![AEC — Australian Electoral Commission logo]

Reporting Guide
for Media

2025

A resource for editorial media covering the 2025 federal election.

Message from the
Electoral Commissioner

Welcome to the 2025 federal election. If you've covered elections before, welcome back. If this is your first time, I trust you'll find the election campaign a rewarding professional experience.

Whether your first or fifth federal election, this guide should prove to be an essential resource for your reporting on the electoral process itself, or wherever political campaigning activities intersect with that process.

Over the next few pages, you'll find:

- statistics that can provide context to your reporting;
- high-level details about how the AEC runs the electoral process; and
- information on the AEC Newsroom, contact details for the AEC's Media & Digital Engagement team and links to myriad other resources.

I would encourage you to use the AEC Newsroom and the Media & Digital Engagement Team as resources whenever you can. It could be requesting permission to film at a polling place, seeking the latest pre-poll voting numbers, looking to have an on-air chat or checking the validity of information about the electoral process...our media staff are informed and ready and willing to help.

Information environment

No election is immune from global trends, and I think it important to highlight an area of ongoing concern for the AEC that is also relevant to your role in the election. This is of course the increasingly difficult information environment voters are exposed to.

While Australian election processes remain largely the same as they've been for decades, the rapid evolution of technology, and prominence of digital communication — including AI generated content — increases the potential for incorrect information to enter the political landscape and undermine public confidence in electoral integrity.

There have been many changes to the information environment since the 2022 federal election that extend beyond technological advances. 2024 was dubbed the 'year of elections', with Australian coverage of recent overseas elections having an impact on the perceptions of democratic systems and democracy in general.

In addition, many social media platforms continue to move further towards a hands-off approach to moderation. While research indicates that trust in Australian elections remains very high, it would be foolhardy to think Australia can escape what other nations have experienced and will continue to contend with.

At the AEC, we work hard to educate voters about the election process and counter any incorrect information when we see it. You will once again see the AEC's social media accounts being one of the most active in the Australian Public Service — both proactively and reactively.

This will work in conjunction with:

- an active media presence;
- the availability and promotion of our Disinformation Register;
- our 'Stop and Consider' advertising campaign;
- creation and distribution of AEC TV videos;
- our engagement work in local communities; and
- much more.

Elections are owned by all Australians and the role of the media is incredibly important. If you're a journalist, editor or producer reading this guide, I would encourage you to embrace the fact that you are part of what makes Australia's robust and transparent democracy as strong as it is.

I thank you for your diligence in helping Australian voters navigate the information environment through this federal election. And we look forward to helping you do that job along the way.

