



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission



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2021 State General Election Technology Assisted Voting Approved Procedures



Version Control

Version No	Date	Who	Comments
V1.0	October 2016	Electoral Commissioner	Approved Procedures - Published for 2017 State General Election
V2.0	October 2020	Electoral Commissioner	Approved Procedures - Published for 2021 State General Election



2021 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE GENERAL ELECTION

PROCEDURES FOR TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING

A key feature of any democracy is the ability to cast a secret vote.

For the 2021 State general election, the Western Australian Electoral Commission is providing two forms of Technology Assisted Voting - Vote Assist (VA) and Telephone Assisted Voting (TAV) to eligible electors to cast a secret vote. Under Section 99C of the Electoral Act 1907, an eligible elector is defined as “*an elector who cannot vote without assistance because the elector has insufficient literacy skills or is sight impaired or otherwise incapacitated*”.

Vote Assist, as used by the Commission at the 2013 State general election, allows electors who visit selected Vote Assist Polling Places to listen to pre-recorded voting instructions and ballot paper information, select their preferences using a special keypad and then have their completed ballot papers self-printed (known as a *Vote Record*) face down and in private, prior to ballot box lodgement. Locations where Vote Assist will be available will be posted on the Commission’s website.

Telephone Assisted Voting (TAV), being made available for the first time by the Commission, allows eligible electors to vote over the telephone (via two separate call centres, one for applying to vote using the system and one for vote casting) by having the voting instructions and ballot paper information read to them and then Commission staff recording the elector’s vote preferences, whilst ensuring elector anonymity. Telephone Assisted Voting has been successfully deployed at previous federal elections plus state elections in Queensland and Victoria.

The Technology Assisted Voting procedures approved for the 2021 State general election are set out below and accord with the provisions of the Electoral Act 1907.

I welcome feedback on the operation of both Technology Assisted Voting solutions and suggestions for future enhancements.

Robert Kennedy
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER
Western Australian Electoral Commission

January 2021



2021 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE GENERAL ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING

Table of Contents

1. DEFINITION AND APPROVED PROCEDURES.....	5
2. ELIGIBILITY	5
3. TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING - DATES AND TIMES.....	5
4. APPLICATION	6
5. THE VOTING PROCESS	9
6. RECORD OF THOSE WHO VOTE	15
7. SECRECY OF THE VOTE	15
8. SECURE TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE OF BALLOT PAPERS	16
9. SCRUTINY AND COUNTING OF VOTES	17
10. INDEPENDENT AUDITING	18
11. PUBLICATION OF APPROVED PROCEDURES.....	19
12. ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER DETERMINATION FOR TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING ...	19
13. OFFENCES AND FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENTS IN RELATION TO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING	20



1. DEFINITION AND APPROVED PROCEDURES

The *Electoral Act 1907* (Section 99D) states that the Electoral Commissioner may approve and publish procedures in relation to Technology Assisted Voting. Throughout this document excerpts from the Act are quoted. Where the legislation is quoted it will appear in italics prior to the written procedures.

Technology Assisted Voting means *a method of voting where an eligible elector votes by means of an electronic device, such as by a telephone or by a computer linked to the internet* (Section 99C).

2 ELIGIBILITY

Eligible elector means *an elector who cannot vote without assistance because the elector has insufficient literacy skills or is sight impaired or otherwise incapacitated but does not include an elector of a class that is excluded from this definition under the regulations;*

2.1 Procedure

Electors will be required to make a declaration that they fit the above definition. (See 4. Application and 5. The Voting Process).

3. TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING - DATES AND TIMES

Technology Assisted Voting will be made available for voting on the same day that early voting (in person) commences. Voting will extend until 6.00 pm AWST on Election Day Saturday 13 March 2021. Dates and times of operation will be advertised on the Electoral Commission's website and elsewhere.

