

Victorian Electoral Commission

Preliminary Report

on the 2010 Victorian State election

May 2011

Victorian Electoral Commission
Preliminary report on the 2010 Victorian State election
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Electoral Matters Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne 3002

I am pleased to submit this preliminary report on the administration of the Victorian State election held on 27 November 2010. This report has been fast-tracked and should be taken as a precursor to my full report. Any errors or omissions will be corrected in my full report, which will be tabled before Parliament later this year.



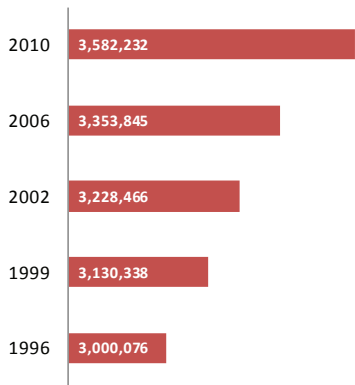
Steve Tully
Electoral Commissioner
17 May 2011

2010 Victorian State election at a glance

Legislative Assembly – Lower House	
Total Voters Enrolled (at close of roll)	3,582,232
Total Votes Counted	3,329,865 (92.96% of enrolment at close of roll)
Total Formal Votes	3,164,729
Total Informal Votes	165,136 (4.96% of total votes counted)
Legislative Council – Upper House	
Total Voters Enrolled (at close of roll)	3,582,232
Total Votes Counted	3,328,861 (92.93% of enrolment at close of roll)
Total Formal Votes	3,216,386
Total Informal Votes	112,475 (3.38% of total votes counted)

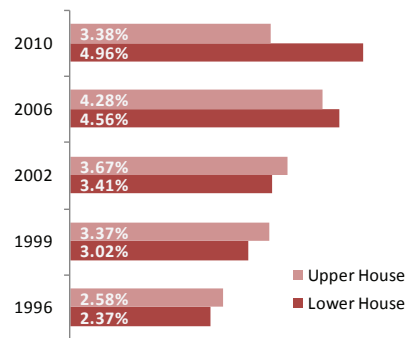
Victorian State elections

Enrolment



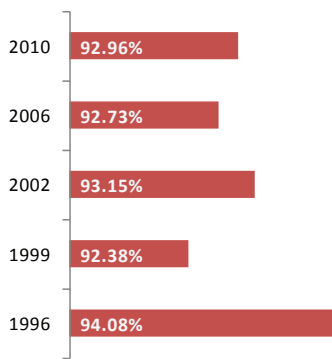
Electors on Victorian enrolment register at close of roll, Victorian State elections, 1996-2010

Informality



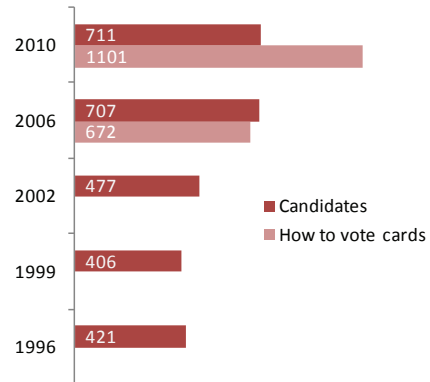
Informality at Victorian State elections, 1996-2010

Turnout



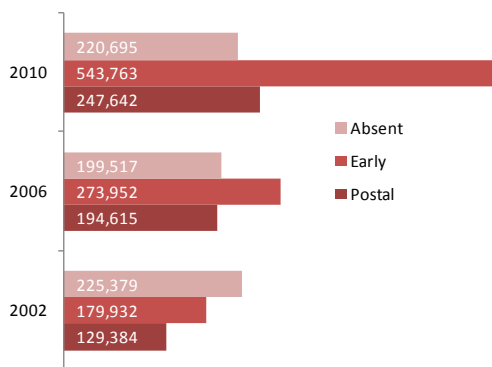
Voter turnout, Victorian State elections, 1996-2010

Candidates



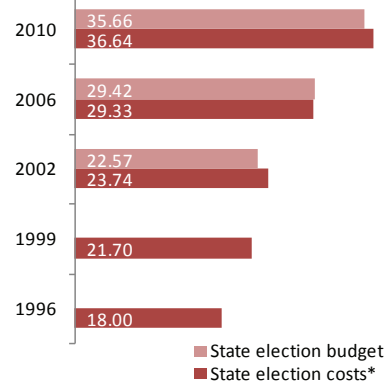
Number of candidates contesting and number of registered how-to-vote cards, Victorian State elections, 1996-2010

Absent, early and postal votes



Absent, early and postal votes, Victorian State elections, 2002-2010

Budget and Costs \$M



Budget and costs, Victorian State elections, 1996-2010
* Marginal costs, estimated at time of report

Victorian State elections, 2002-2010

Executive Summary	2002	2006	2010
Total enrolment	3,228,466	3,353,845	3,582,232
Total votes counted	3,007,342	3,109,907	3,329,865
Voter turnout (participation rate)	93.15%	92.73%	92.96%
Overseas and interstate votes returned	8,205	10,805	10,508
Antarctic votes	7	13	16
Total Candidates	477	707	711
Total below the line votes % (average across all regions)	N/A	5%	3.90%
Informality - Lower House	3.42%	4.56%	4.96%
Informality -Upper House	3.67%	4.28%	3.38%
Nominations	2002	2006	2010
Lower House	372	459	502
Upper House	97	248	209
Party candidates	412	644	624
Independent candidates	65	63	87
Contentious nominations	1	0	0
Group voting tickets/How to Vote Cards	2002	2006	2010
Group voting tickets registered and on website by 9am next day	N/A	75	57
Registered HTVCs	522	672	1,101
HTVCs taken to VCAT	0	0	0
Voting statistics	2002	2006	2010
Total votes returned	NR	NR	3,340,332
Total votes counted	3,007,342	3,109,907	3,329,865
Ordinary votes counted	2,471,486	2,440,009	2,289,187
Postal votes counted	129,384	194,615	247,642
Early votes counted	179,932	273,952	543,763
Absent votes counted	225,379	199,517	220,695
Provisional votes counted	1,159	1,808	28,533
MAV votes counted	2	6	45
<i>NR: Not reported</i>			
<i>Note: Some instances of incorrect result labelling - re-reported to registered parties on 1 Dec 2010</i>			
Voting services	2002	2006	2010
Voting centre venues booked and assessed by mid-October	1,655	1,652	1,675
Extra early voting centres identified and leased by mid-September	26	34	45
Election offices leased October 1	53	43	64
Special facilities provided with mobile voting services	878	826	833
Special facilities provided with postal voting services	Inc above	66	153
Ballot packs distributed to GPs	31,243	41,722	51,713
Ballot packs distributed to postal voters	170,000	184,448	298,886
Extra voting services provided upon request	N/A	4	0
Overseas voting centres established	35	28	34
Interstate voting centres established	12	11	11
Antarctic voting centres established	1	1	1
EasyVote Guides despatched from mailhouse	3,341,432	3,591,687	3,530,488
Scannable rolls produced and delivered to warehouse	6,491	7,689	7,997
PDA's provided to voting centres for roll look-up	N/A	474	1,980
Netbooks provided to voting centres for electronic roll marking	N/A	N/A	1,080

Ballot papers printed for election	25,320,000	12,281,000	12,009,000
Results Services	2002	2006	2010
% district ordinary votes counted at voting centres by 10pm on election night	NR	96.40%	98.90%
% of total Lower House votes counted within 5 days of election day	NR	NR	93.60%
Number of days to declare all Lower house seats	12	16	12
Number of days to declare all Upperhouse seats	12	19	18
Preference distributions	52	49	46
District recounts	2	1	0
Region recounts	2 (Province)	3	0
District declarations	88	88	88
Region declarations	22+2 (Province)	8	8
Enrolment	2002	2006	2010
New enrolments (2 Oct-1 Dec 2006)	48,710	62,165	48,230
Updated enrolments (2 Oct - 1 Dec 2006)	138,529	117,917	103,090
Returned to sender - roll clean up	34,316	34,000	35,768
Nomination enrolments checked	477	707	711
Enrolments received by virtual fax/website	5,690	28,166	
Enrolment forms sourced from supermarkets	3,556	5,158	
Enrolment forms dispatched from TES	N/A	2,949	
Enrolment forms sourced from Australia Post	2,924	2,511	
Total enrolment forms sourced	N/A	91,863	59732
Special late electors	259	61	16
New General Postal Voter applications processed	935	3,796	1,246
Declaration votes (total)	91,963	74,403	36,811
- Absent Not on Roll	60,102	32,179	2,264
- Unenrolled	29,976	39,667	NA
- Early Not on Roll	1,883	1,493	1
On-the-day enrolment provisional vote	N/A	N/A	34,546
Deceased electors removed from roll	52,702	12,316	7,800
Mapping	2002	2006	2010
No of organisations provided with electoral boundaries data	N/A	18	14
Voting centre lookup			
Web	N/A	206,356	213,106
iPhone app (downloads)	N/A	N/A	5,165
Interactive electoral boundaries map	N/A	N/A	5,610
Personnel	2002	2006	2010
Election day officials appointed	13,630	14,811	16,993
% election day officials who completed online training	N/A	N/A	81%
Election casuals appointed			3817
Election managers appointed	53	43	56
Assistant election managers appointed	106	107	99
Region coordinators appointed	N/A	N/A	8
Assistant region coordinators appointed	N/A	N/A	8
Election support officers appointed			11
HelpDesk staff supporting election officials	12	12	7
Election officials identified as having a disability	(Not measured) N/M	N/M	361

Election officials identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	N/M	6	177
Election officials with foreign language skills	1,126	1,669	2931
Training hours for Senior Election Officials	9,984 hours	6,600 hours	10,763 hours
Disability access indicators	2002	2006	2010
Organisations invited to attend access group	N/A	14	20
Access group planning meetings	N/A	3	1
Formal complaints in relation to access	1	3	
Complaints to Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	1	0	2
Fully wheelchair accessible venues	770 (47%)*	178 (10%)	286 (17%)
Braille information letters mailed to blind/vision impaired voters	N/A	N/A	180
Large print information letters mailed to blind/vision impaired voters	N/A	N/A	750
Audio files mailed to blind/vision impaired voters	N/A	6,800	12,340
<i>*A more stringent access audit tool was introduced in 2006</i>			
Telephone Enquiry Service	2002	2006	2010
Calls to service	129,774	227,246	106,784
Calls answered by auto-attendant	24,833	73,379	30,645
Calls answered by operators	99,743	128,090	73,939
Calls escalated to Enrolment Branch	N/A	1,485	1,238
Calls to interpreter	N/A	2,045	541
Fulfilment from call centre	N/A	13,018	6,735
Hours service operational	N/A	515.5	404
Proportion of calls answered within 30 seconds	N/A	65%	86%
Formal complaints with regard to service	N/A	2	0
Service hours system offline	N/A	0	0.3
Complaints	2002	2006	2010
Services to voters	23	59	103
About the media	1	1	2
About candidates/parties	49	103	42
About the VEC (compulsory voting, not employed as election official, conduct of election official, employment conditions, ballot paper presentation)	37	62	20
Total	110	225	167
Advertising		2006	2010
Print advertisements published		253	266
Radio advertisements aired		4,222	2,156
Television spots aired		982	122
Outdoor - metrolites and superlite billboards		69	
Media		2006	2010
Total media releases issued		54	36
Journalist queries received		421	350
Journalist surveys distributed		33	N/A
Journalist surveys completed and returned		7 (21%)	N/A
Emails		2006	2010
Emails received on info@vec.vic.gov.au (responses in working days)		1,714	1,913
Website		2006	2010
Total hits over election period		27,992,472	3,287,493
Files downloaded over election period		8,994	149,799
Translated material available in language other than English		19	22

Audio files available		5	24
Election-related updates (excluding election night)		117	182
Voting centre look-up hits over election period		206,534	211,353
Combined voting centre lookup hits on Friday 24 & Saturday 25 November		71,456	59,470
Voting centre look-up availability (hours)		620 hours	1,033
Interactive animations available		5	5
Election night results services - 3 minute updates		97 files	120
Virtual Tally room total hits Nov 24-30, 2006		1,789,316	1,555,857
Electronic Voting		2006	2010
Votes printed and counted		199	961
Votes lost or corrupted		0	0
Election Publications	2002	2006	2010
Election manuals printed (* Includes election manuals, candidate and scrutineer handbooks)	67,370*	60,500	76,700*
Bulletins sent to Election Managers and Region Coordinators	63	60	60
Bulletins sent to registered political parties	5	29	24
Bulletins sent to Upper House candidates	0	11	17
Education supplement in Age newspaper	0	2	1
Research Evaluation	2002	2006	2010
Level of satisfaction of early voters	97%	98%	95%
Level of satisfaction of postal voters	92%	83%	91%
Level of satisfaction of absent voters	93%	90%	91%
Level of satisfaction of CALD voters	75%	89%	86%*
Level of satisfaction of election day voters	90%	86%	91%
Level of satisfaction of political parties with VEC services	satisfied	highly satisfied	highly satisfied
Level of satisfaction of candidates with operation of voting centres	NA	77%	83%
Level of satisfaction of blind/vision-impaired voters	NA	82%	95%
Level of satisfaction of election officials with training manual	NA	87%	TBA
Overall satisfaction level of voters	93%	88%	TBA
<i>* Small sample size, decrease not statistically significant</i>			
Budget	2002	2006	2010
State election budget	\$22.57M	\$29.42M	\$35.663M
Estimated cost of state election	\$23.74M	\$29.33M	\$36.643M
Electoral Entitlements	2002	2006	2010
Eligible formal first preference votes	5,697,220	5,622,395	5,942,129
Entitlement per formal first preference vote	\$6.83M	\$7.399M	\$8.823M
Payroll	2002	2006	2010
Officials returned pays reprocessed (banking details provided incorrect)	N/A	462(3.1%)	396 (1.9%)
Value of election payroll (incl. Payroll tax & superannuation)	N/A	\$13.04M	\$17.30M

Foreword

The conduct of the election of the 57th Victorian Parliament brought opportunities, challenges and a great sense of achievement to the Victorian Electoral Commission.

The legislated timing of the election enabled the VEC to be “election ready”, developing and maintaining an extensive and rigorous Election Plan, which was published early, revisited and reviewed regularly. The State Election Plan guided the VEC in the successful delivery of electoral services to almost 3.6 million eligible electors across Victoria, within Australia and around the globe. This report outlines the conduct of the 2010 State election including the service provided to electors, registered political parties, candidates and the media, and I commend my staff for their dedication and contribution to a successful State election.

Inclement weather on election day presented a major challenge to electors, candidates, party workers and the VEC. An increase of more than 100% in the numbers of electors voting early is also noteworthy. Special attention to planning for services to voters resulted in more staff and resources, shorter queues, faster service and more accessible voting no matter where the voter was located.

The Electoral Amendment (Electoral Participation) Act 2010, passed prior to the election, changed the ways in which people could be enrolled and how they could vote, and demonstrates the Parliament’s accord with the VEC’s objectives of making enrolment and voting accessible and easy.

The amendments introduced by this made it possible for the VEC to develop and implement programs that helped maximise the number of eligible Victorians that are correctly enrolled, and that made voting even more accessible to a wider range of electors.

While presenting administrative and technological challenges to the VEC, it was gratifying to see that these legislative amendments provided accessible voting to people who might otherwise have been unable to participate, or for whom standard voting presents considerable difficulty. Information and communications technology featured heavily in the VEC’s response to the new legislation and again supported every aspect of the election. These two major themes – access to voting and the integration of technology into electoral services – are featured throughout this report.

Outstanding issues now for the VEC and the Parliament, are threefold:

- the high proportion of informal votes that indicate lack of knowledge of how to vote correctly, or are blank or deliberately informal;
- the turnout at elections (averaging 93.06% for the past five Victorian elections); and
- how to engage Victorians in the electoral or democratic process.

While there are many reasons that could be put forward in explanation for each of these phenomena, I believe they could be effectively addressed by the VEC, with the support of the Parliament.

Programs based on solid research and culturally authentic program design, such as those implemented by the VEC’s small but dynamic Community Education Team are shown to bring real results. *Passport to Democracy*, *Homeless doesn’t mean Voteless*, and *Voting is for Everyone* have had a measureable impact on the electoral engagement and knowledge of participants. Government support is critical to the success of these programs. In this report, I foreshadow a recommendation in relation to the redirection of monies currently paid into the consolidated fund, to support electoral research, outreach, engagement and education.

The VEC’s commitment to voter services is demonstrated by the efforts made to ensure that over 450 Victorian electors cruising aboard the *Dawn Princess* were able to apply for a postal vote in Melbourne, receive their ballot material at Hobart or Brisbane, and submit their votes Act at Brisbane or Darwin. I take this opportunity to formally express my appreciation to the Electoral Commissions who provided willing assistance with this huge logistics exercise, and for the support of State, Territory and Australian Electoral Commissions in many other aspects of the election.

With access to voting services a major objective, key information was available in a variety of formats, including audio, Easy English, and other languages. A telephone enquiry service operated throughout the election period, taking over 106,000 calls, with less than one percent of all calls diverted to voicemail. In addition, the VEC embraced social media and technology offering SMS enrolment and voting reminder services, information via Facebook, and an iPhone voting centre look-up application.

Some 17% of voting centres available for lease were rated as fully wheelchair accessible compared with 10.8% in 2006. The VEC acknowledges the

frustrations of electors and potential employees who have disabilities, and works hard to find voting venues that are fully wheelchair accessible. We will continue to work with our Electoral Access Advisory Group and other agencies to develop workable solutions.

A key component of the “Every Vote will Shape Victoria” communication campaign was the EasyVote Guide, which was mailed to every elector on the enrolment register prior to election day. The EasyVote Guide contained elector and electorate details, and also provided information on when, how and where people could cast their vote.

An exciting new electoral education resource was the Election Roadshow. Launched at the Royal Melbourne Show, and travelling to shopping centres and agricultural shows, the Election Roadshow provided electoral information, education and interactive displays to communities in targeted areas of metropolitan and regional Victoria. In addition, an expanded education and community engagement focus delivered tailored information, enrolment and mobile voting sessions to Aboriginal, CALD, homeless and prisoner groups.

New legislation enabled the expansion of electronically assisted voting (EAV) to include not only electors who are blind or who have a vision-impairment, but also those with low proficiency in English or literacy difficulties, and electors with poor motor skills. This major initiative, attracted nearly five times more voters than the e-voting pilot program at the 2006 state election. While the numbers may appear small, I am confident EAV will prove to be a major force in the delivery of the secret ballot to electors who could otherwise be disenfranchised.

The VEC was very pleased with its performance in conducting the 2010 State election, and this is supported by the results of independent surveys conducted on and after election day.

The outcome of the election meant close scrutiny, an anxious wait for results, and pressure on election staff to finalise counts quickly while maintaining the highest levels of accuracy. Rechecking of all Upper House ballot papers at a regional level resulted in a smooth and speedy computer count of ballot papers marked below the line, and no recounts were requested or required. All counts were conducted in a timely manner prior to the return of the Writ, with no resulting applications for appeal lodged with the Court of Disputed Returns.

The VEC administers the law as passed by Parliament, and must remain neutral on policy matters such as compulsory voting and methods of voting. In accordance with this principle, this preliminary report highlights matters in regard to election administration that do not impact on policy, provides information on the impact of current laws and foreshadows certain recommendations I intend to make in my full report to Parliament.

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Section 1 - Introduction

The Governor issued Writs for the 2010 Victorian State election at 6.00pm on Tuesday, 2 November, 2010. The issue of the Writs is a legal requirement and sets out the timetable of the election. One Writ is issued for the election of the Legislative Council and one for the election of the Legislative Assembly.

At the issue of the Writs, there were 11 registered political parties. At close of nominations there were 711 candidates, compared with 707 in 2006. Ten of the eleven registered political parties contested at least one electorate.

The Liberal Party won 35 seats in the Legislative Assembly and the National Party won 10 seats, giving the Coalition the overall majority. The Australian Labor Party (ALP) won 43 seats.

The Liberal Party received 38.03% of first-preference votes, and the ALP received 36.25% of first-preference votes. The National Party received 6.75%. On a Coalition/Labor two-party preferred basis, the vote was 51.58% and 48.42%. The Greens received 11.21% of first preference votes for the Legislative Assembly, up from 10.04% at the 2006 State election.

Election timetable

The Victorian State election timeline is set in legislation. The Constitution Act 1975 prescribes that, barring exceptional circumstances, the Victorian State election is to be held on the last Saturday in November every four years.

The trigger for a State election is the issue of the Writs, which occurs 25 days before election day. The Writs for a State election must be returned no later than 21 days after election day. The timeframe for the conduct of the 2010 State election was 46 days (33 working days).

Given this timeframe, it is essential that planning and preparation commences well in advance of the election. The lead-time for the management of the 2010 State election was 12–16 months with most major projects in place by the issue of the Writs.

The timeline for the 2010 election, based on the Writs being issued on Tuesday 2 November 2010, is included as Figure 1.

Business Intelligence

Using the VEC's EMS database, the VEC implemented a business intelligence solution that provided a far more granular view of election data than in past elections.

This gave the VEC a much better insight into the progress of the elections and allowed better and more accurately targeted management of the election process.

Figure 1: Timeline for 2010 Victoria State Election

<p>“Expiry of the Legislative Assembly Parliament is dissolved 25 days before the last Saturday in November.”</p>	Tuesday, 2 November
<p>“Issue of Writs The issue of the Writs commences the election process. The Writ commands the VEC to hold an election and contains the dates for the close of rolls, the close of nominations, election day and the return of the Writs. At a State election, Writs are issued for the election of all the members of the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) and for all members of the Legislative Council (Upper House). ”</p>	Tuesday, 2 November
<p>“Close of rolls Electors have until 8:00pm, seven days after the Writs are issued to enrol, or to update their enrolment.”</p>	Tuesday, 9 November
<p>“Close of nominations The deadline for receipt of nominations by candidates is midday on the date specified on the Writ as the close of nominations. The close of nomination date differs for Registered Political Parties and independent candidates.”</p>	“Thursday, 11 November for a Registered Political Party and Friday, 12 November for independent candidates”
<p>Final day for submission of How to Vote Cards for registration by the VEC</p>	Friday, 19 November
<p>Close of Postal Voting</p>	Thursday, 25 November
<p>Close of Early Voting</p>	Friday, 26 November
<p>“Election day election day is the day nominated for the election to be held and is the day on which most electors cast their vote. ”</p>	Saturday, 27 November
<p>Last day that votes can be admitted to scrutiny</p>	Monday, 6 December
<p>“Return of Writs After the results are declared for all Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council seats, the Victorian Electoral Commissioner returns the Writs, endorsed with the names of the successful candidates, to the Governor. Writs must be returned within 21 days of the date of the election.”</p>	On or before Saturday, 18 December

Voting system

The Victorian Parliament is made up of two Houses - the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) and the Legislative Council (Upper House). Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected from 88 single-member electoral districts, each with approximately 38,000 electors. A party or coalition with the majority support in the Legislative Assembly forms the Government.

The voting system for the Legislative Assembly is full preferential. Voters must number all the squares on the ballot paper in order of their choice. To be elected a candidate must gain more than 50% of all formal votes to be elected. If none of the candidates receives over 50% of the first-preference votes, voters' preferences are distributed until one candidate gains an absolute majority.

Members of the Legislative Council are elected from eight electoral regions, each with approximately 418,000 electors. Each region returns five elected members.

Proportional representation vote counting for the Legislative Council was introduced in 2006. The principle of proportional representation is that candidates and parties are elected in proportion to their level of support among voters. Under this system, voters can either:

- vote 1 'above-the-line' for their preferred party or group of candidates (the voter's preferences will follow the group voting tickets lodged by the party or group); or
- vote 'below-the-line' for individual candidates. Voters have to vote at least 1 to 5 for their vote to count, and can continue numbering other squares if they wish. This is known as optional preferential voting.

Under the proportional representation vote counting system, a candidate must gain a 'quota' (one sixth plus 1) of the formal votes to be elected. First, candidates who have gained more than a quota of first-preference votes are elected. Then, elected candidates' surplus votes (the number of votes more than the quota) are transferred to other candidates according to the preferences on the ballot papers. Any candidate who reaches a quota through these transfers is elected. If there are still vacancies to fill once the surplus votes have been transferred, the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded and that candidate's votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the preferences on the ballot papers. The process of transferring surpluses from

elected candidates and distributing preferences from excluded candidates continues until all positions have been filled.

Voting is compulsory at Victorian State elections.

The Victorian Electoral Commission

The Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) responsibility is to conduct fair and impartial elections, efficiently and according to the law.

The Electoral Commissioner is appointed by the Governor-in-Council for a ten-year term. Under the Electoral Act 2002 (the Act), the Electoral Commissioner is independent of the government of the day and reports directly to Parliament.

The key responsibilities of the VEC are to:

- conduct parliamentary elections and by-elections
- conduct parliamentary referendums and polls
- conduct local government elections and by-elections (upon appointment by councils, following a competitive tendering process)
- conduct electoral representation reviews and subdivision reviews for local councils
- conduct certain statutory elections
- provide advice to the Attorney-General and Parliament on issues affecting the conduct of parliamentary elections, including administrative issues requiring legislative remedy
- ensure the enrolment of eligible electors
- prepare electoral rolls for parliamentary elections, voters' lists for local government elections, jury lists, and provide enrolment information to members of Parliament and registered political parties
- contribute to public understanding and awareness of elections and electoral matters through information and education programs
- provide administrative and technical support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission during the review and drawing of new State electoral boundaries
- report to Parliament on the VEC's activities.

Governing legislation

The work of the VEC is governed by legislation. The Electoral Act 2002 is Victoria's principal electoral Act, providing for the enrolment system and the conduct of parliamentary elections.

The Constitution Act 1975 sets out who is entitled to enrol as an elector, who is entitled to be elected to Parliament, and the size and term of Parliament.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982 governs the determination of State electoral boundaries.

Legislative changes affecting the 2010 Victorian State election

- The Electoral Amendment (Electoral Participation) Act 2010 (the EA Act) made amendments to the Electoral Act 2002 (the Act) as summarised below.

Automatic enrolment

Prior to the passing of the EA Act, the only way to enrol was for a person to fill in and sign an enrolment form and send it to an electoral commission. The VEC is now able to use information it holds to enrol people who have turned 18. The VEC writes to people it has enrolled, informing them of their enrolment and giving them an opportunity to correct any mistake. Initially, the VEC is enrolling VCE students who are 18, using information supplied by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. This will be expanded to other agencies during 2011.

Enrolment at voting centres

People who were found not to be enrolled when they attended to vote at this election were able to enrol and cast a provisional vote at a voting centre. They were required to show a proof of identification such as a driver's licence or to nominate a service provider to be contacted to verify identity. After Election Day, the VEC checked the enrolment applications and verified identities and addresses with service providers, and, if everything was satisfactory, enrolled the applicants and admitted their votes to scrutiny at the election.

Electronically assisted voting

At the 2006 State election, blind and low vision electors were able to vote electronically. For 2010, electors with language or literacy difficulties and those with motor skill impairments were also able to cast an electronically assisted vote. Electronically assisted voting, using a telephone or touchscreen, was available at 100 early voting centres in the two weeks before Election Day.

Abolition of three month rule

The three month rule meant that electors who had changed their principal place of residence more than three months before Election Day without updating their enrolment were unable to vote. Abolition of this rule meant that all electors on the roll were able to vote for the District at which they were enrolled.

How-to-vote cards

The VEC was required to display all registered how-to-vote cards on its website as soon as possible after they were registered.

Group voting tickets

Upper House groups of candidates were able to amend or withdraw their request to be a group on the ballot paper up to 24 hours before the close of nominations. However, a group that was established at that point was required to lodge a group voting ticket (setting out the order of voting preferences for "above the line" votes for that group) with the VEC. Previously, lodgement of a group voting ticket was optional.

Authorisation of letters and cards

Letters and cards bearing the name and address of the sender, and that did not contain an example of how to complete the ballot paper no longer had to be duly authorised.

Acceptance of postal vote declarations

If a postal vote declaration envelope was postmarked the Sunday after election day, the VEC was permitted to use the date of the witness's signature on the declaration to determine whether the vote should be included in the count.

Election planning

The VEC operates with a core of 54.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, which is supplemented by temporary and casual staff. At the time of the State election, there were 82.4 FTE positions at the VEC. In addition, contract staff were engaged to provide specialist services such as IT support, or election software development and advice. There were also around 20,000 people engaged by the VEC to conduct the State election in election offices and voting centres, as well as to assist in the postal vote processing centre and central count centre which operated for two weeks after the election.

There are many aspects of a State election that require the expertise of external service providers. Contracting external service providers allows VEC staff to focus on their election-specific areas of expertise. It also ensures that Victorians are provided with the highest quality election services, using the latest technologies and systems.

In early 2006, the VEC entered into contracts with a range of specialist service providers. Contractors were selected after a competitive tendering process, taking into account the quality of their service and value for money.

Contracted services for the State election included:

- information technology
- cardboard furniture (existing contract)
- electronic voting kiosks
- election advertising
- public relations (request for quote)
- telephone enquiry service
- SMS enrolment and reminder service
- printing (existing contract)
- transport (existing contract)
- tally room services (request for quote)
- Australia Post (service level agreement)
- election staffing
- mail house services (existing contract).

Arrangements with other agencies

Victorian Government Solicitors Office

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office (VGSO) to have a senior legal adviser on stand-by 24 hours a day during the election period, to ensure that any matters could be dealt with in a timely fashion. The VEC would like to thank the VGSO for its support and assistance during this election.

Victoria Police

The VEC wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Police in late September, outlining the State election processes and requesting a discreet police presence at voting centres during the hours of voting on election day. The VEC formally records its appreciation for the support received from the Chief Commissioner and Victoria Police.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

The VEC made arrangements with the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for arrangements to be in place to deal

with any applications for review of the Electoral Commissioner's decision in relation to the registration of a how-to-vote card.

Section 82A of the Electoral Act 2002 provides that if an application for review of a how-to-vote card decision is received, the Tribunal has until 5.00pm on the next working day after receiving the application to determine the application.

Supreme Court

Under section 176 of the Electoral Act 2002, candidates may seek injunctions in certain circumstances where the conduct of a person may impact on the outcome of an election. The VEC is also able to seek an injunction under the same circumstances. These matters must be heard in the Supreme Court. The Victorian Electoral Commission made arrangements with the Department of Justice to ensure any applications for an injunction received on election day could be heard.

Election Budget

The cost of conducting the 2010 State election was \$36.643 million. An estimate for the completion of compulsory voting is included in the figure. This compares to the reported cost of the 2006 State election of \$29.329 million.

Additional budget was provided to meet inflation, an increase in the number of electors, the implementation of new legislation, and the use of advanced technology to assist with the provision of electoral services. Actual expenditure occurred over two financial years, 2009-10 and 2010-11.

A summary of the election expenditure, candidates' deposits and election entitlements will be included in the 2010 State Election Report to be released in August 2011.

Candidates' deposits forfeited

Of the 711 candidates, 283 forfeited their deposits, because they were not elected and/or because they, or their Upper House group, obtained less than 4% of the first-preference votes in their electorates. The following table shows the number of candidates who were eligible to have their nomination deposits refunded.

	Number of Candidates	Number of Candidates eligible for refund
Australian Labor Party	128	128
Christian Democratic Party	10	0
Country Alliance	37	10
D.L.P. Democratic Labor Party	67	3
Family First	91	12
Australian Greens	128	127
Liberal	113	113
The Nationals	21	19
Sex Party	25	2
Socialist Alliance	4	0
Independents	87	14
Total	711	428

Figure 2: Proportion of candidates eligible for nomination refund

Insurance and claims

The Victorian Electoral Commission is insured with the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority, and is generally covered under the Department of Justice policy. The VEC has additional coverage in the areas of:

- Professional Indemnity - required by many organisations in tenders for election services
- Public and Products Liability - a buy-down of the excess
- Group Personal Accident - insurance coverage for Election Officials
- Travel Insurance - insurance for travel by staff

Details of the cost of the insurance, claims on the insurance policies, incident reports from election offices and voting centres reported by the public, workplace incidents will be included in the full election report.

Resource management and sustainability

The VEC is committed to managing resources in a way that minimises negative environmental impact across all operations. A number of initiatives introduced at the 2010 State election addressed key strategies from the VEC's Environmental Management Strategy including:

- alignment of the VEC operations with Government directions in environmental sustainability
- encouraging staff to become proactively

involved in reducing greenhouse emissions

- engaging internal and external stakeholders in positive action
- reduction of the number of courier journeys by faxing 'not on roll' absent declarations for checking against the enrolment register
- improving the VEC's environmental performance by reducing environmental impacts and resource consumption that occur as a consequence of VEC operations.

The following initiatives reduced the amount of paper used during the State election.

- Online training for election officials reduced the need for the preparation and printing of training materials.
- Electronic roll mark-off – the introduction of a direct roll mark off capability for mobile voting and voting at some election day voting centres reduced the number of envelopes required for the election.
- Production of voting compartments containing pre-printed language translations for electors on how to complete their ballot papers meant the provision of pre-printed multi-language information pamphlets that were previously made available at all voting centres was no longer required. Additionally, this removed the requirement for the provision of labels containing translated voting instructions to be adhered in voting compartments.
- Provision of recycling facilities at election offices and voting centres resulted in a reduction of the amount of paper that ended up in land fill.

Although the VEC made every endeavour to comply with Action 16 of the Victorian State Government 2006 Sustainability Action Statement by way of effectively managing resources to minimise environmental impact across all operations, there are items outside its control that played a large role in the conduct of a State election.

Electors receive large amounts of election material distributed through state-wide mail-outs or by letter box drops from candidates. Additionally, the large number of how-to-vote cards printed and distributed during early voting and on election day continues to be of concern to the VEC.

Section 2 - Enrolment

Enrolment

Victorians responded to the VEC's call for enrolments in the lead-up to the 2010 State election. In the seven days between the issue of the Writ and the close of rolls, the VEC received 38,152 new enrolments and updates.

At the close of rolls at 8.00pm on Tuesday, 7 November, 3,582,232 people were enrolled to vote in the 2010 election, compared with 3,353,845 in 2006 and 3,228,466 at the 2002 State election.

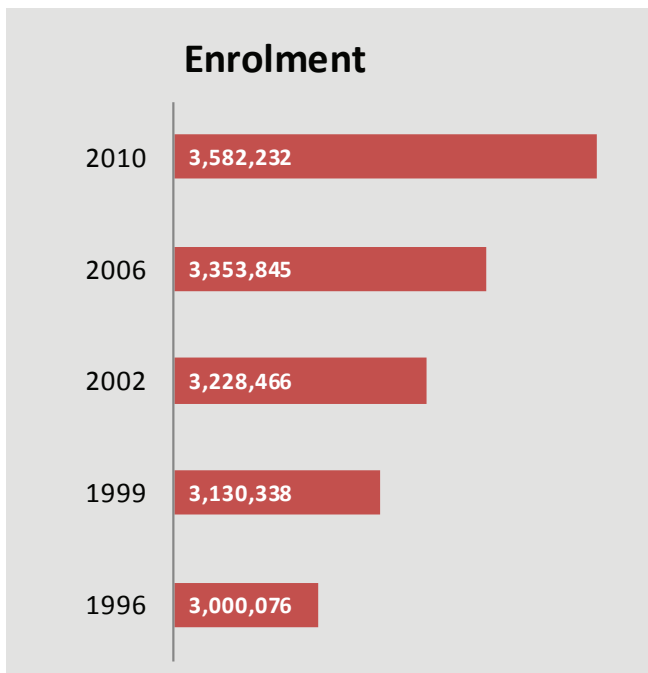


Figure 3: Electors on Victorian enrolment register, 2006-2011

* Figure does not include electors added as a result of the GetUp Federal Court challenge.

Enrolment services

Enrolment initiatives prior to the 2010 State election

The fixed election date provided an opportunity to have an extended enrolment advertising period a month prior to the issue of the Writ. The campaign commenced with a media launch and included television, radio, newspaper and outdoor advertising -reminding eligible electors to enrol or update their enrolment details. The aim was to have as accurate an enrolment register as possible at the close of rolls.

Other ongoing enrolment initiatives

To maintain the accuracy of the enrolment register on an ongoing basis, the VEC has a range of strategic programs to help Victorians to enrol or update their enrolment. The VEC sends enrolment brochures to Victorians when they turn 17 years of age and become eligible to provisionally enrol, and to electors who have changed their address and need to update their enrolment details. Electors are targeted through data-matching initiatives such as with the Rental Bond Authority and VicRoads. This ensures the VEC only mails enrolment forms to those people who have changed address recently.