Jeff Pope
Australian Electoral Commissioner

Contents

The resources

AEC Media and Digital Engagement Team

Email: media@aec.gov.au
Phone: (02) 6271 4419
AEC website: aec.gov.au

AEC visuals

Images and b-roll: flickr.com/photos/auselectoralcom/
Videos: youtube.com/@AECTV

Follow us on social media

We're active on social media to educate Australians, address queries and misconceptions, advocate for our electoral system and at times, have a bit of electoral banter with the public.
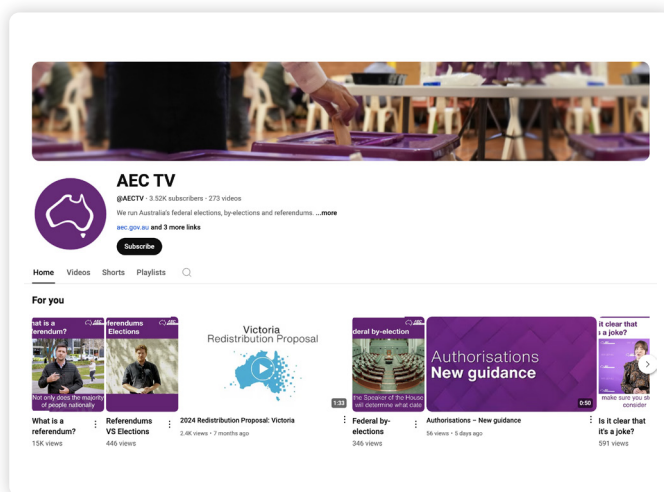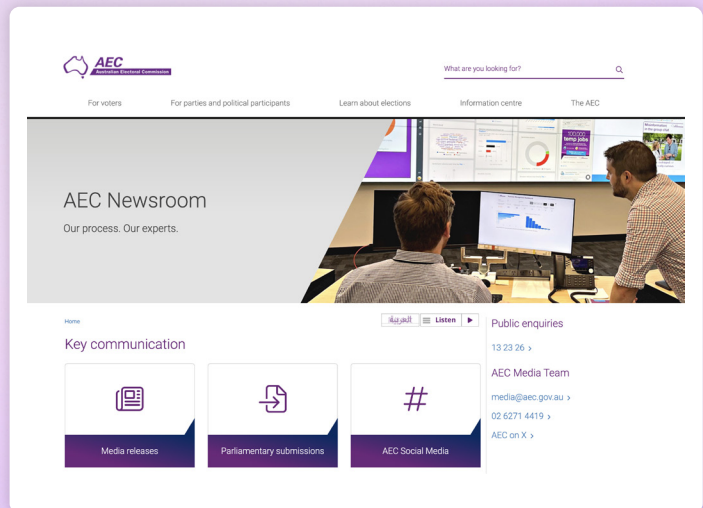
Our channels include:

AEC Newsroom

aec.gov.au/media

The AEC Newsroom is home to all the resources you might need to help you cover the federal election. Here you'll find the results data feed, media releases, AEC venue guidelines, fact sheets, information to understand the count and other explainers.

We've created a range of videos explaining key processes and common myths on our YouTube channel, AEC TV.

The seats

150 House of Representatives*

40 Senate

*One less seat than the 2022 Federal election.

Electoral boundaries
NSW, VIC, WA have all undergone redistributions since the previous election in 2022. The NT redistribution was still underway at the time of production for this guide.

The seat of Bullwinkel in Western Australia is a new seat. The seats of Higgins (VIC) and North Sydney (NSW) were abolished.

Redistribution reports, boundary maps and division profiles are all available on the **dedicated redistributions website**.

Seat margins
Past tally rooms are available back to the 2001 federal election. Given there has been redistributions, some results are not indicative of the starting point for a contest.

For this, we calculate notional seat margins based on polling place level results. We have a seat status fact sheet available on the **AEC Newsroom**.

The candidates

Anyone can nominate as a candidate in the federal election, as long as they are:

- Aged 18+;
- an Australian citizen;
- eligible to be enrolled to vote; and
- not disqualified by section 44 of the Australian Constitution.

A deadline is set for nominations when writs are issued for the federal election. Nominations must be received by the deadline.
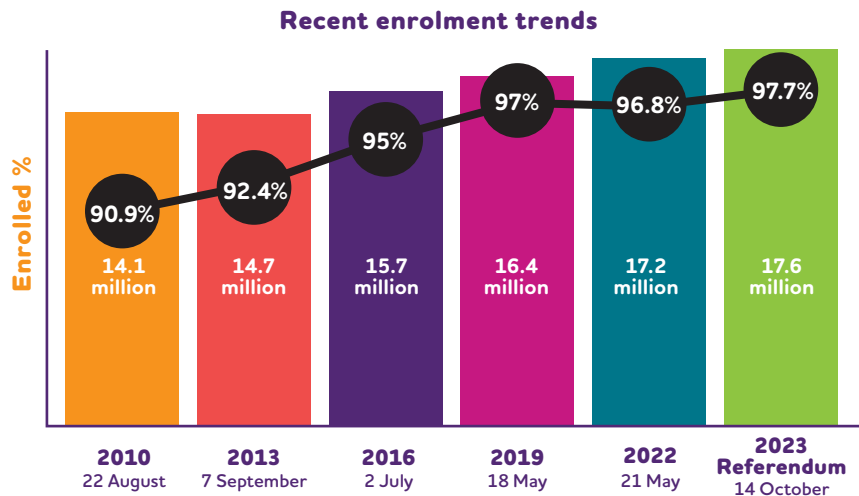
2016
Saturday 2 July
Candidates: 1,625
House of Representatives: 994
Senate: 631 *

