



2024 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
**First Nations  
Voice Election**

**Electoral  
Commission**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



# Candidate handbook

[savoicerelection.sa.gov.au](http://savoicerelection.sa.gov.au)

# Contents

Introduction .....	2
Definitions.....	3
Timetable .....	4
About the SA First Nations Voice Election .....	6
Nominating .....	8
Campaigning.....	11
Voting.....	13
Counting.....	14
Complaints .....	18

## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in putting your hand up to run as a candidate in South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament Election.

This handbook provides the information you need as a candidate in the South Australian First Nations Voice to Parliament Election.

Although this handbook outlines key legislative requirements, for further information you should consult the South Australian legislation:

- the *First Nations Voice Act 2023* and the *Regulations* under that Act
- the *Electoral Act 1985* and the *Regulations* under that Act

These Acts and Regulations can be accessed from the South Australian Government Legislation website at

[www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)

While the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) may provide information, it cannot offer legal advice regarding the interpretation of the Acts and Regulations or the conduct of candidate election campaigns. You may consider seeking your own independent legal advice on any complex election matters.

The Electoral Commissioner is appointed as Returning Officer (RO) under the *First Nations Voice Act 2023* and is responsible for the management of the election of members for the Local First Nations Voice. The Electoral Commissioner appoints electoral officers to perform certain delegated electoral responsibilities. These electoral officers can provide information about election process and procedures and respond to any concerns or questions you may have about the content of this handbook.

**For more information visit:** [www.savoicerelection.sa.gov.au](http://www.savoicerelection.sa.gov.au) or [www.ecsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au)

### Contact details

<b>Address</b>	Electoral Commission South Australia Level 6, 60 Light Square Adelaide South Australia 5000
<b>Phone</b>	1300 655 232 (within South Australia) (08) 7424 7400 (from interstate) +61 8 7424 7400 (from overseas)
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:ecsacomment@sa.gov.au">ecsacomment@sa.gov.au</a>

## Definitions

<b>Candidate</b>	A person who has put their hand up to become a member of the Local First Nations Voice. To become a candidate, a person must submit an accepted nomination to ECSA.
<b>Contested Election</b>	This is when people must vote for who they would like to become an elected member. Contested elections occur when there are more candidates than positions available.
<b>Declaration</b>	A formal statement.
<b>Electoral Roll</b>	The list of all people who are eligible to vote in South Australian state elections.
<b>Eligibility</b>	Criteria that determines who can and cannot do something.
<b>Local Voice</b>	An elected body of members that represent their local community (region).
<b>Scrutineer</b>	A person chosen by a candidate to be their representative and watch electoral processes to make sure they are fair.
<b>State Voice</b>	A group consisting of two chosen members from each Local First Nations Voice.
<b>Vote</b>	People having their say about who they would like to be elected. Votes are cast on a ballot paper.

## Timetable

<b>Nominations open</b>	Monday, 22 January 2024
<b>Nominations close</b>	5pm Monday, 12 February 2024
<b>Roll close</b>	5pm Monday, 12 February 2024
<b>Declaration of nominations</b>	Monday, 26 February 2024
<b>Early voting period</b>	Monday, 4 March 2024 to Friday, 15 March 2024
<b>Polling day</b>	Saturday, 16 March 2024
<b>Scrutiny and count</b>	From Monday, 25 March 2024
<b>Provisional declaration</b>	On completion of scrutiny and count
<b>Declaration of elections</b>	Contested Elections – 48 hours after the provisional declaration Uncontested Elections – Monday, 26 February 2024

### Nominations open

The date from which nominations may be lodged with ECSA by people intending to run as a candidate.

### Nominations close

The date by which nominations must be lodged with ECSA. No changes or new nominations can be made after this date.

### Roll close

This is the date when all applications (including updated information) on the electoral roll is considered to be final for the purpose of this election.

### Declaration of nominations

This is the date when ECSA will formally announce the candidates who have been accepted for this election. This also includes an announcement of any candidates who are declared elected because not enough nominations were received. ECSA will also conduct a draw for position on the ballot paper for elections where more than the required number of nominations have been received.

### **Early voting period**

This is the period in which voters can visit an early voting centre or mobile polling location to cast a vote before polling day.

### **Polling day**

This is the day where most voters will visit a local polling booth to cast their vote.

### **Scrutiny and count**

During this week, the votes that were cast at the election will be counted.

### **Provisional declaration**

After the scrutiny and count of votes is completed, ECSA will announce the successful candidates. At this time, results are provisional.

