

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE – INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE 2006 VICTORIAN STATE ELECTION

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Recommendation	Government Response
Chapter 2: Victorian Electoral Commission	
<p>2.1: The Victorian Electoral Commission continue liaising with the Australian Electoral Commission to minimise duplication of roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC is a member of the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA), which consists of all state and territory commissioners and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The ECA meets around four times per year and this forum will continue to be a major foundation for cooperative working relationships.</p>
<p>2.2: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers conducting an audit of its election workforce planning, including a review of the roles, responsibilities and training requirements of its election staff, with the view to achieving efficient and effective outcomes for the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support. The Victorian Electoral Commission intends to develop its recruitment and training strategic plan for election officials required for the 2010 State election in early 2009. This is a standard component of the VEC’s election planning cycle.</p> <p>It is important to note the good work done by electoral officials on a relatively infrequent basis and ensure that their contribution is valued. Most do not do it for the money, but rather as a community service.</p>
<p>2.3: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers consulting with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to inform its development of a targeted strategy to recruit more Indigenous staff to work as election officials, particularly where there are</p>	<p>Support. Options to enable the recruitment of Indigenous staff to work as election officials will be considered as part of the recruitment and training strategic plan. The VEC will consult with agencies supporting Indigenous communities as part of this process, including Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.</p>

established Indigenous communities.	
2.4: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers implementing a more systematic approach to the recruitment of multilingual staff for the 2010 Victorian state election. Consideration should be given to aligning the appointment of multilingual staff with the predominant ethnic composition/community languages spoken in electorates.	Support. Options to ensure the recruitment of multilingual staff and the alignment of these staff with the community languages spoken in particular electorates will be considered as part of the recruitment and training strategic plan described in 2.2. The VEC will consult with agencies supporting multicultural communities as part of this process.
Chapter 3: Enrolment and Engagement – Part A	
3.1: For the 2010 Victorian state election, the Victorian Electoral Commission considers collaborating with the Australian Electoral Commission to educate Victorian electors about the differences between state and Commonwealth voting systems.	Support. The VEC will liaise with the AEC and consider this recommendation.
3.2: In relation to public access of the electoral roll, the Victorian Electoral Commission should note the importance of complying with and enforcing the provisions of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> .	Support. The VEC is currently complying with the legislation and is not legally authorised to prevent public access to the roll.
3.3: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers investigating the feasibility of	Not supported. The AEC trialled SMS texts for request of enrolment forms for the 2007 Federal election and from some 2,500 requests received 1,012 completed forms Australia

<p>introducing SMS text enrolment.</p>	<p>wide. Given that the AEC has already set up the infrastructure (the biggest associated cost for this initiative) to update the roll via this method, rather than duplicating the effort the VEC will put its resources into investigating other alternatives to improve the number of enrolments.</p>
<p>3.4: Victoria’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development inform the Electoral Matters Committee about the capacity to strengthen compulsory electoral education in secondary schools (pre-VCE).</p>	<p>Support. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) provide the curriculum framework for years prep to ten. Within the VELS the Civics and Citizenship domain articulates the required knowledge, skills and understanding that students should develop in relating to elections. Knowledge about electoral systems that operate within Australia is included in this domain. Victorian government schools operate under an autonomous governance model and decisions about the precise content of the curriculum are made at the school level within the VELS framework.</p> <p>The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will provide advice to the VEC regarding the development of curriculum resources that are consistent with the VELS for use by schools.</p>
<p>3.5: For the 2010 Victorian state election, the Victorian Electoral Commission considers advertising electoral education material on youth radio stations.</p>	<p>Support in part. The VEC will consider its 2010 state electoral program based on previous placement, research results and advice from a media planning agency.</p> <p>Radio, as a communication channel, is different from other media in that it is aural. As such, advertising on radio must allow for the fact that the messages must be very short, the call to action clear and contact details memorable for it to be successful. This works well for increasing awareness, but not at all for education provision.</p>
<p>3.6: The Parliament of Victoria’s Education Office considers including a summary of the Parliament’s activities on its website and liaising with print</p>	<p>Support in part. The website of the Parliament of Victoria is currently being redeveloped. As part of the redevelopment there will be a section called “What’s New”, targeted at news and media outlets that provide them with a summary of Parliament’s</p>