2019
Saturday 18 May
Candidates: 1,513
House of Representatives: 1,056
Senate: 468

2022
Saturday 21 May
Candidates: 1,624
House of Representatives: 1,203
Senate: 421

■ Candidates   ■ House of Representatives   ■ Senate
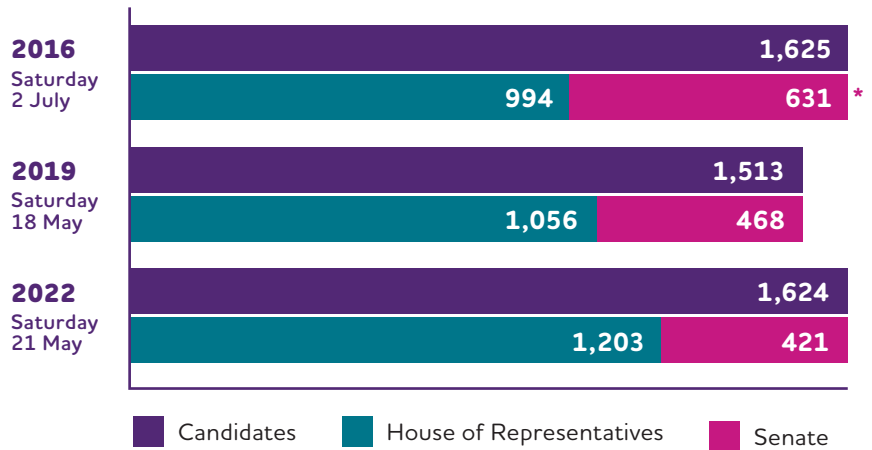
*Double Dissolution

The voters

This federal election will likely have the most complete electoral roll for any Australian federal election since federation, with around 18 million people enrolled at approximately 98%.

[Enrolment statistics](#) are updated regularly on the AEC website.

Recent enrolment trends

Year	Enrolled %	Enrolled
2010 (22 August)	90.9%	14.1 million
2013 (7 September)	92.4%	14.7 million
2016 (2 July)	95%	15.7 million
2019 (18 May)	97%	16.4 million
2022 (21 May)	96.8%	17.2 million
2023 Referendum (14 October)	97.7%	17.6 million

There are many options for voters both before and on polling day:

- Pre-poll voting
- Postal voting
- Election day
- Interstate
- Overseas
- Remote area voting
- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Homeless shelters
- Telephone voting for those who are blind or have low vision

The operations

The number of electronic certified lists has tripled this election, meaning far more people are being marked off the roll electronically than ever before.

There is a 20% increase in the number of polling places that meet the criteria of being 'fully accessible' since the referendum in 2023.

100,000+ temporary staff	**250,000** pencils	**90,000** ballot transport containers
500+ early voting centres	**250,000** strings for pencils	**240,000** vests
7,000+ polling places	**80,000** ballot boxes	**20,000** lanyards
25,000 copies of the electoral roll	**55 million** ballot papers	**5,000** rolls of tamper-proof tape
13,000 electronic certified lists	**1.4 million** security seals	**12 million** Household Guides delivered

The voting trends

Early voting rates have been rising for a number of elections, with more than half of all voters casting their votes before election day for both the 2022 federal election and the 2023 referendum.

In line with trends in other jurisdictions, postal votes were particularly popular for the 2022 federal election, which was held in COVID conditions.

