

Preferences

Senate

One of the most confusing processes in Australian elections is the way Preference votes can affect an outcome. The Australian electoral system is designed to ensure that every vote counts towards the final result. This means that NO MATTER who you vote for, it will never be a wasted vote.

So how do preferences work? When the votes are counted there are always some votes left over after the primary votes are counted and the initial seats are decided. Knowing this will happen, prior to an election Parties nominate how any residual votes are to be distributed.

Voters can cast their vote "above" or "below" the line. If they choose "below". They must decide their own preference order by numbering every box on the ballot paper. But most choose to vote "above the line" with a single "1" in the box and in doing so they leave it up to the judgement of that Party where any left over votes should be allocated.

In most Federal elections, 5 out of the 6 State Senate seats typically go to the major parties. The 6th seat is only decided *after* all the preference votes are allocated.

So this is how the minor Parties usually obtain their Seats-through preference deals. It's a complicated process but an IMPORTANT one. *The key is whether we like it or not*, a minor party will often get the last seat. Unless voters are very deliberate about who they vote for in the Senate the result can be very surprising.

In this election, FAMILY FIRST will be seeking to win the final seat in WA. To help us achieve this it is very important that supporters place "1" against FAMILY FIRST when voting above the line or start with FAMILY FIRST "1" if voting below the line.

If we manage our preference negotiations well, even with a primary vote of just 4 to 5% we still have a good chance of boosting our result to win a Senate seat.

In the Federal Senate, each State including WA, has 12 Senate seats, 6 of which are usually contested at each Federal election. Each of these seats has what is called a quota. The quota is the number of votes a candidate needs to be certain of election. This quota for a half Senate election in each State is 14.3%.

For example, if a Party receives 20% of the primary vote they are guaranteed to hold 1 seat as they received over 14.3% of the votes, which is greater than a 1 seat quota.

But what happens to the votes left over? Well it depends. These votes are allocated to the other parties in the order listed by preferences. As this occurs (called the next round of counting) the Party with the least votes is eliminated from the contest and their votes are given to the Party listed as their preference. Basically, this continues, round after round of counting, until all seats are taken and all votes are allocated. Ultimately, the last Party standing effectively gathers all the left over Preference votes to reach a quota and claim the final seat.

We want that final seat to be FAMILY FIRST in the Senate. Our preferences will first go to like minded Parties which are DLP, CDP and we will gather as many micro minors that are closely aligned with our values. They may not be 100% aligned but remember at the final count we must out poll the Greens. This is our goal.

Likewise, in the House of Representatives, we preference minor like minded parties first, and then usually Liberal and Nationals before Labour and Greens.

Counting for the Senate takes longer than the House of Representatives because of the complex nature of the counting system used. It is some weeks before all Senators are declared elected.

http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/counting/senate_count.htm

http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/counting/vid_senate.htm

http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/counting/hor_count.htm

http://www.aec.gov.au/Voting/counting/vid_hor.htm

VOTE 1 FAMILY FIRST SENATE - LINDA ROSE