



Parliaments and Local Councils	Terms of Members of Parliament/ Council	Number of Members	Electoral Legislation	Voting System <small>(See page 10 for definitions)</small>	Enrolment and Voting Eligibility	Redistribution Provisions and Frequency	Joint Rolls Arrangements Between Commonwealth States and Territories	Funding, Donations and Disclosure Provisions	Interesting and Particular Feature(s)
Senate	State Senators: 6 years; half retire every 3 years. Territory Senators: Same as House of Representatives ie, up to 3 years.	76. Twelve from each State, 2 from each Territory. Each State and Territory serves as a multi-member constituency.	<i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i> <i>Representations Act 1983.</i>	Proportional Representation – full preferential, single transferable vote and above the line ticket voting.	Enrolment and voting are compulsory for eligible Australian citizens 18 years and over who have lived at their present address for at least one month. British subjects who were on the Commonwealth electoral roll on 25 January 1984 are eligible to enrol and vote. People who are 17 years old may apply for electoral enrolment, and while their name is placed on the electoral roll, they cannot vote until they turn 18.	<i>The Constitution and the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918.</i> A redistribution is necessary when: (i) If the enrolment in at least one third of the Divisions in a State/Territory is more than 10% above or below the average enrolment for the State/ Territory for a period of more than 2 months; (ii) If the number of members to be chosen in a State/Territory alters; or (iii) If a period of 7 years has passed since the last redistribution	The Joint Roll Arrangements (JRAs) are bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each State/Territory to provide a single point of electoral enrolment. Most JRAs also provide for the maintenance of a joint electoral roll, for Commonwealth, State/Territory and Local Government.	At the 2007 federal election , funding of approximately \$2.10 per House and Senate vote was granted to candidate and Senate groups who received at least 4% of the formal first preference vote. This level of funding is indexed to the CPI. Disclosure of certain financial details is required from candidates, registered political parties and other groups in returns filed with the AEC.	Legislative power to provide international electoral assistance. Special arrangements apply for Antarctic voters. The Governor General issues the House of Representatives writ and the Senate writ for the ACT and Northern Territory. For each state, the Senate writ is issued by the Governor of that State.
House of Representatives	Up to 3 years.	150 elected from single-member Divisions. (At the 2007 federal election)	As above.	Full Preferential.	As above.	As above.	As above.	As above.	As above.

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Legislative Council	Members elected for 8 years (ie. 2 parliamentary terms) with half the members (ie. 21 members) being elected at each Legislative Assembly election.	42 Members with the State serving as a single constituency.	<i>Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912. Constitution Act 1902.</i>	Proportional Representation. Partial Preferential.	Same as for Commonwealth.	None.	Since 1927.	Candidates elected and those who receive at least 4% of the formal first preference votes are eligible to receive funding. Funding is a reimbursement scheme. All candidates, groups and parties must declare contributions and expenditure.	How-to-vote cards distributed on election day must be registered. Registration of parties.
Legislative Assembly	4 year fixed term. 4th Saturday in March.	93 elected from single-member electoral districts.	As above.	Optional Preferential.	As above.	<i>Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912. Constitution Act 1902.</i> Conducted by Electoral Districts Commission, made up of Supreme Court Judge (current or retired), Surveyor General and Electoral Commissioner. After 2 elections by law; 25% of seats outside quota.	As above.	As above.	As above.
Local Councils	4 year fixed term. 2nd Saturday in September.	1 518 councillors elected in 152 council areas.	<i>Local Government Act 1993.</i>	As above plus exhaustive preferential.	Voting is compulsory for electors on the NSW state roll. Property owners, rate-paying occupiers or lessees can apply to be on the non-residential roll in a local area (if they are not already enrolled as a resident in that area and if they are eligible to be enrolled for state and federal elections).	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> by law.	Since 1996.	Disclosure. No funding.	How-to-vote cards distributed on election day must be registered. Issue of "Candidate Information Sheets". Registration of Parties.