Total before polling day
51.3% 51.2%
41.6%
32.1%

Pre-poll
40.2%
37.0%
33.3%
23.5%

Postal
14.3%
8.6% 8.3% 11.0%

2016 **2019** **2022** **2023 Referendum**
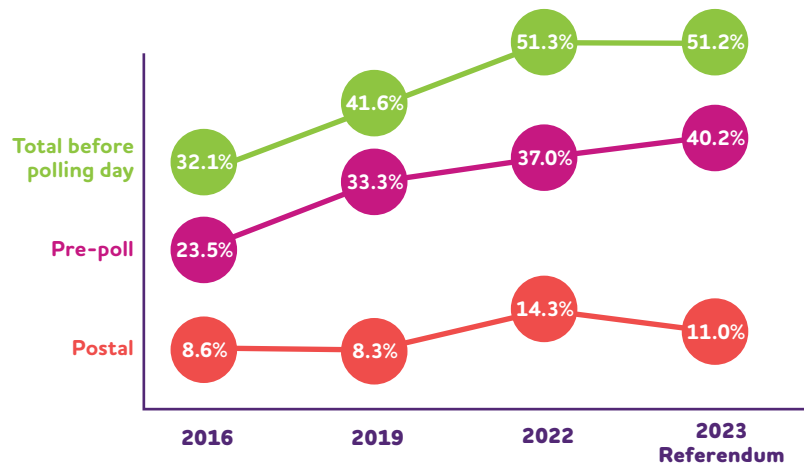
The communication

The AEC is the independent, politically neutral electoral administrator for federal elections and plays no role in policing truth in political advertising.

The AEC does have a role to play in countering false information about Australia's electoral process. We strongly encourage any journalists reporting on claims about the electoral process to contact the AEC for comment prior to publication — we take this responsibility seriously and are always happy to work with you to ensure that any reporting discusses accurately the details of the electoral system.

As has been the case at previous elections, the AEC's role is to ensure that political authorisation rules are followed. Authorisation messages allow readers and viewers of political messaging to know the source of any given message. The AEC works closely with political parties, candidates and campaigners to ensure that the law is followed.

Better Practice Guide: authorisations

The count

The count begins after the polling place doors close at 6pm on election night.

AEC Media will arrange television filming and photography opportunities at large counting venues (where pre-poll votes are counted) **between 5:45pm and 9pm local time in all major capital cities**. Please contact AEC Media staff to request an invitation.

For House of Representatives electorates, the AEC conducts first preference counts (tallies of every ballot paper with a '1' vote for each candidate) and Two-Candidate Preferred counts in which each

formal ballot paper is distributed to one of the two most prominent candidates on election night.

These counts provide election analysts and the public with an early indication of who might be likely to win each seat. It may not be possible for people to determine the likely winner of the election on election night. At the last federal election, the AEC was required to perform a small number of Three-Candidate Preferred counts in seats with very close results.

The count of Senate ballot papers is an intensive process that takes weeks. On election night, the AEC will tally the number of first preference votes on Senate ballot papers. However,

a full distribution of preferences can only be conducted by the AEC's specialised software after every Senate ballot paper has been scanned and manually checked — a process that begins after election night.

The AEC must receive and process postal votes up to 13 days after election day. However all postal votes must be completed and sealed by 6pm on election day.

The AEC has further information about the **counting process** available on the website, including helpful video summaries. In addition, the AEC will be offering a briefing to media representatives in the days leading up to election day about the specifics of the counting process.

The results

A link to the Tally Room, an online home to all the electoral results, will be made available on **aec.gov.au** just before 6pm on election day.

The AEC also provides a results feed in raw data formats to allow media outlets with appropriate software to use the data for graphics and analysis. This is referred to as the 'media feed' and there is comprehensive information available on the AEC website about this service.

While election analysts may be in a position to predict results on election night, the AEC has a higher threshold. We cannot formally declare the result in any electorate until it is mathematically impossible for any other result to occur. In other words, the number of outstanding or uncounted votes must be lower than the margin the winning candidate is leading by. These declarations typically begin taking place in the week following the election. Media attendance to these events can be arranged by contacting AEC Media.

The rules

Members of the media who would like to visit a polling place must contact the AEC beforehand. If you don't, you may be refused access by an AEC officer.

Once you have advised the AEC of your intentions, you should visit the AEC Newsroom to familiarise yourself with the rules for media attendance at an AEC venue.