Technology Assisted Voting will be available in accordance with the prescribed schedule:



Date	Event	Action
Wednesday 24 February 2021	Early Voting (in person) commences. Technology Assisted Voting opens 8am AWST.	Technology Assisted Voting (1. Vote Assist and 2. Telephone Assisted Voting) both available throughout Early Voting (in person) period. Operating hours may vary and be subject to change and will be published on the WAEC website (elections.wa.gov.au)
(Election Day) Saturday 13 March 2021	Technology Assisted Voting remains open from 8am AWST.	Technology Assisted Voting (1. Vote Assist and 2. Telephone Assisted Voting) available on Election Day.
(Election Day) Saturday 13 March 2021	Application for Technology Assisted Voting (Telephone Assisted Voting) closes 4pm AWST.	Telephone Assisted Voting Application Call Centre closes 4pm (Telephone Assisted Voting Vote Casting remains open)
(Election Day) Saturday 13 March 2021	All forms of voting closes 6pm AWST.	Vote Assist and Telephone Assisted Voting Vote Casting Call Centre closes 6pm.

4. APPLICATION

4.1 Application by an Eligible Elector

The application by an eligible elector before the eligible elector can vote by means of technology assisted voting.

4.2 Eligibility for Technology Assisted Voting

1. To vote using Technology Assisted Voting, an eligible elector must be enrolled on the Western Australian electoral roll and make a declaration that they meet the definition of an eligible elector.



4.3 Procedure - Application for Technology Assisted Voting

4.3.1 Vote Assist

1. An eligible elector need only apply for Vote Assist by attending in person at a designated Vote Assist Early Voting Centre or Polling Place and seeking to use the system.
2. The elector must verbally or by some other means declare that they have not already voted at the election and confirm their eligibility to use the system.
3. The elector must be recorded against the electoral roll by providing their name, and their enrolled address to the electoral official.
4. Eligible electors who are also silent electors are only required to provide their name to apply.
5. Once the elector's eligibility is confirmed and they have been marked on the electoral roll they are then directed to cast their vote for their designated Legislative Assembly district and Legislative Council region using Vote Assist.
6. If an elector is not listed on the electoral roll, they cannot use Vote Assist. An elector who believes they have been omitted from the electoral roll in error may cast a provisional vote with assistance from an electoral official or their nominee.

4.3.2 Telephone Assisted Voting

1. An eligible elector may only apply for Telephone Assisted Voting by telephoning the WAEC Telephone Assisted Voting Application Call Centre requesting an operator to assist with the application.
2. At the time of application, the elector must answer the questions required for the call centre operator to determine they are on the roll by providing their name, date of birth and their enrolled address.
3. The elector will make a declaration of eligibility by listening to the eligibility criteria that is read by the call centre operator and affirming the declaration verbally.
4. Eligible electors who are also silent electors are only required to provide their name and date of birth to apply.
5. The Telephone Assisted Voting Application Call Centre operator must verify the elector's details against the electoral roll.



6. If an elector is not listed on the electoral roll, they cannot apply for Telephone Assisted Voting. An elector who believes they have been omitted from the electoral roll in error may cast a provisional vote with assistance from an electoral official or their nominee.
7. Upon successful application, electors will be prompted to provide their own Personal Identification Number (PIN) of 4 digits. Electors who later forget their PIN can re-apply by telephoning the WAEC Telephone Assisted Voting Application Call Centre.
8. Electors will then separately be issued with a randomly generated 8-character alpha numeric Voting ID which should be recorded by the elector.
9. The Voting ID can be issued by SMS text, email or phone call. Issuing of the Voting ID will only be undertaken by call centre operators not involved in the processing of that elector's Application. This will prevent a call centre operator knowing both the Voting ID and PIN of an elector, thus ensuring elector anonymity is maintained and safeguarding the secrecy of each vote.
10. If an elector, wishing to use the phone call service or SMS text service to receive their Voting ID credential, cannot provide an Australian telephone or mobile number, then the phone call service or SMS text service will not be available and an alternate offering (email) will need to be used. Issuing of the Voting ID will only be undertaken by call centre operators not involved in the processing of that elector's Application.
11. The re-application process is only available through the Telephone Assisted Voting Application Call Centre and requires the same elector authentication information as an original application.
12. Telephone Assisted Voting Call Centre staff can cancel the application of electors in the following circumstances:
 - a) An elector advises that they did not apply for Telephone Assisted Voting but received an application acknowledgement.
 - b) An elector advises that they applied for Telephone Assisted Voting but now want to cancel their application.
13. The elector cancelling their application will have to identify themselves in the same method as when they first registered. An acknowledgement confirming the cancellation will be sent to the elector either via email, phone, sms or mail.



