

HOW-TO-VOTE CARDS

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.

What is a how-to-vote card?

How-to-vote (HTV) cards allow candidates to communicate how they would like their supporters to vote and distribute their preferences in an election.

Authorisation requirements

HTV cards must have an authorisation statement in a sufficient font size to be read by the intended audience containing:¹

1. the **name** and **address** of the person authorising the publication or distribution (a post office box is not permitted), and
2. if printed, the name and address of the printing company, and
3. if the material is double sided, the above authorisations must appear on both sides, and
4. the source of the funding for that material if not self-funded.

The address required is:

- if the authoriser is a **person** – the locality of the person’s residence (a post office box or email address does not satisfy the requirement). For example: *Darwin, NT*.
- if the authoriser is an **organisation** – their business address (in full) or the address of their primary office. For example: *10 Smith Street Darwin, NT*.

Examples:

- *Authorised by John Day, Darwin NT. Printed by Armadillo Printing, 25 Winnellie Road, Winnellie NT.*
- *Authorised by Anthony Smith, Friends of Alice Springs, 10 Gregory Terrace Alice Springs, NT. Printed by Anteatr Publishing, 25 Stott Terrace, Alice Springs, NT.*

¹ See section 164

What does the ballot paper look like for each election?

Candidates are advised to have their HTV cards show the candidates in the same order as they are on the ballot paper to assist voters.

The order of candidates on the ballot paper is finalised at the declaration of nominations and published on the NTEC website. For the 2025 Local Government Supplementary Elections this will occur on 29 November 2025.

How-to-vote cards must not be misleading or deceptive

HTV cards must not be published or distributed if they are likely to:²

- mislead a voter
- deceive a voter
- improperly interfere with a voter casting a vote
- contain an untrue or incorrect statement.

If following a HTV card will lead a voter to casting an informal ballot, then it is considered misleading.

For example, a HTV card showing a 1 next to the preferred candidate but with no other marks or instructions is misleading as it would, (if followed) lead to an informal vote, because all boxes must be marked. However, that HTV card would not be considered misleading if in addition to the 1 in the box there are clear and prominent instructions advising voters to mark all other boxes in their own order of preference. Examples are provided at the end of this factsheet.

Where can how-to-vote cards be distributed

HTV cards can be distributed outside 10 metres of the entrance to the voting centre during voting hours.³

HTV card pamphlet holders will not be available at any voting centres. Candidates and their supporters must hand out any HTV cards directly to voters outside the 10 metres to the entrance to a voting centre.

The NTEC cannot print HTV cards for candidates.

Does the NTEC need to approve HTV cards?

The NTEC does not need to approve HTV cards. However, the NTEC can check a candidates HTV card against requirements. Candidates can send draft HTV cards to: ntec@nt.gov.au.

² See section 164(3)

³ See regulation 77(1)

Handy hints

- Add colour, text and images to the design of the HTV. Plain white how-to-vote cards with the appearance of a ballot paper may confuse a voter during the voting process.
- HTV cards cannot have the word ‘ballot paper’ written on them.

Examples



Correct – HTV card shows correct voting instructions



Correct – HTV card shows correct voting instructions



Incorrect – HTV card show does not show correct voting instructions and if followed will lead to an informal vote

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.1	2 June 2025	Chris Brack, Financial Disclosure and Compliance Manager	Update to authorisation address requirements

