



## Counting Instructions

### First past the post

#### Step 1: Set up a count area

- Find a table with plenty of clear space for laying out the ballot papers.
- If you have been running multiple elections, sort the ballot papers into piles for each election, so you can conduct each count separately. Make sure you don't mix the ballot papers.
- Make some labels with the candidates' names on them and put them on the table. This will help you keep track of the piles of ballot papers as you count.
- On the count tally sheet (first past the post) fill in the election details and the candidates' names for that election and print a copy. The tally sheet can be downloaded from the EEC website.

#### Step 2: Formality of votes

- Unfold and check each vote to see whether the ballot paper is 'formal'.
  - A vote is formal when:
    - the voter has filled in the ballot paper correctly; and/or
    - the intention of the voter is clear; and
    - there is no identifying mark on the ballot paper that means the vote is not secret.
- Sort the papers into two piles, formal and informal votes.
- Count up the number of formal and informal votes and record on the tally sheet. Add the two numbers together to get 'total votes' and record this on the tally sheet too.
- Collect the informal votes and put them to one side, as they will no longer be included in the count.

### Step 3: Counting the votes

- Sort the formal votes according to the candidate who has been chosen by each voter.
- Place each vote into a pile under the candidate's name (using the labels you made in step 1).
- After all the formal votes have been allocated, count up the number of votes in each pile, and record the number on the tally sheet.
- The candidate with the most votes (highest number) is elected.

If the results are tied, there are many options for deciding the result. You can:

- run the election again
- select a winner through a random draw (names in a hat)
- ask a suitable person to have a casting vote
- let the winners share the position.

It is very important to decide how you will resolve a tie BEFORE you begin counting.