

10 TIPS ON SCRUTINEERING IN A FEDERAL ELECTION (AUSTRALIA) & AEC FORM

1. Download the "Scrutineer appointment and undertaking form" (AECEF107) from AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) <https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/candidates/files/scrutineers-appointment-form.pdf> (see below).

After downloading and printing the blank AEC scrutineer form, it must be completed at the top section; then completed, dated and signed by the Candidate in Section A. The Scrutineer completes Sections B and C (including full address) with their signature and date at the end. Check the form, then scan the completed form for the AEC, Candidate and Scrutineer's records. It will be necessary for the Scrutineer, or the Candidate (or someone trustworthy on their behalf), to physically take the **original** Scrutineer's completed, dated and signed forms to the local AEC division (electorate office) for processing. Then, on the day of Scrutineering at the chosen polling place (prepoll &/or on election day), the AEC Supervisor on shift, should have a record of the Scrutineers names and which Candidates, they are scrutineering for. The volunteer Scrutineer will need to print off the scanned, completed form and take it with them, alongside some form of ID, e.g. driver's licence, in readiness to show to the AEC Supervisor/staff at the polling place, on the day of the Scrutineering. Only one Scrutineer is allowed for each Candidate at each polling/ early voting or counting location. Most Scrutineers arrive about 5.30pm at polling booths, to show their form and ID. Check any possible COVID-19 restrictions (if applicable).

2. Do not wear any political party t-shirts, hats, badges etc., or any other political marketing material when undertaking the role as a Scrutineer. A Scrutineer must wear the AEC Scrutineer's "Identification Badge" with lanyard during scrutineering and to return the ID badge/ lanyard whenever leaving the polling, early-voting or counting locations.

3. Take a clip board, paper and pen for making any observations/ notes.

4. Be prepared by reading the 72-page AEC booklet published on February 2025 called "**Scrutineers Handbook**". KEY pages 5-13, 19-20, 24-53, 59-65 and 68-72. <https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/candidates/files/scrutineers-handbook.pdf>

5. See page 8 of Scrutineers Handbook for "Do's" and "Don'ts". See page 11 "Rights of scrutineers" and page 12. Pages 19 and 20 also show what Scrutineers must do and must not do. See pages 62 to 65 on offences and penalties.

6. Volunteer Scrutineers should NOT get too close in proximity to AEC staff (ballot paper counters/ electoral employees). Observe and record notes. Scrutineers can inspect ballot papers, but are not allowed to touch ballots at the count.

7. Do not use any device e.g. a mobile phone, tablet, camera, video equipment etc. - as NO photographs and/or video/audio recording are permitted during scrutineering. AFTER scrutineering, report incidents to the Candidate, for AEC.

8. If unsure of anything, ask questions to the "presiding officer" or during the scrutiny process. Ask the "ARO" (Assistant Returning Officer) e.g. "What is that pile of ballot papers?" or "Will you recheck that pile of major party candidates votes?".

9. Inspect piles of ballot papers and challenge AEC Counters where appropriate e.g. as a previous Scrutineer in the 2022 Federal Election, I (*Sharon Cousins*) witnessed a green House of Representatives formal ballot paper (completed by a local electorate Voter), placed *incorrectly* by the AEC Counter (casual employee), onto the pile of another Candidate's ballot papers, belonging to a major party. Hence fraudulently adding a formal vote given to a minor party candidate onto a major party pile of votes. This was challenged and reported to the AEC Officer-in-Charge and to the Candidate later on. When formal green ballot papers for a major party candidate are placed *on top of* formal votes given to a minor party candidate ballot, it 'appears' as though there are more votes for the major party candidate. Formal green ballot papers are then collated by AEC counters into separate piles for each of the Candidates and a separate pile for "informal" ballot papers. Ballot papers are generally put into piles of 50-100. Thus, any formal ballot paper/s for a minor party candidate can easily be 'concealed' within a pile of formal green ballot paper votes for a major party candidate. **THIS IS ELECTORAL FRAUD.** As a previous Scrutineer, I have also witnessed AEC counters (electoral employees) using pencils and rightfully challenged them. Over 15 years ago, a past electoral employee (Counter) publicly confessed at a minor political party members event, to using a piece of lead (from a lead pencil) under one of her long finger nails. She then flicked through ballot papers to alter numbers that had been completed in pencil in order to make particular ballot papers "informal". Hence the need for **Voters to use a pen (not a pencil)** on ballot papers and for proper scrutiny during counting at polling places. NB. Declaration votes tend to be counted after polling night and AEC staff should inform Candidates where/when this takes place, for additional scrutineering.

10. Scrutineers should ask to ensure the counting/ recording of ballot papers is completed correctly as officials do make mistakes, due to tiredness because AEC staff tend to have worked long hours at polling places. If this request is denied, the Scrutineer needs to record the incident directly to the electorate Candidate and to the AEC, for a proper investigation.

Scrutineer appointment and undertaking form

Year <input type="text"/>	Federal election
To the Divisional Returning Officer	Through the Officer-in-Charge/Supervisor
Division <input type="text"/>	Polling place/ counting centre <input type="text"/>

Section A: Candidate details

I hereby appoint the person named in Section B below to represent me as a scrutineer at your polling place/counting centre at the abovementioned federal election.

Name of candidate as it appears on the ballot paper	Signature	Date
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Name of registered party (if applicable)		
<input type="text"/>		

Section B: Scrutineer details

Family name	Given name/s
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address	
<input type="text"/>	
Suburb	State
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	Postcode
	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Section C: Undertaking by scrutineer

I undertake for the purpose of subsection 202A(3) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*:

- Not to, either directly or indirectly, divulge or communicate any information with respect to the vote of an elector acquired by me in the performance of my duties or functions or in the exercise of my powers, under this Act or the regulations, in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of an elector
- Not to interfere with or attempt to influence the vote of any elector (section 200DB and section 218 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*)
- Not to communicate with any person in the polling booth or pre-poll voting office except so far as is necessary in the discharge of my duties or performance of my functions
- To inform myself of my obligations under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* the relevant offence provisions under this Act
- To carry out my duties and functions in accordance with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, including complying with any lawful direction given under s 348 designed to address the health risks presented by Covid-19 infection (which may include wearing face masks during scrutiny).
- To at all times, wear the scrutineer identification supplied to me by the AEC within a polling place or counting centre, and
- Not to use any image recording device (including cameras, video recorders and video-enabled mobile phones) to record images of ballot papers or declaration envelopes, or any other images that might identify an elector and how they have voted, in a polling place.
- Not to use any device with the potential capability of image-recording (including, but not limited to, mobile phones, tablets, cameras and video recorders) in the scrutiny area of a counting centre.

I have read and understood the above undertakings. I understand that should I fail to adhere to the above guidelines, I may be asked to leave the polling place or counting centre. I recognise that the AEC produces the 'Scrutineers Handbook' to assist me in understanding my duties, functions and obligations, and relevant offence provisions.

Scrutineer	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>
Signature			

Scrutineers Handbooks are available from the Divisional Returning Officer or the AEC website www.aec.gov.au

Safeguard of official information: your attention is directed to:

- Public Service Regulations 1999* (Cth), Part 2, Division 2.1: an employee must not disclose confidential information obtained in connection with the employee's employment, and
- Section 70 of the *Crimes Act 1914*: it is an offence to publish or communicate any fact or document which comes to an Officer's knowledge, or into possession, by virtue of being a Commonwealth officer, and which it is the Officer's duty not to disclose. **Penalty:** Imprisonment for 2 years.