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Electoral Glossary

A

Absent Vote

Is a declaration vote on polling day at Federal Elections when you are voting outside your division.

(see out-of-division votes)

Absolute Majority

More than 50% of the formal vote. (often referred to as 50% +1)

B

Ballot

A synonym for *Ballot Paper* or for *Poll*.

Ballot paper

The paper used for voting. At an election, the ballot paper lists candidates' names and parties.

To cast a vote, the voter uses numbers to show his/her preferences.

A referendum ballot paper shows the questions to be decided.

Bicameral

A type of Parliament that has 2 houses

(*bi* means 2, *cameral* means chamber).

By-Election

A way to elect another candidate to replace a member of Parliament who has resigned (see *Casual Vacancy*).

C

Campaigns

Includes the advertising, information and events that:

1. a candidate or political party uses to persuade people to vote for them

or

2. a lobby group uses to highlight particular issues.



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C

Candidate

A person who is nominated for election.

Casual Vacancy

A vacancy in the Parliament when a member resigns or dies.

Close of Roll

The time when no more new names can be added or changes can be made to the *Electoral Roll* for an *election*.

Compulsory Voting

Everyone who is allowed to vote, must vote at *elections*.

A fine can be given to a person who doesn't vote.

Constitution

The set of laws that define how the *government* will work, and what powers it has.

D

Declaration of Poll

The *Returning Officer* announces (or proclaims) the new *Members of Parliament*.

Democracy

A system of society that is not easily defined.

D

Disenfranchise

Depriving a person's right to vote.

Division

An area that a *member* or members in a *Parliament* represent.

Double Dissolution

Is a process where a Governor dissolves (or ends) the whole Parliament, meaning both Houses need to hold elections.

This is not possible in Tasmania, as Tasmanian laws don't allow the *Upper House* to be dissolved.

E

Early Voting

Voting services provided before polling day for voters who will be away on polling day or not able to get to a polling place.

Types of early voting include:

- Postal vote
- Pre-poll vote
- Mobile polling
- Express vote (Tasmania only)

Election

The process of electing the Members of Parliament.

The steps:

1. Issuing the *Writ*
2. Close of the *Electoral Roll*
3. *Nomination*
4. *Voting*
5. Counting *votes*
6. Return of the *Writ*

Election Day

Usually meaning the day that everyone is expected to vote (also see *polling day* and *early voting*).

Elector

A person entitled (allowed) to vote at an election

Electorate

The group of people living within a *Division*.

Enfranchise

Giving a person the right to vote.

Enrolment

Having your name added to the list of electors (*Electoral Roll*)

Express Voting

A type of early voting using electronic means for electors who are overseas on polling day.

F

Federal Government

The government of Australia.

Federation

On 1 January 1901, all of the Australian states became one country – Australia.

First Past the Post Voting

The candidate with the most votes wins - no preferences and no need to get more than half of the votes to be successful. This is not used in Tasmania.

Franchise

The right to *vote*.

Formal Vote

Where the voter's preferences comply with the ballot paper requirements to be counted as a vote.

G

General Elections

Where all members of one or more Houses of Parliament go to election at the same time (the *House of Assembly* election in Tasmania.)

Gerrymander

An unfair electoral boundary that tries to maximise the votes for a particular person or party.

Government

The group of elected Members of Parliament that have the majority of seats in Parliament.

The Government creates and approves laws.

Governor

The Queen's representative.

H

Hare-Clark

A system of counting *votes* when each division has more than one elected *representative*. (e.g. Tasmania's House of Assembly)

House of Assembly

The *Lower House* of Tasmania's Parliament. Made up of 5 *divisions*. Each division is represented by 5 *Members of Parliament*.

How to Vote Card

An example ballot paper, created by a political party. It shows how that party would like voters to vote.

I

Informal Ballot Paper

Where the voter's preferences do not comply with the ballot paper requirements.

These ballot papers cannot be counted as votes.

Issue of Writ

A *Writ* is signed by the Governor of Tasmania, directing the *Returning Officer* to run an election.

L

Legislative Council

The Upper House of Tasmania's Parliament.

Made up of 15 *divisions*.

Each division is represented by 1 *Member of Parliament*.

Lower House

Tasmanian House of Assembly.

In a Westminster system, the government is decided in the lower house. The Premier must be elected to the lower house. Most laws begin in the lower house.