### **Declaration of elections**

The final declaration of results will occur after the 48-hour period for unsuccessful candidates to request a recount of the votes has concluded.



# 2024 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN First Nations Voice Election

## About the SA First Nations Voice Election

### What is the SA First Nations Voice?

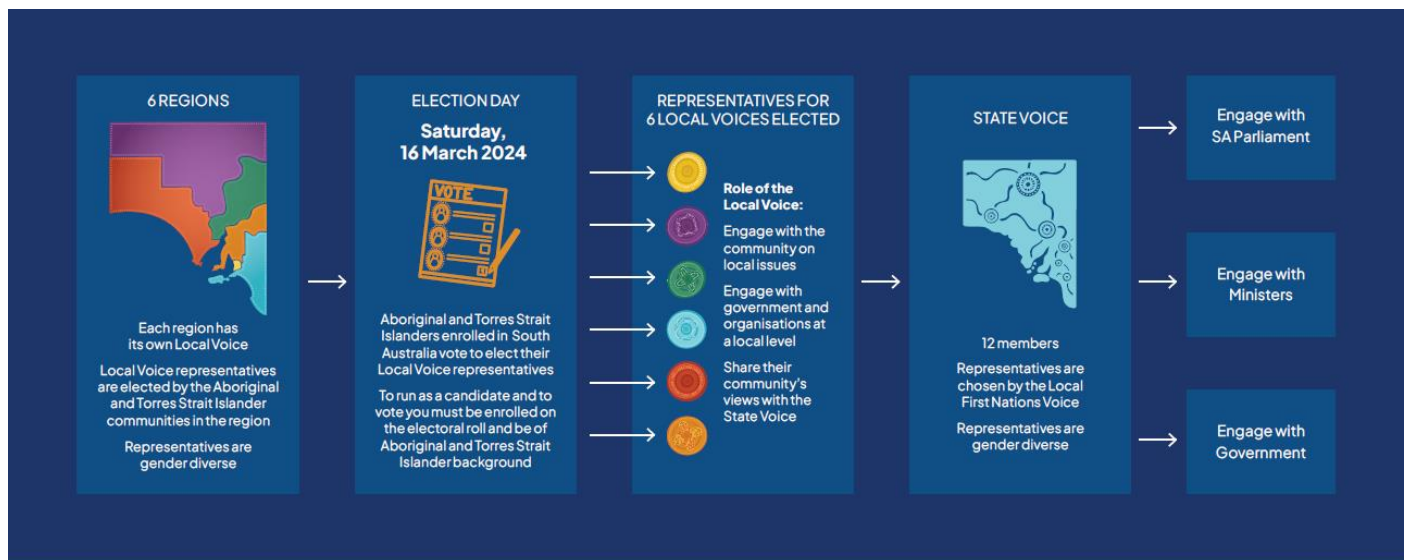
In 2023, the South Australian (SA) First Nations Voice to Parliament was established.

The SA First Nations Voice will be made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been elected to represent their communities and provide advice on laws, policies, and programs through direct communication with key decision-makers.

The purpose of the SA First Nations Voice is to enable more informed and inclusive decision-making about the issues that matter most to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities. To achieve this purpose, the SA First Nations Voice will be composed of two levels:

- **The Local First Nations Voice** – an elected body of members that represent their local community (region).
- **The State First Nation Voice** – a group consisting of two chosen members from each Local First Nations Voice.

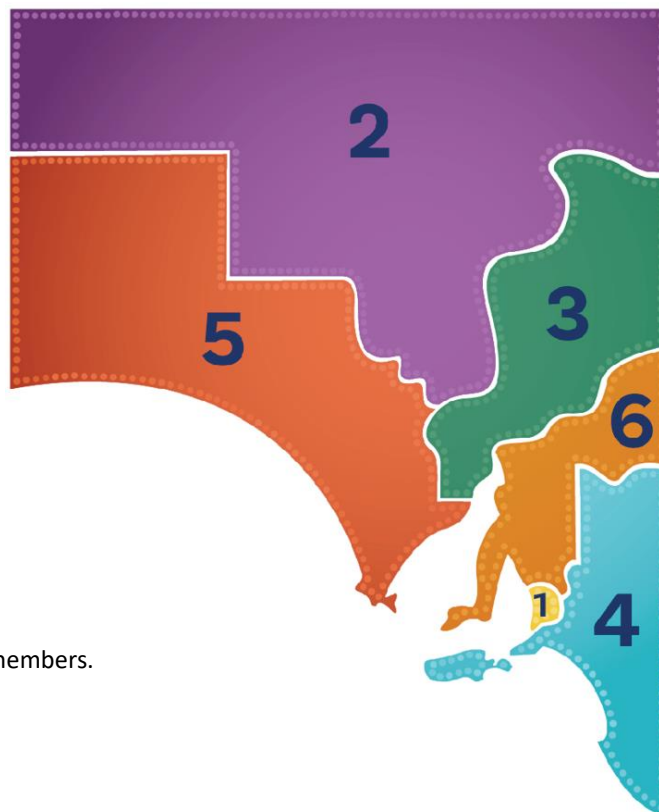
The SA First Nations Voice to Parliament Elections will be held on Saturday, 16 March 2024. This is when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will get to vote for the candidates that they want to be elected to their Local First Nations Voice.



