

Referendums

A federal referendum is a national vote on a question about a proposed change to the Constitution. The Constitution is the founding document for how our country is governed. There have been 44 referendums held since 1901. It's been quite a while since we held one – the last referendum was more than 20 years ago in 1999.

Who needs to vote

All Australian citizens aged 18 and over must vote in a referendum. You must be enrolled and you should update your enrolment details if you have:

- recently changed your name or address
- turned 18, or
- become an Australian citizen.

Visit aec.gov.au or pick up an enrolment form from any AEC office.

When and where to vote

Voting day will be held on a Saturday with polling places open between 8am and 6pm around the country.

Mobile polling teams will also visit many remote areas in the weeks leading up to voting day.

If you can't make it on the day, you may be eligible to vote early either in person or by post.

More details will be available at aec.gov.au closer to the referendum.

How to vote

Voting in a referendum is different to an election. You only need to complete one ballot paper.

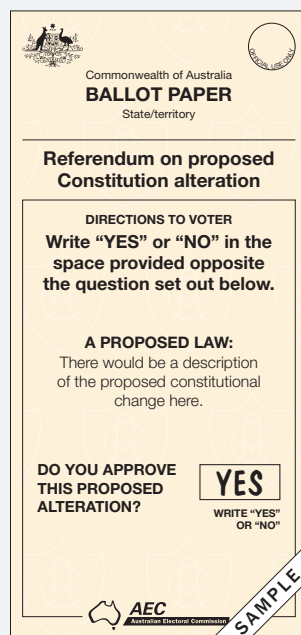
The ballot paper will show a question about a proposed change to the Constitution. To vote, write 'yes' if you approve or 'no' if you do not approve the proposed change.

At the polling place, you can ask a polling official, friend, or family member for help on how to cast a formal vote.



Don't worry if you make a mistake.

Ask for another ballot paper and start again.



Commonwealth of Australia
BALLOT PAPER
State/territory

Referendum on proposed Constitution alteration

DIRECTIONS TO VOTER
Write "YES" or "NO" in the space provided opposite the question set out below.

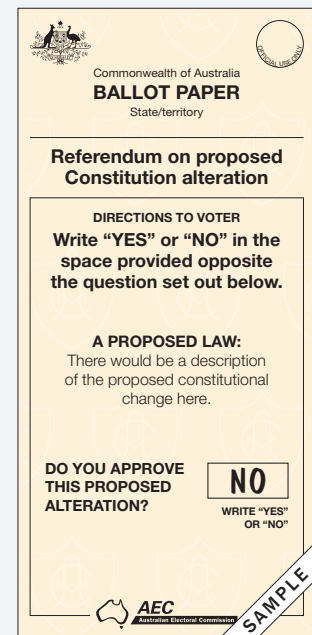
A PROPOSED LAW:
There would be a description of the proposed constitutional change here.

DO YOU APPROVE THIS PROPOSED ALTERATION? **YES**
WRITE "YES" OR "NO"

SAMPLE

Sample ballot paper

Write **YES** if you approve the proposed change



Commonwealth of Australia
BALLOT PAPER
State/territory

Referendum on proposed Constitution alteration

DIRECTIONS TO VOTER
Write "YES" or "NO" in the space provided opposite the question set out below.

A PROPOSED LAW:
There would be a description of the proposed constitutional change here.

DO YOU APPROVE THIS PROPOSED ALTERATION? **NO**
WRITE "YES" OR "NO"

SAMPLE

Sample ballot paper

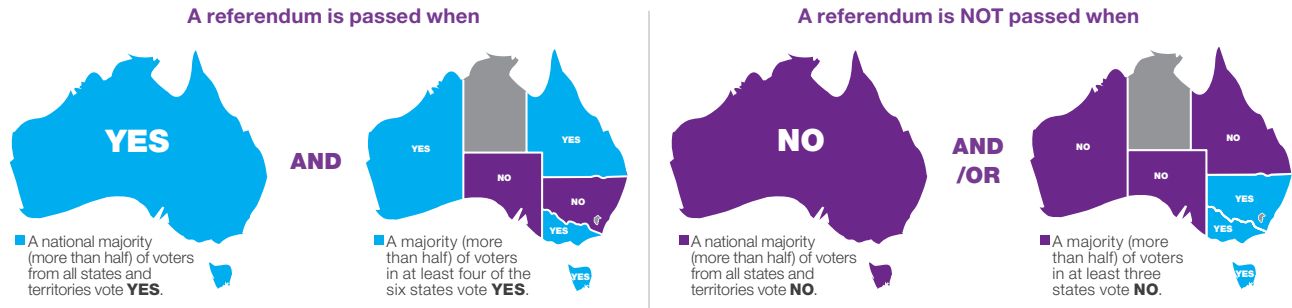
Write **NO** if you do not approve the proposed change



How the result is decided

The proposed change to the Constitution must be approved by a ‘double majority’ – that is:

- a national majority of formal votes cast (more than 50%) from all states and territories, and
- a majority of formal votes cast (more than 50%) in a majority of states (at least four of the six states).



The result is binding. This means the Australian Government must act on what voters decide.

Mythbusting referendums

MYTH: Referendums can be held about any topic or law.

FACT: They're only held to make a proposed change to the Constitution.

MYTH: The 2017 marriage law survey was a referendum or plebiscite.

FACT: It was a postal survey, and participation was optional.

MYTH: It's not compulsory to vote in a referendum.

FACT: You must vote if you're an Australian citizen aged 18 and over.

MYTH: I need to enrol separately.

FACT: If you're enrolled for elections, you're enrolled for referendums too. Just make sure your details are up to date.

MYTH: I can only vote by post.

FACT: You can vote on the day or check your eligibility to vote early in person or by post by visiting aec.gov.au closer to the time.

MYTH: A referendum needs 70% or more 'yes' votes to pass.

FACT: It must be approved by more than 50% of voters from all states and territories, and more than 50% of voters in a majority of states (at least four of the six states). This is the 'double majority'.

Role of the AEC

The AEC is an independent and impartial statutory authority.

Its role at the referendum is to provide enrolment, voting and information services.

While the AEC will deliver a yes/no pamphlet to Australian households, the information in this product is produced by Parliament. Beyond the delivery of the pamphlet, the AEC has no involvement with campaigns for or against the proposed change to the Constitution.

CHECK THE SOURCE
this upcoming referendum

Stop and consider the source

Your vote at the referendum will help make an important decision for Australia.

During the referendum period, you may come across information that is deliberately misleading.

Stop, check, and consider the source of what you see, hear, or read. Don't be misled by disinformation this referendum.

Visit aec.gov.au for tips on checking the source.