



## Factsheet 9: Voting with no fixed address

1. You need to be enrolled on the electoral roll to vote.
2. If you are homeless, it is not compulsory but you can enrol to vote and vote.
3. If you are homeless and would like to vote, fill in the "No fixed address" form.
4. If you believe that having your address on the electoral roll would put you or your family's safety at risk, you can apply to be a silent elector.

It is generally compulsory for all eligible Australian citizens to enrol and vote in federal elections, by-elections and referendums,<sup>1</sup> and for all eligible ACT residents to enrol and vote in ACT elections.<sup>2</sup>

People who are enrolled to vote and do not vote may be fined (unless they have a valid and sufficient reason for failing to vote or they are homeless).<sup>3</sup>

Enrolling to vote and voting is not compulsory for people who do not have a permanent home.<sup>4</sup> If you have been living in a permanent home for a month or more, you must enrol to vote as normal.

### Who is eligible to vote?

You are eligible to vote in federal elections if you are:

- at least 18 years, and
- an Australian citizen or a British subject who was enrolled to vote immediately before 26 January 1984.<sup>5</sup>

There are minor exceptions to this, including if you have been sentenced to 3 or more years imprisonment.<sup>6</sup>

You can vote in ACT elections if you can vote in federal elections and live in the ACT.<sup>7</sup>

You can also still vote in ACT elections (even if you cannot vote in federal elections) because you were sentenced to 3 or more years imprisonment, and your address is in the ACT.<sup>8</sup>

### How to enrol without a fixed address

If you do not have a permanent home and would like to vote, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has a form called "Enrolment for persons with no fixed address", which you can fill in and give to the AEC. If you do this, you may be enrolled to vote.

You can enrol for the address where:

- you were last eligible to enrol;
- your close family are enrolled if you have not previously been eligible to enrol; or
- you were born if neither of the above apply, or
- you have the closest connection if none of the above applies.<sup>9</sup>

### When to enrol

If you want to be enrolled to vote in ACT elections, you must apply to be enrolled by 8pm on the 29<sup>th</sup> day before the election.<sup>10</sup>

If you want to be enrolled to vote in federal elections, then you have to apply for enrolment within 7 days after the election day is formally announced.<sup>11</sup>

Once you have a permanent home and have lived there for one month, you should enrol to vote within 21 days for federal elections.<sup>12</sup> For ACT elections, if you are enrolled in an electorate, and move electorates within the ACT, you must make a claim for a transfer of enrolment within 52 days of changing address.<sup>13</sup> If you do not enrol to vote or

1 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth), ss 101, 245(1) (available here: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C1918A00027>)

2 Electoral Act 1992 (ACT), ss 73, 129 (available here: <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1992-71/>).

3 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth), s 245. Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) ss 73, 129 and 161–165, available at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1992-71/>.

4 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) ss 96, 101, 245(17) (c); and Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) s 129(2)(d).

5 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) s 93(1).

6 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) s 93(8AA).

7 Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) s 72(1).

8 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) s 93(8AA) and Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) s 72(2).

9 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth), s 96(2A).

10 Electoral Act 1992 (ACT), s 80(1), (2) and (5).

11 Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth), s 155.

12 Commonwealth Electoral Act (Cth), s 101(5).

13 Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) s 73(2), (3).



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change addresses within these time frames, and you don't have a reasonable excuse, you may be fined.<sup>14</sup>

If you would like to keep your address private for safety reasons, you can enrol or register as a silent elector by completing a "silent elector" form.<sup>15</sup>

You will also need to complete the statutory declaration at the back of the form and explain what you consider the risk to your family to be and why your personal safety or that of your family is at risk.

## Where can I vote?

For the ACT elections you don't need to vote at any particular polling place. You can cast an ordinary vote at any polling place in the ACT, even if you are outside your electorate.

For the federal elections, if you are interstate, you can vote at interstate voting centres on election day or by post. If you are in the ACT, you can vote at any polling place.

If you are overseas, you can vote in person at an overseas voting centre, or by post.

You may also apply for postal votes through the AEC.

## The process

### For Commonwealth and Territory elections

Submit your Enrolment for persons with no fixed address form to:

#### Post:

Australian Electoral Commission  
Reply Paid 9867  
Canberra

No stamp is needed if you are posting your form in Australia

#### In person:

Australian Electoral Commission  
50 Marcus Clarke Street  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Online:** You can enrol to vote at: <http://www.aec.gov.au/enrol/>

<sup>14</sup> Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) s 73(6); Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth), s 101(6).

<sup>15</sup> Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) s 104 and Electoral Act 1992 (ACT) s 77.