

The Senate count process

On election night, a first preference count of ordinary Senate ballot papers is conducted at polling places. Indicative first preference results are progressively published on the Tally Room on the AEC's website on election night.

From the Sunday after election day, ballot papers are reconciled and counted again. For each group, the first preference above the line votes (ticket votes) and first preference below the line votes (unapportioned) are updated on the Tally Room. Totals for ungrouped candidates are also published on the Tally Room. Senate ballot papers are then sent to the Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS).

At the CSS, all ballot papers are scanned for entry into the semi-automated scrutiny process. The semi-automated process captures voter preferences using a combination of optical character recognition software and manual verification by human operators. The images of potentially informal

ballot papers and those with unusual markings, are visually checked by a different human operator and assessed as formal or informal by AEC staff.

As ballot papers progress through the scrutiny process, first preference above the line votes (ticket votes) are verified and first preference below the line votes are apportioned to individual candidates within the group. This is shown on the Tally Room by group where, for below (the line votes, the unapportioned total) is progressively transferred to individual candidates. Throughout this process the Tally Room displays a provisional quota, which is indicative only.

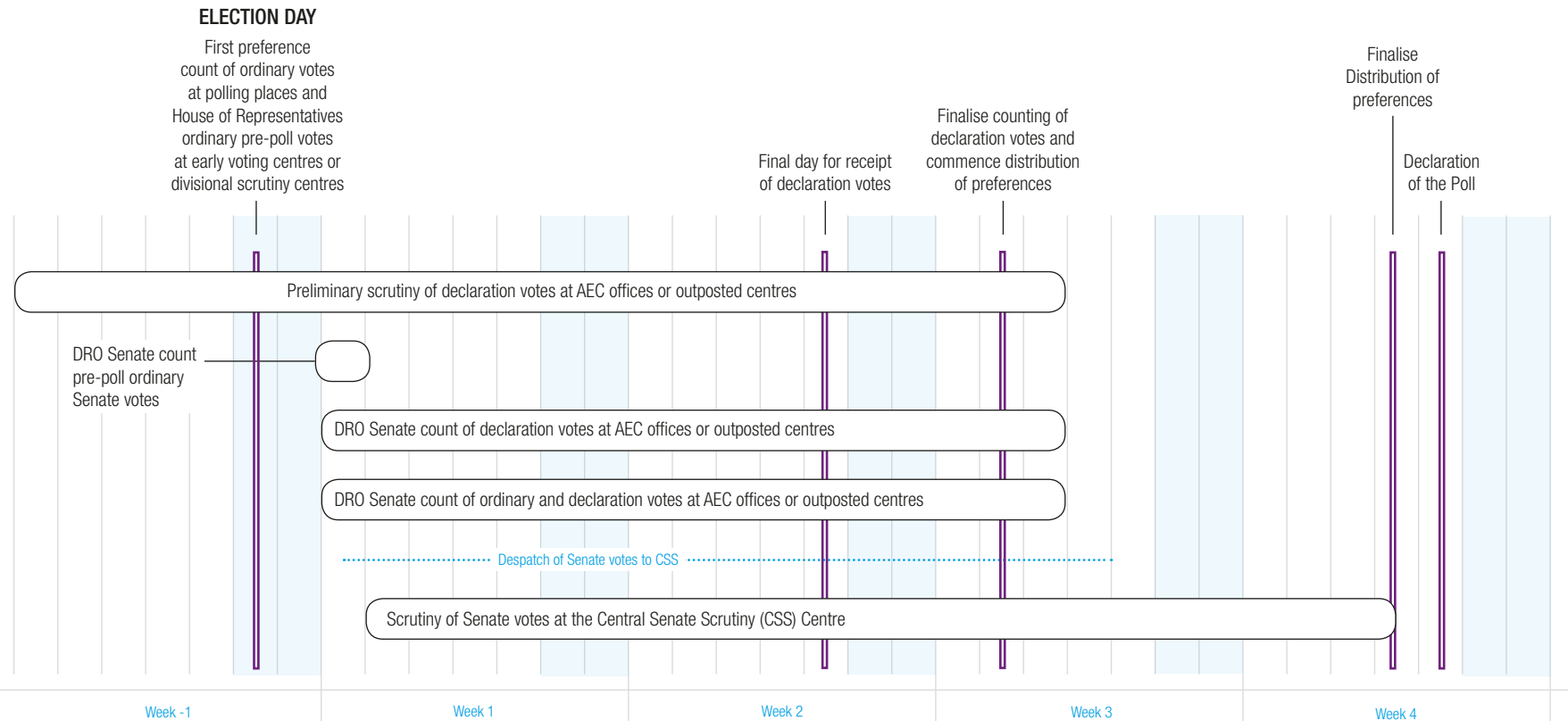
Once all ballot papers have passed through CSS, the quota for the election is struck from the total number of formal ballot papers. Using this quota, the count system conducts the distribution of preferences to determine the final results, which are published on the Tally Room.

The Senate count always takes longer to complete than the House of Representative count due to the size and nature of the task. Counting may take four weeks or more and the AEC expects to return the Senate writs on or before 8 August 2016.

www.aec.gov.au 13 23 26



Indicative timeline for Senate counting process



Note: these timeframes are indicative and may change due to operational requirements