



# Encouraging Democratic Participation with Software

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# OUTLINE

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2. Ask Parliament
3. Age of Reason
4. Explain that Election
5. Where did my (STV) vote go?

# About

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# ABOUT DEMOCRACY DEVELOPERS LTD.

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- We are an Australian not-for-profit registered with the ACNC.
- We make privacy-respecting open-source software for supporting democracy.
- <https://democracydevelopers.org.au>

About  
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Ask Parliament  
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Age of Reason  
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Explain that Election  
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Where did my (STV) vote go?  
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Today's question: *How can software encourage more meaningful democratic participation?*

## THINGS WE'D BE PROUD OF

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- Getting someone off X/Facebook/TikTok and doing their democratic engagement more effectively
- A Senator/MP asking a question in Parliament that came from the community using our software
- Educating someone about voting to inoculate them against misinformation

# HAVE YOU ...?

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1. Sent an email/letter to or had a conversation with your MP?
2. Engaged with them on social media?
3. Written a submission to a parliamentary inquiry?
4. Read (part of) a bill?
5. Put in an FoI request?
6. Organised others to do any of these things?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY

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1. How many Senators do you (usually) vote for at a time?
2. Name your House of Representatives electorate or member.
3. If a state had 1.4 million votes in a (usual, half) Senate election, and a candidate got 400,000 votes, they would get elected. With (approximately) what transfer value would their surplus be distributed?
4. Australian Senate votes are counted manually - True or False?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY

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1. You elect 2 Senators for a territory, and (usually) 6 for a state.
2. Try <https://electorate.aec.gov.au>
3. Quota

$$Q = \lfloor \frac{votes}{seats + 1} \rfloor + 1 \approx \frac{1.4m}{7} \approx 200,000$$

Transfer value

$$T = \frac{votes - quota}{votes} \approx \frac{400k - 200k}{400k} \approx 0.5.$$

4. False. But we now have an auditing requirement.

# Ask Parliament

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## ASK PARLIAMENT

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Ask Parliament let you suggest questions, which could be:

- directed to an MP to ask for an answer (e.g. from a constituent),  
or
- suggested for an MP to ask someone else (e.g. in a committee).

People could up- or down-vote questions, showing parliamentarians (or journalists etc) which questions were popular.

# ASK PARLIAMENT

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**Status:** on the backburner.

**Reasons:** too complicated; trying to do too many things at once.

**Source:** <https://github.com/RightToAskOrg/>

# **Age of Reason**

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## AGE OF REASON

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**Status:** Try it out and send us feedback:

`https:`

`//ageofreason.democracydevelopers.org.au`

**Objectives:** Make it easy to tell your MP(s) what you think of a current bill.

**Source:** `https://gitlab.com/democracydevelopers/age-of-reason`

# AGE OF REASON



Select one of the topics below to start writing your email.

## National Topics



Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures No. 1) Bill 2025



VET Student Loans (Miscellaneous Measures) Bill 2025



Universities Accord (Cutting Student Debt by 20 Per Cent) Bill 2025



Treasury Laws Amendment (Payday Superannuation) Bill 2025



Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Triple Zero Custodian and Emergency Calling Powers) Bill 2025



Superannuation Guarantee Charge Amendment Bill 2025



## Explain that Election

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# EXPLAIN THAT ELECTION

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**Status:** In development.

**Objectives:** Getting people started; helping them understand the basics, especially counting.

**Source:** <https://gitlab.com/democracydevelopers/explain-that-election>

# EXPLAIN THAT ELECTION

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## Explain That Election

**Explain That Election**  
Select a past Australian election to explore its outcome.

**Australia's Democracy**  
Learn about our three levels of government.

**Voting and Counting**  
Learn about how we vote and how our votes are counted.

**Get Involved**  
How to get involved in Australian elections.

**Learn**

**Learn**

[About & Privacy Policy](#)

Three navigation icons: three vertical bars, a square with a circle, and a left arrow.

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### ▼ The House of Representatives



Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), Alex Proimos, CC BY 2.0.

The House is a chamber with 150 seats. Each seat represents a geographical region in Australia called an electorate, and is held by a Member of Parliament (MP).

At each federal election, the voters of each electorate will elect a candidate to hold their seat, and represent them in the House. Each

**Federal**   **State/Territory**   **Local**

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**Explain**   **Get Involved**

Three navigation icons: three vertical bars, a square with a circle, and a left arrow.

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### ▼ Preferential voting in action

Four candidates are vying for the role of Top Bird in the Australian Bird Republic.



Tawny. Adept at camouflage.

Wikimedia Commons, Cobrie, CC BY-SA 4.0



**Preferential**   **Proportional**   **History**   **Resources**

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**Explain**   **Get Involved**

Three navigation icons: three vertical bars, a square with a circle, and a left arrow.

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on those ballots.

The number of ballots in each stack is displayed on its bottom-right corner. The total number of votes in each candidates' tally is shown on the far-right.

Tawny	1 Tawny 4 Kookaburra 2 Emu 1 Magpie	x40	Tawny 2 Kookaburra 1 Emu 1 Magpie	x8	48
Kookaburra	3 Tawny 1 Kookaburra 4 Emu 4 Magpie	x30	Tawny 1 Kookaburra 1 Emu 4 Magpie	x5	35
Emu	3 Tawny 4 Kookaburra 1 Emu 2 Magpie	x25	Tawny 1 Kookaburra 1 Emu 4 Magpie	x4	29
Magpie	2 Tawny 4 Kookaburra 3 Emu 1 Magpie	x15	Tawny 2 Kookaburra 3 Emu 1 Magpie	x4	28

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Three navigation icons: three vertical bars, a square with a circle, and a left arrow.

# **Where did my (STV) vote go?**

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# WHERE DID MY (STV) VOTE GO?

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**Status:** Try it out and send us feedback:

<https://vote.andrewconway.org/Federal%20Senate/2025/VIC/WhereDidMyVoteGo.html>

**Objectives:** Explain the Single Transferable Vote (STV)  
(a.k.a. Senate Counting).

**Source:** <https://github.com/AndrewConway/ConcreteSTV>

# WHERE DID MY (STV) VOTE GO?

Vote summary : 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33.....

## Where did my vote listing consecutive preferences for 33 candidates go?

Count	Reason	Candidate vote sitting at	Value
1	First preference count	✓ 1 PATERSON, James Liberal/The Nationals	1
3	Surplus distribution for elected candidate PATERSON, James	✓ 2 HUME, Jane Liberal/The Nationals	Used 46% to elect PATERSON, James Surplus 54%
5	Surplus distribution for elected candidate HUME, Jane	3 HOPPITT, Kyle Liberal/The Nationals	Used 46% to elect HUME, Jane Surplus 8.2%
278	Exclusion of HOPPITT, Kyle	7 PATTEN, Fiona Legalise Cannabis Party	8.2%
284	Exclusion of PATTEN, Fiona	✓ 26 ANANDA-RAJAH, Michelle Australian Labor Party	8.2%
289	At the end of the counting ANANDA-RAJAH, Michelle was elected.		8.2% elected

► Challenges  
► Privacy for this page

# QUESTIONS

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[info@democracydevelopers.org.au](mailto:info@democracydevelopers.org.au)

- Would a lower barrier to communicating with representatives be enough to get people engaged? If not, what else might help?
- What change do you think you can, or want to, effect through your government representatives?
- What would be a satisfying result of going through the process of engaging with government, parliament or your representative(s)?

**Questions? Ideas?**

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