## Local First Nations Voice

For the purpose of this election, South Australia is divided into six regions. Each region will elect representatives to form their own Local First Nations Voice.

-  REGION 1 – Central
-  REGION 2 – Far North
-  REGION 3 – Flinders and Upper North
-  REGION 4 – Riverland and South East
-  REGION 5 – West and West Coast
-  REGION 6 – Yorke and Mid-North



Each Local First Nations Voice can elect a specified number of members.

- Region 1 – Central will elect 11 members.
- All other regions will elect 7 members.

To ensure adequate gender representation, there are a specified number of positions available to each gender.

- Region 1 – Central has 5 positions reserved for males only and 5 positions reserved for females only.
- All other regions have 3 positions reserved for males only and 3 positions reserved for females only.

Each region has one open position. This position will be filled by a person of any gender (male, female, or any other gender). The structure of each region’s Local First Nations Voice is recorded in the table below.

Region	Male Positions	Female Positions	Any Gender	Total Members
Region 1 - Central	5	5	1	11
Region 2 - Far North	3	3	1	7
Region 3 - Flinders and Upper North	3	3	1	7
Region 4 - Riverland and South East	3	3	1	7
Region 5 - West and West Coast	3	3	1	7
Region 6 - Yorke and Mid-North	3	3	1	7

Please refer to the Commissioner for First Nations Voice for information regarding the Local First Nations Voice roles and responsibilities.



# Nominating

## Who can nominate?

To be a candidate in the SA First Nations Voice to Parliament Election, you must:

- **Be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person;** and
- **Be 18 years or older;** and
- **Be enrolled** on the South Australian electoral roll at the close of roll (5pm on 12 February 2024); and
- **Live in the region** you are nominating for (as recorded on the South Australian electoral roll) **OR**  
**Be a traditional owner** in relation to an area located wholly or partly within the region you are nominating for.

You may only nominate for one region.

## Who cannot nominate?

You cannot be a candidate if:

- You are currently in jail or remanded in custody in relation to a charge of an offence; or
- You have been found guilty of a serious criminal offence within the last two years; or
- You are restricted from travelling within the SA because of a bail, parole or other agreement; or
- You have been disqualified from managing corporations under the *Corporations Act 2001*.

## When can I nominate?

**The nomination period opens: Monday, 22 January 2024**

**The nomination period closes: 5pm Monday, 12 February 2024**

During the nomination period, ECSA will contact candidates who have submitted their nomination documents early to ensure that they are still willing and eligible to nominate.

**All documents must be received by ECSA before the close of nominations at 5pm Monday, 12 February 2024.**

## What do I have to do to nominate?

To nominate, you must:

1. Complete a nomination form and sign the declaration.
2. Provide a recent photograph of your head and shoulders.
3. Provide a criminal history report (such as a police check) that is less than 6 months old **OR**  
Apply for a police check and supply the required identity documents.  
**There is no cost to apply for a police check as part of your nomination.**

## What happens after I submit my nomination?

- **Nominations are processed:** After nominations close at 5pm on Monday, 12 February 2024, all received nominations will be processed, and police checks will be conducted by SAPOL.
- **Candidate names are confidential:** ECSA does not publicise the names of intending candidates until the declaration of nominations. However, if you want to begin your campaign prior to the declaration of nominations, you may do so.
- **Declaration of nominations:** At 12 noon on Monday, 26 February 2024, ECSA will publicly declare the names of candidates that have had their nominations accepted.

If there are more candidates than the number of positions available, a contested election must be held.

You will be invited to attend the declaration of nominations. A link to view the declaration online will also be provided to all accepted candidates.

