

QUOTA NOTES

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How did South Australia's state-wide 37.6% Labor vote give Labor 72.3% of the MHAs?



On 21 March 2026, South Australia's voters elected all 47 members of its Lower House (*the House of Assembly*) from single-member electoral districts.

They concurrently elected - with the whole State as a single electorate - 11 of the 22 members of its Upper House (*the Legislative Council*) using proportional representation with the single transferable vote

(PR-STV). The other 11 MLCs, who did not face election, were elected on [19 March 2022](#).

Table 1 below shows the overall rounded result for both Houses in terms of the first preference votes and the seats declared won. Labor soon appeared to be returned to government with a 72.3% absolute majority of the 47 Lower House seats, but with only 37.6% of first preference votes for its candidates.

PARTY	Lower House			Upper House		
	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Seats
Labor	37.6	72.3	34	36.7	45.5	5
One Nation	23.0	8.5	4	24.4	27.3	3
Liberal	19.0	10.6	5	17.7	18.2	2
Green	10.4	0.0	0	10.2	9.1	1
Others (incl. Independents)	10.0	8.5	4	10.8	0.0	0
Totals	100.0	100.0	47	100.0	100.0	11

Table 1: Overall result of SA's 2026 State election

In contrast, in the [Upper House](#), Labor's 36.7% of first preference votes won only 45.5% of the 11 seats to be filled, showing the fairness if PR-STV were used as the electoral system.

The main reason why single-member electorate systems often produce such distorted results in translating votes into seats is that all that is required to elect an MP, in each district, is a bare absolute majority of votes. The remaining votes - which amount to 50% or the vote minus one vote - elect nobody, which is not the case with PR-STV.

That minority of votes, which is just one vote short of the number of votes required for election in the electoral district, is simply wasted. That appalling [waste](#) occurs in each of the 47 districts, so just under half the state-wide vote in the Lower House is wasted.

Surprising electoral milestone achieved:

For the first time since the continuous long-term monopoly of mainland Australia's Government seats and Opposition seats - by Labor or the Coalition, both federally, and in the States and Territories - a somewhat different grouping, the One Nation Party, won the second-largest number of first preference votes at a Lower House election.

Despite that widespread and explicit indication of voters' wishes, SA's existing system of single-member electoral districts produced a distorted result in terms of Assembly seats won. Liberal MHAs will therefore form the official Opposition even though One Nation candidates won noticeably more votes. See the Society's [PR-STV Analysis](#) of the Assembly elections, which showed that One Nation, with 12 MHAs, would have become the Opposition rather than the Liberals, who would have won only 9 MHAs.

If South Australia's Lower House 2026 election had used [PR-STV](#) - the system used in Tasmania and the ACT - a far more representative Parliament would have been elected.

To illustrate that, PRSA Inc's Analysis has divided South Australia into eight electoral districts each electing five Assembly members, and one district (in central Adelaide) electing seven members. Each of the 47 existing electoral districts was included in one of those nine multi-member districts, maintaining the 'one vote, one value' principle. The data appeared on the [ABC website](#) on 09 April 2026.

The Analysis shows that the results for South Australia's 47-member House of Assembly, if PR-STV counting had applied, would have been something like that in Table 2 below:

PARTY	Labor	ON	Liberal	Green	Others	TOTAL
PR-STV SEATS	21	12	9	3	2	47

Table 2: Likely no. of PR-STV seats in 2026 SA Assembly

A comparison of the votes received with the seats won, by percentages, is shown in Table 3 below.

PARTY	Labor	ON	Liberal	Green	Others	TOTALS
% votes at the election	37.6%	23.0%	19.0%	10.4%	10.0%	100.0%
% seats by PR-STV %	44.7%	25.5%	19.1%	6.4%	4.3%	100.0%

Table 3: % votes versus % PR-STV seats in 2026 SA Assembly

Key messages from PRSA Inc’s analysis are:

(i) South Australia’s Parliament would actually represent what its voters wanted, so that with its less than 40% of the vote, Labor would win around 40% of the seats, not 70% as the ‘single-member’ electoral system delivered.

(ii) Every electoral district in South Australia would have had multiple representation. Most electoral districts would have elected MHAs from four different parties or independents because that is what the voters showed they wanted.

