

THIRD PARTIES

How-to-vote cards

Unless otherwise stated, all references to legislation are to the *Electoral Act 1992* (EA). The information in this fact sheet does not replace legislation. If you are concerned about your circumstances, you should seek independent legal advice.

This fact sheet relates to third parties intending to distribute how-to-vote (HTV) cards for a State election or by-election. For more information about third parties, please see [Fact sheet 19 – Funding and disclosure overview for third parties](#).

What is a how-to-vote card?

A HTV card is a card, flyer or pamphlet that does any of the following:

- contains a full or partial representation (or intended representation) of a ballot paper
- lists the names of any or all candidates with numbers indicating an order of voting preference against the names of any or all of the candidates
- directs or encourages the casting of preference votes, other than a first preference vote, in a particular way.

Materials with phrases like 'Vote 1' or 'Put them last' are considered HTV cards.

 EXAMPLES

The following are HTV cards for a State election:

- a card showing a ballot paper numbered with preferences
- a pamphlet that says 'Vote 1 Candice Date'
- a flyer that says 'Put the Gold Party Last'.

What are the requirements for how-to-vote cards?

To distribute a HTV card during an **authorisation period**, you must ensure the HTV card:

- is properly authorised
- is not misleading
- does not induce someone to cast an informal vote.

The **authorisation period** starts:

- for the **2028 State general election** – on 28 October 2027
- for a **by-election** – the day after the writ for the by-election is issued.

The authorisation period ends at 6pm on election day.

The ECQ does not regulate HTV cards distributed outside of the authorisation period.

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More information

If you need more information relating to Funding, Disclosure and Compliance, please contact ECQ on 1300 881 665 or by emailing fad@ecq.qld.gov.au.



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What are the authorisation requirements?

All HTV cards must be authorised.

The authorisation must:

- state the name and address of the person who authorised the card
- appear on every printed side of the material
- be prominent and legible
- have a font size of at least:
 - 10 point if the card is A6 or smaller
 - 14 point if the card is larger than A6 up to A3 size (e.g. DL, A5, A4)
 - 20 point if the card is larger than A3.

It is common for text to reduce in size during printing. To avoid any issues with your authorisation, the ECQ strongly recommends using a font size that is larger than the minimum requirements.

Double-sided HTV cards must be authorised on both sides.

Any person may authorise a HTV card for a third party.

The address used in the authorisation can be the person's own residential or business address, or a post office box. The authoriser must be contactable at the address.

It is against the law to distribute a HTV card with no authorisation or a false authorisation.

EXAMPLES

- Authorised by Mary Tyler, 1/100 Queen St, Brisbane.
- Authorised by G. Smith, Organisation XYZ, PO Box 123, Port Douglas.

What is considered 'misleading'?

A third party must not distribute a HTV card if it is likely to mislead an elector about the ways of voting or induce them to cast an informal vote.

For example, a HTV card is misleading if it:

- contains incorrect voting instructions
- misspells the names of candidates or political parties
- lists the names of candidates out of ballot paper order
- includes duplicate or missing preference numbers
- calls on voters to only number 1 or some (not all) of the boxes on the ballot paper.

State elections use **full preferential voting**. This means voters must number every box on the ballot paper in order of preference. Materials that say 'Just vote 1' or similar are therefore considered misleading as they are likely to cause voters to cast an informal vote.

More information on state government elections

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 **EXAMPLE**

A third party wants to hand out a HTV card showing a ballot paper with a '1' in the box next to their preferred candidate. They wish to leave the other boxes blank.

For the third party to legally distribute the HTV card, they must include instructions on the card telling voters to number all other boxes in order of preference.

Do how-to-vote cards need to be approved?

HTV cards for third parties do not need to be lodged with the ECQ for approval. However, we may confiscate and issue fines for HTV cards that do not meet the above requirements.

HTV cards for candidates and registered political parties do require ECQ's approval before they can be distributed on election day. For more details, see [Fact sheet 3](#).

For further information

This fact sheet mainly refers to part 10, division 2 of the EA. This Act is available in full at legislation.qld.gov.au.

 **RELATED FACT SHEETS**

Fact sheet 3 – How-to-vote cards for registered political parties and candidates
Fact sheet 19 – Funding and disclosure overview for third parties

Fact sheets can be found on the [ECQ website](#).

More information on state government elections

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