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Legislative Council	4 years. Fixed term November.	40 (5 members elected from each of 8 regions).	<i>Electoral Act 2002. Constitution Act 1975.</i>	Proportional Representation – partial preferential, single transferable vote and above the line ticket voting.	Same as for Commonwealth.	<i>Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982</i> If enrolments for a specified number of electorates have fallen outside the 10% tolerance; or If there have been 2 general elections since the previous redivision.	Since 1924.	Funding rate: \$1.20 per vote (indexed to CPI) Cap on donations by certain licence holders.	How-to-vote cards distributed on election day must be registered. Registration of political parties. Provision of electronic voting for voters who are blind or have low vision.
Legislative Assembly	4 years. Fixed term November.	88 elected from single-member electoral districts.	Same as Legislative Council.	Full Preferential.	As above.	As above.	As above.	As above.	As above.
Local Councils	4 years. Fixed term November.	Not fewer than 5 and not greater than 12. 117 councillors in single councillor wards. 514 councillors from 180 multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided municipalities.	<i>Local Government Act 1989.</i>	Full Preferential where single vacancy. Proportional representation where more than 1 vacancy. City of Melbourne: Full Preferential for leadership team of Lord Mayor and Deputy; proportional representation with above-the-line voting for councillors.	Same as for State plus special enrolment provisions for non-resident owners and occupiers, corporations and non-citizens. Voting compulsory for residents (those aged 70 years or over automatically excused if they do not vote); not compulsory for non-residents. Except for City of Melbourne: voting compulsory for all on roll.	<i>Local Government Act 1989</i> Electoral representation reviews. Take place before every second general election. Decide number of councillors, electoral structure and ward boundaries. Subdivision reviews. Take place between representation reviews if ward boundaries unlikely to meet equality requirements at next general election. Decide ward boundaries.	Councils are responsible for producing rolls. Formed by merging: • the Victorian Electoral Commission's list of State electors; and • the Council list of non-residents and non-citizens	Disclosure of donations to Council. No funding.	Most Council elections conducted by post. City of Melbourne: Corporations entitled to 2 representatives each on voters' roll.



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<i>(Legislative Council abolished 1922)</i> Legislative Assembly	Up to 3 years.	89 elected from single-member electoral districts. Optional Preferential.	<i>Electoral Act 1992. Referendums Act 1997.</i>	Optional Preferential.	Same as for Commonwealth, an elector must have resided in the Queensland electoral district for one month. A British Subject (who is not an Australian Citizen) in order to be entitled for enrolment under the <i>Elections Act 1983</i> on 31 December 1991, the person had to be on an Australian (Commonwealth, State or Territory) roll between 1 May and 1 August 1983.	Conducted under <i>Electoral Act 1992</i> . When approximate equality requirements no longer apply or after 3 general elections.	Since 1992.	Based on 1994 Commonwealth Scheme. Introduced in 1994 Amended 2008 to provide for twice yearly returns by registered political parties, associated entities and donors to parties and associated entities. Reporting level threshold reduced to \$1 000. Election Funding Rate for 2009/10 is \$1.59596	One House of Parliament.
Local Councils	4 year fixed term of council with next election due on 31 March 2012	Approximately 553 Councillors (including 73 Mayors) from 73 Councils (7 city; 29 Regional; 24 Shire; 12 Aboriginal and 1 Islander councils)	<i>Local Government Act 1993. City of Brisbane Act 1924.</i>	Optional Preferential (LGs with single-member wards or divisions); or First past the post (LGs with multi-member Divisions). Mayors are directly elected under the same voting system as for Council.	Enrolment and voting is compulsory for electors qualified to vote for Legislative Assembly.	<i>Local Government Act 1993; and City of Brisbane Act 1924.</i> An eight year cycle commencing in 2000 for all divided councils. Separate provisions apply for City of Brisbane.	Electoral rolls are provided by the Electoral Commission Queensland.	Disclosure of donations. No funding.	Brisbane City Council is the largest Local Government in population and budget in Australia.



