

## Electronic voting

### Electronic voting in the ACT

Electronic voting was used for the first time at the ACT Legislative Assembly election in October 2001. This was the first electronic voting system to be used for a parliamentary election in Australia. There were 16,559 electronic votes cast at the 2001 election. Electronic voting has been used at each ACT election since, taking 192,892 votes at the October 2020 election. Electronic voting is available at all early voting centres during the early voting period for 3 weeks before the election. It is also available at these same venues on election day.

The ACT's electronic voting and counting system (eVACS®) uses all-in-one touchscreen PCs as voting terminals. These terminals are linked to a server in each early voting centre using a secure local area network. No votes are taken or transmitted over a public network such as the internet.



### How is electronic voting different from ballot paper voting?

**HOW TO USE ELECTRONIC VOTING**  
If you need help, just ask a polling official

**STEP 1**  
Select your preferred language.  
Touch the screen to make your selections.  
Scan your e-voting card by placing it on top of the 'E-VOTING CARD HERE' box, to the left of the screen.  
The e-voting card reader will beep when the code has scanned. Remove it while you vote.

**STEP 2**  
Choose the candidates you wish to vote for. Use the touchscreen to make your selections in the order of your choice.  
If you need help, raise your hand and:  
TOUCH   
If you make a mistake:  
TOUCH   
If you need to start again:  
TOUCH   
When you have finished entering your selections:  
TOUCH

**STEP 3**  
Review your choices. The candidates you have selected will appear in order on the screen.  
If you are satisfied with your selections, **scan your e-voting card** to cast your vote.  
If you want to make changes:  
TOUCH   
and you will return to step 2.

**STEP 4**  
You have now finished voting. Please put your e-voting card in the ballot box on your way out.

After your name is marked off the electoral roll you are given an e-voting card with a QR code printed on it. You then go to a private voting screen equipped with a touchscreen and a QR code reader. Before you start voting, you must select the language you wish to see the instructions in. There is a choice of twelve languages including English.

Scanning the e-voting card will then display the ballot paper for your electorate. This registers that a vote process is about to be commenced.

You then select the candidates you wish to vote for by touching the screen. The first candidate you select will be number 1, the second number 2 and so on. You can select as many candidates as you like. You can change a selection if you make a mistake or change your mind using 'Undo last choice' or 'Clear all choices'. Polling officials can help you if you ask for assistance. Use 'Hide my vote' to keep your vote secret before raising your hand and asking for help.

When you have finished choosing candidates, you select 'Next' to see your completed vote. You can still make changes at this point.

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If you do not choose any candidates, your vote will be counted as informal. A screen will appear warning that you are about to cast a blank informal vote.

When you have finished making vote selections, scan your e-voting card again to finalise your vote. If you don't scan your card again, your vote will not be recorded in the system. After scanning the e-voting card a second time, your vote will not be able to be changed. Each e-voting card can only be used to cast one vote.

On your way out of the polling place, place your e-voting card in the ballot box.

When voting closes at 6pm on election day, data is removed from the polling place computer server and loaded into the electronic counting system.

## Electronic counting of the votes

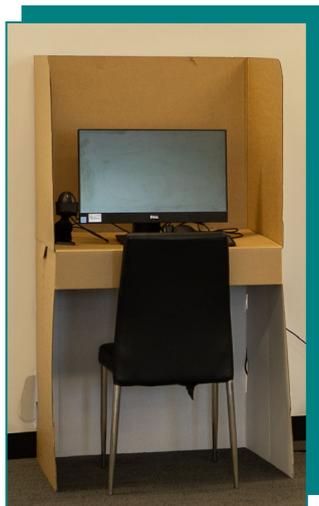
Electronic counting, which combines the counting of electronic votes and paper ballots, was also used in the ACT for the first time at the 2001 election. Initially, the preferences on each ballot paper were data entered by two different operators.

From the 2008 election onwards, preferences shown on paper ballots are electronically scanned. This data is combined with the results from electronic voting, and the computer program distributes the voter's preferences under the ACT's Hare-Clark electoral system.

## Can I e-vote in secret if I have vision impairment or use a wheelchair?

Full or assisted wheelchair access is provided at all early voting centres and an accessible version of electronic voting is available. These same locations are also open on election day.

Each early voting centre has an electronic voting terminal that can be used by a person seated in the supplied chair or in a wheelchair. Each terminal has a 23-inch monitor facing away from the main room for privacy. The terminal also has a set of headphones to deliver recorded audio instructions that guide a voter through the ballot paper. This allows a voter with vision impairment to vote independently.



If you use the headphones, when you scan your e-voting card the system invites you to press any key on the voting keypad to hear a description of what that key does. Each function key is also labelled with a tactile label indicating its purpose. When you have finished learning the functions of all the keys, scanning the e-voting card will bring up the ballot paper screen.

When the ballot paper appears on screen for the first time, the audio tells you the name of the electorate and the instructions printed on the screen. As you move around the ballot paper using the direction keys, the audio tells you the group letter, registered party name and candidate name highlighted by the cursor. As you indicate your choices by pressing the **SELECT** key, the audio confirms the preference number you have given to each candidate.

When you finish selecting candidates, press the **FINISH** key. The system will read out your preferences in the order you chose. You can then go back and make changes if you want to.

You must confirm your final vote by scanning the e-voting card for a second time.