

Approved Procedure

Required by the *Electoral Act 2004*, section 132

Approved by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission on 24 January 2023

Under section 132 of the *Electoral Act 2004*, the Tasmanian Electoral Commission approves the procedures in the attached document entitled “Procedures for telephone voting and for transmitting votes cast under these procedures” and dated 01/23 to enable electors who are:

- outside Tasmania but within Australia, or
- outside Australia,

to vote by telephone.

Approved Procedure

Procedures for telephone voting and for transmitting votes cast under these procedures

Who can use this service

The service is available to electors who have their name and address on an election roll for Parliamentary elections and are either:

- interstate, or
- overseas.

The telephone voting service

The telephone voting service will be available during the period as determined by the Electoral Commissioner under section 94(2) of the *Electoral Act 2004* ("the Act").

To ensure the integrity and secrecy of the vote, the telephone voting service will consist of three separate stages, undertaken by different staff teams:

- A registration process,
- A ballot paper transcription process, and
- marking electors on the roll.

The registration process

To register for the telephone voting service the elector is to call the designated phone number and provide the following information:

- their full name,
- their enrolled address,
- confirmation that they had not already voted at these elections, and
- confirmation that they are either overseas or interstate.

If the elector provides the required information and they are identified as an elector for one of the election rolls, they will be issued a unique code for the separate ballot paper transcription process. The elector will be asked to record this code and repeat it back to the staff member to confirm it has been recorded correctly.

Once the registration process has been completed, the elector will be given the option to be directly forwarded to the ballot paper transcription process or be given the direct phone number for that process if they wish to complete their ballot paper at a later time. The staff member will also clearly instruct the elector to not identify themselves to the transcription team.

Electors cannot be issued a second unique code.

The registration process will have access to a Registration System which allows staff to verify elector details on the roll by name and address; flag the elector as being registered for the service and provide the elector's unique code for the elector to give to the staff for the ballot paper transcription process.

Once an elector is flagged on the Registration System as receiving a unique code, the System will send that code to the Code Validation System which enables the transcription process to occur.

The ballot paper transcription process

The ballot paper transcription process involves two staff for each elector; one to speak with the elector and record the elector's ballot paper preferences and the second to verify the correct recording of the preferences.

When an elector connects to the transcription process, the TEC staff will:

- provide their given name to the elector,
- ask the elector to not provide any details that could identify the elector,
- provide a summary of the ballot paper transcription process to be undertaken, and
- ask the elector to provide the unique code issued during the registration process.

The first staff member will enter the unique code into the Code Validation System, which will confirm the electors right to a ballot paper and confirm which division ballot paper is to be used.

The first staff member will then:

- inform the elector which ballot paper is to be completed,
- read the voting instructions and all candidate names (and any associated registered party name or "independent" status) in the order that they appear on the ballot paper,
- invite the elector to choose which candidate they would like to receive their first preference, and
- invite the elector to choose which candidate(s) they would like to receive their next preference(s) until all candidates have a preference or the elector chooses to stop allocating preferences.

If there are insufficient preferences to cast a formal vote, the elector will be informed of this and invited to provide additional preferences. The elector can choose to cast an informal ballot paper.

Once all elector preferences have been allocated, the second staff member will read back the elector's preferences and ask the elector to confirm that it matches their wishes.

If the elector wishes to change their preferences, the original ballot paper can be processed as a spoiled ballot paper and the first staff member will begin the transcription process again.

If the elector is satisfied with the preferences allocated, the first staff member is to:

- inform the elector that they have completed the telephone voting process and that the ballot paper will be placed in a ballot box,
- place the ballot paper in the allocated ballot box,
- mark the unique code as having a completed ballot paper on the Code Validation System, and
- Thank the elector for using the service and end the call.

Once a unique code in the Code Validation System is marked as having a completed ballot paper cast, the Code Validation System will identify the elector as already voted and not permit a new or second ballot paper to be issued.

Marking electors on the roll

When practicable following the close of the poll, TEC IT staff will match the unique codes in the Code Validation System that have a completed ballot paper cast acknowledgement, against the election roll in the Registration System.

Security of the telephone voting systems

The Registration System and the Code Validation System are two independent systems. The data for these systems is stored on-premises in back-end databases only accessible to specified user groups. This data is accessed by telephone voting staff through front-end systems for which access is also restricted to specified user groups. Direct access to the backend databases is encrypted with a complex password only known to senior IT staff, and access to the database tables via the front-end systems is restricted to permitted actions via the user interface only.