5. THE VOTING PROCESS

Where an eligible elector votes by means of Technology Assisted Voting.

5.1 Procedure - Voting Process for Technology Assisted Voting

5.1.1 Vote Assist

1. The WAEC will record the names of candidates and any affiliations in the order as they appear on the ballot paper. All names will be spoken by the same professional voice actor in an even tone without emphasis.
2. Any Vote Assist registered voter who is connected to the system at 6pm Election Day (close of voting) may remain connected for up to one hour for the purpose of completing their vote.

5.1.1.1 Vote Assist - Ballot paper instructions

1. The following audio recording will be heard upon the elector commencing their vote casting.

Welcome.wav

“Welcome to Vote Assist – a form of technology assisted voting offering a secret and unassisted vote for eligible West Australian electors.

Vote Assist will allow you to hear all voting instructions and the names of candidates and political parties listed on the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council ballot papers. Using the special keypad, you can mark your candidate preferences before being asked to print your completed ballot papers. Once printed, fold and place your ballot papers in the envelope provided before placing into a sealed ballot box. An election official can assist you if required. .

When you're ready to start, press the number 5 key to hear your voting instructions.”

Instructions.wav

“To confirm a decision, or vote for a candidate when you hear their name and political party, press 5

To cancel your last choice press 1

To clear all preferences and start again press 3

To print your ballot paper press 7

At any time press 0 to listen to these instructions again



Press 5 when you are ready to start”

<Audio Recording – Legislative Assembly Ballot paper >

- “Your Legislative Assembly Electoral District is” [DISTRICT_NAME]

“You will now hear the name and political party of all candidates contesting this district election, before proceeding to cast your vote”

{LOOP} All candidates / political party listing

You are now ready to cast your vote press the 5 key to continue. To hear the full candidate list again press 1”

There is/are

{x} [NUMBER OF REMAINING CANDIDATES]

“candidates contesting this election.” (played when no selection made)

“candidates remaining.” (played when 1 or more selection has been made)

“candidate remaining.” (played when only 1 selection is left)

“Press 5 when you hear the candidate you want to give your”

{suffix x} “preference”

“You have given your”

{suffix x} “preference to”

[CANDIDATE NAME] [PARTY]

“Press 5 to confirm”

REMOVE VOTE

“You wish to cancel your last choice. Press 5 to confirm”

PRINT BALLOT

“You have completed your ballot paper as follows.”

{LOOP}

“Number”



LA INFORMAL VOTE

“You have chosen to print this ballot. You have not entered all the required candidates. If you print now your vote will be informal. Press 5 to confirm an informal vote or press 1 to go back and complete the ballot paper”.

INCOMPLETE VOTE

“You have chosen to print this ballot. You have not completed all the required candidates. If you print now your vote will be informal. Press 5 to confirm an informal vote or press 1 to go back and complete the ballot paper”.

<Audio Recording – Legislative Council Ballot paper >

“We now move to the election of your 6 representatives in the Legislative Council region of ” [REGION_NAME]

“You can choose to mark one box against the party or independent candidate you prefer, above the line. Or number the candidates from one to”

{x} [TOTAL_NUMBER_CANDIDATES_BTL]

“below the line , in order of your choice. To make one selection from”

{x} [TOTAL_NUMBER_CANDIDATES_ATL]

“choices above the line on the ballot paper, press 1 or to number all your preferences from 1 to”

{x} [TOTAL_NUMBER_CANDIDATES_BTL]

“below the line , press 2.”

– ATL (Above the line)

- “You have chosen to select one preference above the line. You will now hear your options”

{LOOP} [REGION_PARTY_NAMES]

“There are a total of”

{x} [NUMBER OF REMAINING CANDIDATES]

“Choices available. Press 5 when you want to make your selection.”