When you arrive at an AEC venue, you must identify yourself to AEC staff. Please follow any directions our staff give you while you are on site and remember that our main priority is to run an efficient and secure election and to protect the secrecy of the vote.

You can vox pop voters, but this must not occur inside a polling place. If you would like vision of a counting centre, you must get in touch with the AEC media team in order to gain entry at a desired location. Entry to a counting centre after 6pm on polling day, is not guaranteed. The media's role is very important, but our operational processes are our first priority.

Information about media filming and photography during the count is available in the AEC Newsroom.
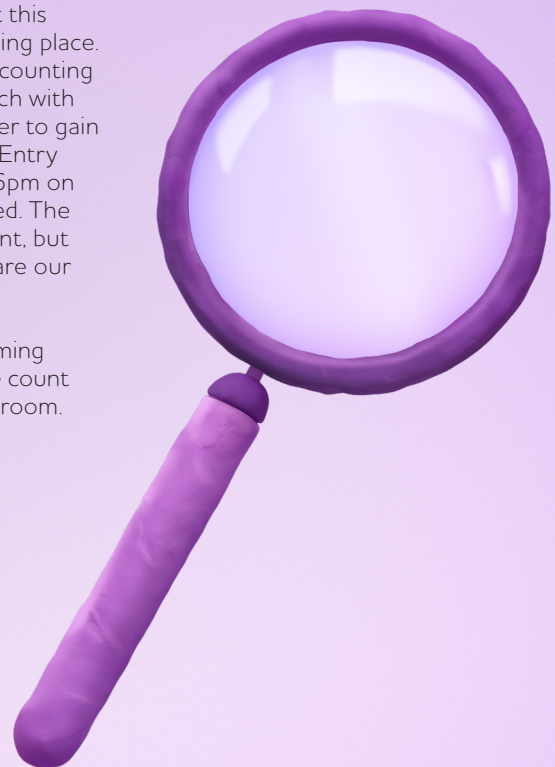
The experts

Jeff Pope

Electoral Commissioner

- 23-year career in law enforcement, finishing up as Victorian Assistant Police Commissioner in 2013.
- AEC Victorian State Manager (2013 and 2016 federal elections).
- AEC's Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer (2016 – 2024).
- Chair Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce (2019 – 2024).

Kath Gleeson

Deputy Electoral Commissioner and National Election Manager

- Joined the AEC in 2010, working across multiple areas of the agency.
- National Election Manager for the AEC from 2021.
- Secondment to the ANU's National Security College (2019 – 2020).
- Grew up in country NSW and Brisbane.

Evan Ekin-Smyth

National spokesperson and AEC Director of Media and Digital Engagement

- Started with the AEC as a graduate in 2011.
- AEC experience through four federal elections, the 2023 referendum and 18 by-elections.
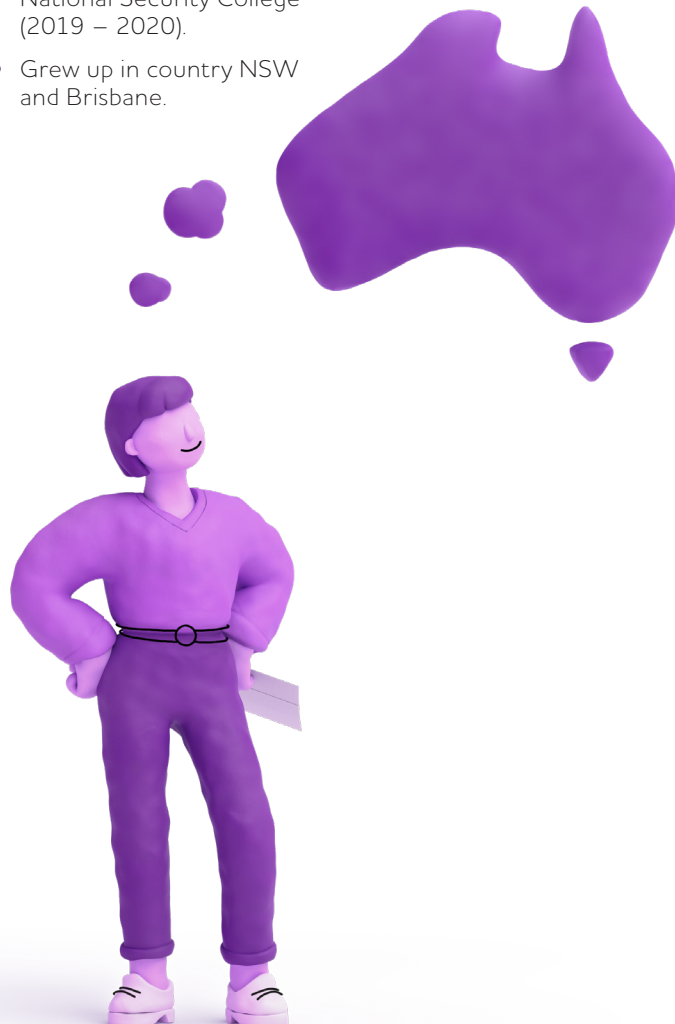
The experts

Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey

Victorian State Manager

- Joined the AEC in 2018.
- Director Voter Services for the 2019 Federal Election.
- Commenced as Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria in 2021 ahead of 2022 Federal Election and 2023 Referendum.
- AEC Diversity Sponsor for Disability.

Anita Ratcliffe

Western Australian State Manager

- Commenced in June 2023 following a 15-year career in banking.
- Professional experience working across agriculture and regional development in Western Australia.

Stephanie Attard

Queensland State Manager

- Joined the AEC in Feb 2021 as State Manager for Queensland ahead of the 2022 Federal Election.
- 35-plus years in New South Wales and Queensland public service, including 15 years in the Queensland Justice sector.

Cameron Stokes

South Australian State Manager

- Commenced with the AEC in 2006, working across multiple areas of the agency.
- Director of QLD State Office in 2019 and State Manager of SA in Feb 2021.
- Observed international elections in India and Timor Leste.

Hannah Brown

State Manager TAS

- Joined the AEC in her current role in July 2021.
- 10+ years in the Victorian Public Service.
- Completed her Articles and practised law before joining the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office in 2009.

Rebecca Main

State Manager NSW

- State Manager for New South Wales from June 2021.
- 20 year career in the public service.
- Bachelor Arts, Master of International Studies, Master of Public and International Law.

Geoffrey Bloom

Northern Territory Manager

- Commenced with the AEC late 2011.
- Three national elections as the NT Manager.
- ABS 2011 Census Fleet and Logistics Manager Northern Australia.
- Born and raised in Melbourne but proud Territorian.

Tim Robertson

ACT Manager

- Australian Electoral Officer for the ACT (appointed for the 2025 election only)
- 16 year career across the Australian Public Service
- BA (Hons), PG Cert. Mus. Stud.
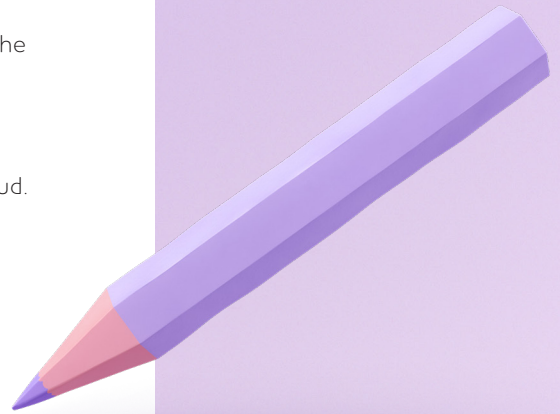
In-language spokespeople

- Bi-lingual officers across the AEC available to provide in-language interviews.
- Covering 18 languages including Macedonian, Hindi, Punjabi, Mandarin, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Indonesian, Bangla, Afrikaans, Cantonese, Greek, Tamin, Sinhalese, Amharic and Greek.

Indigenous Electoral Participation Program team members

- People from across the national program that are dedicated to providing electoral education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in remote areas of Australia.
- Often travelling in-community and part of remote voter services work.

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AEC
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