

CAMPAIGNING ACTIVITIES AT VOTING CENTRES

Disclaimer: This factsheet is a general overview provided by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC). Please consult the legislation and seek independent legal advice as necessary. Unless specified otherwise, all references are to the Local Government Act 2019 and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2021.

Overview

To protect voter's rights, ensure fair and orderly elections, and maintain the integrity of the electoral process, there are rules governing campaigning activities and campaign materials around voting centres. These rules apply to all individuals and groups attempting to influence voters, including candidates and their supporters.

Behaviour expectations

The NT Electoral Commission (NTEC) has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, intimidation, aggression or bad language.

1. Treat our staff with kindness and respect.
2. If you have concerns or questions, address them calmly and respectfully.
3. Be patient—our staff are here to help and may be in these roles temporarily.
4. We understand that you may feel frustrated or upset during this stressful time; however, there is no excuse for mistreating any election staff member.
5. Treat other campaigners with respect.

What is a campaigning activity?

Campaigning activity involves actions such as:

- canvassing for votes: actively seeking the support of a potential voter. This includes handing out a how-to-vote card.
- soliciting votes: asking individuals to vote in favour of a particular candidate.
- persuading individuals: encouraging people not to vote for a specific candidate.
- displaying election-related notices or signs: putting up signs or notices about the election.
- broadcasting content that can be heard by the public using sound amplification tools such as loudspeakers, public address systems, or similar devices.

Where can you campaign?

You can campaign outside 10 metres from the entrance to voting centre while the voting centre is open for voting.¹ The 10 metre zone at each voting centre will be indicated by the voting centre manager or another authorised election staff member and may be indicated by chalk or traffic cones.

Campaigning activities and materials are not allowed within 10 metres of the entrance to the voting centre, and this includes inside the voting centre.

No campaign material is permitted to be displayed in a voting centre. This means that when voting a person cannot wear a campaign t-shirt, button or other campaign merchandise. It must be covered up (or turned inside out if appropriate) to conceal the campaign material.

When campaigning outside 10 metres of the entrance of a voting centre, please ensure access to and from the voting centre remains clear for voters.

What can't campaigners do?

Offences include:

- Canvassing within 10 metres of the entrance of a voting centre.²
- Wearing or displaying campaign material in a voting centre.³
- Obstructing or interfering with the proper conduct of an election.⁴
- Engaging in violent or intimidating conduct.⁵
- Making a dishonest or misleading statement to an authorised officer.⁶

Compliance

The NTEC applies a constructive compliance approach to its regulatory activities, providing electoral participants with resources and information to support compliance with their obligations. Where education does not address non-compliance or where the NTEC believes an offence has been committed, the NTEC can undertake a range of actions to ensure and enforce compliance.

An authorised officer in charge of a voting centre can give a direction to a person at a voting centre relating to their conduct.⁷ It is an offence if a person intentionally fails to comply with this direction and can lead to a fine of 50 penalty units (\$9,250 as of the financial year 2024-25).

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	14 May 2025	Chris Brack, Financial Disclosure and Compliance Manager	New factsheet

¹ See regulation 77

² See regulation 77(1)

³ See regulation 77(2)

⁴ See section 162(1)

⁵ See section 162(2)

⁶ See regulation 74

⁷ See regulation 77(3)

