The Commonwealth agency responsible for providing Australians with an independent electoral service and enhancing their understanding of, and participation in, the electoral process.
Ballot box	The sealed container into which a voter places a completed ballot paper.
Ballot box guard	Member of the polling place staff whose role it is to guard and ensure the security of the ballot box.
Ballot paper	A paper that shows the names of the candidates who are standing for election and on which voters mark their vote.
Ballot paper transport container	A sealable box with a plastic window designed for the transportation and storage of ballot papers.
Ballot paper secure zone in the home/accommodation	A designated area for the storage of sealed ballot paper transport containers and ballot boxes that must be kept in the home/accommodation of the OIC.
Below the line (BTL)	On the Senate ballot paper, voters may vote for candidates of their choice by numbering at least 12 boxes below the black line (or all boxes if there are less than 12). They may continue to number as many boxes as they choose. See also vote savings provisions.
Candidate	A person standing for election to the Senate or House of Representatives.
Certified list	The official electoral roll used to mark off voter's names. The list contains the names and addresses of all eligible voters for that division for the particular electoral event. Polling officials place a mark against a voter's name when the voter is issued with ballot papers at a polling place to indicate that the person has voted.

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (The Act) (CEA).	The legislation governing the Commonwealth electoral process.
Declaration vote	Any vote where, instead of the elector being marked off the certified list, the vote is sealed in an envelope signed by the voter. Absent, pre-poll declaration, provisional and postal votes are all types of declaration votes.
Declaration vote issuing officer	Member of polling place staff. Issue votes to absent and provisional voters, complete relevant returns and reconciliation, package/label materials and assist with the count of ordinary ballot papers after the close of poll.
Declaration vote issuing point	Locations within polling places that issue declaration votes to voters.
Discarded ballot paper	A ballot paper that has not been placed in the ballot box (for example, one that has been left in a voting screen or found on the floor). These ballot papers must be placed in spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelopes.
Division	A specific geographical area represented by one member of the House of Representatives. Each division in a state or territory contains approximately the same number of voters; however, the geographical sizes of divisions vary greatly.
Division finder	The division finder is an alphabetical listing of all localities within a state or territory. It is used to determine which division any address within a state or territory belongs.
Divisional office	An office that supports the DRO, generally located within the division, but in the case of co-located offices, may be outside the division.
Divisional Returning Officer (DRO)	The AEC officer responsible for maintaining the roll and conducting the election in each division. The DRO is the returning officer for the House of Representatives election in their division.
Dual polling places	Dual polling places provide ordinary votes to voters from more than one division.
Early vote	A vote cast in the lead up to polling day and is either a pre-poll vote or a postal vote.
Elector	All those people entitled to vote at an election. In this manual, 'elector' and 'voter' are used interchangeably.

First preference	Candidate or party that is marked number 1 on the ballot paper.
Formal vote	A ballot paper that has been completed by the voter in compliance with the legislation.
House of Representatives	One member of the House of Representatives (or the 'People's House') is chosen by each electorate (division) under a preferential voting system. The House of Representatives has 151 members.
How-to-vote cards	Party workers may distribute how-to-vote cards that demonstrate to the voter how to number their ballot paper for a particular candidate or party. The party workers must remain 6 metres or more from the entrance to the polling booth.
Informal vote	A ballot paper that has not been completed by a voter in compliance with the legislation. It cannot therefore be included in the scrutiny/count.
Inquiry officer	Member of polling place staff. Attends to the needs of voters waiting in the queue, assists voters who require help in casting a vote and assists with the count of ballot papers after the close of poll.
Issuing point	The part of the polling place where ballot papers are issued to voters.
Issuing point storage box	A box supplied by the DRO for each issuing point. Issuing officers are to place their polling equipment in the storage box and return the box to the OIC if they are leaving their issuing point unsupervised.
List of candidates booklet	Booklet containing a replica of the House of Representatives ballot papers for all divisions. Polling officials must use this booklet to prepare 'open' ballot papers if fully printed supplies have run out. All ballot paper details must be copied **exactly** as they appear in the booklet.
Officer-in-charge (OIC)	The AEC appointed manager of the polling place.
Open ballot papers	Ballot paper prepared by a polling official when pre-printed ballot papers for the division are not available or have run out. Names of candidates must be copied in **exactly** the same order and with **exactly** the same spelling as in the list of candidates booklet.

