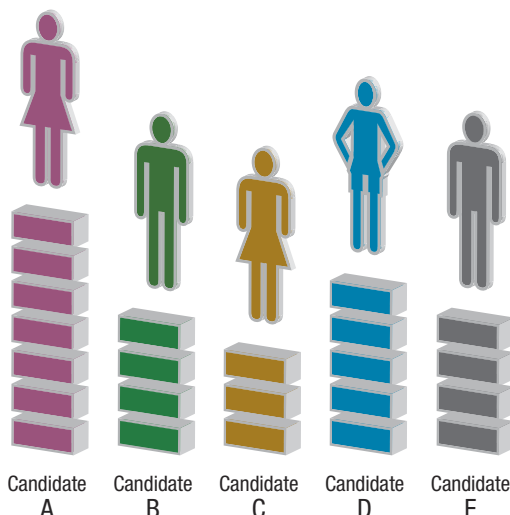


vote counting methods

This fact sheet provides an insight into three commonly used vote counting methods which are: First Past the Post, Full Preferential and Proportional Representation.

First Past the Post

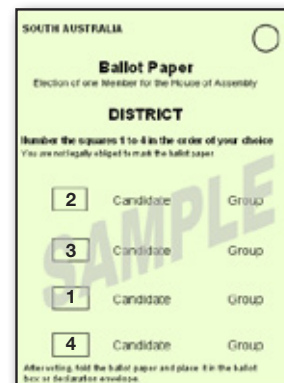
- The vote count system is used to elect officials in some statutory authorities, unions, clubs and societies.
- It is the simplest method of counting votes in elections.
- Voters choose one of the candidates on the ballot paper by marking a square next to the candidate's name.
- Once voting closes, the ballot papers are counted. The candidate with the highest number of votes wins the election.



In this picture, candidate A has the highest number of votes and therefore she is elected.

Full Preferential

- This system is used to elect a member of the House of Assembly in South Australia.
- Using this system a voter is required to place consecutive numbers commencing with the number 1 (i.e. 1, 2, 3 etc.) in all the squares on the ballot paper in the order of their choice. *As shown below:*



- The winner is the candidate who receives more than 50 percent of the formal votes. For example, if there are 20,000 votes, the candidate must get more than 10,000 votes to win the election.
- If none of the candidates receive 10,000 votes after counting the first preferences, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes is excluded from the election and their second preference votes are distributed to the other candidates.
- The process of excluding the candidate with the lowest number of votes and distributing their next available preference to the remaining candidates will continue until one of the candidates gains more than half of the votes.
- When a candidate receives more than 10,000 votes, they are elected.

Proportional Representation (PR)

Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect members to the Legislative Council and is determined by the following step by step process, shown below:



Step 1

Count 1st preference votes for all candidates.

Step 2

Calculate the Quota (Q)

$$Q = \frac{\text{Total number of formal ballot papers}}{\text{Number of vacancies} + 1} + 1$$

Step 3

Determine whether any candidate has reached the quota.
A candidate with votes equal to or greater than the quota is elected.
If all vacancies have been filled, the election is finalised.

If vacancies remain, check if any of the elected candidates received more votes than the Quota (surplus votes).

↓
IF YES

Distribute the surplus votes for the successful candidate. This is achieved by distributing all their ballot papers at a transfer value to the remaining candidates according to the next available preference marked on the ballot paper.

$$\text{Transfer value} = \frac{\text{Number of surplus votes for elected candidate}}{\text{Total ballot papers received}}$$

Calculate new totals for continuing candidates then

Go back to the start of Step 3

↓
IF NO

Exclude the candidate with the least votes and distribute all of their ballot papers to the continuing candidates according to the next available preference marked on their ballot papers.

Calculate new totals for continuing candidates then

Go back to the start of Step 3 OR

If the number of continuing candidates is the same as the number of remaining vacancies, then those candidates are elected and the election is finished.

For more detailed information, visit www.ecsa.sa.gov.au to find fact sheets about vote counting methods. There is also an animated presentation entitled *How Your Vote Counts*. If you have any further queries on elections or vote counting methods, call **1300 655 232**.