

Australian Electoral History

The following lists Australia's major electoral developments

1843: First parliamentary elections in Australia for the New South Wales Legislative Council. Only men with a freehold value at £200 or house worth £20 could vote

1850: Victoria becomes a separate colony.

1855: Responsible government granted to Victoria and New South Wales.

1856: Responsible government granted to South Australia and Tasmania.
The secret ballot introduced in Victoria and South Australia became the first country in the world to use the secret ballot known as the "Australian Ballot.
The right to vote granted in South Australia to all male British subjects over the age of 21.

1857: The right to vote granted in Victoria to all male British subjects over the age of 21.

1858: The Australian ballot introduced in New South Wales and Tasmania
The right to vote granted in Victoria to all male British subjects over the age of 21.

1859: Queensland becomes a separate colony and introduces the Australian ballot.

1867: First elections held in Western Australia.

1872: The right to vote granted in Victoria to all male British subjects over the age of 21.

1890: Responsible government granted to Victoria

1893: The Australian ballot introduced in Western Australia
The right to vote granted in Western Australia to all male British subjects over the age of 21.

1894: Women granted the right to vote in South Australia

1899: Women granted the right to vote in Western Australia

1900: The right to vote granted in Tasmania to all male British subjects over the age of 21.

1901: Federation - First federal elections held under State Legislation.
Federal Parliament meets for the first time in Melbourne 9th May 1901.

1902: All British subjects over 21 granted the vote in Federal Elections
Commonwealth Officials run the Elections
Women granted the right to vote in New South Wales

1903: First Federal Election 43% voter turnout
Women granted the right to vote in Tasmania

1905: Electoral subdivisions created

- 1905: Women granted the right to vote in Queensland
- 1908: Permanent Electoral Rolls established
Women granted the right to vote in Victoria
- 1911: Compulsory Enrolment introduced
- 1918: Preferential voting replaces first past the post system for the House of Representatives elections
- 1919: Preferential voting replaces first past the post system for the Senate elections
- 1922: Northern Territory granted a Member of the House of Representatives with limited voting rights
- 1924: Compulsory Voting introduced
- 1925: First used in this Federal election with a 91.3% voter turnout
- 1927: Parliament meets for the first time in Canberra on 9th May
- 1948: Senators increased to 10 for each state making the national total 60
Members of the House of Representatives to 121
Australian Capital Territories granted a Member of the House of Representatives with limited voting rights
Aboriginals who were entitled to vote in State elections or who had served in the defence forces granted the right to enroll and vote in federal elections
- 1962: Voluntary enrolment and voting at federal elections extended to all Aboriginals
- 1966: Australian Capital Territories granted full voting rights
- 1968: Northern Territory granted full voting rights
- 1973: Australian Capital Territories given Senate representation with two senators
Northern Territory given Senate representation with two senators
- 1984: Senators increased to 76 (12 for each state 2 each Territory)
Members of the House of Representatives to 148
Aboriginal enrollment and voting made compulsory
An independent Australian Electoral Commission established to administer the federal electoral system
- 1991: All Commonwealth Electoral Rolls for each individual state compiled alphabetically (not compiled via electoral subdivision)
Published on microfiche and could be publicly searched at all AEC offices
- 2008: All Commonwealth Electoral Rolls for each state could only be searched via an electronic database at an AEC office and the electoral rolls ceased to be published
- 2014: All Commonwealth Electoral Rolls for each state could only be searched by an individual to identify their own listing on the electoral roll