Ordinary vote	Issued to a voter who is voting within their enrolled division and whose name is found on the certified list for that division.
Ordinary vote issuing officer	Member of polling place staff. Issues ordinary ballot papers to electors whose names are found on the certified list of voters, marks the certified list, completes the account of ballot papers and assists with the count of ballot papers after the close of poll.
Party worker	People who work for political parties/candidates and encourage electors to vote for that party/candidate.
Polling day	The day on which the election will be held. It must be a Saturday.
Polling official	Person hired by AEC to work during an election period.
Polling place	Place where electors go to vote (such as a school or hall). Polling places are appointed for a particular division and issue votes for that division and absent votes for other divisions within the state or territory. Some polling places may be appointed to issue votes for a number of divisions and will have separate issuing areas for each of those divisions. These are referred to as 'dual polling places'.
Polling place ballot paper secure zone	A designated area for the handling and storage of unused and unallocated ballot papers and full ballot boxes during polling in static polling places.
Polling place liaison officer	The polling place liaison officer (PPLO) acts as an agent for and with the authority of the DRO on polling day to ensure that AEC procedures are implemented. PPLOs are available to provide support and assistance to OICs on polling day.
Postal vote	A type of declaration vote. The vote is issued to, and usually returned by, the voter by post.
Postal vote certificate	The certificate specific to postal voting on which the voter declares their entitlement to vote, inserted inside the return envelope provided by the AEC.
Pre-poll vote	Vote issued prior to polling day at a pre-poll voting centre (or a divisional office). On polling day, pre-poll votes are issued only as interstate or intrastate declaration votes.

Production-line scrutiny	Scrutinies are conducted using a 'production-line' system that has three main parts of unfolding, sorting and counting.
Provisional vote	Issued to people who claim to be enrolled in the division for which they are attempting to vote and: ▪ whose name cannot be found on the certified list ▪ whose entry on the certified list is marked as having already voted ▪ whose address is not shown on the certified list, or ▪ whose identity cannot be confirmed after additional questions have been asked.
Queue controller	Member of polling place staff. Directs electors from a single initial queue to mini-queues in front of issuing points, identifies electors who require assistance and assists with the count of ballot papers after close of poll.
Scrutineer	A person appointed by a candidate, political party or government official to observe the voting and counting of the votes.
Scrutiny	Examination and count of the ballot papers after the close of poll which leads to election results.
Second-in-charge (2IC)	Member of polling place staff. Assists the OIC with polling and counting duties. If the OIC leaves the polling place, the 2IC will act as substitute OIC
Senate	In the Senate (or the 'States House'), the states are represented equally regardless of their size or population; each Senator represents the whole state or territory. There are 76 Senators (12 from each of the six states and two from each of the territories), elected under a proportional representation system in each state and territory.
Silent elector	An elector who has applied to have their address not appear on the roll for reasons of personal safety or safety of their family members.
Sorting card	A card used to record the total number of ballot papers counted for a candidate/group during the scrutiny process. It is placed on each bundle of ballot papers.

Spoilt ballot paper	A ballot paper on which the voter has made a mistake. The ballot paper is cancelled and a replacement is issued. Each spoilt ballot paper must be placed in a spoilt or discarded ballot paper envelope.
Two candidate preferred (TCP) count	These figures show where preferences have been distributed to the likely final two candidates in a House of Representatives election.
Vote savings provisions	The 'vote savings' provisions provide that those ballot papers marked: ▪ above the line with a one only (or a consecutive sequence of numbers less than six); or ▪ below the line with at least six consecutive numbers from one to six and bearing no other mistakes or formality issues, will be included in the count.
Voter	See 'Elector', which has the same meaning.