Receiving an enrolment form prompts an elector to act when they might otherwise delay enrolling or updating their enrolment until an election is called. A non-response to these mail-outs results in follow-up action.

The VEC has ongoing enrolment data collection arrangements with a number of organisations. In 2009-10, the VEC collected 136,330 enrolments through its strategic enrolment programs and arrangements.

Enrolment forms are also available year round on the VEC website, at local council offices and post offices.

The legislation introduced in August 2010 allowed for the VEC to automatically enrol persons on the register of electors where, having regard to information obtained through its compulsory acquisition powers under S.26(4) of the Electoral Act 2002, the VEC considered the person to be entitled to be enrolled on the register of electors.

The VEC opted to take a cautious approach in implementing the new legislation and in the lead-up to the 2010 State election, only committed to enrolling school students registered with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

In October 2010 the VEC wrote to 1,886 students, that were 18 years or older as of 30 September 2010 but were not enrolled, advising them that the VEC intended to enrol them on the register of electors. The students had 14 days to advise the VEC if they were not entitled to enrol. Only 15 letters were returned undeliverable (no longer at the address), advice was received in regard to a further 17 students who did not understand the significance of enrolment and voting and 1,854 electors were subsequently enrolled. Of those electors who were automatically enrolled, 999 subsequently voted at the election (see Figure4).

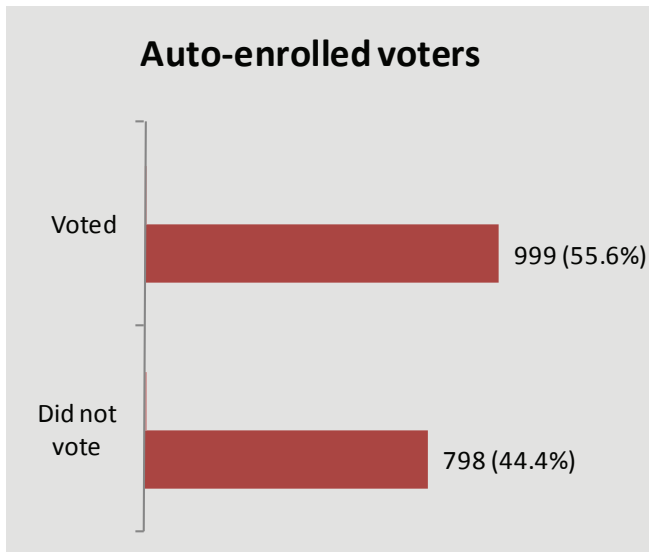


Figure 4: Automatically enrolled electors' voting compliance, 2010 Victorian State election

Close of roll

At the issue of the Writ on 2 November, 2010, eligible electors had seven days to ensure they were on the electoral roll and that their enrolment details were correct.

Electors were able to update their enrolment details or enrol on the spot at VEC or Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) election offices throughout the State, collect an enrolment form at any post office, or use the AEC's online enrolment SmartForm via a link on the VEC's website. Electors could email, fax, post or hand-deliver enrolment forms to the VEC.

The period between the issue of the Writ and the close of roll was extended from three days in 2002 to seven days in 2006, with no other changes to the election timeframe. The resultant reduced timeframe for producing essential roll products causes significant difficulty in meeting deadlines. In spite of the change, the number of new enrolments and enrolment updates in the period were very similar for both the 2002 and 2006 State elections.

As a result of the federal election being held in August, just two months before the close of rolls for the 2010 State election, enrolments for this election in the same period were considerably fewer than in 2006. However, producing essential roll products within the timeframe available was still an issue and the VEC was again required to negotiate special arrangements outside the service level agreement for close of roll data from the AEC.

	2002	2006	2010
Issue of Writ to Close of Roll	3 days	7 days	7 days
New enrolments	21,158	21,238	12,842
Enrolment updates	34,003	36,479	25,310

Figure 5: Enrolments processed from the issue of the Writ to the close of roll

In addition, the VEC processed 10,801 new enrolments and 30,896 enrolment updates in the month prior to the issue of the Writ. At the close of rolls at 8.00pm on Tuesday, 9 November, 3,582,232 people were enrolled to vote in the 2010 State election, compared with 3,353,845 at the 2006 State election. The Results and Statistics Report is available on the VEC website and Appendix 1 contains details of region and district enrolments at the close of roll.

The VEC entered into special arrangements with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to facilitate the close of roll for roll production. All electors wanting to enrol via the VEC website were redirected to the AEC SmartForm on the AEC's website (the SmartForm captures electors details online eliminating the need for data entry). The AEC provided two additional special enrolment transactions and set-up a special centralised data entry cell for processing enrolments in the week leading up to the close of roll. All AEC offices were open on close of roll day until 8.00pm to receive and process enrolment cards and the AEC managed to provide the close of roll extract within 24 hours of close of roll as negotiated as part of the special arrangements. The VEC would like to formally record its appreciation for the AEC's responsive turnaround, which was critical to roll production and nomination checking as well as to the distribution of postal votes.

Status	Enrolments processed
New to Roll (N1)	83,416
Reinstatement (R1)	57,643
Change of Address (C2)	276,511
Total	417,570

Figure 6: Number of enrolments processed by the VEC, July – December 2010

Section 3 - Voting

Voter turnout

Voter turnout and informal voting rates are useful indicators of the health of an electoral system. These indicators may be affected by factors other than the services provided by an electoral authority, including interest in the election, election issues, the geography and demographic composition of the electorate, and even the weather on election day.

The VEC sought to maximise voter participation and reduce informal voting, by providing Victorians with the voting services and information they needed to participate fully and appropriately in the election.

Voter turnout at the 2010 State election for the Lower House was 92.96% of the total electors enrolled, lower than the 92.72% at the 2006 State election, and 93.15% recorded at the 2002 State election.

Voting services

Arrangements for voting before election day

The VEC made a variety of arrangements for electors who were unable to attend a voting centre on election day. A total of 817,263 Victorians voted before election day, representing 24.47% of all votes cast. This is an increase on the number of votes cast before election day at previous State elections. The total number of votes cast before election day represented a 68.9% increase on the 2006 State election (468,567 or 15.07% of all votes) and 2002 (10.29% of all votes).

VEC's Office Network

For the State election the VEC's infrastructure had to expand to cater for network links from 64 election offices, 45 early voting centres, the Telephone Enquiry Service, WebCentral (who hosted the VEC's virtual tally room and other critical websites), a microwave radio link to the VEC's tally room at Etihad Stadium as well as 750 NextG connections and two connections from the United Kingdom. In addition the VEC provided remote access to the roll for 40 inter-state and overseas voting centres and acted as the back site for the VEC's electronically assisted voting solution.

Early voting in person

Voting in person was available at 101 early voting centres throughout the State prior to election day. Early voting centres were open for two weeks prior to election day, from Friday, 12 November, to Friday, 26 November. In addition to business hours, these centres were open until 8:00pm on Thursday, 25 November, and from 8.00am to 2.00pm on Saturday, 20 November, in recognition of the needs of those members of the community who could not vote during business hours.

There were 559,857 votes cast at early voting centres prior to election day, this was more than twice the number of votes cast at early voting centres in 2006. In most cases, the election office was considered to be appropriately located for the purpose of voting prior to election day. However, an additional 45 early voting centres were established to supplement election offices, including one each at Melbourne and Avalon airports. The VEC received a small number of complaints relating to the location of, or difficulty finding early voting centres.

Operating hours at early voting centres at both airports were extended to ensure that electors leaving Victoria on all major flights were catered for. For Melbourne Airport operating hours were 5.00am to 10.00pm from Monday 15 to Thursday 25 November and until 6.00pm on Friday 26 November. Avalon Airport operating hours were 5.00am to 7.30pm from Monday 15 to Thursday 25 November and until 6.00pm on Friday 26 November. Operating hours also included the weekend of 20 and 21 November for both airports.

Electors with special circumstances were able to vote from 4.00pm on Friday, 12 November, four hours after the close of nominations. However, they were only able to vote on ballot papers with below-the-line voting options, as group voting tickets were not finalised until the Sunday after the commencement of early voting. The period between the close of nominations and commencement of early voting does not allow enough time for the production and distribution of ballot papers, so offices were required to print ballot papers on-site.

The use of Netbooks at all early voting centres enabled staff to identify an elector's correct enrolled address and district, so that the elector could cast a ballot without having to complete a declaration envelope, making voting much quicker. Electors were marked as having voted directly onto the VEC's central database.

Mobile early voting

The Electoral Commissioner has the authority to appoint certain institutions as mobile early voting centres, to enable electors in those institutions to vote on the spot when a mobile voting team visits in the lead-up to a State election. Mobile early voting teams may visit establishments such as nursing homes, hostels and hospitals.

There were 986 mobile early voting centres appointed for the 2010 State election, compared with 892 locations in 2006. Some venues requested postal voting services only and 833 requested a mobile voting team to visit.

For the first time, Netbooks were used at voting centres where a mobile service was provided. The Netbooks provided access to the State election roll to assist election officials to identify each elector's correct enrolment details and to mark them as having voted directly on the VEC's central database. 39,468 votes were issued to electors at mobile early voting centres.

Mobile early voting services at homeless agencies

A mobile early voting team visited 11 homeless agency locations between 16–26 November. Spending between two to three hours at each location, staff offered voting services including (under the new legislation) the opportunity to enrol and vote provisionally on the spot.

Two cardboard polling booths were setup, and staff used an electronic roll to mark electors off. In addition to the 355 votes cast in 2010, were 44 provisional votes cast by people experiencing homelessness who, under new legislation, were able to enrol and vote on the spot if certain criteria were satisfied.

Mobile early voting services at prisons and correctional facilities

Six correctional centres were visited during the 2010 State election. These facilities were established at the Melbourne Assessment Centre, Melbourne Remand Centre, Barwon Prison, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Marnong Correctional Centre and Port Phillip Prison.

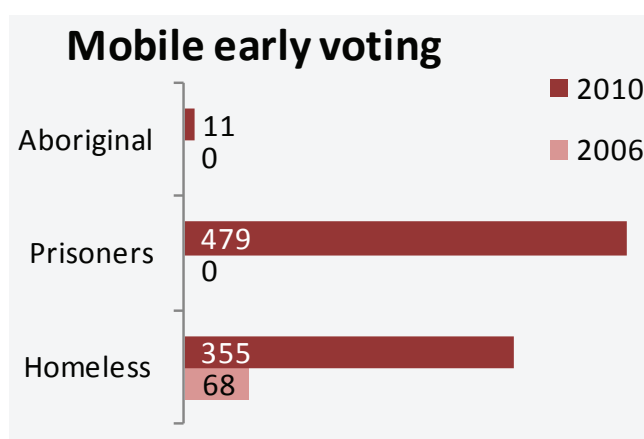


Figure 7: Votes cast at targeted mobile voting sessions, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

Mobile early voting services at blind and low vision service agencies

The VEC provided mobile voting facilities at a number of agencies providing support services for electors who are blind or have low vision. This included Vision Australia Centres at Geelong, Kensington, Bendigo, Dandenong, Warrnambool and Mildura and at Blind Citizens Australia Melbourne and Guide Dogs Australia in East Melbourne.

Mobile early voting services at Aboriginal communities

Lake Tyers is an Aboriginal community with approximately 150 residents and 30 staff members. Because of the specific needs of this community, the VEC decided to provide a dedicated mobile voting service for the 2010 State election.

Mobile early voting services at disability service agencies

Mobile voting was offered as a pilot specialist service to Scope day centres. Scope advised that in line with its inclusion-based approach, it prefers to encourage clients to use a voting centre.

Early voting at interstate and overseas locations

Early voting was possible at 11 interstate and 34 overseas locations. A total of 10,508 votes were cast outside Victoria during the 2010 State election. This is slightly fewer than in 2006 (10,805) but more than 8,205 votes cast outside Victoria at the 2002 State election.

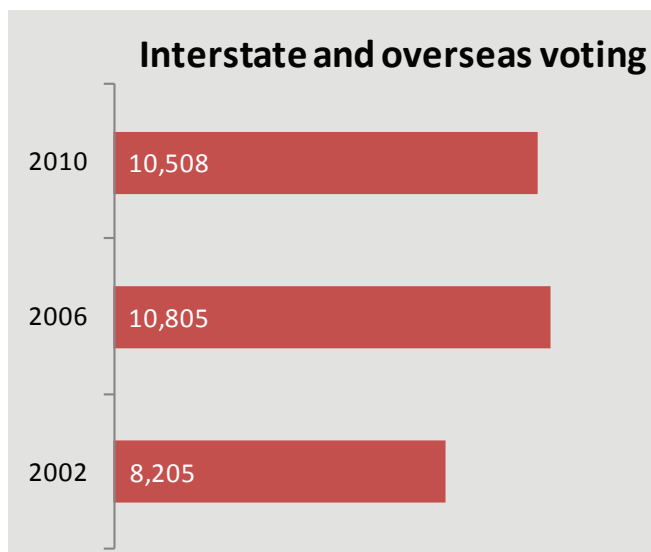


Figure 8: Votes cast at interstate and overseas locations at Victorian State elections 2002-2010

Early voting by post

Electors unable to attend a voting centre on election day could access a postal vote in the following ways:

- collecting an application form for a postal vote from any post office in Victoria
- collecting an application from any election office or interstate or overseas voting location
- downloading a postal vote application from the VEC's website
- telephoning the VEC's telephone enquiry service to request an application form be posted to them
- using an application form provided by a political party.

Postal vote applications were scanned and processed electronically, which eliminated labour-intensive handling of paper applications and helped to ensure the efficient delivery of ballot packs. The VEC's Election Management System enabled election officials to track all applications and inform electors of the status of their application at any time.

As an initiative, the VEC introduced emailed ballot material for the 2010 State election. This facility was only available to electors in remote areas or overseas who would experience difficulty in accessing postal facilities. Electors could submit a postal vote application by email, providing an email address for receipt of ballot material. The VEC processed each application and then sent two emails to each elector who requested the email ballot material service; the first containing a secure file with all ballot material required to vote, and the second containing a

password for the elector to access the ballot material file. A total of 1,212 emailed ballot packs were despatched during the election.

Once the initial backlog of postal vote applications was cleared (two working days), all further postal vote applications were processed on the day they were received by the VEC.

As occurred at the 2006 State election, a number of electors had difficulty with the witness provisions on the application form. The application form requires a 'Title or capacity as witness' to be completed by the witness, with an accompanying list of categories of capacity. Many electors presumed this section required either 'Mr', 'Mrs' etc or a description of the relationship i.e. hairdresser, neighbour. Political parties and candidates were advised of the Electoral Commissioner's intention to authorise the issue of ballot materials where the elector had signed the application in the presence of a witness, and the witness' address and signature were present on the application. While the VEC took action to provide an additional information sheet alerting witnesses of the need to write 'elector', it remained an issue when processing applications.

As occurred at the 2006 State election, some electors who applied for a postal vote also voted at an early voting centre prior to receiving their ballot packs. The introduction of Netbooks at all early voting centres allowed the VEC to identify any elector who had been issued with, but had not returned a postal vote. The computerised system used to mark electors off the roll prior to issuing a vote cancelled the postal vote issued to any elector who wished to cast an early vote instead. If the postal vote was inadvertently returned, this vote was rejected by the system, set aside and not counted.

Australia Post is an important partner in the postal voting system, and the VEC used 'Express Post' for delivery of election material in the week prior to election day. This ensured that material was delivered with sufficient time for electors to complete and return their ballot material. On election day, the declarations could be quickly checked against the elector's signature on the scanned image of the postal vote application. As a result, most postal votes were included in the count on election night.

Provisional voting

Under new legislation introduced in 2010, people who were found not to be enrolled when they attended to vote at this election were able to enrol and cast a provisional vote at a voting centre. They were required to show a proof of identification such as

a driver's licence or to nominate a service provider to be contacted to verify identity. After election day, the VEC checked the enrolment applications and verified identities and addresses with service providers, and, if everything was satisfactory, enrolled the applicants and admitted their votes to scrutiny at the election.

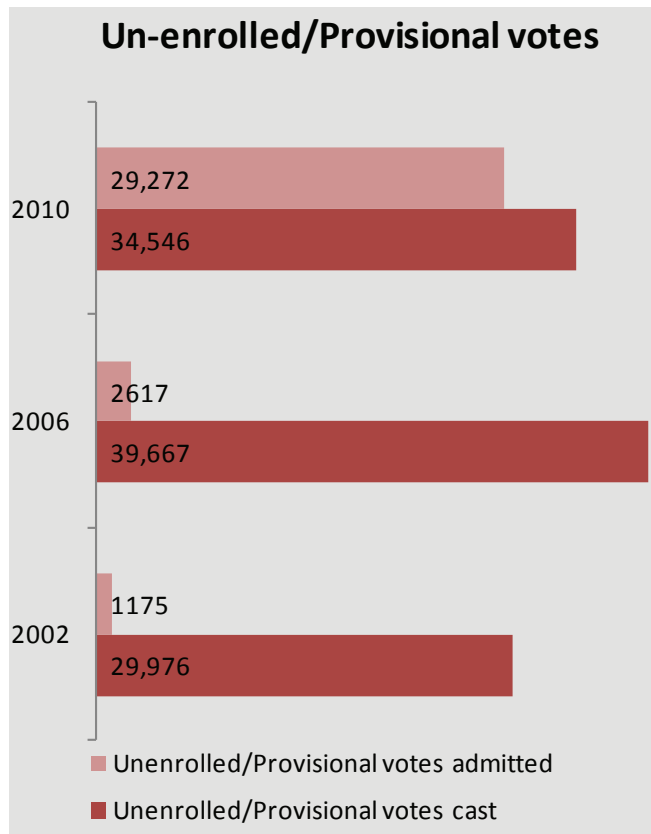


Figure 9: Un-enrolled/provisional votes, Victorian State elections, 2002-2010

Registered General Postal Voters

Electors who satisfy certain statutory requirements regarding their inability to vote at a voting centre at election time are eligible for registration as General Postal Voters. By registering as a General Postal Voter, electors automatically receive ballot papers in the mail for all State elections and local government elections.

There were 51,713 registered General Postal Voters at the 2010 State election. This figure demonstrates an increasing trend of voters in this category (31,243 in 2002 and 41,722 in 2006).