- **Draw for positions on the ballot paper:** When a contested election is to be held, ECSA must conduct a draw to determine the order that candidates are to appear on the ballot paper. The draw for positions on the ballot paper occurs at the declaration of nominations and you may attend in-person, or view online via the provided link.

## Can I withdraw my nomination?

If you have submitted a nomination and change your mind, you can withdraw your nomination.

Nominations can be withdrawn by notifying ECSA via email at [ecsa.nominations@sa.gov.au](mailto:ecsa.nominations@sa.gov.au) or calling 1300 655 232. ECSA must be notified of the withdrawal of a nomination before the declaration of nominations.

You are not able to withdraw your nomination after this time.

## Briefing session for intending candidates

You are encouraged to attend an ECSA candidate briefing session. ECSA will discuss election topics such as:

- How to nominate
- How the election is conducted
- The election timetable
- Nomination procedures
- Scrutineers
- Tips for campaigning
- Voting procedures and processes

The briefing sessions give you an opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the SA First Nations Voice Election.

Please visit [savoicerelection.sa.gov.au/events](https://savoicerelection.sa.gov.au/events) to register your attendance at one of the briefing sessions listed below.

Location	Date	Time	Venue
Adelaide	14/02/2024	6:00pm – 8:00pm	Electoral Commission of South Australia Level 6, 60 Light Square Adelaide SA 5000
Adelaide	22/02/2024	6:00pm – 8:00pm	Electoral Commission of South Australia Level 6, 60 Light Square Adelaide SA 5000
Online	26/02/2024	6:00pm – 7:00pm	Microsoft Teams link will be provided on registration
Online	28/02/2024	12 noon – 1:00pm	Microsoft Teams link will be provided on registration

## Campaigning

Once accepted nominations are announced on Monday, 26 February 2024, you can check the details of other candidates standing for election in the same region as you on [savoicerelection.sa.gov.au](https://savoicerelection.sa.gov.au).

If no other competing candidates nominate (i.e. there are an equal or lesser number of candidates to positions available), you will be declared elected unopposed. An election campaign will not be necessary.

If there are more than the required number of candidates, you may consider campaigning to make your community aware that you are a candidate for the election. As voting is voluntary, people need to know about you and what you stand for. A campaign can encourage people to vote for you.

ECSCA cannot provide advice on how to run an election campaign. Candidates may conduct their own research on campaigning or contact the Commissioner for First Nations Voice.

Early voting opens on Monday, 4 March 2024, two weeks before polling day, Saturday, 16 March 2024. Many people will vote early or vote by post, so consider starting your campaign with enough time to reach these people.

### **When planning your campaign, you may wish to consider:**

- What qualities you have to be an effective community leader
- What community issues are important to you
- What you stand for
- How you can best represent the whole community
- What your messaging will be
- How much time and money you can spend
- If you have people who can help you with your campaign

### **You may also wish to consider:**

- Deadlines and details for local media
- Advertising costs
- Designers or printers who can help with promotional material
- Website support for your online activity
- Setting up social media
- Advertising a 'meet the candidate' event in your community

### **Some ways to promote yourself to voters include:**

- Calling voters on the phone
- Putting a pamphlet in letterboxes
- Writing letters to voters
- Door knocking
- Speaking to local clubs and community groups
- Talking to people in your community
- Interviews with local newspapers, radio, or TV
- Paid advertisements in local media or online
- Placing posters in local shop windows or on noticeboards (with permission)

- Speaking at public meetings
- Holding events where you can promote your community's priorities
- Creating a website
- Building a social media presence
- Sending emails (with permission)

Note ECSA does not provide information about voters to candidates, including phone numbers or addresses.

### **Electoral Material**

As a candidate, you may publish electoral material as part of your campaign. Electoral material means an advertisement, notice, statement or representation intended to affect the result of an election.

Electoral material must not be published unless the material contains the name and address of the person who authorises publication of the material. Candidates may authorise their own electoral material, or someone else may authorise it for them.

However, if the electoral material is published on the Internet and the name and address of the person who authorises publication of the material is immediately accessible, then the name and address does not need to be published in the specific advertisement or notice. For example, if using a social media platform where characters in each post are limited, the name and address of the person who authorises the electoral material can be displayed in the 'about' or 'bio' section of the account.

If you do not comply with this rule, the returning officer may require you to update your electoral material to comply with this rule, take the information down, or re-issue corrected material.

# Voting

## Who can vote?

Only South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can vote in the election. To vote, you must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and be enrolled on the South Australian electoral roll. You can check if you are on the roll, update your details, and apply to be included on the roll at [savoicerelection.sa.gov.au](https://savoicerelection.sa.gov.au).