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Legislative Assembly	4 year fixed term: elections held 4th Saturday in August.	25 single-member electorates. NB: The Territories of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands are included in the Northern Territory for Commonwealth electoral purposes only.	<i>Northern Territory Self Government Act 1978.</i> <i>Northern Territory Electoral Act 2004.</i>	Full preferential.	Same as for Commonwealth.	<i>Northern Territory Self Government Act 1978</i> <i>Northern Territory Electoral Act 2004</i> A distribution of boundaries is carried out as soon as practicable after 2 years and 6 months after the polling day for a general election.	Since 1989.	Disclosure of donations and expenditure is required by candidates, parties, associated entities. Broadcasters and publishers must file returns in respect to electoral expenditure during an election period. No funding provisions.	Candidate photographs appear on the ballot paper. At election times a large area of the Territory is serviced by mobile polling teams.
Local Councils	Council elections are held on a Saturday in March each leap year.	Varies from 5 to 13 per council.	<i>Local Government Act 2008.</i> Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2008.	Exhaustive preferential.	Voting is compulsory for electors who are enrolled on the Legislative Assembly roll for an address within a council area.	<i>Local Government Act 2008.</i> Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2008. At least once in a council's 4 year term.	Electoral rolls and roll products are provided by the Electoral Commission.	None.	Councils usually appoint the Electoral Commissioner to conduct their elections. Casual vacancies are filled at a by-election in the first 3 years of a term. At general elections, absent voting is undertaken at all polling locations.

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Legislative Council	8 years.	22 with the State serving as a single constituency.	<i>Electoral Act 1985.</i>	Proportional Representation count, (modified Hare-Clark) and above the line voting. Full Preferential.	Compulsory enrolment and voting for Australian citizens 18 years and over who have lived at their present address for one month. Provisional enrolment for 17 year olds. British subjects who are not Australian citizens eligible to re-enrol if they were on the State roll or roll of the Commonwealth within period 26 October 1983 and 25 January 1984 inclusive.	None.	Since 1920.	None.	The EDBC must ensure that, as far as is practicable, that the electoral redistribution is fair to prospective candidates and groups of candidates, so that if candidates of a particular group attract more than 50% of the popular vote, including preferences, they will be elected in sufficient numbers to enable a government to be formed. The 'fairness' criterion is unique to SA as it is the only State or Territory in Australia to give consideration to the political outcome of boundary distributions.
House of Assembly	4 years fixed (third Saturday in March).	47 elected from single-member electoral districts.	As above	Full Preferential – Absolute majority needed.	As above.	The <i>Constitution Act 1934</i> requires that a redistribution occur after every general election. The Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission (EDBC) conducts the redistributions and consists of the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court (SA), the Electoral Commissioner and the Surveyor-General. The number of electors in each district should be approximately the same with a threshold of 10%.	As above.	As above.	Electoral material must comply with the principle of 'truth in advertising'. The <i>Electoral Act 1985</i> considers inaccurate and misleading advertising to a material extent to be an offence and gives the Electoral Commissioner powers to require offending material to be retracted or withdrawn.
Local Councils	Elections held every four years. Voting closes at 5pm on the last business day before the second Saturday in November.	Varies between councils. In 2006 there were 740 Council positions across 67 Councils.	<i>Local Government Act 1999.</i> <i>Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 & Regulations.</i> <i>City of Adelaide Act 1998.</i>	Partial preferential voting (up to the number to be elected) and proportional representation count. Elections conducted entirely by postal voting.	Voting is not compulsory. House of Assembly electors are eligible to vote and non naturalised citizens; non resident owner or non-resident occupier (tenant) can apply for a voting entitlement.	All councils must conduct an elector representation review at least once every 8 years which the Electoral Commissioner must certify. Council or public initiated submissions relating to (i) alteration of council boundaries (ii) alteration to composition/structure of council including creation, alteration or abolition of wards are referred to the Boundary Adjustment Facilitation Panel under the <i>Local Government Act.</i>	<i>Local Government (Elections) Act 1999</i> specifies House of Assembly electors to comprise part of Councils' Voters' rolls. (The other part comprises electors with council specific entitlements).	All candidates must complete a campaign donation return form. City of Adelaide requires campaign and donation expenditure disclosure.	