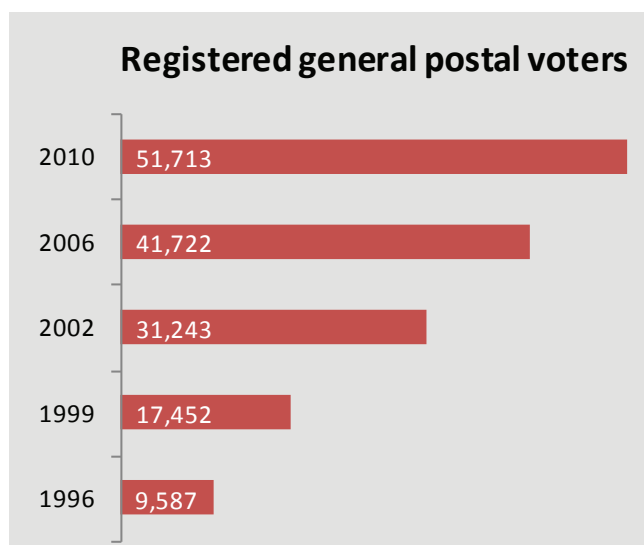


Figure 10: Registered General Postal Voters at Victorian State elections, 1996 - 2010

Antarctic electors

An 'Antarctic elector' is an elector who has made a request under the Electoral Act 2002 to be treated as such while employed in Antarctica. Fourteen Antarctic electors cast a vote at the 2010 State election.

Additional elector services

The VEC is committed to ensuring maximum accessibility to voting. As such, an analysis was conducted to identify any key events that were occurring on Saturday, 27 November, to provide suitable services for electors attending these events. The VEC contacted organisers of these events to coordinate information for participants, examine opportunities to advertise in relevant publications, or in some instances to provide voting centres close to the events. Major events catered for included the Corporate Games, Great Victorian Bike Ride, Queenscliff Music Festival, La Dolce Vita Wangaratta, Eltham Amateur Wine Show and Mt Eliza Yoga Retreat.

The VEC also provided a postal voting service for passengers travelling on the Dawn Princess which departed from Melbourne on 10 November, stopping at various ports around Australia and returning to Melbourne on 8 December.

Arrangements for voting on election day

Voting took place between 8.00am and 6.00pm at 1,839 voting centres throughout Victoria on election day - Saturday, 27 November, 2010.

Voters were able to cast an ordinary vote at a voting centre within their electorate, or vote at any other voting centre in the State outside their electorate by casting an 'absent vote'.

Of the total votes counted for the election, 2,538,460 were issued on election day. This compares with 2,641,340 in 2006 and 2,698,026 in 2002.

A total of 158 joint voting centres were established for this election compared to 147 in 2006 and 23 in 2002. The aim was to reduce the number of absent votes issued at voting centres located close to electorate boundaries, thereby speeding up the voting process for affected electors.

Voting centres were established primarily in schools and community halls selected by Election Managers during preparation for the election, with a preference for those that were wheelchair accessible. Disability and community groups were invited to suggest suitable voting centres that the VEC had not already identified.

An accessibility audit of all selected venues was conducted and they were subsequently classified according to recognised national accessibility standards. Despite its best efforts, the VEC continues to be disappointed with the lack of wheelchair accessible venues available for use as voting centres – particularly given that most of the venues are State government-owned.

Voting centre locations were promoted through the VEC's telephone enquiry service and online through the voting centre look up and iPhone app. In addition, all voting centres were listed in major daily and regional newspapers. The accessibility rating of all centres was included and those venues rated as 'assisted access' included a brief description of their accessibility limitations.

The Victorian Electoral Commission reviewed its election workforce planning, and incorporated feedback and observations from the 2006 State election, along with consideration of the EMC recommendations, when developing the plan for the 2010 State election. Targets were set for completion of tasks in each voting centre no later than 10.00pm. To reduce queue length and voter waiting time, ordinary issuing point loadings were decreased from 600 to 550 votes issued on election day per ordinary

issuing point. Total voting centre staffing increased from 14,811 to 16,993.

The VEC introduced two new part-day employment positions designed to supplement voting centre staffing during the morning when voter numbers are generally higher, and to assist with counting after 6pm, reducing expected count completion times. A total of 469 part day voting centre support officers, and 1,093 part day count support officers were appointed

By 10:00pm on election night, 99.2% primary District results were entered, compared with 97.5% in 2006.

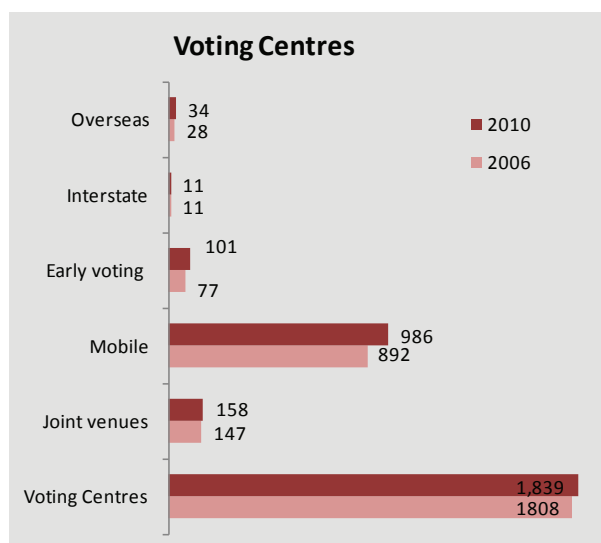


Figure 11: Voting centres, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

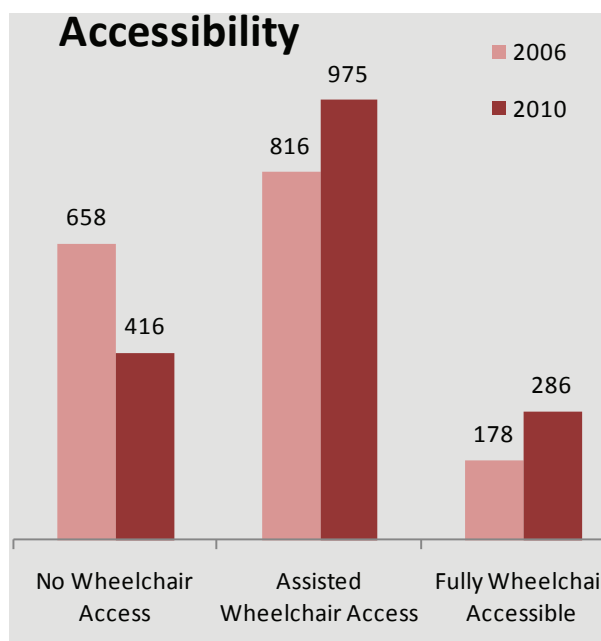


Figure 12: Accessibility ratings of Voting Centres, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

Assistance for electors from non-English speaking backgrounds

At the 2010 State election, voting instructions in a range of languages were printed on the voter-facing side of every full size and wheelchair height voting screen. The VEC developed an online registration facility that included questions about foreign language fluency, for people seeking election work. This resulted in the number of staff identifying as bilingual increasing from 1,669 in 2006 to 2,931 in 2010. Data from the 2006 census and Department of Immigration settlement statistics was analysed to assess the main languages spoken in each District. This analysis was provided to Election Managers and Voting Centre Managers to assist with strategic recruitment of election staff in relation to the relevant languages spoken in each area.

The Electoral Amendment (Electoral Participation) Act 2010 passed in August 2010, amended the Electoral Act 2002 (the Act) enabling electronically assisted voting (EAV) to be offered at the 2010 State election to electors whose first language is not English, electors with low literacy and electors with a motor skills impairment as well as to blind and vision-impaired voters. The EAV piloted at the 2006 election was further developed, and made available at all early voting venues at the 2010 State election accordance with legislation. Almost 1000 votes were received.

Publishing key election information in accessible formats and Easy English is a major commitment outlined in the VEC's Disability Action Plan. The VEC developed an Easy English Guide to the 2010 State election, which was extremely popular.

Electoral information in 20 languages and English was available on the VEC's website, and a telephone interpreter service was advertised. The telephone service provided pre-recorded information specific to an event and an option for the caller to request the services of an interpreter.

The VEC website conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 conventions for accessibility. A link to BrowseAloud, a downloadable application that reads the text on a website, is provided on the VEC website.

Informal votes

The proportion of informal votes for the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) at the 2010 election was 4.96%, slightly higher than previous informality rates of 4.56% in 2006 and 3.42% in 2002.

The rate of informal votes for the Legislative Council (Upper House) was 3.38%, which was almost one

percentage point lower than for the 2006 State election. The decrease may be due to growing familiarity with the voting system. Further detail on the types of informal votes can be found in the Results and Statistics Report.

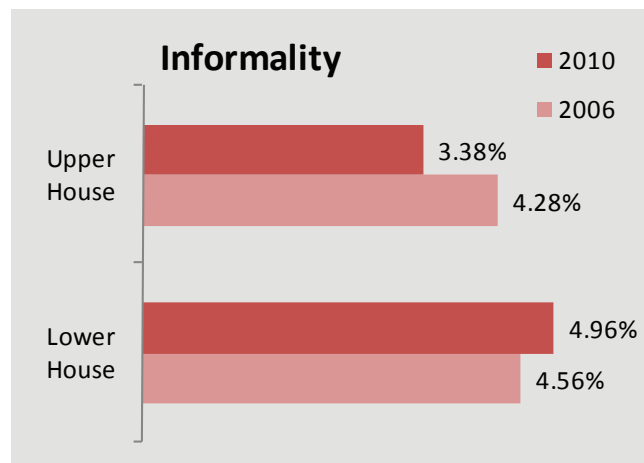


Figure 13: Informality rates, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010 (% of total votes)

Electronically Assisted Voting

In July 2006, the Electoral and Parliamentary Committees Legislation (Amendment) Act 2006 was passed by the Parliament. This allowed for the introduction of electronically assisted voting (EAV) at the 2006 State election, initially implemented for blind and low vision electors.

In 2010 the VEC presented an enhanced version of the previously developed kiosk electronic voting solution. The enhancements were developed in response to findings from both the 2006 Victorian State election, and the 2007 Australian Federal election, where a kiosk-type electronic solution was also used. The enhancements also took into account the recommendations and suggestions in the Electoral Matters Committee's 2008 report.

The Electoral Amendment (Electoral Participation) Act 2010 expanded EAV enabling electors who otherwise could not vote without assistance because of a visual impairment, a motor impairment or insufficient literacy skills (whether in the English language or in the elector's primary spoken language) to vote using either a touch-screen kiosk or telephone.

For the 2010 State election, the VEC provided electronic voting at each early voting centre across Victoria, interstate at offices of the State and Territory electoral commissions and to Victorians in England.

With the introduction of electronically assisted voting in the United Kingdom, the VEC appointed a staff member (or VEC representative) specifically to oversee this project and based in London during the voting

period. The VEC representative was responsible for all aspects of electronically assisted voting in Manchester and London, including the set-up and removal of equipment at each venue, and the training and support of staff appointed as early voting officials.

In order to establish an early voting centre at Victoria House, London, the VEC commenced negotiation with the Agent's General, Sally Capp in May 2010. It was important that the relationship between the VEC representative in London and the staff provided by the Agent's General's office be cohesive. Effective planning and early consultation resulted in a very successful project, with over 700 electronically assisted votes taken in London.

A full report of the electronically assisted voting project will be published during 2011.

Section 4 - Communication Services

The VEC commenced its communication campaign a month prior to the issue of the Writ with an extensive public awareness campaign in early October.

The objectives of the 2010 communication campaign were to:

- maximise new enrolments and enrolment updates prior to the close of the roll;
- maximise the level of voter participation for the election;
- minimise the level of informal voting;
- encourage early voting among key target audiences;
- provide timely, clear and accurate information services to candidates;
- provide accurate, clear and accessible information to the public and media;
- communicate accurate, accessible and timely election results;
- maximise public awareness of voting innovations;
- maintain/increase public confidence in the VEC's ability to conduct elections ; and
- increase level of electronically assisted voting participation.

The campaign involved a state-wide mail-out, press, radio, television, outdoor advertising, a telephone enquiry service, media relations, community presentations and outreach services, publications, social media and the VEC's website. Audience-specific strategies targeted the following groups:

- young electors 17-34 years of age;
- electors with a disability;
- users of electronically assisted voting systems;
- CALD electors;
- frail/elderly electors;
- Indigenous electors;
- people experiencing homelessness;
- interstate or overseas electors; and
- media (journalists).

Media representatives were invited to a number of briefings, and arrangements to provide information in short time-frames were established.

EasyVote Guide

The most significant form of election communication for the 2010 State election was the direct mail of an EasyVote Guide to every elector on the roll at the close of roll. The EasyVote Guide was a four page, A4 document detailing:

- the election date;
- early, postal and electronically assisted voting options;
- information on how to vote correctly for both houses of Parliament;
- language lines and the election hotline number;
- an SMS offer for text voting reminders; and
- the location of every early voting centre and election day voting centre within the elector's District, along with the applicable accessibility rating of those voting centres.

The EasyVote Guide included a detachable EasyVote Card containing an elector ID for voting centres using Netbooks, and for voting centres where manual marking of the roll was required, the scannable roll page number and the position on the page, where the elector's details could be found. This assisted with faster marking off of the elector on the roll. The redevelopment of the EasyVote Guide was in direct response to market research feedback from the 2006 State election. Most suggestions for service improvements related to the inclusion of voting locations on any mailout to electors.

Focus group testing on the Guide proved extremely positive and the market research indicates that almost 70% of ordinary, absent and CALD voters recalled content from the Guide. The Guide was less effective for early voters and postal voters who needed to vote prior to receiving the publication in most instances. In an effort to engage the high number of Victorian electors in the United Kingdom, the 2010 State election advertising campaign used targeted advertising across both print and online media.

In early October large print ads were placed in two issues of TNT magazine, a free publication for travellers in the UK. These ads were supported by online banner advertisements throughout November on the TNT website.

The VEC used IP address matching to target Victorians in the UK who accessed popular Victorian news sites such as heraldsun.com.au and theage.com.au. The VEC also placed banner ads on Facebook that were only shown to people who were over 18, born in Australia but who were accessing Facebook from the United Kingdom.

Voting is compulsory
Avoid a fine

State Election
2010

You are enrolled in:
Albert Park District
Southern Metropolitan Region

↓ This is your enrolled address.
You must vote for this address. ↓

EasyVote Guide

THE VICTORIAN STATE ELECTION WILL BE HELD ON

SATURDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2010

VOTING IS BETWEEN 8.00 AM AND 6.00 PM.

See back page for a full list of voting centres for your District.

DON'T FORGET

Take the hassle out of remembering to vote.

Text 'SATURDAY' to 131 832 to receive free SMS voting reminders.

Standard text rates apply to register. Not available for Vodafone or 3.

Take this EasyVote Card with you when you go to vote to make voting easier.

You are enrolled in:
Albert Park District
Southern Metropolitan Region

EasyVote Card

Victorian Electoral Commission

Completing your two ballot papers

For your votes to count, complete **both** ballot papers correctly.

Small Ballot Paper
Lower House (Legislative Assembly)

Put the number **1** in the box next to the name of the candidate you most want to see elected, then number **ALL** the other boxes in the order of your choice.

Remember, number all the boxes on the smaller ballot paper.

Large Ballot Paper
Upper House (Legislative Council)

EITHER Vote **ABOVE** the line, by writing **1** in only one box above the group of your choice.

OR Vote **BELOW** the line by numbering at least 5 boxes from **1** to **5** in the order of your choice. You may continue numbering if you wish.

Ballot Paper

Issuing Officer's Office

DISTRICT OF
Sample

Number the boxes **1** to **4** in the order of your choice.
Number every box to make your vote count.

CANDIDATE
 CANDIDATE
 CANDIDATE
 CANDIDATE

You can vote either above **OR** below the line.

Ballot Paper REGION OF **SAMPLE**

For your vote to count, you must vote in either one of the two ways described below.

EITHER place the number **1** in one, and one only of these squares to indicate your choice.

<input type="checkbox"/> A	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> B	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> C	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> D
PARTY 1		PARTY 2		PARTY 3		PARTY 4

OR place the numbers **1** to at least **5** in these squares to indicate your choice.

<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> UNGROUPED
CANDIDATE Name	CANDIDATE Name	CANDIDATE Name	CANDIDATE Name	CANDIDATE Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Languages

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:
 • **Arabic** 9209 0190 • **Chinese** 9209 0100 • **Croatian** 9209 0191 • **Dinka** 9209 0119 • **English** 9209 0103 • **Greek** 9209 0104 • **Italian** 9209 0194 • **Korean** 9209 0105 • **Macedonian** 9209 0106 • **Mandarin** 9209 0195 • **Persian** 9209 0196 • **Russian** 9209 0107 • **Serbian** 9209 0108 • **Somali** 9209 0109 • **Spanish** 9209 0110 • **Turkish** 9209 0111 • **Vietnamese** 9209 0112
 • All other non-English languages 9209 0112

3

Other ways to vote

I can't vote on election day.
If you can't vote on election day you can vote early. Early voting centres within your District are listed below.

Can't get to a voting centre on election day? Vote early.

Early Voting Centres in Albert Park District, Southern Metropolitan Region.

AWA

1st Floor
19-25 Raglan Street
South Melbourne VIC 3205

For other early voting centres, locations and operating hours check online at 131vec.com.au

Can I vote by post?
If you can't vote on election day and voting at an early voting centre does not suit, you can apply to vote by post. Complete a postal vote application to receive your ballot papers in the mail. Collect an application from any post office, election office or download one from 131vec.com.au

What if I'm in hospital?
Hospitals, nursing homes and aged care facilities can request a mobile voting team visit prior to election day. Check with the facility directly.

What if I'm going to be interstate or overseas?
Early voting will be available at Melbourne and Avalon Airports, between 15 November and 26 November for extended hours; check 131vec.com.au for operating hours.
If you will be travelling or living interstate or overseas on election day, visit 131vec.com.au for more information.

What is Electronically Assisted Voting?
Electronically Assisted Voting (EAV) is available for voters with sight, literacy and English language difficulties, or a motor impairment, at early voting centres only (**not on election day**).
EAV enables eligible voters to cast an unaided secret vote in 11 languages plus English. Make sure you tell any eligible relatives, friends or neighbours about this option.

Cut out this EasyVote Card and write down your nearest Voting Centre

You can still vote without this card but it may take longer.

