



Family History

Electoral rolls

Electoral rolls list people eligible and registered to vote, whether at federal, state or local government elections. Electoral rolls can provide useful information, showing where a person may have lived over time.

What is the history behind the “right to vote”?

19th Century: a property qualification excluded some people from voting. Those who owned property in different electorates could vote in each.

Compulsory enrolment:

- From **1925**, voting in Federal elections became compulsory for those over 21,
- and from **1973**, for those over 18.

Women got the vote

In Australia women who were British subjects, and over 21 years, gained the right to vote in:

- South Australia 1894
- Western Australia 1899
- New South Wales 1902
- Tasmania 1903
- Queensland 1905
- Victoria 1908
- Australia (Commonwealth) 1902

Australian Aboriginal women and men were granted the right to vote in 1962.

Source: AUSFOLIO Volume 2, Number 1 SOCOM Educational Resources 1993.

For more information: <https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm>

What information is on the electoral roll?

Information on electoral rolls includes:

- full name,
- address,
- and, between 1903 and 1984, the voter’s occupation.

Note: Electoral rolls may not be a real time image of where people were living, their occupation etc.

How are electoral rolls organised?

- **Check electoral maps for an electorate name.** Boundaries for an electorate change over time. For 19th century Qld and NSW electoral boundaries there are State Archives guides at the level 3 desk. Post 1901 check *Commonwealth of Australia 1901-1988 electoral redistributions* book on level 3.
- **Until 1988:** rolls were arranged by state then by electorate, division and subdivision. Names were then organised alphabetically within the subdivision.
- **1989:** rolls were organised alphabetically within divisions by state.
- **From 1991:** rolls were organised alphabetically by name within each state.
- **Post 1901:** State Library holds Commonwealth Rolls: these are organised by state.

Some electoral rolls on CD-ROM (1903, 1913, 1922, 1941, 1949, 1959, 1969) allow more flexible searching e.g. by street, occupation. Find a woman’s married name if her given names are distinctive.

What are annotated electoral rolls and how can they be used?

Annotated electoral rolls are marked with:

- the new surname of a recently married woman
- change of address or
- date of notification of someone’s death

As a result, these rolls can flag another electorate to search or approximately when someone died.

These electoral rolls are only held at:

- **1918-1968:** National Archives of Australia www.naa.gov.au (Commonwealth electorates)
- **1915-1992:** Queensland State Archives <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives> (State electorates)

What is the silent electoral roll?

It is compulsory to be on the electoral roll but not on the published list. Some examples of those not on the lists include people in witness protection programs, police undercover work or victims of domestic violence.

For additional information on electoral history check the Australian Electoral Commission website <https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/history-of-electoral-reform.htm> or https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/25/theme1-voting-history.htm.

What electoral rolls are available at State Library of Queensland?

Most of the following resources can be viewed in the Family History area on level 3.

Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1860-1900 State (Ask for Guide at Desk)➤ 1860-84, 1889 State [CD-ROM]➤ 1895, 1896, 1900, 1901. 1905, 1906, 1909, 1910, 1912, 1915 State [CD-ROM]➤ 1903-2008 Commonwealth➤ 1903, 1906, 1913, 1922, 1934, 1941, 1949, 1959, 1969 Commonwealth [CD-ROM]➤ 2012, 2014, 2015 State (Request from storage)	MFL 324.94 (Open access microfilm) QCFS 324.6409943 QCFS 324.6409943 FICHE/S 324.94/q ; MFCS 324.94/q QCFS 324.6409943 S 324.94 003 (Level 4)
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1842-64 (Ask for guide at the Desk)➤ 1903-2008➤ 1903 [CD-ROM]➤ 1913, State [CD-ROM]➤ 1935 Commonwealth [CD-ROM]	(Open access AO fiches 768-779); MFCS 324.94/n QCFS 324.640994 2003- QCFS 324.6409944 QCFS 324.6409944
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1841-1851➤ 1899 only➤ 1856; 1903-2008➤ 1903, 1939 [CD-ROM]	MFCS 324.945 1994 MFCS 324.6409945 1986 MFCS 324.94/v QCFS 324.640994 2003-
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1856-1900 – imperfect➤ 1914-2008➤ 1903 [CD-ROM]	MFL 324.640946 MFCS 324.94 com/t QCFS 324.640994 2003-
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1928-2008	MFCS 324.94 com/a
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1901-2008➤ 1901 [CD-ROM]➤ 1939, 1949 [CD-ROM]	MFCS 324.94 com/w QCFS 324.640994 2003- QCFS 324.64099441 2010
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1991-2008➤ 1909 [CD-ROM]➤ 1939, 1941, 1943 [CD-ROM]	MFCS 324.94 com/s QCFS 324.640994 2003- QCFS 324.640994 2010
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1922-2008➤ 1884-1940 [CD-ROM]	MFCS 324.94 com/nt QCFS 929.39429 2006
New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 1853-1874/75; 1880/81-1887; 1890; 1893-1894; 1896-1897; 1899-1900; 1902-1903; 1905/6; 1908; 1911; 1914; 1919; 1922; 1925; 1928; 1931; 1935; 1938; 1941; 1943; 1946; 1975; 1978; 1981➤ 1881, 1893, 1896 [CD-ROM]➤ 1911, 1935 [CD-ROM]	MFCS 324.993 (See also <i>New Zealand Electoral Atlas</i> FAMHIS 328.3345 1989) QCFS 929.393 2010 QCFS 929.393 2010


Check **Ancestry (Library edition)**, available at State Library, to search across Commonwealth electoral rolls for most states between 1903 and 1980.

Check **Find My Past**, available at State Library, to search a range of electoral rolls for all states and New Zealand, pre and post 1900.

For current Queensland electoral roll searches visit **Queensland Electoral Commission Brisbane office** <https://www.ecq.qld.gov.au/enrol-to-vote/enrol-or-update-your-enrolment> or your **local Australian Electoral Commission office** https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Contact_the_AEC/index.htm.

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/plan-my-visit/services/ask-us>

 This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>