<p>media outlets about the inclusion of a weekly legislative report in a major Victorian newspaper.</p>	<p>activities.</p>
<p>3.7: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers establishing relationships with community service providers to assist with the distribution of electoral information to older persons.</p>	<p>Support in principle. There is no current evidence that enrolment and participation levels amongst older people in Victoria is currently an issue. For the 2002 state election, 582,728 (18.0%) of the 3,228,466 electors were over 65 on election day. For the 2006 state election this figure had increased to 634,341 (18.9%) of the total enrolment of 3,353,845 electors, which is to be expected with the ageing population. Equally, the number of non-voters over the age of 65 for the 2006 state election comprised only 0.015% of the total enrolment, or 0.35% of non-voters.</p> <p>Even though enrolment and participation levels in this demographic are not considered to be a major issue, prior to the 2006 state election, the VEC advertised in a number of seniors' magazines and sent information to every senior citizens centre and council in the state. This information included the date of the election and the availability of General Postal Voter status for older people, particularly for those who had a mobility issue.</p> <p>In the lead up to the November 2008 council elections the VEC implemented a strategy to inform carers and older persons of the council elections. Part of this was promotion of the availability of a new carers' brochure and articles in a number of magazines including Carers Victoria.</p>
<p>3.8: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers conducting electoral education for older persons and distribute brochures at planned activity groups and senior citizen centres.</p>	<p>Support in principle. See the response to recommendation 3.7.</p>
<p>3.9: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers publishing its key electoral information</p>	<p>Support. The publishing of key election information in accessible formats and Easy English is a major commitment in the VEC's Disability Action Plan 2008-2011. The</p>

<p>and resources in accessible formats and Easy-English.</p>	<p>Disability Action Plan itself is in Easy English.</p> <p>The Easy English version of the VEC’s Guide to the 2006 State election was so highly regarded by disability organization SCOPE, that it successfully entered it for inclusion at the International Society for Augmentation and Alternative Communication’s biennial conference in Canada in August 2008. Since then, Easy English versions of guides to the 2008 council elections have also been produced and focus group tested with people who have a disability and those who are experiencing homelessness. An Easy English version of <i>Running Your Own First Past the Post Election</i>, primarily aimed at community clubs and Indigenous groups has also been produced. SCOPE holds the VEC to be a model government organization when it comes to the provision of Easy English material.</p> <p>Electoral information is also available via the VEC’s website in 20 different languages and an interpreter service is advertised for <i>every</i> electoral event. This service provides either pre-recorded information specific to an event and provides an option for the caller to request the services of an interpreter.</p> <p>In addition, the VEC’s website conforms with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 conventions for accessibility.</p>
<p>3.10: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers investigating simplifying the current enrolment form.</p>	<p>Support in principle. The current enrolment form has been developed in conjunction with the Commonwealth and facilitates enrolment for all tiers of government in Victoria. As there are different requirements for State and Commonwealth enrolment, the information required has meant the form has increased in size in recent years making it appear more imposing. To retain a joint application for all tiers of government means that there is very little scope for simplification of the current enrolment form.</p> <p>The Victorian Government will consult with the Commonwealth Government to determine whether the identity requirements for enrolment can be streamlined and the current joint enrolment form simplified.</p>

