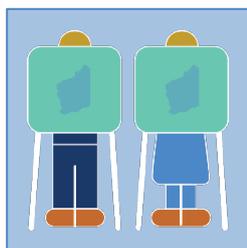




# Understanding preferential voting



Western Australia uses full preferential voting to elect members of the Legislative Assembly (lower house).

It uses a combination of optional preferential voting and proportional representation in the Legislative Council (upper house).

Full preferential voting means all squares – one for each candidate on the ballot paper – must be numbered according to the voter’s preferences. This system is used in the Legislative Assembly.

For the Legislative Council, candidates are elected through a combination of optional preferential voting and proportional representation.

For more information see the fact sheet *Understanding proportional representation*.

The preferential voting system requires a candidate to receive an absolute majority of votes to be elected. This means that a candidate must receive more than half the total formal votes to be elected:

If no candidate receives enough votes to get an absolute majority on first preferences, the candidate with the least number of votes is excluded and the second preferences distributed to the remaining candidates. This process is repeated until a candidate has enough votes to be elected.

### Exhausted votes

A ballot paper becomes exhausted when the preferences can no longer be allocated to a candidate. For example, this may happen when all the remaining preferences are for candidates that have already been excluded.

Exhausted votes are removed from the count once they become exhausted. As exhausted votes are not considered formal votes, the absolute majority may be affected as the count progresses.

## Preferential voting system

