

20 TIPS - VOTING PREPARATION

1. It's important to check if you are enrolled to vote, using your current or previous address. Contact the **Australian Electoral Commission on 132 326** or view <https://check.aec.gov.au> and type in your details. Please note, the federal electoral roll closed on 18th April, 2022.
2. Australian voters need to know the name of the electorate, in which they are enrolled. Visit <https://electorate.aec.gov.au/> "**Find my electorate**" and enter a locality/ suburb or postcode. Using an example, when you type in 'Parkes', the AEC website shows 5 entries. "PARKES NSW" is shown on the AEC webpage as "Riverina", the electorate name; but there is another NSW electorate name, called "Parkes". So, there are 2 electorates next to each other for the town of Parkes, both in NSW; one is Riverina and the other is Parkes. Some postcodes cover 2 electorates; so, it's important to get confirmation of your electorate, especially if there have been boundary changes through redistributions by the AEC.
3. Check out the AEC website <https://aec.gov.au/election/> to find out the names of the Candidates/ Parties in your electorate. For the actual candidate names and positions on the ballot form, in each of the 151 electorates (House of Representatives - Lower House) and for the Senate (Upper House) in 6 states and 2 territories, these are shown on the AEC website, following the ballot draw (which occurred midday on 22nd April, 2022).
4. Check by researching information about your electorate, for any redistributions (boundary changes), historical voting results, the % figure to see whether it is an electorate that is a 'key' seat, known as "marginal" (unsafe) or whether it is in a safe seat (6% and over). Also find out about the current/retiring MP and other Candidates/ Parties. A useful website for the Federal Election 2022 is on the ABC elections website. If, however, you prefer other political/ election/ news websites, then perhaps consider comparing the electoral information. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/elections/federal/2022/guides>
5. If on the above ABC link "**Federal Election 2022 Guides**", click any of the navigation tabs of interest e.g. "*Electorates by State*", "*Index to Electorates*", "*Index to Candidates*", "*Federal Election Preview: Senate*" etc. If you know your electorate name (under "Index to Electorates"), go to the alphabet listing. Click the letter that matches your electorate's name e.g. "P" for 'Parkes' or "R" for 'Riverina'. When the webpage opens up, click the electorate name to find the relevant information. Once on the electorate webpage, you can click "**JUMP TO CANDIDATES**" to see Candidates / political parties in your electorate.
6. It's recommended to research your candidates e.g. work/education background, experience, skills, civic ability, values, where they stand on issues and what are their policies (or party policies). Candidates sometimes have their own websites and/or social media pages, including forum events. Visit political party websites for Candidates' profiles, under the state/territory and by electorate name. Be careful of any "fake" Independents, who may be 'stooges' for the major parties or with an 'agenda-based' organisation.
7. Sometimes there is no photo or any profile information about Candidates, which means you may need to do a bit more searching. Cross-reference information for 'facts'. Review and list the 'good' or 'best' Candidates, in YOUR preference order.
8. If there is a 'good' selection of Candidates, but you are unsure of who to choose as your 1, 2, 3, 4... etc., then contact Candidates directly, by either online messaging, email or over the phone (if published). Consider sending the Candidates some key questions or issues you are concerned about; but it is a very busy time for Candidates with campaigning.
9. Be careful with political party postal information sent to your letterbox. If you are unable to vote on election day, and you want to do a postal application, you need to ensure you complete the OFFICIAL AEC postal application form and post it in time, to be received by **Wednesday, 18th May, 2022**. Click this AEC link below for information to help. <https://aec.gov.au/Elections/candidates/third-party-pva.htm> "**Postal vote applications must be received by the AEC (or our provider, Computershare) by 6pm (local time) on the Wednesday before election day.**"

10. It's recommended to vote on '**Polling' Day, Saturday, 21st May, 2022** (8am -6pm) and to go to the nearest polling booth to your address. Take your OWN pen (not a pencil) for completing the Green Ballot (House of Reps.) and White Ballot (Senate) papers.
11. Write the no. '1' not as a lower case 'l' but with a top angle and line at the bottom **1** .
Write the number '7' with a line across the middle **7** . This helps prevent any potential electoral fraud made on your ballot papers e.g. numbers altered from a 1 to a 4 or 7.
12. Number ALL boxes on the Green Ballot Paper (House of Reps). On the White Ballot Paper (Senate), above the line, you must number 6 squares, starting at your number 1 choice, then continue with your number 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. **It's recommended to number ALL boxes above the line;** so that you don't waste your vote and an unscrupulous person doesn't mark any empty boxes (squares), possibly making your ballot 'informal'.
13. If you prefer to vote *below the line* on the white ballot paper (for the Senate), you need to number at least 12 boxes (squares), for the Candidates of YOUR choice, starting with your "1", then consecutively, number your choice for 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Ideally, it's advisable to number a lot more boxes (below the line) for the above-stated reasons.
14. If you need help, see an AEC officer. If you make a mistake, ask for a fresh ballot paper.
15. To help prepare yourself, **before you vote**, visit the AEC website and find your electorate and check the ballot paper order of names and parties (Green ballot paper for House of Representatives - Lower House). Find on the AEC website, the white ballot paper (Senate - Upper House) for your state or territory. See where the parties (group tickets) and **Independents** are positioned on the white ballot paper. The group tickets (parties and sometimes grouped Independents), have an alphabetical letter next to them, issued from the ballot draw for the Senate and start from A, B, C, D, E etc. Names of parties/ groups are shown next to the allocated letter. Some independents do not have a letter next to them, just their name. ALL Senate Candidate names are shown below the line. If voting either above or below the line, on the white ballot paper, know where your Candidates / parties are *exactly* positioned. Take your time to accurately number the ballot papers.
16. Once you know the Candidates/ Parties/ Independents names and where they are positioned on the ballot papers, write down your OWN preferences on a piece of paper (for both the Green Ballot and White Ballot papers). Take a photo of your notes and keep them on your mobile phone or tablet device, in preparation for when you vote.
17. Remember to take your charged mobile/ tablet and/or written notes and **your own pen** with you and preferably **VOTE on Saturday, 21st May, 2022** (8am to 6pm) at your nearest polling booth. If you forget to take your mobile/ tablet or notes, try and remember the voting order of YOUR preferred candidates' names (including Independents and parties).
18. Consider sharing your own research with others, who may be in the same electorate and need help with deciding on who best to vote for. Many Australian electors are unsure of some of the parties, including the 'freedom-friendly' minor parties and Candidates; and are looking for personal recommendations on where to find information and who to vote for. It helps to be discerning and to use discretion concerning 'politics' with family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours, faith groups, social/ sports clubs etc. Most people are genuinely grateful for advice and who to choose as the best candidate (and what order).
19. If you are able to volunteer, Candidates need Campaign Workers and especially Scrutineers (a much-needed role to help prevent electoral fraud). You don't need to be 'jabbed', but check for any COVID health changes, in case a mask is required. For "**10 TIPS ON SCRUTINEERING**" see pg. 4-5. Download **Scrutineers Appointment and Undertaking form:** <https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/candidates/files/scrutineers-appointment-form.pdf>

Scrutineers Handbook: <https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/candidates/files/scrutineers-handbook.pdf>

20. Consider sharing these voting preparation tips to help others. **VOTE WISELY.**