Chapter 4: Enrolment and Engagement – Part B

<p>4.1: In consultation with Indigenous organisations and communities, the Victorian Electoral Commission considers liaising with the Australian Electoral Commission to develop electoral education for Indigenous people in Victoria.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC, in consultation with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, will consider opportunities to provide electoral education to Indigenous communities and is currently pursuing a possible partnership opportunity with an organisation aiming to have up to 300 Indigenous youth completing non-school programs each year.</p>
<p>4.2: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers engaging well-known Indigenous persons to raise awareness about enrolment and voting among their communities.</p>	<p>Support. The composition of the Indigenous population in Victoria is a collection of many and various clans. The culture is such that each clan is almost to be considered as a unique identity and what works for one, should not be considered to be automatically appropriate for another. An elder or identity revered within one clan may have little or no relevance for another. Based on a recommendation in a small research project in early 2006, the VEC did try this approach using prominent former Carlton footballer, Syd Jackson.</p> <p>The VEC, in consultation with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, will continue to consider opportunities to raise awareness about enrolment in Indigenous communities.</p>
<p>4.3: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers investigating the impact of television advertising on improving Indigenous electors' knowledge of upcoming state elections and considers strategic placement of community television announcements during Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lifestyle and current affairs</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will consult with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and seek advice from media planning agencies on this recommendation.</p>

<p>programs.</p>	
<p>4.4: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers liaising with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to investigate improving data collection on Indigenous enrolment.</p>	<p>Support. As part of the VEC's Indigenous enrolment initiatives the VEC considers that information on Indigenous enrolment and voting would be useful to measure how well these initiatives are working. The VEC will consider liaising with the ABS to investigate improving data collection on Indigenous enrolment.</p>
<p>4.5: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers recruiting bilingual workers to conduct electoral education with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.</p>	<p>Not supported. This recommendation resulted from a submission suggesting that the use of interpreters was problematic and less effective than the use of bilingual workers.</p> <p>The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) advises that the migrant communities are not able to distinguish between interpreters and bi-lingual workers from an information provision perspective. It suggests that the use of interpreters is entirely appropriate, especially given interpreters have professional guidelines for conducting this work where bi-lingual workers would not.</p> <p>Targeted education forums and presentations as suggested by the ECCV is a more prudent and efficient approach, particularly given the VEC's training in providing information in plain English, which can then be interpreted more easily.</p>
<p>4.6: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers conducting electoral education about enrolment, voting and voting rights with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in accessible venues.</p>	<p>Support. Prior to the 2006 state election, the VEC attended statewide travelling roadshows with the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) to provide translated material and a presentation on enrolling and voting for the 2006 election. Changes in the system of voting were also covered. These sessions resulted in a number of requests for radio interviews and further presentations for specific ethnic groups, which the VEC performed. The VEC will continue with this proactive approach.</p>
<p>4.7: The Victorian Electoral Commission continues to build and sustain relationships with</p>	<p>Support. The VEC has very good relationships with both the VMC and the ECCV and is continuing to build on them. See also the response to recommendation 4.5.</p>

<p>relevant culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations about communication strategies and electoral information provision.</p>	
<p>4.8: For the 2010 Victorian state election, the Victorian Electoral Commission considers running frequent and lengthier advertisements and information sessions on television, newspapers, and radio popular with culturally and linguistically diverse communities about correct voting methods, where to vote, voting rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Support in principle. The Victorian Government sets a minimum spend requirement for multicultural advertising as part of any major advertising campaign– at least 5% of the total media spend must be on multicultural advertising. The VEC almost doubled this figure in 2006. The post-election research indicated a high level of satisfaction with the communication services and products provided for this group.</p>
<p>4.9: The Victorian Electoral Commission continues translating its key electoral information and resources in relevant community languages and Easy-English.</p>	<p>Support. This is an ongoing activity within the Communication Branch of the VEC.</p>
<p>4.10: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers piloting its translated resources with the relevant communities to assess the appropriateness of translations.</p>	<p>Support. This will be done on partnered projects with ECCV and agencies where the ability to gather groups for focus testing is straightforward. The VEC is also now checking translations provided by one supplier by another translation supplier in order to ensure accurate translations.</p>
<p>4.11: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers conducting electoral education about enrolment, voting and voting rights with new and emerging communities in accessible venues.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC has been involved with Horn of Africa Project and Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria community sessions and will continue to seek opportunities in this area.</p>
<p>4.12: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers recruiting bilingual workers to conduct</p>	<p>See the response to 4.5. The VEC will continue projects such as those mentioned above.</p>