- Election day voting centres listed on page 4
- Early voting centres listed above

Below is a list of all election day voting centres in Albert Park District, Southern Metropolitan Region, open from 8.00am to 6.00pm on Saturday 27 November.

<p>Albert Park Primary School Bridport Street (access via Cardigan Place) Albert Park</p> <p>Elwood Primary School corner Mitford Street and Poets Grove Elwood</p> <p>Middle Park Primary School Richardson Street (access via Mills Street) Middle Park</p> <p>Middle Park Bowling Club Canterbury Road (access via Armstrong Street) Middle Park</p> <p>Sol Green Community Centre corner Montague and Coventry Streets South Melbourne</p> <p>Port Phillip Specialist School Nott Street (access via Farrell Street) Port Melbourne</p> <p>Fishermens Bend Community Hall corner Dunstan Parade and Centre Avenue Port Melbourne</p> <p>South Melbourne Town Hall 208 Bank Street South Melbourne</p> <p>Malthouse Theatre - Kiln Room 113 Sturt Street Southbank</p> <p>St Kilda Park Primary School 68 Fitzroy Street St Kilda</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">AWA</p> <p>Cara Graves Centre 38 Blessington Street St Kilda</p>
--	--

AWA = Wheelchair Access with Assistance FWA = Fully Wheelchair accessible
0 = Outside District – voting centre is located outside your District.

All voting locations on this card were correct at the time of printing. However, it is suggested that prior to voting you confirm the location on the Voting Centre Locator at 131vec.com.au

4

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131vec.com.au
131VEC (131 832)

Figure 14: Easy vote guide sent to all electors

State election advertising campaign

Following a competitive tendering process, the VEC appointed Grey Global to adapt the 2002 and 2006 State election advertising campaigns (Every vote will shape Victoria) for the 2010 State election. Advertising was designed to address key topics such as enrolment, and where and how to vote and was delivered in phases relating to the election timeline, key dates and events (see Figure 15).

Phase	Timing
1. Enrolment	3 October to 9 November 2010
2. Information for candidates	3 November 2010
3. Motivational	14-26 November 2010
4. Early voting	11-26 November 2010
5. Candidate listings	20 November 2010
6. How to vote correctly	21-27 November 2010
7. Where to vote on election day	22-27 November 2010

Figure 15: Advertising phases, 2010 Victorian State election

Communication services for regional and remote Victorians

Placement of advertising targeted to regional and remote Victorians was dictated by the need to balance effective targeting of key information with best 'value for money'. The VEC advertised in an extended range of regional newspapers, including the Mighty V newspapers, The Weekly Times and 67 Victorian Country Press Association newspapers.

General Postal Voter registration was promoted to electors residing more than 20kms from a voting centre, as was postal voting. Targeted areas included the remote Western, North Western and Alpine regions.

Placements on the WIN TV, Southern Cross and Prime television networks and eight regional radio stations formed part of the regional communication strategy. Details of regional advertising are included in Figure 17.

	Total	Newspaper	Radio	Television
2006	\$361,304	\$139,329 (38.56%)	\$106,596 (29.50%)	\$115,379 (31.93%)
2010	\$336,053	\$131,316 (39.01%)	\$54,297 (16.16%)	\$150,439 (44.77%)

Figure 17: Regional advertising spending by media type, 2010 Victorian State election*

*Excludes the cost of advertising in State-wide media circulated or broadcast in regional Victoria.

Communication services for voters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Early in 2010 the VEC established an Advisory Group consisting of representatives from organisations working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Various election communication and education initiatives were both suggested by, and canvassed with the Advisory Group.

Four media releases in 28 languages were distributed to 93 different ethnic publications throughout October and November, while paid advertising in 22 languages ran in 45 ethnic publications and on seven radio stations. Details of spending for advertising directed at CALD electors is presented in Figure 18.

	Total	Newspaper	Radio	Retailers of Asian goods, Channel 31	Online
2006	\$178,187	\$107,627 (60.4%)	\$70,560 (39.6%)	N/A	N/A
2010	\$305,908	\$179,324 (58.62%)	\$74,384 (24.32%)	13860 (4.53%)	\$38,340 (12.53%)

Figure 18: Advertising targeting CALD electors spending by media, 2010 Victorian State election

Advertising in ethnic and English print media included the VEC's 20 multi-lingual telephone enquiry service numbers that operate all year round. Callers who dialed a language-specific number heard a message on a selection of topics and could then opt to speak through an interpreter with a telephone enquiry service operator. Details of calls received via language specific numbers and requests for interpreter services are included in Figure 19.

	Cost	Metro	Regional	Ethnic	Outdoor*	Online	Other**
2002	\$2,217,746	\$1,798,925	\$277,979	\$140,842	-	-	-
2006	\$2,837,288	\$2,073,834	\$422,054	\$178,187	\$152,625	-	\$10,588
2010	\$2,793,083	\$1,934,912	\$336,053	\$305,908	\$86,951	\$121,882	\$7,376

Figure 16: Advertising costs, 2010 Victorian State election

* Includes airport,

** Includes street press, seniors press and Indigenous media

Key information in 22 languages plus English was provided on the VEC website. Access to a translated enrolment form for 20 languages was available, and audio files in two other languages were available to assist those people experiencing difficulty with literacy in those languages. CALD electors also had access via the website to the VEC's interactive virtual voting experience (18 languages plus English), originally produced for the 2006 State election. This provided a voting simulation and a demonstration of how to complete Upper and Lower House ballot papers. Information kits were mailed to 984 CALD community groups (see Community Education and Engagement section of this report).

Multi-language voting instructions were printed on the elector-facing panel of all standard and wheelchair height voting screens at voting centres, and multi-lingual election officials were clearly identified, wearing a sticker indicating the language/s spoken.

	Oct-10		Nov-10		TOTAL PER LANGUAGE	
	Calls	Interpreter	Calls	Interpreter	Calls	Interpreter
Amharic	0	0	9	0	9	0
Arabic	4	0	85	40	89	40
Bosnian	3	1	7	3	10	4
Cambodian	4	1	26	11	30	12
Chinese (Cantonese)	66	33	280	117	346	150
Chinese (Mandarin)	63	23	416	167	479	190
Croatian	2	0	43	13	45	13
Dari	0	0	18	4	18	4
Dinka	2	1	6	0	8	1
Greek	7	2	140	61	147	63
Italian	7	3	121	32	128	35
Korean	5	2	28	11	33	13
Macedonian	1	1	33	10	34	11
Persian	1	0	34	5	35	5
Russian	6	3	55	30	61	33
Serbian	0	0	39	22	39	22
Somali	1	0	9	0	10	0
Spanish	2	2	57	22	59	24
Turkish	12	6	77	21	89	27
Vietnamese	22	14	238	113	260	127
Other	20	6	292	50	312	56
TOTAL PER MONTH	228	98	2013	732		
TOTAL CALLS					2,241	830

Figure 19: Total number of calls and requests for an interpreter, as recorded by the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (October and November 2010)

Communication services for Indigenous people

After the appointment of an Aboriginal officer to the newly created Aboriginal Engagement Officer position early in 2010, an Aboriginal Engagement Program was established aimed at increasing understanding of the electoral process through the conduct of Aboriginal outreach sessions, and encouraging a greater number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work as election officials during the election. The VEC also established an Aboriginal Advisory Group to provide guidance to the VEC on how it might best respond to the electoral information, education and service needs of Aboriginal Victorians. To complement the program and help ensure its success, VEC head office staff and election managers attended cultural awareness training sessions.

An election specific logo "Yarn up – be solid – vote! Your future in your hands" was developed and featured heavily on outreach and engagement materials and resources, and on emails to a distribution list of over 1,000 Aboriginal people. As a result of promoting the VEC's outreach presentation sessions, the VEC presented information to 1,272 people over 21 sessions. For further information on education initiatives for the Aboriginal community, see the Community Education and Engagement section of this report.

Communication services for people experiencing homelessness

Since 2006, the VEC developed its 'Homeless not Voteless' program, and increased its network of participating homelessness agencies. A key objective of the program is to increase ease of access to, and participation in, the electoral system. This was assisted by a change in Commonwealth legislation during the year with regard to No Fixed Address enrolments.

For further information on education and engagement activities for this community (see Community Education and Engagement).



Figure 20: Poster targeting first time voters

Communication services for students and first-time voters

The VEC repeated a successful initiative from 2006 and ran a special voting supplement in The Age newspaper for the State election. However in 2010, the supplement was published earlier (July) to enable teachers to better incorporate election activities into the classroom.

As was the case previously, the issue was very popular with teachers who ordered class sets.

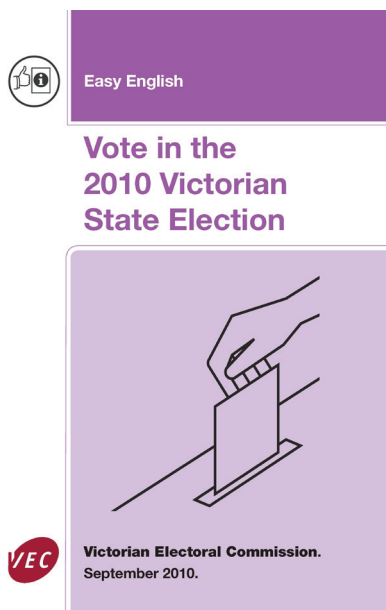


Figure 21: Easy English voting instructions

Communication services for voters with a disability

A strong and productive relationship between the VEC and its Electoral Access Advisory Group has resulted in a number of significant initiatives delivered through the VEC’s Disability Action Plan, most notably, the VEC’s Voting is for Everyone DVD kit (see Community Education and Engagement). The kit is an Australian industry first community education resource for people living with a disability, their families and paid care staff. The resource was developed in partnership with Scope workers and clients, and features a DVD facilitation guide focusing on why it’s important for people living with a disability to vote and explains the process of voting. The resource was distributed to over 1,000 disability residential and day services across Yooralla, Scope and DHS service providers.

For electors with a mild cognitive impairment or low literacy skills, the VEC again produced an updated version of the Easy English Guide to Victorian State elections. This publication continues to be one of the most popular of all of the VEC’s publications, particularly as it’s also of great use to voters whose first language is not English.

The VEC also provided a free software application BrowseAloud on its website for download. The application reads website text and PDFs to website users and is of greatest benefits to web users with low literacy.

Election Roadshow

Although the VEC’s 2010 election campaign “Every Vote Will Shape Victoria” consisted primarily of mass media advertising, the VEC decided to run a community-based public awareness initiative ‘Election Roadshow’ to deliver face-to-face information about the 2010 election. Research undertaken by the VEC indicates many community groups prefer information about elections to be provided in a face-to-face format. The Roadshow was also intended to provide the public with an opportunity to enrol or update their enrolment details before the close of rolls.



Figure 22: The State Election Roadshow at the Royal Melbourne Show

The Roadshow targeted three key audiences:

1. the general voting public in regional centres and metropolitan areas of low voter participation and high informality;
2. culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities; and
3. people aged 17-29 years.

While not directly targeting youth festivals and music events, the Roadshow was designed to appeal to this audience in an effort to address low youth enrolment and turnout rates.

With the aim of reaching a wide audience, the VEC launched the Roadshow on the 18 September 2010 at the Royal Melbourne Show, a high profile event. This was the first of nine locations – five in metropolitan areas and three in regional Victoria – over an eight week period. The Roadshow concluded on 9 November 2010 at Federation Square, coinciding with the close of rolls.

The Roadshow was an eye catching inflatable purple arch with a series of interactive activities inside the zone. The set was the most commented on aspect of the Roadshow by members of the public and certainly caught people’s attention. Key Roadshow statistics are provided in Figure 23.

	Days	Face-to-face hours	VEC staff hours	Giveaways	Direct customer interactions	Estimated number of spectators
Royal Melbourne Show	11	116	344	24,800	30,516	54,900
Chadstone shopping centre	4	39	59	200	1,807	27,700
Elmore	3	26	56	700	3,500	3,700
Shepparton	2	18	40	4,500	4,500	6,500
Geelong*	1	10	24	2,000	500	1,500
Bendigo	2	20	40	2,500	2,800	6,000
Dandenong	3	41	48	1,020	4,600	30,000
Highpoint shopping centre	4	24	48.5	360	3,600	24,000
Federation Square	1	13	37.5	500	1,800	5,000
Total	31	307	697	36,580	53,623	159,300

Figure 23: Key statistics, 2010 State Election Roadshow

Community Sector Information Kits

Community Sector Information Kits, consisting of a package of resources with key information about enrolling and voting in the State election were sent to key agencies and advocacy groups, small community groups representing and supporting CALD minority groups, and CALD agencies and groups listed in the Victorian Multicultural Commission’s (VMC) state-wide directory.

The aim of the community information kits was to resource the community sector with an inclusive, engaging and responsive package of information presented in diverse formats for diverse audiences.

The community sector information kits consisted of the following:

- a cover letter detailing equal access, key dates, available resources
- a resource order form
- an Easy English Guide to the State election
- a poster – a variety of posters was available targeting various groups e.g. general, Aboriginal Victorians, youth
- an enrolment form holder and enrolment forms – a thick, cardboard, foldable holder designed to match the ‘Every Vote Will Shape Victoria’ resource
- Every Vote Will Shape Victoria – a booklet with information about enrolling and voting in State elections
- Your Voice, Your Future – a youth focused resource with key information about enrolling and voting



Figure 24: Community Sector Information Kit Poster

Service type	
Aboriginal organisations	306
Adult education	32
CALD Service	984
Community Legal Centre	62
Disability Service	69
Employment service	15
Health Service	48
Homelessness Agency	37
Library	212
Local Council - Community Services	90
Local Council CEO	79
Local Learning and Employment Network	31
Migrant Information Service	12
Neighbourhood House or community centre	199
Peak body	89
TAFE	27
University	46
Women's services	64
Youth services	406
Total	2808

Figure 25: Distribution of Community Sector Information Kit

VEC website

In early October, the VEC developed an election-specific website (131vec.com.au) designed to complement the 131 VEC (131 832) telephone enquiry service number, to enable better recall through advertising, and to increase access and visits to the site. Linked icons on this landing page took site visitors directly to relevant information for each stage of the election. The landing page had just over 190,000 page visits during October and November.

Information about where to vote and the availability of online checking of enrolment details were the most popular pages, followed by information on how to vote outside your electorate, general State election information and downloadable enrolment forms.

A direct link from the landing page and a dedicated page for overseas electors was included in 2010 as a response to feedback from that elector group. Clear links to the State election web pages were included on the VEC homepage also. During the month of November, the VEC had just over 790,000 page visits to the landing page and homepage.

The site averaged just over 11,000 unique visits each day from the Monday to Friday prior to election day and 21,163 unique visits on election day.

Voting centre search facility

The website also included a voting centre search facility, to identify and locate early voting centres and election day voting centres. After an address was entered, a search returned the details of the five voting centres nearest that address or (prior to election day) two early voting centres. Details included the voting centre address, Melways map, accessibility rating, details of any access limitations, and noted whether the voting centre was within the electoral district related to that address. Electors could also search by locality or postcode, which proved helpful for those away from their enrolled address on election day.

Over the campaign period, 63,684 search requests were recorded. This was a vast reduction from the 220,000 odd hits for the service in 2006 – most likely due to the decision to list all voting centres within the elector's District on the EasyVote Guide.

Telephone enquiry service

The VEC outsourced (by tender) the 131VEC (131 832) election hotline, or telephone enquiry service (TES) project. The TES dealt effectively and efficiently with the large number of calls received during the election.

The strategy for the TES was to use an initial message to drive potential callers through to the VEC website rather than through to an operator. This approach resulted from the extremely high volume of calls received in 2006, leading to concerns that the figure could approach 250,000-300,000 calls in 2010.

The TES operated for nine weeks, from Monday, 27 September, to Wednesday, 1 December. Operating hours were 9.00am - 5.30pm weekdays (8.00pm on

close of roll), 9.00am - 2.00pm on Saturday, 13 and 20 November, and 8.00am- 6.00pm on Saturday, 25 November.

The TES received 106,784 calls during the election period (compared with 227,246 in 2006 and 129,774 in 2002). Up to 90 trained operators were available to answer calls at peak times. The VEC provided training and online information to operators to enable them to answer questions quickly and accurately regarding:

- how and where to enrol
- Election Manager contact details and how to nominate as a candidate
- the location of interstate and overseas voting centres
- how to vote by post or in person before election day
- the location of early mobile voting centres
- voting on election day

The more complex calls were handled by team leaders. Any enquiry requiring more detail was referred to a VEC representative and, if required, could be transferred to the VEC’s head office for final resolution of the matter.

All State election advertising publicised the 131VEC (131 832) hotline number. Interpreter lines for 20 languages other than English were also advertised on the bottom of print advertisements and on the EasyVote Guide. Notably, all advertising generated large increases in the volume of calls received in the period immediately following publication or broadcast.

	Calls received	Calls answered	Left after message	Abandoned	Diverted to voicemail
2002	129,774	99743 (77%)	24833 (19%)	5198 (4%)	NA
2006	227,246	128090 (56%)	73379 (32%)	25777 (11%)	NA
2010	106,784	73939 (69%)	30645 (29%)	2103 (2%)	97 (<1%)

Figure 26: Service levels at the election hotline

SMS enrolment and reminder service

In response to Recommendation 3.3 of the Electoral Matters Committee report on the conduct of the 2006 State election, that the VEC considers investigating the feasibility of SMS text enrolment, an SMS enrolment and reminder service was trialed at this election.

As this was a new communications field for the VEC, the organisation opted to partner with an experienced company that had been recommended by Telstra - Ad I.Q. The SMS strategy had two phases. Voters

could request an enrolment form by SMS during the enrolment period. Later in the campaign, voters could register for a series of voting reminders – for the early voting period and two on election day itself. Registration for the SMS reminder service could be achieved by SMS text or online.

In direct response to SMS requests, 764 enrolment forms were distributed, and a post-election analysis revealed that 57% of these resulted in new or updated enrolments. A total of 4,877 requests for an SMS reminder were also received, peaking on election eve with 893 requests in a single 24 hour period. A portion of the reminder service users could be characterised as ‘active’ SMS users, as several hundred had manually opted out between the morning and afternoon reminders.

Key to the success of the SMS project was the fact that both phases (enrolment and reminder) were highlighted in the mainstream communications campaign. An analysis of advertising schedules against incoming SMS requests showed that use rates peaked for all media within moments of ads being seen. Television was the most successful medium, outdoor advertising was the weakest.