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Legislative Council	6 years with 3 or 2 Members elected in alternate years, ie a periodical cycle of elections. Elections are held on the 1st Saturday in May each year.	15 elected from single-member Divisions (changed from 19 in 1999).	<i>Constitution Act 1934.</i> <i>Electoral Act 2004.</i>	Partial Preferential. Robson Rotation.	Same as for Commonwealth.	<i>Legislative Council Electoral Boundaries Act 1995.</i> Every 9 years unless 4 Divisions vary by more than 25% from the average divisional enrolment.	Since 1994. Joint Upper House, Lower House and Local Government roll.	Legislative Council has expenditure limit in 2010 of \$12 500 per candidate and an expenditure statement is required. The expenditure limit increases by \$500 each year.	Electioneering and how-to-vote cards not permitted on polling day.
Legislative Assembly	Up to 4 years.	25 elected from 5 five-member Divisions (changed from 35 in 1998). State and Federal Divisions are identical.	As above.	Proportional Representation – Hare-Clark system. Partial Preferential. Robson Rotation.	As above.	Usual practice is to adopt Commonwealth boundaries after each Commonwealth redistribution.	Since 1908.	No provision.	As above.
Local Councils	Half the Councillors of each Council are elected every 2 years for 4 year terms.	Varies from 7 to 12 Councillors per Council. 29 Local Councils. 281 Councillors in total.	<i>Local Government Act 1993.</i>	Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) with Robson Rotation. Partial preferential for Councillors and Optional Preferential for Mayors and Deputy Mayors.	Persons on the House of Assembly roll plus owners and occupiers not on House of Assembly roll. Voting not compulsory.	No set provisions.	Since 1993.	Limit on radio, TV and newspaper expenditure. \$5 000 for a candidate in respect of a single election. \$8 000 for a candidate in respect of an election for a councillor and an election for mayor or deputy mayor.	Elections by universal postal vote.



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Head of State: **Governor-General** (The Governor-General has certain reserve powers and can disallow legislation, recommend amendments to legislation and under extreme circumstance dissolve the Assembly).

Leader of Government: **Chief Minister** (The Chief Minister is elected by the Assembly and exercises a number of powers normally exercised by a Governor including appointment of Ministers and signing law into effect).

Electoral Authority: **ACT Electoral Commission**

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Legislative Assembly	4-year fixed term. Elections held on 3rd Saturday of October. Next election due 20 October 2012.	17 elected from 3 electorates. (2 returning 5 Members and one returning 7 Members.)	<i>Electoral Act 1992. Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994. Australian Capital Territory (Self Government) Act 1988.</i>	Proportional Representation – Hare-Clark system. Optional Preferential voting. Robson Rotation.	Same as for Commonwealth with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prisoners – all ACT prisoners are entitled to enrol and vote in ACT Legislative Assembly elections. Residents of Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island are included in the ACT only for Commonwealth purposes. 	<i>Electoral Act 1992. Australian Capital Territory (Self Government) Act 1988.</i> Redistribution after every general election.	Since 1994.	Disclosure of gifts received and election expenditure is required by candidates and other persons for each election. Political parties must disclose election expenditure for each election. Broadcasters and publishers must declare details of electoral advertisements during the election period. Political parties and associated entities must disclose all receipts, outstanding debts and payments in annual returns. MLAs must disclose gifts received, total payments and outstanding debts in annual returns. Donors to parties, MLAs and associated entities must declare gifts made and any gifts received that are used to make gifts. Disclosure thresholds are \$1000.	The ACT is unique in combining Local and Territory levels of government. The Legislative Assembly is elected to carry out all Territory and Local Government responsibilities. Voting by computer is available at some ACT polling places. A change from 3 year terms to 4 year terms took place at the 2004 election. No absent voting. Ordinary voting from all polling places and all prepoll voting centres for all electorates. Electioneering and how to vote cards not permitted within 100 metres of a polling place.