<p>electoral education with new and emerging communities.</p>	
<p>4.13: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers translating its key electoral information and resources in new and emerging community languages and providing resources in accessible formats.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will continue to take advice in this area from both the ECCV and the VMC. The move to new and emerging languages may slow given the extended period of time migrants must now be living in Australia prior to being able to apply for citizenship.</p>
<p>4.14: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers translating key electoral information and resources in accessible formats for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC has been very active in this area and will continue to be so. The VEC will follow up on the recommendations that eventuate from its current disability research.</p>
<p>4.15: The Victorian Electoral Commission continues to build and sustain relationships with relevant community organisations about communication strategies and electoral information provision for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Support. This is a key commitment in the VEC’s Disability Action Plan – which is ongoing in nature. Also, the results of the above mentioned research are expected to assist.</p>
<p>4.16: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers conducting electoral education about enrolment, voting and voting rights with health professionals, residential care workers and carers of people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will consider how to further improve its electoral education for persons with a disability once it completes its current research in this area.</p>
<p>4.17: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers conducting electoral education about enrolment, voting and voting rights with people</p>	<p>Support. This is a key commitment of the VEC and it has an ongoing relationship with St Mary’s House of Welcome and other homelessness agencies. St Mary’s House of Welcome also recently participated in a workshop on usability of the VEC’s draft Easy</p>

<p>experiencing homelessness and staff of homeless organisations in accessible venues.</p>	<p>English Guide to Council Elections. A series of enrolment and presentation days were provided to these agencies, and have been supported by mobile voting facilities where required for the 2008 council elections.</p>
<p>4.18: For the 2010 Victorian state election, the Victorian Electoral Commission considers promoting electoral participation in transitional housing and crisis accommodation centres.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will take advice from current contacts within the homelessness area on the feasibility of this suggestion.</p>
<p>Chapter 5: Administrative Aspects of Political Parties</p>	
<p>5.1: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to provide different registration requirements for parliamentary parties and non-parliamentary parties in line with the Commonwealth electoral provisions.</p>	<p>Not supported. Political party registration provisions in Victoria’s former electoral legislation, <i>The Constitution Act Amendment Act 1958</i>, were modeled on those in the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>. In both jurisdictions, there were different registration requirements for parliamentary parties and non-parliamentary parties. Non-parliamentary parties needed at least 500 members to be registered, while parliamentary parties simply had to have a member who was also a member of Parliament. There were a number of occasions in both jurisdictions where members of Parliament broke with their party and then set up their own registered party. Even though there was very little popular support for these parties, they were still entitled to registration and all the benefits of registration.</p> <p>One of the stated reforms contained in the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> was that requirements relating to the registration of political parties would be tightened, so that only parties with substantial community support could be registered. The <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> has abolished the distinction between parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties, so that all parties are treated alike: to obtain the benefits of registration, they need to have at least 500 members. In terms of equity, it would be more desirable for the Commonwealth to follow Victoria’s</p>

	lead.
5.2: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers reviewing the “Victorian Electoral Commission confirmation party membership form”.	Support. The VEC has acknowledged that its party membership confirmation form has caused confusion for some recipients, and is redesigning the form.
5.3: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers publishing on its website the register of political parties in Victoria and their respective office holders.	Support. The VEC will seek legal advice on this recommendation. Section 59 of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> prescribes that the register is to be available for public inspection at the office of the Commission. The issue is whether this provision would preclude the register being made available in other ways, such as on the VEC’s website.
5.4: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers developing guidelines about the structure and content of party constitutions to be provided to political parties upon application for registration.	Support. The VEC will provide party constitution guidelines that are within the scope of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> .
5.5: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers extending Occupational Health and Safety training to Voting Centre Managers and Assistant Voting Centre Managers and include within this training discussions of how to manage enforcing the “3 metre rule” when party staff and volunteers are handing out how to vote cards during extreme weather conditions.	<p>Support. The Occupational health and safety training for Voting Centre Managers and Assistant Voting Centre Managers is currently being reviewed and will be considered further as part of the recruitment and training strategic plan.</p> <p>The VEC will continue to train election officials managing voting centres to enforce the “3 metre rule”, as required by legislation, for the distribution of election material outside voting centres.</p> <p>The Victorian Electoral Commission provides protective clothing, including sun hats and sun screen, to staff who are required to work outside.</p>