## How do I vote?

There are several ways to vote during this election, including:

- On polling day
- During the early voting period
- By post
- With a mobile polling team

Polling day for the South Australian First Nations Voice to Parliament Election will be held on Saturday, 16 March 2024.

There will be polling booths across the state where eligible electors can vote in person. Locations will be promoted closer to polling day.

If you cannot attend a polling booth on polling day, there are other options to ensure you can vote.

## Early voting

The early voting period will be held from Monday, 4 March to Friday, 15 March 2024. Eligible electors who cannot attend a polling booth on election day may vote at an early voting centre. Locations will be promoted closer to the election.

## Postal voting

If you cannot attend a polling booth or early voting centre, postal vote applications will be available from late January at selected locations across the state or can be downloaded from [savoicerelection.sa.gov.au](https://savoicerelection.sa.gov.au) or sent to you by calling 1300 655 232.

Complete your postal vote application and return it to the ECSA by post or email to receive your postal voting pack. It does not cost you anything to post your postal vote application. After you put in your postal vote application, ECSA will send you a postal voting pack in the post. The postal voting pack will have your ballot paper in it. Your postal voting pack will arrive in the post after Monday, 4 March 2024.

## Mobile polling

Mobile polling will be conducted in regional and remote locations across South Australia between Monday, 4 March and Saturday, 16 March 2024. Mobile polling locations and times will be advised closer to the election date.

## Scrutineers

You can appoint scrutineers to observe electoral processes on your behalf. Scrutineers may be present at any polling, scrutiny or counting location if they are appointed by a candidate contesting the election. A maximum of two scrutineers may be present at a location at any given time.

## Counting

### What happens after voting closes?

At the close of polling at 6pm on Saturday, 16 March 2024, all ballot papers are collected from across the state and securely returned to ECSA's Central Processing Centre (CPC) in Adelaide.

Counting will not start until Monday, 25 March 2024, to ensure that all ballot papers make it back to ECSA so they can be included in the count. This gives time for postal votes to be returned to ECSA.

During this period, the declaration envelopes that the ballot papers were sealed in are reviewed by ECSA staff to ensure that the envelopes are signed and that no one has voted more than once. The envelopes are sorted into their correct region ready for the count. The envelopes are not opened, and the ballot papers are not removed from the envelopes before the count starts on Monday, 25 March 2024. This process can be observed by appointed scrutineers.

### Where will the count be, and when will it start?

The count will be held at ECSA's CPC in the Adelaide CBD. Counting of votes starts on Monday, 25 March 2024. Depending on the number of votes, the count for each region could take a few hours or days. After voting has closed, a schedule of all the counts will be provided to candidates.

### Who runs the count?

The count is run by ECSA, the independent government agency that runs the whole election. The Count Manager oversees the counting location and directs the staff employed and trained by ECSA to do the count. Other ECSA supervisors may be in the room to help the Count Manager during the counting process.

### Can a candidate watch the count?

Candidates cannot watch the count in person; however, they can choose someone to watch it for them. This person is called a scrutineer. The scrutineer's job is to watch the process and ensure the counting staff follow the correct procedure.

The scrutineer can ask the Count Manager questions about the process and pass information on to the candidate.

A scrutineer must bring an appointment form signed by the candidate confirming that they have been appointed as a scrutineer by the candidate.

Each candidate may appoint one or more scrutineers; however, a maximum of two scrutineers may represent a candidate at the counting centre at any given time.

Candidates will receive more information about scrutineering via direct communications and the ECSA website.

### What happens when counting starts?

Each region is counted separately.

The first step is for counting staff to remove the declaration flaps from all the envelopes that contain the ballot papers. These envelopes have been accepted into the count, and by removing the flap, the ballots are de-identified – i.e. no one will know how anyone voted to ensure that every vote is secret.

Counting staff then open all the envelopes of accepted votes using an envelope opening machine and take the ballot paper out of the envelope.

Counting staff check the envelope to ensure it contains the correct ballot paper the voter was entitled to.

The number of ballot papers or votes for the region is counted so the total number of votes for the region is known.

This can take several hours if there are lots of envelopes to open and ballots to be counted.

Once the total number of ballots is calculated, all ballot papers are checked for formality. This means that the voter's intentions are clearly marked on the ballot paper. A ballot paper is formal or accepted if it has at least a clear first preference for a candidate. This can be a number 1, a single tick, or a single cross.