Encouraging enrolment via SMS was somewhat successful. However, legislative amendments enabling automatic enrolment, plus the fact that it required the manual distribution of paper forms when there is a range of quicker and more sustainable options available, mean that the VEC is unlikely to pursue this again.

The reminder service was significantly more popular, required very little in the way of resources and is likely to be continued. The service is a significant value-add for (potentially) all voters, it can be offered free if people register for it online, and it is a service that could be integrated with other VEC communication tools, such as the VEC Facebook page or iPhone application.

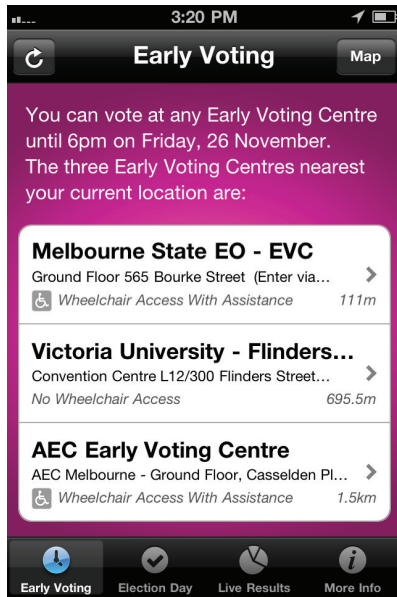


Figure 27: Voting reminders were sent to people who registered with the VEC

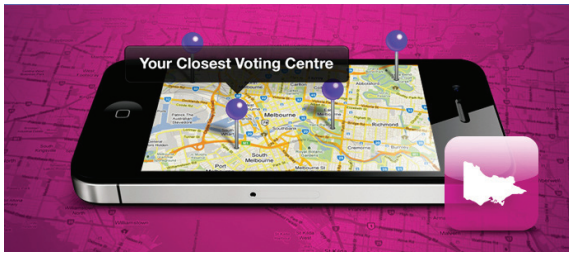


Figure 28: Vote Victoria iPhone app showed voting centre locations

Vote Victoria (iPhone application)

The VEC helped to define an iPhone application (app) concept, which was developed by Information Victoria as a test case for government/private partnerships with consulting firm Deloitte.

Focusing on the most widely used platform (iPhone) and limiting the functionality to three key features (a GPS assisted voting centre locator, a page for general electoral information and a method to access live results) "Vote Victoria" was listed in the iTunes App Store on 18 November. Vote Victoria was downloaded 5,085 times during the ten days it was live, and its average review score on iTunes was 4.5 of a possible 5 stars.

Feedback focused almost entirely on the nature of the elections results. The iPhone app was consistent with the VEC's physical and online tally rooms. However, differences between the official results from the VEC and results as interpreted by media commentators

caused some confusion. Vote Victoria capitalised on current technology trends to provide a simple, yet effective service to a wide audience. The success of the application may well lead to the delivery of services via mobile platforms becoming standard practice in Australian electoral communication.

Social media

Recognising that social media has a large place in communication, particularly with young people (one of the VEC's target groups), the VEC decided to launch an official presence on the social media platforms Facebook and YouTube. This was seen as a cost effective way of delivering campaign messages to an increasingly transient audience that may not be reached by the mainstream campaign.

The sites were constantly monitored to ensure all content supported the VEC's objective – to create greater awareness of the election and provide key election information.

The official VEC Facebook page and YouTube channel were launched on 23 September 2010. By election day, the Facebook page had 117 followers with 75 checking the VEC's posts daily. The VEC's Facebook page and YouTube channel were not included in the mainstream campaign, but promoted by VEC staff to contacts and friends. On 15 October, linked icons were included in the footer of the VEC's website.

There were 6,007 views of VEC posts to the Facebook page during the campaign, and the underlying strategy of 'informing without challenging' was a success. Feedback from users was posted 22 times during the campaign, none of which was negative, partial or inappropriate. No user posts had to be removed.

Use of VEC's social media pages was very small compared with the mainstream communications campaign. However, the low cost of administering social media sites and the nature of user base growth suggests that it is a field that should not be overlooked in future communication plans. The VEC's Facebook page and YouTube channel are still being maintained. Use has slowed since the election, however, user numbers continue to increase.

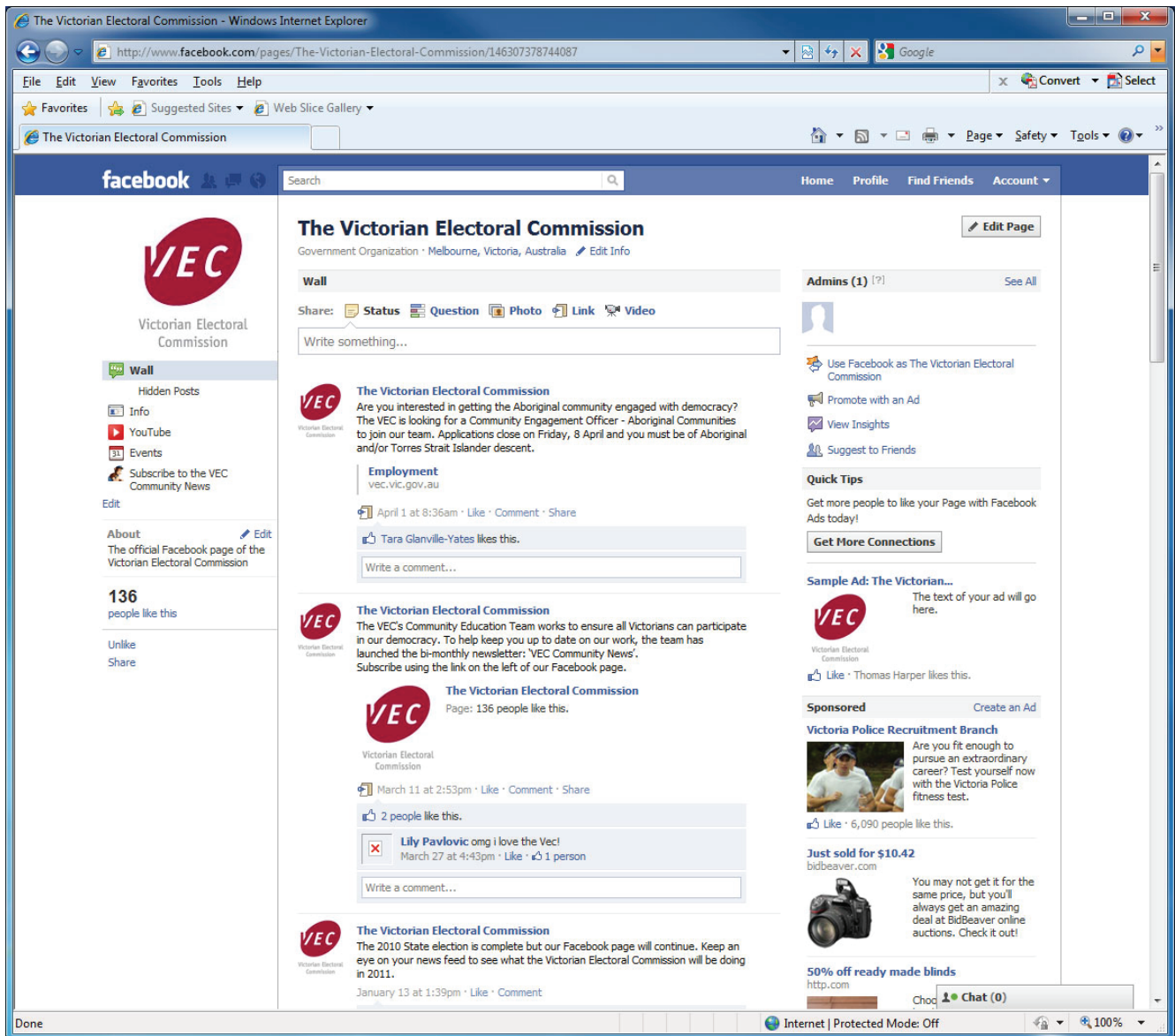


Figure 29: VEC Facebook page, 2010

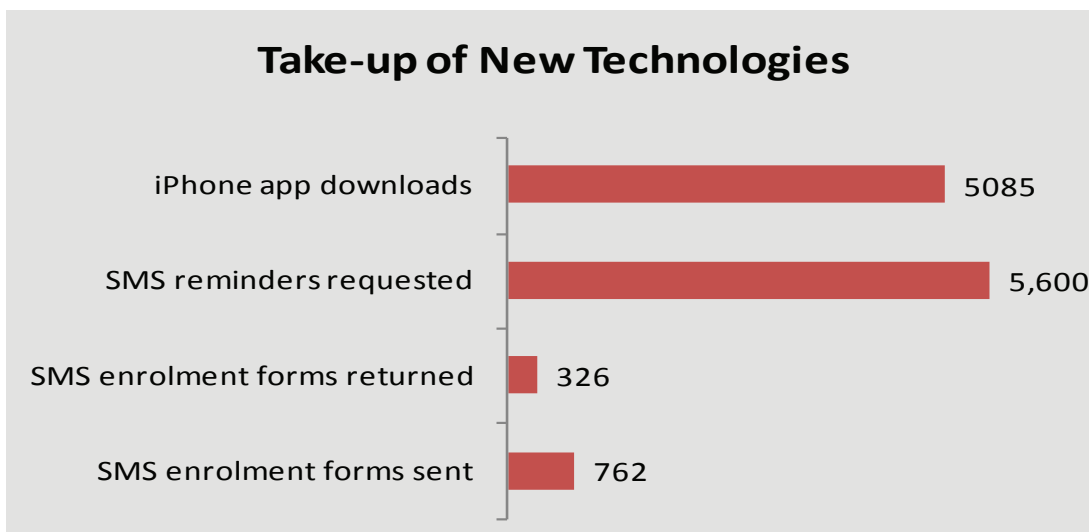


Figure 30: Elector take-up of new technologies, 2010 Victorian State election

Section 5 - Community Education and Engagement

The VEC's Community Education Team undertook an ambitious program of work spanning in-depth voter information workshops, broader public awareness activity via a community road show and the provision of special mobile early voting services for groups including the homeless and prisoners. Figure 31 provides details of the outreach sessions conducted between July and December 2010.

Audience	Sessions	Participants
Aboriginal	21	1,272
Multicultural	65	1,606
Homeless	30	230
Disability	15	328
Prisoners	9	54*
Mobile voting	23	937
Total	165	4,427

Figure 31: Outreach session conducted by the VEC Community Education team, July-December 2010

* Number of enrolments received.

Electoral education on the VEC website

In the period between 1 July 2010 and 31 December 2010, the education section of the website had almost 11,500 unique page visits. Pages within the education section provided 2,133 direct entries to the VEC website.

Aboriginal Engagement Program

As part of its Aboriginal Engagement Program, the VEC established an Aboriginal Advisory Group to provide advice and guidance on the VEC's initiatives in this area. One initiative involved capitalising on the significant affiliation many Aboriginal Victorians have with the Australian Football League. To increase awareness of the State election, enrolment and voting, the VEC sponsored the Marngrook Footy Show, Most Valuable Player of the Finals series, which culminated in an on-air presentation during Grand Final Week.

Marngrook Football Show presenter, Grant Hansen, a highly recognisable, well respected and influential Victorian Aboriginal personality, was featured in a campaign directed towards Aboriginal communities that included poster, print and radio mediums.

During the year, under the guidance of the Aboriginal Advisory Group, a letter was sent to Aboriginal organisations across Victoria introducing the VEC's new Aboriginal Engagement Officer, and offering a visit and an electoral education session

to the organisation. Over the course of the year this was supported with in-person networking and electronic mail outs promoting the free service. The VEC provided information sessions, or established information stands at community events, enabling discussions with Koories on a one-to-one basis.

Drawing on his own experience and the VEC's research into the electoral engagement of Aboriginal Victorians, the Aboriginal Engagement Officer developed a motivational presentation about Koorie history, the Koorie relationship to democracy, motivational and inspirational messages and basic information about enrolling and voting.



Figure 32: Poster featuring prominent Aboriginal personality Grant Hansen

Education sessions	Participants
Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation	20
Wannik Aboriginal Student Leadership conference	40
VAEI Schools Sub Committee – Passport to Democracy	10
Koorie Community Tour at Parliament House	25
Living Room Homeless Agency	10
Western Suburbs Aboriginal Gathering Place	7
Aboriginal Men's Forum	50
Healesville Aboriginal Women's Group	10
2010 Department of Justice Koorie Job Fairs	≈1,000
Centrelink Jobs Expo Western suburbs	20
Department of Justice Koorie Programs Unit	10
Whole of Government Head of Agencies Forum	10
Our Youth, Our Future, Youth Forum	50
Aboriginal Disability Network	10

Figure 33: Aboriginal outreach sessions and number of participants, 2010

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

The VEC recognises that Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities are not homogeneous or exclusive. Culture and customs can affect people's voting behaviour in Australia, and many people come from countries where the voting systems are different to that in Victoria, where the freedom to vote as one chooses is not always available.

To deliver a responsive and relevant education program, the VEC's community education work employed a range of participatory methodologies to ensure citizens from CALD communities understood how to exercise their democratic right to vote.

The VEC's 2008 resource All About Voting (produced in partnership with AMES) provided a solid grounding for electoral education to this audience.

In the lead up to the 2010 State election, the CALD program aimed to:

- increase the participation of multicultural communities in the democratic process;
- educate the community about how to complete a ballot paper correctly; and
- foster relationships with multicultural community organisations to increase the impact of the VEC's work.

To achieve these aims, the 2010 program consisted of:

- the establishment of a CALD Advisory Group;
- face-to-face community education sessions; and
- the distribution of community sector information kits (see Communication Services).

CALD Advisory Group

The VEC's CALD Advisory Group was established as a means to inform key agencies about State election activities, and to support the development of initiatives and inform with regard to the current trends and needs of communities.

The members of the Advisory Group represented the following agencies:

- Victorian Multicultural Commission;
- Ethnic Community Council of Victoria;
- Centre for Multicultural Youth;
- AMES – Adult Multicultural Education Services;
- Migrant Information Centre East; and
- Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The Advisory Group met twice in the six months prior to the Victorian State election. The Group also received email updates about the progress of outreach

and resource development. Members also assisted in distributing key information and resources through their networks in the lead up to the election.

Community education sessions

In the six months prior to the State election, community education sessions were delivered to four distinct audiences:

- interpreter assisted workshops to Chinese and Vietnamese community groups
- Easy English sessions with ethno-specific community groups, sometimes delivered with interpreter assistance
- Easy English sessions for ESL classes
- 'train the trainer' sessions to build capacity of community workers around their electoral knowledge.

	Sessions	Participants
Chinese groups	9	256
Vietnamese groups	6	121
Other language groups	26	567
ESL classes	16	533
Train the trainer	7	65
Total	64	1,542

Figure 34: Outreach session provided to CALD groups, 2010

The VEC used its expanding multicultural networks to promote its community education sessions via electronic mail outs to multicultural community networks. Chinese and Vietnamese community groups were a focus, as research conducted by the VEC after the 2006 election had revealed that a significant proportion of respondents in these groups were unclear about how to vote correctly. The VEC matched the postcodes of relevant organisations listed in the Victorian Multicultural Commission Resource Directory with postcodes of districts with an informality rate above 5% at the 2006 State Election. Regional ethnic organisations in Geelong, Bendigo and Shepparton were also approached.

Education sessions used a participatory, Easy English approach to deliver information about:

- the identification of democratically elected representatives at each level of government
- service provision at each level of government
- the importance of enrolling to vote
- how to correctly complete ballot papers (usually in the form of a mock election).

The community education sessions provided an opportunity to assist people to enrol, check enrolment details and complete other election-related forms. The majority of sessions were conducted in the Western

and Northern Metropolitan Regions (both areas with large CALD populations), with 25 districts across seven regions covered. Over 10% of sessions were conducted in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, where there are high numbers of Chinese speakers. A total of 64 community education sessions were conducted, with over 1,600 participants in all.

Survey respondents reported an overwhelming increase in electoral knowledge; with 61% of participants reporting a good knowledge of democracy after the session, compared to 4% before the session.

Outreach services for people experiencing homelessness

The VEC’s Homeless doesn’t mean Voteless program incorporating election-related activities and year-round electoral activities for people experiencing homelessness, has continued to grow and develop with the support of the key homelessness agencies. The number of people accessing the program has substantially increased since the 2006 State election. A number of activities for homelessness communities were conducted prior to the 2010 election.

Activity	Time frame	Sessions
Worker information sessions	August - December 2010	16
Enrolment outreach sessions	August - December 2010	14
Mobile voting	November 16 – 26, 2010	11
Living Voice: Graffiti Art	November 12, 2010	1

Figure 35: Outreach sessions provided to homelessness agencies and clients, August - December 2010

The Living Voice – Graffiti Art Project

This exciting project was developed when Living Room Youth Projects expressed interest in an electoral education campaign for its clients. Consultation indicated that a standard information session would not suit this client group. Inspired by the fact that graffiti art on walls surrounding its location often serves as a discussion point for clients accessing the service, this voting-related graffiti art, created by clients working with an artist, provoked an interest in discussion about politics and civic engagement, and provided a common link for the VEC to build on at the subsequent early mobile voting session.



Figure 36: Graffiti art created at the Living Voice, 2010

Worker information sessions

VEC Community Education Team members visited homelessness support agencies to outline program initiatives, organise enrolment opportunities for clients and provide information about issues such as clients’ apprehension relating to failure to vote. Around 100 agency workers attended these sessions, assisting the VEC to gauge agency service type, interest and need, and to tailor its various enrolment and election services accordingly.

Enrolment outreach

Based at support agencies, the outreach sessions provided an opportunity for people to enrol or enquire about enrolment, in a familiar and safe location, with the support of agency staff. The sessions frequently coincided with a lunchtime activity.

Outreach services for people who have a disability

A key objective of the VEC’s Disability Action Plan is the development and implementation of an education program for people with an intellectual impairment or multiple disabilities within daycare environments. The DVD resource Voting is for Everyone forms part of this program.

Developed in partnership with Scope workers and clients, Voting is for Everyone aims to encourage a community-wide conversation about democracy and to dispel some of the misconceptions around voting by people with an intellectual disability, and their capacity and willingness to vote. The kit is a community education resource for people living with a disability, their families and paid care staff, and an Australian industry first.



Figure 37: Voting is for Everyone sessions enabled people with a disability to vote, sometimes for the first time

Voting is for Everyone was distributed to over 1,000 disability residential and day services across Yooralla, Scope and DHS service providers.