<p>5.6: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to enable Election Managers to vary the provision so that how to vote cards can be handed out within 3 metres of the voting centre during extreme weather conditions.</p>	<p>Not supported. The purpose of the “3 metre rule” is to give voters clear access to the entrance of a voting centre, without being obstructed or bothered by enthusiastic party workers. Party workers and volunteers have a legitimate part in the election process, and are welcome to canvass voters and distribute how-to-vote cards outside voting centres. The limit for canvassing was reduced from 6 metres to 3 metres with the introduction of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> in the interests of flexibility; but there needs to be a clear limit within which party workers cannot enter.</p> <p>Weather conditions can be extreme in late November. Parties and candidates should ensure that their workers are properly equipped (shade umbrellas, sunscreen, hats and water, or alternatively wet weather gear) to help them handle such conditions</p>
<p>5.7: The Victorian Government considers including an electoral treating provision in the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to provide candidates with clear rules about bribery.</p>	<p>Support in principle. Victoria’s former electoral legislation, <i>The Constitution Act Amendment Act 1958</i>, contained treating provisions (sections 244 – 245A) but these were difficult to understand and enforce, and were not included in the Act.</p> <p>The Government will consider the re-introduction of an electoral treating provision in the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> following further consultation.</p>
<p>5.8: The Parliament of Victoria informs members at the induction program and “refresher” seminars what constitutes bribery and how to report an incident of bribery.</p>	<p>Not supported. The VEC currently provides information seminars for candidates and parties at which it can highlight the bribery provisions of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>. However, it is not appropriate for either the Parliament of Victoria or the VEC to provide candidates and parties with legal advice on what does and does not constitute bribery. Such questions should be referred to legal advisers.</p>
<p>5.9: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers incorporating the relevant extract on bribery from the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> in the Victorian Electoral Commission’s candidate’s</p>	<p>Support. The VEC currently refers candidates via the Candidate Handbook to the provisions of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> that relate to bribery offences. The VEC will consider including the specific extract relating to bribery for the 2010 State election.</p>

handbook.	
Chapter 6: Electoral Material	
<p>6.1: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers the ramifications of the legislative requirement associated with the registration of how-to-vote cards, in particular the discretionary powers given to the Election Manager.</p>	<p>Not supported. All how-to-vote cards at State elections are registered by the Electoral Commissioner. Registered political parties must lodge cards directly with the Electoral Commissioner for registration and independent candidates may submit cards for registration with the local manager, but these are all registered by the Commission. The Election Manager provides a point of lodgement only. The Election Manager has no discretionary powers in relation to the registration of how-to-vote cards at State elections. (See sections 77 – 80 <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>)</p> <p>In local council elections, how-to-vote card registration is the responsibility of each Returning Officer under the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>. This does not apply at State elections.</p>
<p>6.2: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to enable electors at mobile voting centres to request their own copies of how to vote cards.</p>	<p>Not supported. Protecting the secret ballot is as important in mobile voting as in any other type of voting in a State election. Currently, a mobile voting team brings a folder of registered how-to-vote cards that have been provided by political parties and candidates. The team advises voters that how-to-vote cards have been provided, and presents the folder to voters if requested. Teams are equipped with voting screens that can be placed on beds.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed to the EMC that this process could compromise the secrecy of the ballot, since election officials and hospital staff can see the how-to-vote card in the folder that the voter is following. However, the recommended amendment is unlikely to do anything to improve the secrecy of the ballot. If a voter was given individual how-to-vote cards, observers would be able to see which card the voter was using. In contrast, under the current procedure, the how-to-vote card folder can be turned to shield the voter's</p>