If the ballot paper is blank or has no clear first preference, these ballots are called informal ballot papers and are not included in the count.

All the formal ballot papers are then sorted by first preference for each candidate. This means the ballot papers are sorted into piles based on which candidate has the number 1, a single tick, or a single cross next to their name.

Each pile is counted to see how many first-preference votes the candidate got.

After this is completed, the counting moves onto the next stage using a counting system called proportional representation.

### **How will I know the results?**

ECSA will publish the results on the website as soon as possible after the provisional declaration is made.

The results will become final after the 48-hour period has finished. After this, all candidates will receive an email with the final results.



## **What is proportional representation?**

To be elected to the SA First Nations Local Voice, a candidate is typically required to obtain a 'quota' of the formal votes.

The quota is the minimum number of votes required to be elected.

The method of electing candidates for this election is called proportional representation.

This means that multiple candidates can be elected in each region because the voters filled out the ballot paper with their preferences. By using numbers, voters rank candidates of their choice for whom they want to be elected.

A candidate usually must get enough votes to match the quota to be elected. The quota is a calculation of how many votes a candidate needs to get based on the number of available positions and the total number of formal votes. The exact calculation is the total number of formal ballot papers divided by one more than the number of vacancies plus an additional one at the end.

## **How many positions are available?**

Each region has a set number of positions for males and females.

In the Central region, there are 11 positions: Five positions for males, five positions for females, and one position for someone of any gender.

In all the other regions, there 7 positions: Three positions for males, three positions for females, and one position for someone of any gender.

This means that if three male positions are available and five males achieve the quota, only the three who achieve the highest number of votes will be elected. This is because there are only three male positions available.

## **How are the positions filled during the count?**

Once the quota is calculated, if any candidates have reached the quota, they are elected in the order of the highest number of votes they received until the gender representation requirements are met.

If those candidates get more votes than the quota, these extra votes are called a surplus.

The surplus is transferred to the next preference or ranked choice on the ballot paper. A transfer value calculation is used to ensure the total number of ballot papers equals the number of extra votes.

If the gender representation requirements are met, and there are more candidates of that gender left, those candidates are no longer able to be elected. This is called an elimination. For candidates that are eliminated, their votes are distributed to their next preference or ranked choice candidate on the ballot paper.

If no candidates have reached the quota, and no candidates have been eliminated, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is excluded. This is done by transferring their ballot papers to their next preference or ranked choice candidate on the ballot paper.

A computer program is used to help with the calculations and keeping track of all the ballot papers. This ensures that all the votes are counted fairly, and anyone can see how the ballot papers are transferred to the next candidate.

The count staff will continue transferring ballot papers until the reserved positions for each gender have been filled.

Once they are all filled, the Count Manager will announce who is elected. This is called a provisional declaration.

A provisional declaration means that the results are not yet final. After the provisional declaration is made, a candidate who was not elected may request a recount of the votes within 48 hours of the provisional declaration. The candidate must explain how the result would change from a recount, for example, if they provided evidence that the process was not followed correctly.

## Complaints

ECSA's Feedback and Complaints Policy establishes the standards which the Electoral Commissioner requires for complaints to be considered, as well as the standards which individuals and organisations may expect to receive in their dealings with ECSA.

Complaints should be made in writing, preferably using the online form available on our website.

**Online**                [ecsa.sa.gov.au/about-ecsa/feedback-and-complaints](https://ecsa.sa.gov.au/about-ecsa/feedback-and-complaints)

**By email**            [ecsa.complaints@sa.gov.au](mailto:ecsa.complaints@sa.gov.au)

**By post**             Electoral Commissioner  
Electoral Commission SA  
GPO Box 646  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

The Electoral Commissioner will consider all formal complaints on merit and the legislative provisions or rules which are relevant to the complaint.

Any personal information provided in the course of managing feedback or complaints will be managed in accordance with relevant legal and policy requirements.

ECSA treats complaints and feedback confidentially; however, in some circumstances may be required to disclose information to resolve the complaint or feedback.

Where the parties involved have publicised the matter, the Electoral Commissioner may confirm the existence of a complaint but will not discuss the details.

ECSA may make public comment regarding feedback and complaints in order to ensure electors are aware of a situation and/or have accurate information.

ECSA will acknowledge all feedback and complaints where contact information is provided within 2 business days.

ECSA will strive to resolve complaints within 5 days of acknowledgement.

If, given the complexity of a complaint, it cannot be resolved within 5 business days, ECSA will advise of the time frame expected and keep the complainant up to date throughout the process.