{LOOP}



- BTL (Below the line)

“You have chosen to number all”

{x}

“Candidates in the order of your preference below the line. You will now hear your options”

[REGION_CANDIDATE_NAME_PARTY]

5.1.1.2 Vote Assist - Legislative Assembly Ballot

1. If the elector wishes to cast an informal vote this can only be done by leaving the ballot paper completely blank or by leaving more than one square blank. The system will issue an informality alert, but the elector may still proceed to submit a completely blank or informal ballot paper if they so choose.

5.1.1.3 Vote Assist - Legislative Council Ballot

1. For the Legislative Council the elector can record a single vote preference above the line or preference all candidates listed below the line.
2. It will not be possible to record a vote both above and below the line.
3. If the elector wishes to cast an informal vote this can only be done by leaving the ballot paper completely blank (i.e. both above and below the line) or by leaving more than one square blank when voting below the line. The system will issue an informality alert, but the elector may still proceed to submit a completely blank or informal ballot paper if they so choose.

5.1.2 Telephone Assisted Voting

1. Electors must first apply and declare their eligibility in accordance with the prescribed Application procedure (see 4.3.2)
2. An eligible elector may only cast their vote using Telephone Assisted Voting by telephoning the WAEC Telephone Assisted Voting Vote Cast Call Centre requesting an operator to assist with the vote casting.
3. At this stage, they must also make the following declaration;

I declare that I have not already voted in this State Election
4. An elector telephoning the WAEC Telephone Assisted Voting Vote Cast Call Centre will be asked by the operator not to disclose their name at the outset of the call.
5. An elector must provide their Voting ID and PIN to the call centre operator.



6. The elector's eligibility to vote will be verified by the call centre operator when the elector provides the correct combination of their issued Voting ID and their own PIN. The elector will be given three (3) attempts to provide the correct combination of Voting ID and PIN. After three unsuccessful attempts, the current application will be cancelled and the elector will then be asked to re-apply by again contacting the WAEC Telephone Assisted Voting Application Call Centre.
7. The call centre operator must validate the elector's Voting ID and PIN and identify the elector's electoral district and region.
8. The call centre operator must explain the voting process to the elector.
9. The elector is informed that there is a second call centre operator listening to the conversation to ensure that all voting preferences are accurately recorded.
10. The call centre operator must also inform the elector if there are any scrutineers or other authorised observers present observing the authentication and voting process.
11. The Telephone Assisted Voting system verifies that the elector has not already cast a vote at this election.
12. The call centre operator undertakes vote casting for the elector's respective electoral district and region using the prescribed (hardcopy) ballot papers from a secured ballot paper zone.
13. Undertaking prescribed vote taking:
 - a) Legislative Assembly Ballot - Prior to transcribing a vote, the call centre operator must first read out all the names of the candidates in the order that they appear on the ballot paper and provide voting instructions.

If any candidate is endorsed by a registered political party, the call centre operator must inform the elector of the name of the registered political party as it appears on the ballot paper;
 - b) Legislative Council Ballot - Prior to transcribing a vote, the call centre operator must first determine whether the elector chooses to cast their vote either 'above the line' or 'below the line'. The operator must then proceed to read out all the names of the groups or candidates (either 'above the line' or 'below the line') based on the elector's indicated preference of vote casting in the order that they appear on the ballot paper and provide voting instructions. If any candidate is endorsed by a registered political party, the call centre operator must inform the elector of the name of the registered political party as it appears on the ballot paper;



If any candidate is a member of a group of candidates, the call centre operator must inform the elector of the name of a group of candidates as it appears on the ballot paper.

