

Ballot paper formality

Local government elections



**Northern Territory
Electoral Commission**
EVERY vote counts!

To assist in understanding the ballot paper formality rules required under a full preferential voting system, the following guidelines are provided.

Formal votes

To vote in Northern Territory Local Government elections, you are required to write the number '1' in the square next to the candidate who is your first choice. You must then place consecutively increasing whole numbers (starting with the number 2) in the candidate square on the ballot paper for each of the other candidates until a number is placed in all squares.

A ballot paper is formal if you have shown a first preference and numbered all squares in order of your choice. You must not repeat or skip a number in the series and your intention must be clear.

Changes to numbers, numbers written outside the squares, drawings and slogans do not make your ballot paper informal provided the ballot paper is otherwise marked correctly. For example, you can cross a number out and write another number beside it if you have made a mistake. As long as your intention is clear your vote will count.

Under Division 2, [section 45\(6\)](#) of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2008, a cross (X), a tick (✓) or the figure one (1) is taken to be the first preference of a voter.

Informal votes

A ballot paper is informal if:

- It is totally blank
- There is no number 1 or a cross (X) or a tick (✓)
- The number 1, a cross (X) or a tick (✓) appear against two or more names
- Two or more squares have been left blank
- A number has been repeated
- There is a break in the number sequence e.g. 1, 3, 4
- Writing on the ballot paper identifies you as the voter.

A direction is included on the ballot paper that reminds you to number every square to make your vote count.

A number of examples of formal and informal ballot papers are pictured on page 2.

Informal

BALLOT PAPER
City of Darwin
LYONS WARD
Election of 3 Aldermen

Number the boxes 1 to 5
in the order of your choice

5  Z CANDIDATE

 A CANDIDATE

1  G CANDIDATE *Wrong Number*

2  B CANDIDATE

4  R CANDIDATE

Remember ... number EVERY box to
make your vote count

SAMPLE

BALLOT PAPER
Katherine Town Council
Election of 6 Aldermen

Number the boxes 1 to 4
in the order of your choice

 Z CANDIDATE

 A CANDIDATE

 G CANDIDATE

2  B CANDIDATE

Remember ... number EVERY box to
make your vote count

SAMPLE

BALLOT PAPER
Litchfield Council
Central Ward
Election of 1 Councillor

Number the boxes 1 to 5
in the order of your choice

3  C CANDIDATE

2  A CANDIDATE

 G CANDIDATE

2  B CANDIDATE

4  R CANDIDATE


Remember ... number EVERY box to
make your vote count


SAMPLE


Formal


BALLOT PAPER
City of Darwin
LYONS WARD
Election of 3 Aldermen


Number the boxes 1 to 5
in the order of your choice

4  Z CANDIDATE

3  A CANDIDATE

1  G CANDIDATE

5  B CANDIDATE


2  R CANDIDATE *Wrong Number*


Remember ... number EVERY box to
make your vote count


SAMPLE


BALLOT PAPER
Katherine Town Council
Election of 6 Aldermen

Number the boxes 1 to 4
in the order of your choice

4  Z CANDIDATE

3  A CANDIDATE

1  G CANDIDATE


2  B CANDIDATE


Remember ... number EVERY box to
make your vote count


SAMPLE


BALLOT PAPER
Litchfield Council
Central Ward
Election of 1 Councillor


Number the boxes 1 to 5
in the order of your choice

3  C CANDIDATE

 A CANDIDATE

1  G CANDIDATE

2  B CANDIDATE

4  R CANDIDATE

Remember ... number EVERY box to
make your vote count

SAMPLE