

How to Vote Cards and Preferences

Understanding how-to-votes and what to do about preferences

A 'how to vote' card is defined as any card, handbill, pamphlet or notice that:

- Includes a representation or partial representation or purported representation or purported partial representation of a ballot-paper for use in an election; or
- Lists the names of any or all of the candidates for an election with a number indicating an order of voting preference against the names of any or all of those candidates.

A 'how to vote' card must include the name and address of the person

The returning officer, under the procedures set out in Local Government Act and Electoral Regulations must register 'how to vote' cards for attendance elections.

A candidate can apply to the returning officer for registration of a 'how to vote' card from the day after the close of nominations until 12 noon on the sixth working day before election day.

The returning officer must register or refuse to register a 'how to vote' card before noon on the next working day after receiving it. A candidate may seek to have a returning officer's decision reviewed by VCAT.

The importance of the how to vote card is not just that it asks voters to put the number 1 next to your name on the ballot paper, it also provides guidance to voters of where you would like their preferences for the remaining candidates to go. As the two systems in use are preferential voting for single councillor wards (the most preferred candidate wins) and proportional voting for multi member wards (a quota of the votes is required) the preferences may be important to the outcomes. So the two issues are how to talk with other candidates to encourage them to give you their preferences and who will you give high preferences to on your how to vote card.