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Legislative Council	4 year fixed term.	36 members from 6 regions (6 x 6 MLCs).	<i>Electoral Act 1907</i> and some aspects of the <i>Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899</i> .	Proportional Representation - Single transferable vote (Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method) and ticket voting.	Largely the same as the Commonwealth except for British subjects who qualify if they were on either a Commonwealth or WA roll between 26 October 1983 and 25 January 1984 inclusive. The two rolls also treat some other categories differently. In WA prisoners serving a sentence under one year are entitled to vote.	<i>Electoral Act 1907</i> . Two years after every Legislative Assembly general election.	A joint enrolment arrangement since 1983. Separate State and Commonwealth rolls are maintained.	Disclosure of certain financial details is required by candidates, Legislative Council groups, political parties and other persons after each election. Each financial year active political parties and associated entities are required to disclose information relating to gifts and other income. Reimbursement for electoral expenditure is available to candidates that receive 4% or more of the formal first preference vote. The amount paid is the lesser of the amount spent within the categories of electoral expenditure for the election, or the entitled amount which is linked to CPI.	The vote counting provisions for the Legislative Council were changed in 2007 from the Inclusive Gregory Method to the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (WIGM). This change was implemented to remove the possible situation in which a ballot paper may increase in value during the transfer of surplus ballot papers to continuing candidates in the count. WIGM ensures that each ballot paper reduces in value when transferred as part of a surplus.
Legislative Assembly	Up to 4 years.	59 elected from single-member electoral districts.	As above.	Full Preferential.	As above.	As above.	As above.	As above.	
Local Councils	Half the Councillors of each Council are elected every 2 years for 4 year terms.	Approximately 1 300 Councillors from 139 Councils.	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> .	First past the post.	Voting is voluntary. To vote, an elector must be on either the State or Commonwealth roll. Property owners and occupiers may also enrol and vote if they are Australian citizens.	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> . The Local Government Advisory Board makes recommendations on suggested redistributions to the Minister for Local Government.	State roll used to produce residents lists. Councils are responsible for maintaining a register of non-residential owners and occupiers.	Disclosure of donations to the CEO of the Local Government by candidates and donors for sums of \$200 and over. No funding.	



Voting Systems

Voting systems can generally be divided into three major groups:

1. Plurality/First-Past-the-Post

The candidate who polls the highest number of formal votes – even if that number is less than 50% of the formal vote – is elected.

2. Majoritarian/Majority

Under the majority system, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of votes to be elected. The Commonwealth House of Representatives uses a majoritarian electoral system.

In Australia majority systems are sometimes called preferential systems. The term “preferential” refers to a voter being able to indicate an order of preference for the candidates on the ballot paper.

Exhaustive preferential

(sometimes called Block Majority) is a variation of a majority system that can be used in multi-member electorates. Under this system, once a candidate is elected, all ballot papers are returned to the count to elect the next member.

3. Proportional Representation (PR)

Proportional representation systems are used for elections in multi-member electorates to elect candidates who receive a set proportion of the vote. In Australia, these systems are classified into two categories – **List Systems** and **Single Transferable Vote (STV)**.

List Systems are used in multi-member electorates where the elector indicates an order of preference for the parties which have registered a list of candidates to be elected as members of the parliament. In **Single Transferable Vote**, the voter indicates an order of preference for individual candidates.

All Australian Proportional Representation systems are STV types, although the South Australian, Victorian, Western Australian and NSW Upper Houses and the Senate of the Commonwealth Parliament may be thought of as Semi-list Systems as the ballot paper provides for above the line voting or left and right of the line in the case of Western Australia.

Preferential Voting

The term preferential refers to the voter being required to indicate an order of preference for candidates on the ballot paper. Different types of preferential voting include:–

Full preferential – the voter must show a preference for all candidates listed for the ballot paper to be formal.

Partial preferential – the voter must show a minimum number of preferences for candidates – usually equal to the number to be elected

Optional preferential – the voter need only indicate a preference for the candidate of his/her first choice and the allocation of any further preference is optional.

Other terms

Absolute majority

More than 50% of the formal vote.

Consensus election

Voters decide the successful candidate/s through a process of discussion, rather than by a formal vote.

Multi-member electorates

More than one member is elected to represent an electorate at a single election.

Robson Rotation

A process of rotating candidates' names within a column on the ballot paper, so favoured positions (i.e. top and bottom of the ballot paper) are shared equally between all candidates. Neil Robson MHA, introduced these rotations to the Tasmanian Parliament in 1977.

The ACT adopted Robson rotation for elections to the ACT Legislative Assembly in 1995.

Single-Member electorates

One member is elected to represent an electorate.

Voting Ticket

A written statement, registered with the electoral authority by a candidate or group of candidates, which expresses the order in which preferences are to be further allocated for an elector marking a “1” in one of the boxes in an above-the-line (SA, the Senate and also used in SA lower house when incomplete preferences are given by a voter) or left and right of the line (WA upper house) vote.