In October 2010, permission was sought from Department of Premier and Cabinet to secure free advertising spots via the Master Advertising Media Service for a 30 second Community Service Announcement (CSA). Using footage from Voting is for Everyone and tagged with VEC State election campaign branding, the aim was to promote the Voting is for Everyone resource and raise awareness of voting and disability amongst the wider community. The CSA resulted in an equivalent media buy of \$28,651 at no cost to the VEC.

The VEC promoted education sessions for disability service clients through metro and rural access workers. Fifteen outreach and education sessions were conducted with 328 participants. The focus of these sessions was to provide education about levels of government, how to contact the person's electorate representatives, how to vote correctly and about seeking assistance from either an election official or a paid care giver to complete ballot papers if they were unable to physically do so themselves. Enrolments were often taken during these sessions.

Passport to Democracy

Passport to Democracy is the VEC's dynamic, interactive and fully resourced program for secondary students. The program takes students on a journey of their own creation, drawing on their concerns and issues to make the connection between politics and the things that are important to them. It prompts students to consider how they can make an impact on issues they care about and ultimately, how they can engage with the community to achieve positive change.

The Passport to Democracy (PTD) program continued throughout 2010, with PTD videos being made available on YouTube, a PTD Blog for teachers and online bookings. The VEC has employed a part-time officer to coordinate the deployment of course materials and outreach officers to schools delivering the program.

Section 6 - Services to registered political parties and candidates

Information services to registered political parties and candidates

The VEC aims to deliver high quality election services, through the provision of accurate and easy to use information to stakeholders and participants.

Prior to the commencement of the State election, the VEC conducted a number of briefing sessions for registered political parties on the election process. The sessions provided information on:

- the VEC's preparations for the election
- changes to legislation
- the role of Election Managers
- postal voting arrangements
- nomination procedures
- the registration of how-to-vote cards and group voting tickets
- the VEC's voter information campaign
- complaints procedures
- public funding of election expenses

Representatives from 10 of the 11 registered political parties attended these sessions.

In addition, the VEC invited registered political parties to attend a demonstration on the VEC's electronically assisted voting facility during October. A small number of registered parties took up the invitation.

Further information was provided to registered political parties and included lists of voting centres and joint voting centres, estimated voter numbers for each voting centre, voting centres with geo codes, interstate and overseas voting locations and region ballot paper colours.

An information session, covering key timelines and procedures relevant to independent candidates, was held for independent candidates on Sunday, 7 November. Approximately 50 prospective candidates attended this session.

During the election period, the VEC published regular circulars for registered political parties and Legislative Council candidates. Legislative Assembly Election Managers kept their candidates informed of specific election activities and timelines.

Postal voting protocol

The VEC met with all registered political parties in the lead-up to the State election. One of the major

items discussed was the production and distribution of postal vote applications by registered political parties. Section 101 of the Electoral Act 2002 allows for a person other than the Commission to reproduce a postal vote application form and include it with other written material issued by that person or organisation. Historically, the three major registered political parties have produced and distributed postal vote applications during State elections. At the 2010 State election as well as the three major parties, an independent candidate also produced and distributed postal vote applications.

Prior to the 2006 State election the VEC introduced a protocol regarding the production and distribution of postal vote applications, in order to minimise any elector confusion regarding the origin of the application i.e. whether it was from the VEC or a party. The VEC protocol was again distributed to all registered political parties at the 2010 State election as it was considered necessary that a number of principles be observed in relation to the distribution of postal vote applications. They were that the applications:

- must contain the information detailed in Form K of the Electoral Regulations 2002
- must not contain any political comment
- must clearly identify the party or candidate distributing the application, but must not contain a Victorian Electoral Commission logo
- may be distributed with other political information
- must not contain any information that could be considered to be misleading
- must be sent to the Victorian Electoral Commission promptly upon completion

To assist parties with the production of their postal vote applications, the VEC provided each registered political party with a template for a postal vote application to be used during the State election.

Parties and candidates were encouraged to discuss their proposed templates, including the envelopes, with the VEC prior to printing and distribution. All applications distributed by parties clearly indicated to electors that the mailing address for the completed application was back to the particular party. Applications distributed by the independent candidate were returned directly to the VEC.

A high number of postal vote applications processed by the VEC were party specific applications. The VEC made arrangements with parties and candidates to ensure that the VEC received completed postal vote applications submitted to party offices as soon as possible on the day of receipt to ensure same

day despatch of ballot material to electors. The VEC noted there were some delays in the receipt of completed applications from parties that led to delays in the despatch of ballot material. In some instances, this also resulted in electors submitting multiple applications to vote by post.

Information to candidates

Handbooks were produced for candidates and scrutineers. The handbooks were available from the VEC, election offices, at the information session for independent candidates and via the VEC's website. All material provided to candidates and scrutineers incorporated feedback received following the 2006 State election, and reflected changes to legislation. The VEC provided candidate handbooks to political parties to distribute to their endorsed candidates.

Register of political parties

The Electoral Act 2002 requires the VEC to establish and maintain a register of political parties.

In order to qualify for registration, a political party must have a written constitution and at least 500 members who are Victorian electors and party members in accordance with the party's rules, and not members of another registered political party or of a party applying for registration.

It is not compulsory for political parties to be registered to contest an election, but registration gives a party a number of important entitlements, including:

- the right to have the party's name on ballot papers
- a requirement to nominate candidates and register how-to-vote cards centrally with the VEC
- access to enrolment and voter information on a periodic basis
- public funding for parties obtaining enough votes

There are 11 registered political parties in Victoria, 10 of which contested the 2010 election.

Support for the nomination process

The VEC advertised prominently for nominations in all daily newspapers throughout Victoria on the day after the Writ was issued. Election Managers provided prospective candidates with an information kit that included:

- the appropriate district or region nomination form
- an appointment of a Scrutineer form
- an Electoral Roll confidentiality agreement
- a Candidate Handbook
- a Scrutineer Handbook
- a copy of the VEC's how-to-vote card protocol
- a how-to-vote card declaration form
- a list of voting centres for the relevant district or region as well as a list of interstate and overseas voting locations
- details on the number of issuing points at each voting centre in the district or region and an estimate of the number of votes expected to be cast
- a district or region fact sheet
- a map of the electorate
- additional forms related to group registration and lodgment of group voting tickets for region candidates
- the Election Manager's contact details

Election Managers offered to meet with each candidate as soon as possible after the acceptance of the candidate's nomination, in order to outline the election process and clarify any other matters.

Registered political parties were required to submit nominations directly to the VEC in either hardcopy or electronic form. Registered political parties were provided with an electronic application for recording of nominations for each district and region. This enabled parties to enter the nominations onto a USB key, which was directly loaded onto the VEC Election Management System by VEC staff. The information was then checked against the hardcopy.

The VEC provided independent candidates with a facility to complete their nomination form online. Candidates were guided through each part of the nomination form and could check and change details before final submission. Once the candidate was satisfied with their form, they could print the online form to lodge with the Election Manager. By scanning the barcode on the nomination form at the time of lodgment, details as entered by the candidate were loaded directly into the VEC's Election Management System. This streamlined the processing of nominations and reduced waiting times for candidates.

The close of nominations was midday on 11 November, 2010, for candidates endorsed by registered political parties, and midday on 12 November for other candidates.

Candidates

The VEC received a record 711 nominations for the 2010 Victorian State election, compared to the previous record of 707 candidates in 2006.

There were 502 candidates for the 88 Legislative Assembly (Lower House) districts compared with 459 in 2006, and 209 candidates stood in the eight Legislative Council (Upper House) regions compared with 248 in 2006.

A total of 624 candidates were endorsed by registered political parties at this election. This was a decrease from 2006 where 644 endorsed candidates nominated. The numbers of candidates endorsed by registered political parties were: the Australian Labor Party (128), the Australian Greens (128), the Liberal Party (113), Family First (91), the Democratic Labor Party (67), Country Alliance (37), the Sex Party (25), the Nationals (21), Christian Democratic Party (10) and Socialist Alliance (4). Eighty-seven candidates stood as independents, compared with 63 at the 2006 election.

	2010	2006	2002
Candidates	711	707	477
Male candidates	488	472	319
Female candidates	223	235	158
Party candidates	624	644	412
Independent candidates	87	63	65
Highest number of candidates contesting an electorate	Gembrook District (10) Northern Metropolitan Region (34)	Bayswater District (8). Eastern Victoria and Northern Victoria Regions (38 each)	Melbourne District (8)
Lowest number of candidates contesting an electorate	Preston and Williamstown Districts (3) Eastern Victoria Region (21)	Four candidates in each of 23 districts. Western Metropolitan Region (26).	Three candidates in each of 25 districts.

Figure 38: Candidates at recent Victorian State elections

Group registration and group voting tickets – Legislative Council

Two or more candidates nominating for the same region in the Legislative Council could request that their names be grouped on the ballot paper in a specified order. Group registration closed at midday on Thursday, 11 November, 2010, the same time as

close of nominations for registered political parties. A total of 57 groups were registered across the eight regions compared to 69 in 2006. Eastern Victoria, South Eastern Metropolitan, Western Metropolitan and Western Victoria regions had the least, with six groups registered in each region. Northern Metropolitan region the highest number of groups for a region, with 10 groups registered.

A total of 52 groups were from registered political parties and 5 groups were registered by independent candidates. The Liberal and National Party registered combined groups in Eastern, Northern and Western Victoria Regions. Two independent candidates remained ungrouped.

All registered groups lodged group voting tickets with the VEC by midday on Sunday, 14 November, in accordance with the legislation. None of the groups chose to lodge multiple group voting tickets.

The registration of how-to-vote cards

Registered how-to-vote (HTV) cards are the only form of printed electoral material that can be lawfully handed out, distributed or otherwise made available within 400 metres of a voting centre on election day. Any candidate, person or organisation can register a how-to-vote (HTV) card. HTV cards carried by mobile early voting teams must also be registered.

A change to the Electoral Act 2002 required the VEC to publish all registered HTV cards on its website for this election. Information about the registration of HTV cards was provided:

- to registered political parties at briefings held prior to the State election
- to independent candidates attending the information session on 7 November
- to candidates by Election Managers directly and in the Candidate's Information Kit
- on the VEC's website.

The registration period for HTV cards was from Monday, 15 November, to midday on Friday, 19 November. A total of 1,101 HTV cards were registered for this election compared to 672 in 2006. All registered HTV cards were available at the VEC head office in Little Collins Street, Melbourne and, in accordance with new legislation, were published on the VEC website. 1,081 HTV cards were registered by Registered Political Parties or candidates and 20 cards were registered by other individuals or interest groups.

HTVCs on the Web

The VEC developed a solution using their high speed scanners and the EMS database to help with the efficient administration and production of HTVCs on the VEC's website. The VEC processed more than 1,000 HTVCs during the registration period. The technology enabled the VEC to meet the legislative timelines and publish the information on the website.

Provision of electoral rolls to candidates

Each candidate in the 2010 State election was provided with the opportunity to obtain by email an electronic copy of the electoral roll for their relevant electorate, as allowed in legislation. Two text files were provided which could be opened easily in Microsoft Excel, one in address order and one in name order. These were emailed on Saturday 13 November 2010, with instructions, to candidates whose nomination was finalised, confidentiality agreement signed and a valid email address provided. Thirty three candidates used this service.

The seven day close of roll date restricts the time available for production of rolls for candidates. In conjunction with the task of processing the large number of enrolments received, the VEC was not able to provide rolls for candidates and political parties until 13 November. Requests for this information had been received by this time, for the purpose of campaigning.

The rolls were printed at the earliest possible time, beginning the weekend after the roll closed. The production of the hard copy rolls took five days of non-stop production, and the rolls were then distributed around the State.

In order to produce the rolls earlier, legislative amendments would be required.

Public funding of election expenditure

The Electoral Act 2002 provides for the public funding of election expenses incurred by registered political parties and candidates contesting Victorian State elections.

For the Legislative Assembly (Lower House), registered political parties and independent candidates that receive four per cent or more of first-preference votes are entitled to \$1.4849 for each first-preference vote received. For the Legislative Council (Upper House),

in each region, any candidate in a group or as an independent who receives four per cent or more of first-preference votes is also entitled to public funding. The number of first-preference votes obtained by the first-named candidate in a group is determined by adding the above-the-line votes for that group to the number of first-preferences recorded below-the-line for the first-named candidate to calculate the entitlement.

In the case of a candidate endorsed by a registered political party, payment is made to the registered officer of the relevant political party. In the case of a candidate not endorsed by a registered political party, payment is made to the candidate.

Payment is dependent upon the VEC receiving an audited Statement of Expenditure (SOE), and an audit certificate that states that the auditor received full access to information and has no reason to believe that any matter in the SOE is incorrect.

Where the audited SOE shows that not less than the entitlement has been spent, payment is calculated at \$1.4849 for each first-preference vote received. Where the SOE reveals that an amount less than the entitlement has been spent, payment is for the amount specified in the SOE.

The deadline for applications for the funding of election expenses was 16 April, 2011. The VEC made payments of the entitlement within three working days of receipt of an audited SOE.

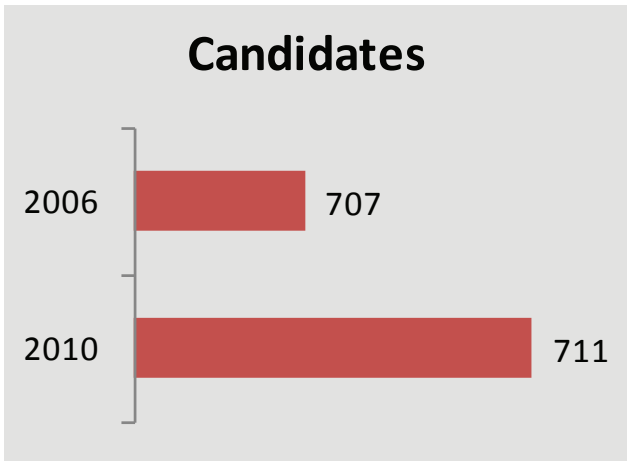


Figure 39: Candidates, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

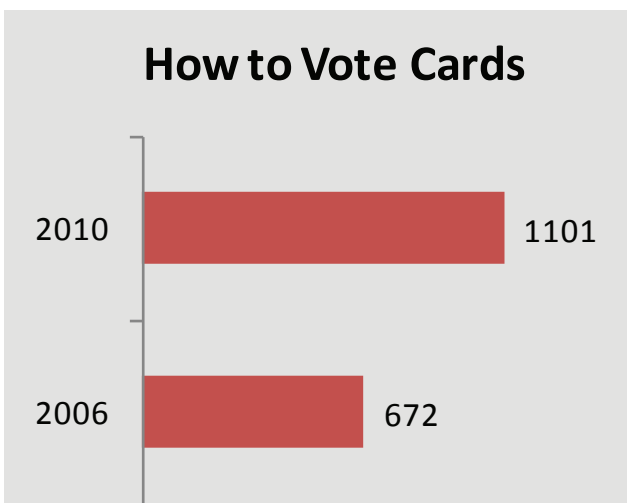


Figure 40: How to Vote Cards registered, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

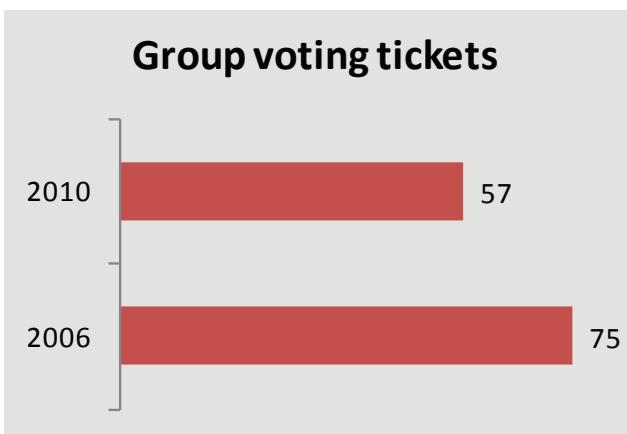


Figure 41: Group voting tickets registered, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

Section 7 - Services to the media

Services to the media

The media remains the primary source of electoral information for most Victorians. In an effort to ensure this information was as accurate and timely as possible, the VEC provided a range of services to the media including; briefing sessions, a media handbook, a dedicated media centre on the website, the distribution of media releases, media interviews and a tally room.

Media briefings

National and regional media outlets were invited to a media briefing at the VEC early in October. Seventeen journalists attended and were briefed on legislative changes, details of the tally room and the results service. They were also given a first look at the Electronically Assisted Voting service.

Two further media briefings were held to discuss the logistics of the tally room and ensure that each broadcaster was given a fair allocation of space according to their broadcasting requirements.

Media handbook

A media handbook was sent to every media outlet in Victoria with additional copies printed and sent out on demand. The handbook was slimmed down to a handy 40 pages from 601 pages in 2006 and concentrated on the most frequently asked questions and details of VEC initiatives. The media were encouraged to visit the VEC website for all other information.

A dedicated media centre was created for the website with profiles of every electorate in Victoria, historical information, maps and relevant staff contact details. The website had 3001 page views during the election period from September to December. This strategy of driving journalists to the website saw a decrease in telephone enquiries of 49% from 2006.

Media releases

Thirty-six media releases were issued to targeted contacts of national and regional media outlets to raise awareness of each stage of the election. Four of these media releases were translated into 28 of the most widely spoken languages in Victoria and sent to 93 ethnic media outlets to promote key messages to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Interviews

During the election period VEC staff made themselves available for interview, achieving significant coverage across Victoria and Interstate. Highlights included the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner providing radio interviews to 94 national and regional stations at well timed stages of the campaign.

On election night the Electoral Commissioner was interviewed by Josephine Cafagna on ABC Television and the Deputy Electoral Commissioner spoke to ABC Radio twice to update listeners on the progress of the count.

The tally room

The tally room at the Victory Room, in Etihad Stadium, provided a focal point on election night. ABC News (television and radio) broadcast live continuously throughout the evening with Sky News, Channel 7, Channel 9 and Channel 10 broadcasting live crosses. 3AW and MTR also had broadcasting presence.

In a first for a Victorian election, the VEC was honoured for Aunty Joy Murphy, a Wurundjeri Elder to open the tally room with a traditional welcome to country. The welcome was broadcast live on ABC radio. Costs to the VEC for the tally room will be reported in the full Election report. The media were responsible for their own set up and operating costs.