14. The elector votes by notifying the call centre operator of their vote preferences and the order of voting preferences against the name of any or all candidates or groups.
15. The second call centre operator must listen to the telephone call and observe the first operator marking the ballot papers to ensure the elector's vote is accurately recorded.
16. If the second call centre operator detects errors, then any errors must be corrected. The elector will be notified immediately of any such errors and advised about the remedial action taken to correct the error.
17. After each ballot paper is marked, the first call centre operator must read back to the elector their vote and preferences that have been recorded on the ballot papers.
18. Electors may still cast an informal vote but will first be advised by the call centre operator that the ballot paper, completed as instructed, will be declared informal. If this is confirmed as the elector's intention, then this will not prevent the elector from casting an informal ballot paper.
19. The call centre operator must use the Telephone Assisted Voting system to record on the WA electoral roll that the elector has voted. The Telephone Assisted Voting system does not allow the Vote Cast Call Centre operator to identify the personal details of the elector.
20. On completion of the ballot papers, the call centre operator must:
 - a) place the completed ballot papers in an envelope before placement into a sealed ballot box
 - b) advise the elector that ballot papers have been placed in the ballot box and that the voting process is completed
 - c) mark the elector off the Telephone Assisted Voting system once completed
21. Any Telephone Assisted voter having contacted the Vote Cast Call Centre prior to 6pm Election Day (close of voting) may remain connected for up to one hour for the purpose of completing their vote.



6. RECORD OF THOSE WHO VOTE

The making of a record of each eligible elector who has voted by means of technology assisted voting

6.1 Procedure - Record of those who vote for Technology Assisted Voting

6.1.1 Vote Assist

1. An elector will proceed to vote after their credentials have been verified on the electoral roll. Before voting, the elector will be marked on the electoral roll as having voted.

6.1.2 Telephone Assisted Voting

1. When an elector proceeds to vote they will be asked for their Voting ID issued to them and their PIN provided by them. These will be validated against the credential stored and encrypted when the elector applied. The elector will then be prompted to cast their vote for both the applicable Legislative Assembly district and Legislative Council region.
2. Credentials used for voting are matched back to the voter's enrolment. This is a record of eligible electors having voted by means of technology assisted voting. This is stored alongside the records of all other voting methods.

7. SECRECY OF THE VOTE

The secrecy of the eligible elector's vote.

7.1 Procedure - Secrecy of the Vote for Technology Assisted Voting

7.1.1 Vote Assist

1. Upon completion of an elector casting their ballot, the elector then prints out the completed ballot paper (denoted as a *Vote Record*) on their Vote Assist desktop. To preserve secrecy of the eligible elector's vote, the Vote Record is printed face down. The printed Vote Records are then folded, placed in an oversized envelope and deposited into a sealed ballot box.



7.1.2 Telephone Assisted Voting

1. The Application and Vote Casting functions of Telephone Assisted Voting must be performed by different telephone operators housed in separate call centre locations.
2. To preserve an elector's anonymity, the telephone operator who completes the elector's application for Telephone Assisted Voting must not be the same operator that records and transcribes the elector's vote.
3. At no time during the election period must any of the WAEC telephone operators change between working in the Application and Vote Casting Call Centres.
4. Electors who telephone to apply for Telephone Assisted Voting must end the call and telephone again to be put through to the Vote Casting Call Centre.
5. To maintain secrecy of each elector, call centre staff will not be able to transfer telephone calls between the TAV Application and the TAV Vote Cast Call Centres.
6. Vote Casting Call Centre operators must advise electors at the start of the call not to reveal their identity at any time during the call. If their identity is revealed, the telephone call is to be immediately terminated and the elector advised to call back later, thus ensuring elector anonymity is maintained and safeguarding secrecy of the vote.

8. SECURE TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE OF BALLOT PAPERS

The means of ensuring that any vote cast in accordance with the approved procedures is securely transported to the Electoral Commissioner and securely stored.

Technology Assisted Voting made available by the Western Australian Electoral Commission (both Vote Assist and Telephone Assisted Voting) utilises in-house computer systems with appropriate controls to manage authorised staff-only system access, security and data integrity.

Votes cast using Technology Assisted Voting are stored in ballot boxes with appropriate security checks and are transported and treated like all other paper ballots.



8.1 Procedure - Transmission and Storage of votes for Technology Assisted Voting

8.1.1 Vote Assist

1. Vote taking, storage and printing occurs in a secure, air-gapped and in-house controlled environment which does not require nor offer external access, including but not limited to internet access. Vote Assist does not require electronically assisted votes to be transmitted to the WAEC.
2. Special encoded security paper used to print Vote Assist ballot papers (denoted as *Vote Records*) is securely stored before, during and after the voting period.