Australian Electoral Commission Offices

Local call for enrolment and voting enquiries from anywhere in Australia 13 23 26. www.aec.gov.au

Central Office

West Block
Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600
PO Box 6172
Kingston ACT 2604
Phone 02 6271 4411
Facsimile 02 6271 4558

NSW

Level 4
Rodden Cutler House
24 Campbell Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone 02 9375 6333
Facsimile 02 9212 7659

Victoria

Level 8, Casselden Place
2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone 03 9285 7171
Facsimile 03 9285 7174

Queensland

7th Floor
488 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Phone 07 3834 3400
Facsimile 07 3834 3403

Western Australia

Level 3
111 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Phone 08 6363 8080
Facsimile 08 6363 8051

South Australia

9th Floor
1 King William Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone 08 8237 6555
Facsimile 08 8231 2664

Tasmania

2nd Floor
AMP Building
86 Collins Street
Hobart TAS 7000
Phone 03 6235 0500
Facsimile 03 6235 0568

Northern Territory

7th Floor
TCG Centre
80 Mitchell Street
Darwin NT 0800
GPO Box 21
Darwin NT 0800
Phone 08 8982 8000
Facsimile 08 8982 8064



**ELECTORAL
COUNCIL**
of AUSTRALIA

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS *of*
AUSTRALIA'S PARLIAMENTS *and*
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**For further information about Electoral Systems and
Parliaments in Australia:**

Electoral Commission NSW

Level 25, 201 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 832, Sydney NSW 2001
Phone (02) 9290 5999
Facsimile (02) 9290 5991
www.elections.nsw.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission

505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VICTORIA 3000
Phone 03 9299 0520
Facsimile 03 9629 8632
www.vec.vic.gov.au

Electoral Commission Queensland

Level 6, Forestry House
160 Mary Street
Brisbane QUEENSLAND 4000
GPO Box 1393 BRISBANE QLD 4001
Phone 1300 881 665
Facsimile 07 3229 7391
www.ecq.qld.gov.au

**Western Australian Electoral
Commission**

Level 2
111 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
GPO Box F316 PERTH WA 6841
Phone 08 9214 0400
Facsimile 08 9226 0577
Email waec@waec.wa.gov.au
www.waec.wa.gov.au

**Electoral Commission of South
Australia**

Level 6, 60 Light Square
Adelaide, South Australia 5000
GPO Box 646 ADELAIDE SA 5001
Phone 08 7424 7400
Fax 08 7424 7444
www.ecsa.sa.gov.au

Tasmanian Electoral Commission

Level 2 Telstra Centre
70 Collins Street
Hobart TASMANIA 7000
GPO Box 300 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone 03 6233 3749 or 1800 801 701
Facsimile 03 6224 0217
Email ballot.box@tec.tas.gov.au
www.tec.tas.gov.au

**Northern Territory Electoral
Commission**

2nd Floor AANT Building
79-81 Smith Street
DARWIN NT 0800
GPO Box 2419, DARWIN NT 0801
Phone 08 8999 5617
Facsimile 08 8999 5845
Email ntec@nt.gov.au
www.ntec.nt.gov.au

ACT Electoral Commission

Ground Floor, North Building
London Circuit, Civic Square
Canberra City ACT 2601
PO Box 272 Civic Square ACT 2608
Phone 02 6205 0033
Facsimile 02 6205 0382
Email elections@act.gov.au
www.elections.act.gov.au

Australian Electoral Commission

Central Office
West Block, Queen Victoria Terrace Parkes ACT 2600
PO Box 6172 Kingston ACT 2604
Phone 02 6271 4411
www.aec.gov.au

Issued by: Electoral Council of Australia

PO Box 2764
Cheltenham Vic 3192
Phone (03) 9584 8831

The ECA is guided by three key directions

1. The need to keep pace with the Australian community's changing expectations regarding the delivery of electoral services through modernisation and innovation.
2. Cooperation and coordination across electoral authorities, where statutes allow, to enhance the individual and collective delivery of electoral services to the Australian community.
3. Informing the community and other political stakeholders through credible research and other information programs of the implication of electoral changes consistent with the challenges outlined in this document.