	<p>choice from observers. The most effective ways to preserve the secrecy of the vote are to use portable voting screens and for election officials and hospital staff to stand back to respect the voter’s privacy (unless the voter requests assistance).</p> <p>Another difficulty with this recommendation is that it would require parties and candidates to provide unknown but multiple copies of how-to-vote cards. This would impose an administrative burden on parties and candidates, and would lead to a reduced choice for voters if a party or candidate failed to provide copies or did not provide enough.</p>
<p>6.3: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers implementing a recycling strategy for the 2010 Victorian state election, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing the current system of paper recycling for all voting centres and districts; • assessing where cardboard collection boxes or wheelie bins are required during the election period; and • providing an improved paper recycling service, including cardboard collection boxes and wheelies bins, across voting centres in Victoria. 	<p>Support. The VEC will continue to consider sustainable business practices and to review and enhance options for recycling materials at future elections, but the main challenge continues to be reducing the volume of paper products used at each election.</p> <p>Cardboard voting screens, ballot papers and how-to-vote cards are the major paper products used at each voting centre. Ballot papers remain under security until destroyed in accordance with legislative timeframes and the VEC arranges for the collection and recycling of the other materials following election day.</p> <p>The VEC’s current recycling strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing recycling bins inside voting centres for recyclable materials – this includes waste paper, plastic and aluminium. The VEC does not provide recycling bins directly outside voting centres for this purpose, because of the risk that an elector may dispose of an unused ballot paper in a public area. • All materials for recycling and rubbish are cleared from each voting centre at the end of election day and collected for recycling or disposal in the following week. • Similarly all election offices arrange for recycling bins to be provided and collected during and after the election period.

<p>6.4: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> so that groups that register under section 69A of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> must lodge a group voting ticket.</p>	<p>Support. The Government will, after further consultation, also consider making legislative provision setting out the consequences of ballot papers marked above-the-line for any groups that fail to lodge a group voting ticket.</p>
<p>6.5: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers ensuring that group voting tickets published on its website are both in a prominent location and easily accessible.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC intends to redevelop its website in 2009 and will consider these matters in that redevelopment.</p>
<p>6.6: The Victorian Electoral Commission ensures that election day voting centres prominently display group voting tickets at the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will ensure that the requirements of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> relating to the display of group voting tickets are communicated to all Voting Centre Managers for future elections.</p>
<p>6.7: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to require group voting tickets to be prominently displayed at all voting centres.</p>	<p>Not supported. Section 73A of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> already requires group voting tickets to be prominently displayed at election day voting centres. The issue is not the legislation, but rather the fact that group voting tickets were not prominently displayed at all voting centres. The VEC will ensure that the requirements of the Act relating to the display of group voting tickets are communicated to all voting centre managers for future elections.</p>
<p>6.8: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers investigating simplifying the ballot paper designs for the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.</p>	<p>Support in principle: The ballot paper content and layout for the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council ballot papers are prescribed in the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>.</p> <p>The VEC will continue to ensure that print and font sizes maximize clarity and readability for electors but it is restricted by the Act in relation to matters of content and layout.</p> <p>The Government will, in consultation with the VEC, consider whether simplifying ballot designs is feasible. The Government will also consider any further recommendations of</p>

	the Electoral Matters Committee as they relate to informal voting, in its future report on <i>Voter Participation and Informal Voting</i> .
<p>6.9: The Victorian Government considers amending section 83(3) of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> so that electoral matter, which is in the form of a letter and bears the name and street address of the sender does not need to contain “an authorised and printed by” tag.</p>	<p>Support. The Government will consider amending section 83(3) of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> along the lines of section 328(3)(c) of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>.</p>
<p>Chapter 7: Voting Centres and Voting</p>	
<p>7.1: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers allowing electors from the electorate to vote at mobile voting centres where convenient.</p>	<p>Support in principle. The VEC appointed 892 mobile voting centres for the 2006 State election.</p> <p>Mobile voting is a specialized service usually offered to hospitals, nursing homes, hostels etc. where residents would find it difficult to vote by other means. The VEC will also organize mobile voting centres to cater for electors attending large organized events on election day or unplanned events that draw large groups of the community on election day (such as the volunteer firefighters at the Casterton fires).</p> <p>In most instances, the VEC designates those centres to be used as mobile voting centres in consultation with the administration of each centre. The VEC also designates the class of elector that is entitled to vote (i.e. residents, patients, staff and family) at a particular mobile voting centre in consultation with the centre administration. The administrators of each venue provide advice in this regard depending on the age, health and mobility of the electors together with the physical layout of the venue. But the VEC does not own or lease these venues and does not have the authority to allow general members of the public into these venues to access mobile voting facilities.</p>