8.1.2 Telephone Assisted Voting

1. Voting by telephone will take place via a single line between the elector's handset and the voting system, housed in the Vote Casting Call Centre.
2. Standard ballot papers as used at Early Voting Centres and polling places are utilised.
3. Ballot papers used to record votes are securely stored in sealed ballot boxes in WAEC offices until counting commences.

9. SCRUTINY AND COUNTING OF VOTES

A candidate or the candidate's agent may appoint scrutineers to represent the candidate in observing:

Any production of the vote record; and

1. *Any other element of the technology assisted voting process that is approved by the Electoral Commissioner.*



9.1 Procedure - Scrutiny and Counting of Votes

1. The provision of Technology Assisted Voting is fully governed by the approved procedures as determined in the Act.
2. The Electoral Commissioner will correspond with the political parties and candidates and advise how technology assisted voting can be scrutinised. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the unknown situation within WA at the time of the election and further government and public health directives, the Electoral Commissioner will further publicise whether scrutineering will be permissible.
3. Subject to 2. above, scrutineers are permitted to access the counting room to observe the counting process.
 - a) Scrutineers must be appointed by a candidate or official agent and must carry adequate identification to demonstrate that the person is a scrutineer when in the controlled environment of the counting room.
 - b) Scrutineers are able to observe the scrutiny of envelopes and the counting of Technology Assisted Voting Ballot Papers / Vote Records.
 - c) Scrutineers must obey lawful directions given by authorised WAEC staff.
 - d) Technology Assisted Voting ballot boxes may be opened and ballot papers removed up to 72 hours before polling concludes (Section 92 (9)).

10. INDEPENDENT AUDITING

1. *The Electoral Commissioner must engage an independent person (the **independent auditor**) to conduct audits of the systems used for Technology Assisted Voting and as specified under the approved procedures.*
2. *Without limiting the content of the audit, the independent auditor must determine whether test votes cast in accordance with the approved procedures were accurately reflected in the corresponding vote record produced under those procedures.*
3. *The independent auditor may make recommendations to the Electoral Commissioner to reduce or eliminate any risks that could affect the security, accuracy or secrecy of voting in accordance with the approved procedures.*
4. *The results of any audit of the Technology Assisted Voting shall be published on the website of the Western Australian Electoral Commission as soon as practicable, and no later than 30 days after polling.*



10.1 Procedure - Independent Auditing

1. The Electoral Commissioner will appoint an independent auditor who will be provided by the Electoral Commission with all necessary assistance to assess the security, accuracy and secrecy of the systems.
2. The auditor will undertake an audit of the Technology Assisted Voting systems across multiple stages. These stages being;
 - a) introduction to systems
 - b) witnessing systems
 - c) witnessing production readiness testing
 - d) witnessing live operation
3. The audit report will be published on the Electoral Commission's website no later than 30 days following the close of polling. This report may include any recommendations for future enhancements to reduce or eliminate any risks that could affect the security, accuracy or secrecy of voting in accordance with the approved procedures.

11. PUBLICATION OF APPROVED PROCEDURES

An approval by the Electoral Commissioner must be:

- a) In writing; and
- b) Published on the Commission website.

12. ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER DETERMINATION FOR TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING

The Electoral Commissioner may determine that technology assisted voting is not to be used at a specified election

12.1 Procedure - Determination of usage

1. *A determination under this section must be in writing and published on the Commission website.*



13. OFFENCES AND FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENTS IN RELATION TO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED VOTING

A person must not make a statement (whether orally, in writing or by means of electronic communication) that the person knows to be false or misleading in a material particular for the purposes of or in connection with:

- a) *Making an application for technology assisted voting; or*
- b) *Casting a vote by means of technology assisted voting.*

The Act provides for considerable penalties for those who interfere with any computer hardware or software, data file or electronic devices used for or in connection with technology assisted voting or for making misleading statements. These penalties range from \$1,000 to 5 years in prison.