Law

A piece of legislation that has passed both houses of Parliament and received royal assent by the governor.

M

Majority

More than 50% of the formal vote. **or**

More than half of the seats in a House of Parliament.

Majority System

Where a *candidate* needs a *majority* to be elected.

Voters mark *preferences* on the *ballot paper* for some or all *candidates*.).

Used in Tasmanian Legislative Council elections and federal House of Representatives elections.

Mandate

The promise (and right) of an elected government to follow its policies.

Members of Parliament

All the elected representatives.

Mobile Polling

A type of *early voting* where voting services are taken to people who can't make it to a *polling place* (e.g. hospitals and nursing homes).

N

Nomination

The process to nominate *candidates* to contest an *election*. This nomination is received and accepted by the *Returning Officer*.

In Tasmania, each parliamentary nomination includes a \$400 fee which is refunded if they receive a minimum number of votes.

O

Opposition

The party or group of parties that didn't 'win' more than half of the seats in Parliament.

Out-of-division vote

A vote at Tasmanian elections where voters can easily vote outside their division without a declaration.

P

Parliament

The elected representatives of Parliament and the Queen's representative (the Governor).

Parliament makes laws. Tasmania has 2 Houses of Parliament – Upper and Lower (Legislative Council and House of Assembly). This is called a bicameral Parliament.

Poll

The process of people voting at an *election*. When a candidate is elected unopposed, a poll is not needed.

Polling Day

The day (Saturday) when polling places are open for voting [Saturday, from 8am to 6pm].

Polling Place

The place where voting is carried out. At all Australian elections, polling day polling places are open from 8am to 6pm.

Postal Vote

A type of early voting where voters can vote by mail if they will be away or not able to get to a polling place.

Premier

The leader of State Government.
The leader of a Territory government is the Chief Minister.

Pre-Poll vote

A type of *early voting* where people can vote in special polling places before polling day.

Prime Minister

The leader of federal government.

Proportional Representation

A system of voting designed to elect representatives who receive a specified proportion (or quota) of the formal votes.

Hare-Clark is a type of proportional representation used at Lower House elections.

Provisional Enrolment

When you turn 16, you can apply to have your name on the electoral roll. You will then be ready to vote at the next election on or after your 18th birthday.



Quota

The proportion or percentage of votes a candidate needs to receive to be elected under a proportional representation system. The Quota for Tasmania's House of Assembly elections is 50% + 1 vote.

(see also: *Proportional Representation and Redistribution*)

R

Recount

Process of filling a casual vacancy in the Tasmanian House of Assembly.

Or

A further count of the votes to check if the election result is correct.

Referendum

People vote 'yes' or 'no' on an issue or policy, e.g. daylight savings.

Return of Writ

When an *election* is completed the *writ* is returned to the Governor with the names of the successful candidates who will now be *Members of Parliament*.

Robson Rotation

The system of rotating the names of the candidates on the Ballot Papers.

This system was introduced by Neil Robson MHA to Tasmanian Parliament in 1979.

S

Scrutineer

A person appointed by a candidate to watch over the counting of the ballot papers. The scrutineer can seek clarification of electoral processes and is a central part of election transparency.

Scrutiny

The processes of counting votes, including processing postal votes, checking ballot paper formality and distributing voter preferences.

Senate

The Upper House of Federal Parliament.

Suffrage

The right to vote.

States and Territories

The 6 states were the 6 colonies that agreed to become the nation of Australia. Under the Australian constitution there are specific rights given to each state. The 2 territories were not colonies and do not have some of the rights given to states.

T

Tally Room

The place where voting figures are collected and the (provisional) results announced.

Term

The length of time a person is elected to the Parliament. Different Houses of Parliament have different terms.

Tasmanian Electoral Commission

The Commission is responsible (under law) for running elections for Tasmania's Parliament. The Commission is independent of the government. The Electoral Commission also runs elections for statutory bodies and all Tasmania's local government elections.

U

Upper House

The Tasmanian Legislative Council. Under the Westminster system, it is mainly a 'house of review' for legislation passed by the Lower House.

V

Vote

Recording the preference decision a voter has made. Votes are combined to determine who has been elected.

The process of combining votes depends on the voting system used.

W

Westminster System

The system of *bicameral* Parliamentary Government developed in Britain and used in Australia.

Writ

A legal document signed by the Governor that authorises an election or referendum.

It has important electoral details like the date of the election and the date the result must be known.