

2023

Local Government Election



FORMALITY OF BALLOT PAPERS GUIDE



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission

1. FORMALITY OF BALLOT PAPERS

A ballot paper can be admitted to the count if, in the Returning Officer's opinion, it clearly indicates an elector's wishes.

The Returning Officer may review a decision in the course of a re-count of votes and, in determining the formality of any ballot paper, is to take into account any instructions given by the Electoral Commissioner. The Returning Officer's decision is final.

Please refer to the Returning Officer if clarification on any aspect of the formality of ballot papers is required.

2. GIVING EFFECT TO THE ELECTOR'S WISHES

The key words in the legislation refer to accepting a ballot paper that '*clearly indicates the elector's wishes*'.

3. MARKING THE BALLOT PAPER

In an election where one office is to be filled and only two candidates are named on the ballot paper, an elector needs to mark the ballot paper by writing the numeral '1' in the square beside the name of the candidate whom the elector wishes to be elected.

If only one office is to be filled at the election and three or more candidates are named on the ballot paper, or two or more offices are to be filled at the election, an elector is to mark the ballot paper by writing numeral '1' in the square opposite the name of the candidate for whom the elector votes as the elector's first preference. Electors may indicate further preferences for **some** or **all** of the remaining candidates by writing the numeral '2' in the square opposite the name of the candidate for whom the elector votes as the elector's second preference, and so on, until the elector has finished allocating their preferences. The elector is not required to number all the squares.

The regulation states that the elector is to use the number 1 to indicate their first choice of candidate. Some variations are acceptable.

4. INITIALS AND OTHER MARKINGS

In State parliamentary elections, ballot papers bearing the signature or initials of the elector are informal because the relevant laws expressly state this. However, while electors in local government elections are entitled to secrecy when casting a vote under the Act and Regulations, a ballot paper is not rendered informal simply because the elector reveals his or her identity by his or her own choice. This typically may occur where an elector initials a correction.

5. RETURNING OFFICER'S DECISION IS FINAL

The final decision on whether a ballot paper is to be admitted rests with the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer will refer to the Electoral Commissioner's guidelines as well as the Act and Regulations, but the resolution of validity will always be circumstance specific.

The physical appearance of markings on the ballot paper may well influence the Returning Officer's decision on the formality of the ballot paper.

6. EXAMPLES OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL BALLOT PAPERS

Examples of three categories of formality are given in the following pages to be used as guidelines:

- Single vacancy elections with two candidates
- Single vacancy elections with more than two candidates
- Multiple vacancy elections.

SINGLE VACANCY – TWO CANDIDATES

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A

CANDIDATE, B

FORMAL

The mark is made in line with voting instructions.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A

CANDIDATE, B

FORMAL

The elector's first preference is clearly indicated.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A

CANDIDATE, B

INFORMAL

The elector has not indicated a first preference.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A

CANDIDATE, B

INFORMAL

The arrows do not indicate a preference for one candidate over another.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A X

CANDIDATE, B ✓

INFORMAL

It is not clear which mark indicates the preference.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A .

CANDIDATE, B

INFORMAL

The dot is not a clear indication of the elector's choice.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A ✓

CANDIDATE, B

FORMAL

The tick symbol can be taken as an indication of choice – in the absence of other ballot paper markings.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the name of the candidate who you want to vote for.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A

CANDIDATE, B X

FORMAL

The cross symbol can be taken as an indication of choice – in the absence of other ballot paper markings.

SINGLE VACANCY – MORE THAN TWO CANDIDATES

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="text" value="1"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input type="text" value="3"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="text" value="6"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="text" value="5"/>
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="text" value="4"/>

FORMAL

The elector's full preferences are clearly marked.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="text" value="1"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input type="text" value="4"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="text" value="5"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="text" value="3"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="text"/>

FORMAL

The elector has allocated their preferences for 5 candidates.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="checkbox"/> x
CANDIDATE, B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

INFORMAL

It is not clear which of the tick or cross indicates a positive preference.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="checkbox"/> [initials]
CANDIDATE, E	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="checkbox"/>

INFORMAL

*The elector's choice is unclear.
Note - Initials do not invalidate a ballot paper.*

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="text" value="1"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="text" value="4"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="text" value="5"/>
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="text" value="2"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="text" value="6"/>

FORMAL

The elector has indicated a first preference. As there are two second preferences marked, the ballot paper will become exhausted after the first preference.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="text" value="1"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input type="text"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="text"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="text"/>
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="text"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="text"/>

FORMAL

A first preference is clear. As there is no second preference marked, the ballot paper will become exhausted after the first preference.

MULTIPLE VACANCY

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="checkbox"/>
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="checkbox"/>

FORMAL

The tick symbol can be taken as an indication of the first preference. The ballot paper will become exhausted after the second preference.

Ballot Paper

**ELECTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR
CITY OF MARYVILLE
WEST WARD**

Election Date: Saturday 21 October 2023

How to vote

Write the number 1 in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. If you want to, you may show more choices by writing consecutive numbers in the squares next to the names of other candidates in the order of your choice, starting with the number 2 up to 6.

You do not need to write a number in all the squares.

CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE, A	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>
CANDIDATE, B	<input type="checkbox" value="3"/>
CANDIDATE, C	<input type="checkbox" value="5"/>
CANDIDATE, D	<input type="checkbox" value="7"/>
CANDIDATE, E	<input type="checkbox" value="9"/>
CANDIDATE, F	<input type="checkbox" value="11"/>

FORMAL

The elector has indicated a first preference. As there is no second preference marked, the ballot paper will become exhausted after the first preference.

Level 2, 111 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

GPO Box F316
Perth WA 6841

PHONE (08) 9214 0400 or 13 63 06
EMAIL waec@waec.wa.gov.au
WEBSITE www.elections.wa.gov.au
FAX (08) 9226 0577

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

13 14 50 and then ask for (08) 9214 0400

National Relay Service

Speak and Listen number 1300 555 727

SMS Relay number 0423 677 767



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission