



# How to vote in local government

Local government council elections are held every four years. The elections enable every eligible person to vote on who they want in their elected council. Local government elections have different criteria than state elections. To be eligible to vote in a local election you should be 18 years or older and fall into at least one of these categories:

- live within that council area
- own property within the council area
- own a business within that council area
- be a temporary resident (people who are not Australian citizens) living within the council area for more than 30 days.

Once you have worked out your eligibility, you can then enrol to vote. This requires you to provide your current address so that the Electoral Commission know you are voting inside your own council area. Many people simply enrol through the Australian Electoral Commission which ensures they are enrolled for federal, state and local elections. However, for temporary residents, they will need to enrol for their local government election specifically.

Once you are enrolled, and when it is time to vote, you will receive a ballot pack in the post which contains everything you need to vote in your local council election. Inside the pack you will find:

- a guide to voting
- information about the candidates
- a coloured ballot paper, which you use to vote for a council member
- a white ballot paper, which you use to vote for the mayor of the council
- a ballot paper envelope for your ballot papers to go in once they are completed
- a reply-paid envelope to send your ballot papers back in the post.

Ballot papers have empty boxes next to the names of the people you can vote for. Write 1 in the box next to the name of the person you want the most. Pick your second favourite and write 2 in the box next to their name. Keep picking until you have the required number of boxes filled according to your voting guide. Alternatively, you can continue numbering until every box is filled. Each box you fill out must have a different number as you cannot rank candidates with the same number.

Fold your ballot papers in half and put them in the ballot paper envelope. Seal the envelope, fill in the declaration with your details and sign it. After this, seal it inside the reply-paid envelope. You do not need a stamp for this envelope, you can mail it right away at a mailbox or post office. You can also take your papers inside the ballot paper envelope to your local council office, where they will have a ballot box you can put the envelope in. If you speak a language other than English or have issues hearing or speaking, you can get in touch with the ECSA for help to vote.



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## References:

'Voting in council elections', Local Government Association of SA, Jan 2024,  
<https://www.councilelections.sa.gov.au/vote/voting-in-council-elections>

'How to vote in council elections', Electoral Commission South Australia, Jan 2024,  
<https://ecsa.easyread.com.au/how-to-vote-in-council-elections/>