	<p>Where the VEC establishes a mobile voting centre to cater for electors outside of health care facilities it maintains a flexible approach in allowing electors to vote at the centre.</p> <p>The VEC will continue to offer the same mobile voting service to health care facilities in future and is considering increasing the number of early voting centres for those electors who are not able to attend a voting centre on election day.</p>
<p>7.2: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers reducing the number of joint voting centres at the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will consider reducing the number of joint voting centres at the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>
<p>7.3: The Victorian Electoral Commission continues liaising with community and disability organisations and Victoria’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to locate and lease fully wheelchair accessible voting centres for major electoral events.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC has requested that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Planning and Community Development consider the retrofitting of facilities used as voting venues, to ensure that they are fully wheelchair accessible.</p>
<p>7.4: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers liaising with Members of Parliament, Access for All Abilities Co-ordinators and Rural Access/Metro Access Officers to assist with the review, monitoring and acquisition of suitable locations and facilities for voting centres.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC is committed to finding as many fully wheelchair accessible voting centres as possible and has made contact with the suggested groups.</p>
<p>7.5: The Victorian Government considers liaising with the Australian Government to progress the inclusion of the “Disability Standards for Access to Premises” (Premises Standard) into the <i>Building Code of Australia 1996</i>.</p>	<p>Support. The Victorian Government will continue to liaise with the Australian Government in relation to the “Disability Standards for Access to Premises”.</p>

<p>7.6: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers including parking and public transport accessibility as part of its access audit for voting centres.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC conducts a full assessment of all voting centres prior to each electoral event to ensure that the level of access is clearly communicated for each venue in election information and advertisements. Parking is already considered as part of the VEC’s access audit and a venue is not rated as fully accessible unless it has accessible parking available.</p> <p>The VEC will review and update its accessibility audit tool in consultation with the VEC’s Electoral Access Advisory Group and other electoral agencies as is done after each electoral event. The inclusion of additional information regarding public transport will be considered as part of this process.</p>
<p>7.7: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers maintaining voting centres in the smaller communities of rural Victoria.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will continue to maintain voting centres in smaller communities of Victoria - providing that venues remain available and in a suitable condition for this purpose.</p>
<p>7.8: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers developing a poster in languages other than English informing electors that written electoral information is available in 19 languages. The poster should be displayed at all voting centres during the election period.</p>	<p>Support. During the election period, the key messaging in voting centres is necessarily how to vote correctly. This poster has already been designed by the VEC and is about to go into production. It covers 20 different languages.</p>
<p>7.9: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers expanding mobile voting services for people experiencing homelessness at the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support. This commitment has already been made with the VEC’s homelessness networks – a formal invitation will be provided prior to 2010 election and the VEC will provide services to all agencies accepting this offer.</p>
<p>7.10: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers liaising with Australian embassies overseas, particularly in the United States</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will conduct a full review of overseas voting procedures and logistics for the 2010 State election and will include liaison with Australian embassies in its considerations.</p>

