



State government

What is a referendum?

When a change is proposed to the State or Commonwealth Constitution, a referendum is held to gauge the opinion of electors about the proposed change.

You have to be enrolled in order to vote in a referendum.

A referendum usually asks a question or questions to which all eligible electors must vote either 'yes' or 'no'.

For electors, referendums are very similar to elections. On polling day, electors go to a polling place and cast their vote on a ballot paper. Electors can also vote early in person or by post, if they can't go to a polling place on polling day.

Referendums in Western Australia

There have been 11 referendums held in Western Australia since 1900. The most recent referendum was held in 2009.

1900	31 July	Popular Referendum on Australian Federation	The majority supported Western Australia in joining the Australian Commonwealth
1911	26 April	Local Option Vote	The majority s publican's licenses should be held and managed by the state, but increasing the existing number of licenses was not supported.
1921	30 April	Local Option Referendum	The majority did not support prohibition.
1925	4 April	First Prohibition Referendum	The majority did not support the introduction of prohibition.
1933	8 April	Secession Referendum	The majority supported secession, but the British Parliament ruled it invalid as the petition was received from the State and not the Commonwealth.

1950	9 December	Second Prohibition Referendum	The majority did not support the introduction of prohibition.
1975	8 March	First Daylight Saving Referendum	The majority did not support the introduction of daylight saving.
1984	7 April	Second Daylight Saving Referendum	The majority did not support the introduction of daylight saving.
1992	4 April	Third Daylight Saving Referendum	The majority did not support the introduction of daylight saving.
2005	26 February	Retail Trading Hours Referendum	The majority did not support extending trading hours in Perth.
2009	16 May	Fourth Daylight Saving Referendum	The majority did not support the introduction of daylight saving.

History shows that in Australia, most referendums are not successful because the required majority for the proposed change to be implemented has not been achieved.