(iii) In every one of the multi-member districts proposed, there would have been a contest, in which voters had a real choice, in other words, there would be no safe seats.

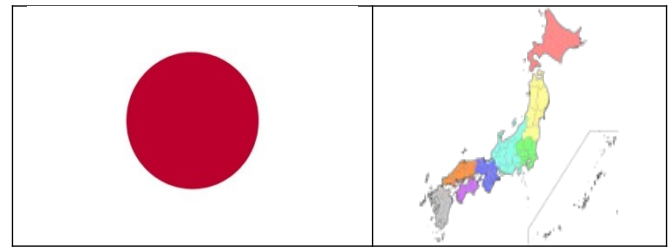
Victoria counts the high cost of by-elections for single-councillor wards versus countback

An [informative article](#) in Melbourne’s newspaper, *The Age*, gives a good explanation of why many Victorian municipalities are resenting the much greater cost to them of the Victorian Electoral Commission’s new requirement to conduct postal ballots to fill casual vacancies in the single-councillor wards that the Andrews Labor Government recently re-imposed by Victoria’s [Local Government Act 2020](#), while Adem Somyurek was its Minister for Local Government.

It was the Bracks Labor Government in 2003 that had introduced multi-councillor wards, and had provided for the filling of casual vacancies in those wards by [countback](#).

That new cost greatly exceeds the cost of the much cheaper use of countback - a far more representative and less onerous arrangement for citizens - which was used to fill such vacancies in the previous multi-councillor wards of those councils.

Elections for Japan’s House of Representatives



On 08 February 2026, the coalition government of the former long-term winner of an absolute majority of lower house seats, the Liberal Democratic Party, and its recent coalition partner, the Japan Innovation Party, instigated an early [general election](#) for all 425 seats in the lower house of Japan’s parliament, the House of Representatives. The previous general election for that house, in October 2021, and the unfortunate defects in its electoral system, were discussed in [QN2021D](#).

The [parallel electoral system](#) used for that house, which Japan adopted in 1994, did little to counter the landside effect of the great preponderance of single-member electoral districts it provides for Japan’s lower house. That house has 62% of its members elected in single-member districts with [plurality](#) counting of the votes.

The remaining 38% of seats are indirectly elected by a party-list form of proportional election. Table 4 below shows that a 49.1% vote for Liberal Democrats translated to 68.0% of seats overall.

Party	Nation-wide party-list proportional (176 seats)		Single-member districts (289 seats)		TOTALS (465 seats) % seats
	% votes	% seats	% votes	% seats	
Liberal Democratic	36.7	38.1	49.1	86.2	68.0
Centrist Reform	18.2	28.9	21.6	2.4	10.5
Dem Party for People	9.7	11.4	7.5	2.8	6.0
Japan Innovation	8.6	9.1	6.6	6.9	7.7
Sanseito	7.4	8.5	7.0	0.0	3.2
Team Mirai	6.7	6.3	0.3	0.0	2.4
Japan Communists	4.4	2.3	4.1	0.0	0.9
Reiwa Shinsengumi	2.9	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.2
Tax Cuts Japan	1.4	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.2
The 13 Others	5.3	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.2
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4: % votes versus % seats in 2026 Japanese Lower House

Election of Japan's Upper House:

Japan's Upper House, the House of Councillors, has elections for half of its 248 members every three years. As a result of the most recent periodic elections to it, in [July 2025](#), it now has 48.4% of its members belonging to either the governing Liberal Democratic Party, or its supporting party, the Japan Innovation Party. Many of the MPs in other Upper House parties tend to be supportive of a range of Liberal Democratic Party viewpoints.

Constitutional implications:

Article 96 of the post-war Constitution of Japan provides that the Constitution, which has never been altered to date, can only [be altered](#) by a two-thirds (66.7%) vote in each of its two houses of parliament, followed by a simple majority at a referendum.

The Constitution gives the Emperor no power to veto such a vote. It seems possible that a 66.7% vote for certain alterations would be achievable in each house, so their fate would depend on the result of a referendum of the nation's electors.

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ABN 31 010 090 247 A0048538N Victoria

National President: Dr Jeremy Lawrence pre@prsa.org.au