<p>of America, to progress workable procedural guidelines for future state elections which will facilitate the timely delivery of election materials.</p>	
<p>Chapter 8: Electronic voting</p>	
<p>8.1: To guarantee the integrity and secrecy of each voter's ballot, the Victorian Electoral Commission considers alternative methods of reporting the votes from e-centres for the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support. Currently, the VEC displays first preference votes by voting centre for each district in State elections. Included in those voting centres are the e-centres where the electronic votes are cast, with each e-centre given a line of its own. If only one person casts a vote for a particular district at a particular e-centre on election day, then the first preference of that voter can be determined by a person who happens to know where the voter voted and for which district. This only applies to voters who cast votes on election day, as early votes are displayed aggregated in a separate line.</p> <p>While there were only 199 electronic votes cast, there were also over 24,000 non-electronic votes cast at the e-centres. In terms of the VEC's display of results, the electronic votes are not differentiated from the non-electronic votes cast at e-centres.</p> <p>Nonetheless, there are instances where there is only one vote for a particular district from a particular e-centre on some results pages. In order to breach an individual's privacy, though, it would be necessary for another person to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that a person voted on a particular day; • where the person voted; and • for which district the person is enrolled. <p>In general, there is relatively little likelihood of one person knowing all of these things about another person (with the exception of political parties, to whom this information is</p>

	provided). Nonetheless, the VEC will be mindful of this recommendation in redeveloping its website in 2009.
8.2: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to expand electronic voting to the print disabled community which includes people with motor impairments, people with poor English language skills and people who are illiterate in English.	Support. The Victorian Government will consider expanding access to electronic voting with particular reference to the print disabled community.
8.3: Further e-voting trials be conducted at future Victorian state elections.	Supported in principle. Part 6A of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> provides that electronic voting may be made available for electors who are visually impaired and this service will continue to be offered by the VEC in future State elections. As indicated in recommendation 8.2 the Government will consider expanding access to electronic voting and this may be done through e-voting trials.
Chapter 9: Counting the Votes	
9.1: The Victorian Government considers amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to include clearer provisions for how to manage postal vote declarations which are postmarked “Sunday”.	Support. The Government will consider amending the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> to provide that postal vote envelopes postmarked on the Sunday after election day be opened and assessed according to the witness date on the declaration, in the same way as envelopes without a postmark are currently assessed.
9.2: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers providing a postal ballot paper tracking service at future Victorian state elections.	Support. The VEC is planning to include progressive postal voting statistics as part of its reporting strategy for the 2010 State election.
9.3: The Victorian Government considers including in the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> a provision	Support in principle. The Government, in consultation with the VEC, will consider the benefits of this recommendation together with the cost and time implications before

<p>that the Victorian Electoral Commission conducts two candidate preferred preference distributions for each polling booth in every Legislative Assembly District at Victorian state elections.</p>	<p>deciding whether to amend the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> as recommended.</p>
<p>9.4: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers pre-sorting ballot papers into batches of first preferences for Legislative Council counts.</p>	<p>Support in principle. The VEC will consider the benefits together with the cost and time implications of this suggestion when developing the overall Legislative Council counting strategy for the 2010 election.</p>
<p>Chapter 10: Communicating the results</p>	
<p>10.1: The state tally room is retained for the 2010 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support in principle. The VEC will retain the state tally room provided the major political parties provide a commitment to a significant presence at the tally room on election day.</p>
<p>10.2: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers ways to reinvigorate interest in the tally room, whether through a new venue and or an increased public awareness campaign.</p>	<p>Not supported. Interest in the tally room will be reinvigorated if the major political parties provide a commitment to a significant presence which is what attracts the media and the public. The venue is not the issue.</p>
<p>10.3: The Victorian Government considers removing the annual reporting requirement of the Victorian Electoral Commission from the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and inserting this reporting requirement into the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> with the express provision that the report is presented directly to the two Presiding Officers of</p>	<p>Support in principle. The Government will consider this recommendation as part of the broader review of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> which is examining annual reporting requirements.</p>

<p>the Parliament, for presentation to Parliament.</p>	
<p>10.4: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers publishing booth-by-booth data for future Legislative Council elections.</p>	<p>Support. The VEC will consider the benefits together with the cost and time implications of this suggestion when developing the overall Legislative Council counting strategy for the 2010 election.</p>
<p>10.5: The Victorian Electoral Commission considers the publication of two-party preferred results as a matter of priority after the declaration of the poll, at future Victorian State elections.</p>	<p>Supported in part. For future State elections, the VEC will review election results on election night and determine those Legislative Assembly Districts where a two-party count may be required. The VEC will implement procedures to allow for the conduct of and publication of two-party count results where required, in the week following the election.</p>