The electronic tally board was updated in real time and provided an impressive backdrop for the television crews. Peter Ryan, leader of the National Party, chose this position to give a press conference at the end of the evening. Two smaller tally boards were arranged in front of the radio stations and the print/online journalist seating area.

Following the low public attendance at the last election, a reduced seating area was provided. Around 100 people braved the weather to watch the election coverage and extra seating was also provided in the stadium where the tally board was projected onto the large screens.

Tally Room

The VEC's tally room venue (the Victory Room at Etihad Stadium) had physical constraints on the size and shape of the actual tally board as well as the viewing of the results data.

The VEC developed an electronic tally board application that projected results data in a dynamic manner and enabled the use of the multiple audio visual outlets to display the results including the main scoreboard at Etihad Stadium. In addition the VEC implemented the same software on an interactive Microsoft Surface table that allowed users to pick and choose the results to be displayed.



Virtual tally Room

The VEC created a website dedicated to the publication of results – the Virtual Tally Room (VTR). The site also provided the media access to up to date results information from a FTP site which were used for the broadcasts from the actual tally room. The VTR was designed to provide quick and secure access to results as they were received by the VEC on election night and for the week following.

On election night the website and results files were updated at no more than 5 minute intervals, receiving more than 1.5 million hits from nearly 78,000 visits to the website.

Section 8 - Personnel

The VEC's Election Managers and Region Coordinators

The VEC has approximately 270 Senior Election Officials (SEO) on standby, who have been recruited and trained for engagement as election managers during State and local government elections. From this pool of SEOs, individuals were selected for appointment to management roles for Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council electorates.

Appointment and training of Election Managers

A total of 56 Election Managers were appointed to conduct elections for 88 members of the Legislative Assembly. Each Election Manager was responsible for one or two districts; most Election Managers in metropolitan areas were responsible for two districts, while most Election Managers in rural areas with larger geographic boundaries were allocated one district.

All Election Managers completed extensive training for the State election, comprising home study in conjunction with a series of seminars at the VEC (one two-day seminar, one three-day seminar and a one day briefing in late October).

Assistant Election Managers from the VEC's pool of SEOs were appointed to assist each Election Manager. One or two Assistant Election Managers were appointed for each office. The Assistant Election Managers also completed the VEC's training program, but did not attend the final briefing in October.

The Election Manager's role is to establish offices and appoint staff to facilitate the smooth running of the election for their electorates. They issue early votes, process independent candidates' nominations, organise the draw for the order of the candidates' names on the ballot papers, appoint and train voting centre staff, and make arrangements for establishing voting centres for election day. On election day, the Election Manager is responsible for the conduct of the election and the counting of votes for those electorates for which they have responsibility.

Immediately following election day, Election Managers checked, sorted and despatched completed ballot material to other electorates, finalised payroll tasks for election officials and conducted counts for postal, early and other declaration votes. For the first time, all ballot papers were rechecked, even if a preference distribution was not required. A total of 52 preference distributions were conducted for district electorates

by the relevant Election Managers. No recounts were required.

Appointment and training of Region Coordinators

A new role of Region Coordinator was created for the 2010 election to be responsible for rechecking all region ballot papers for their appointed region. The Region Coordinator was responsible for receiving region ballot papers from Election Managers, supervising the checking and reconciliation of those ballot papers and despatching those marked 'below-the-line' to the central computer counting venue. An Assistant Region Coordinator was appointed to assist each Region Coordinator.

Region Coordinators and Assistant Region Coordinators all completed two days of comprehensive face-to-face training plus home study.

Support for the VEC's Election Managers and Region Coordinators

Election Support Officers

Eleven Election Support Officers (ESOs) provided support to the VEC's Election Managers and Region Coordinators throughout the election. Located at the VEC's Melbourne office, the ESOs were the central point of contact between the Election Managers / Region Coordinators, the Electoral Commissioner and other VEC staff. They assisted Election Managers and Region Coordinators with procedural and other complex issues.

Helpdesk

Seven Helpdesk operators provided support to Election Managers and Region Coordinators. Principally, they assisted the Election Managers and Region Coordinators with the operation of the VEC's Election Management System and other technical issues.

Recruitment of election officials

Election Managers and Region Coordinators were responsible for recruiting administrative staff to work in their offices, and Election Managers were also required to recruit staff for voting centres on election day.

In addition, Election Managers were able to appoint Election Liaison Officers (ELO) who visited voting

centres on election day. The ELO's role was to alert the Election Manager to instances where voting centres may have needed extra resources and deliver them where appropriate, and to ensure procedures were applied consistently.

To assist them in this task, the VEC developed job specifications to assess potential candidates and to ensure that Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles were considered in the selection of all staff. A recruitment company was also engaged to assist with the recruitment of suitable staff who were employed on a casual basis. The company was provided with job specifications to ensure that staff recruited met the VEC's requirements. Election Managers in areas with large numbers of people from culturally diverse backgrounds appointed multi-lingual staff where possible.

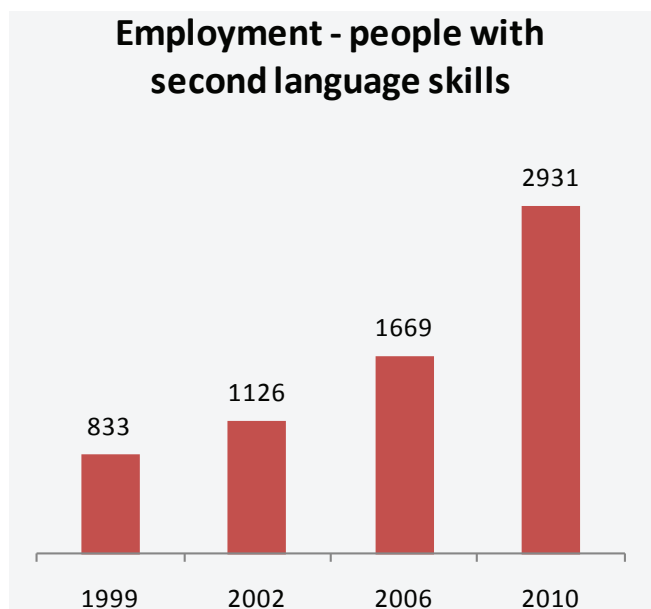


Figure 42: Staff with skills in languages other than English, Victorian State elections, 1999-2010

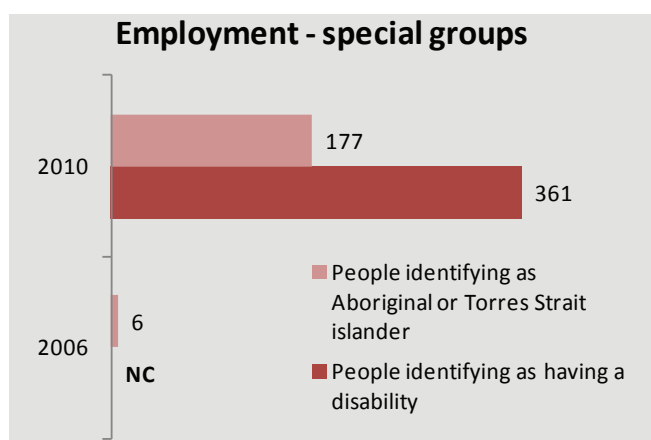


Figure 43: Staff identifying as belonging to special groups, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

NC - Not collected

Apart from agency staff, all appointments were drawn from people who had completed the VEC's online Expression of Interest. Persons who had worked on previous elections were invited to register their interest in working on the election, and provided with a login that would enable their previous work history with the VEC to be linked to their registration.

The Expression of Interest register was also advertised to the wider public, through the VEC's website, universities, colleges and schools, and through multicultural organisations.

The VEC created new part-day roles for this election to address the higher demand often experienced in voting centres during the morning and to assist with counting activities after 6.00pm on election night. 1,656 of the 16,993 officials on election day were appointed to part-day roles.

Training of election officials

For the first time, election officials were required to complete relevant online training. There were three streams of online training, depending on the specific appointment: one for Voting Centre Managers (VCMs), Assistant Voting Centre Managers (AVCMs) and ELOs, one for Declaration Issuing Officers, and one for other election officials. Some election officials appointed to part-day roles were not required to complete online training.

In addition, Election Managers conducted a three-hour training session for their VCMs, AVCMs and ELOs. The VEC developed a standard training package, which included a PowerPoint presentation and practical activities, and arranged hire of projectors to assist Election Managers with their training. This ensured that training sessions were conducted in a professional and consistent manner across the State.

All election officials were provided with a manual, which covered voting centre procedures in detail, and a 30 minute DVD which provided an overview, with an emphasis on good customer service.

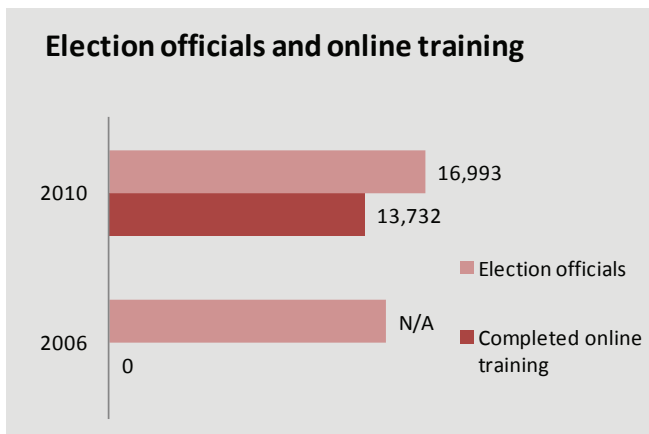


Figure 44: Election officials and take up of online training, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

Voting Centre Managers and ELOs evaluated the work performance of all election officials, in order to determine their suitability for future employment. These details provided the VEC with a strong database repository for future elections.

Measures to ensure impartiality

In 2009, the VEC was granted an exemption from provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 to be able to employ only those personnel who were not engaged in political activities.

This enabled the VEC to advertise and appoint suitable, politically-impartial staff. The exemption applies to the appointment of all VEC staff, including Election Managers and election officials.

Election Officials and Election Casuals are appointed to a variety of roles at the time of an election. The VEC's Disclosure of Political Activities brochures and forms were sent out for completion to all prospective Election Officials and Election Casuals prior to appointment for the 2010 State Election. A total of 21,217 Disclosure of Political Activities forms were completed and returned.

Of all the Disclosure of Political Activities forms received, 236 prospective appointees were initially disqualified. Requests for review were subsequently received from 48 disqualified applicants of which 15 decisions were overturned and offers of appointment subsequently made. A final total of 221 prospective appointees were disqualified from being appointed as an Election Official or Election Casual.

No legal proceedings alleging bias by Election Managers or election officials in the conduct of their duties for parliamentary elections have been lodged in the last 16 years.

The VEC has not been involved in any breach of the

Equal Opportunity Act in relation to any employment matter in the last 20 years. Nor has any of its Election Managers or election officials.

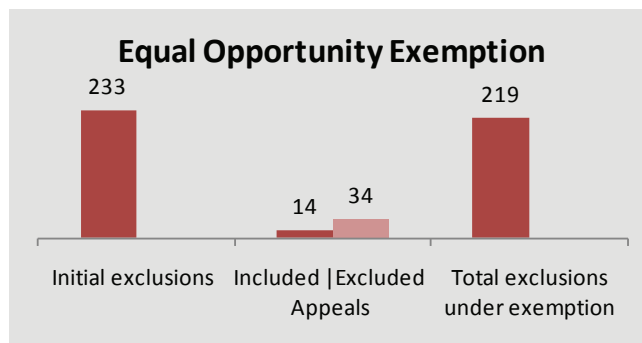


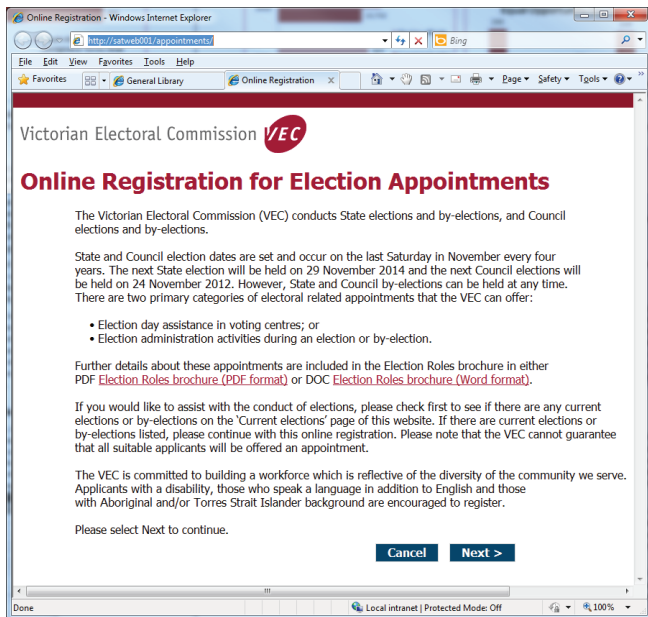
Figure 45: Decisions made under equal opportunity exemption, Victorian State election 2010

On-Line Recruitment

The VEC provided an on-line application for prospective employees to register for employment as either election officials or as casual workers. The VEC received more than 30,000 expressions of interest and the application allowed the VEC to efficiently manage this central pool of prospective employees and reduced the considerable administrative effort required to employ staff.

On-line Training

An on-line training application was put in place to train over 13,000 election officials employed at voting centres on election day. The software was provided by a third party company and was considerably enhanced by the VEC to suit the training requirements. Election officials undertook the training in a four week period.



Payment of VEC personnel

The payroll system used for the payment of all election officials, including election officials appointed to conduct the State election, was administered by the VEC's Finance and Budget Branch. Appointee data was contained in the Election Management System.

The VEC maintained records in the Election Management System to ensure that obligations regarding employment records were met, and to assist with any enquiries received from election officials.

The payroll system ensured that the 20,981 election casuals and election officials appointed to conduct the State election were paid within two weeks of the election. The system also provided for the production of group certificates and special reports for the VEC.

Occupational health and safety considerations

All Election Managers completed a training session in Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S). The training covered awareness of items such as Victorian OH&S legislative requirements, hazard identification, risk assessment and control strategies in the workplace.

Staff feedback

As part of the evaluation of the State election, the VEC conducted debriefing sessions with Election Managers and Region Coordinators. In addition, Election Managers and Region Coordinators provided comprehensive written feedback which included comments and recommendations for future consideration.

The feedback received from Election Managers often provides a useful perspective on the VEC's delivery of election services and leads to improvements. Feedback included that:

- 96% of respondents stated they had received a training manual from the VEC
- 87% of those were satisfied with the manual
- 86% completed the questions included in the manual.
- The VEC sent a training DVD to electoral officials and:
- 82% of respondents reported receiving a DVD
- 82% of respondents used it
- 76% of users considered the DVD to be effective in preparing them for their role.

Reasons given for not using the DVD were that the respondent did not own the required equipment, that they did not get around to viewing it, or that they felt they did not need additional information. Some 40% of respondents attended a face-to-face training session, and 80% of attendees considered the session effective.

Overall, three quarters of respondents felt that they were adequately prepared for their role, the main reasons for this positive feedback being that the VEC's training material was helpful, that they had done the job before, and that the job was straightforward. Respondents who felt that they were not adequately prepared for everything mentioned such aspects as the declaration voting process, wheelchair access for disabled people, the confusion of people who had moved, and the unexpectedly long day at work.

The majority of respondents (85%) were satisfied with the support they received from their Election Manager or Voting Centre Manager, and only 3% expressed dissatisfaction. Election officials were also surveyed about their perceptions of the services provided by their voting centre to voters, and 88% were satisfied with those services.

Section 9 - Counting the votes, and return of the Writs

Votes counted on election day

Counting of votes commenced on election night after the close of voting at 6.00pm. Ordinary votes issued in election day voting centres were counted in voting centres.

Three counts were conducted as follows:

1. First preference count – Legislative Assembly
2. Two candidate preferred count – Legislative Assembly
3. First preference count – Legislative Council

After the counting of first-preference votes for the Legislative Assembly, a two-candidate-preferred count was conducted, with preferences distributed to the two candidates considered 'most likely' to be in the lead after the distribution of preferences. The purpose of the two-candidate-preferred count was to provide an early indication of the result of the election, and also to provide detailed information for political parties and analysts. The final voting centre count conducted on election night was the first-preference count for the Legislative Council.

Counting of postal votes commenced at 6.00pm on election night in election offices in the same count order as the voting centres. Early votes were sorted to their correct district and region and reconciled on election night. This activity also commenced at 6.00pm.

Seventy percent of all postal votes were counted on election weekend. With the exception of Bentleigh District, early votes that did not need to be forwarded to other electorates were counted on the Monday following election day. Counting of early votes for Bentleigh District was commenced on Sunday as the Electoral Commissioner considered the outcome of this seat was pivotal to the overall election result.

Declaration votes

Declaration votes are all votes other than 'ordinary votes' (those cast by electors voting at a centre appointed for their own district on election day). They are called declaration votes because the elector makes a declaration stating their entitlement to vote, which is then checked by the VEC to determine whether the vote should be admitted to the count. There are several different types of declaration votes, and the method of processing each type varies.

Postal votes are cast by electors who have applied to vote by post and have been mailed ballot papers by the VEC. The elector places the ballot papers in the declaration envelope and posts it to the VEC. The postal vote declarations are forwarded to the appropriate election office, where the elector's signature on the declaration is checked against the application.

Early votes are cast at early voting centres before election day. The elector makes a verbal declaration that he or she is eligible for an early vote. Early votes cast outside the elector's district are forwarded to the appropriate election office for counting after election day.

Absent votes are cast by voters at voting centres outside their own districts on election day. Most absent votes are included in declaration envelopes, but where absent votes are issued from voting centres with access to an electronic copy of the State-wide roll, ballot papers are combined for the same electorate and enclosed in specially designed envelopes. After election day, the envelopes containing absent ballot papers are sent to the appropriate Election Managers.

Provisional votes are cast by voters whose complete a provisional enrolment form and vote on the day. After election day, the provisional enrolment/vote envelopes -including the ballot papers - are sent to the VEC to check whether the voter is entitled to vote. They are then returned to the appropriate election office with advice on entitlement.

Marked as voted declarations are completed by electors who have already been marked on the roll when they attend to vote. The elector completes a declaration that they have not voted previously at this election.

Postal votes that were postmarked Sunday, 28 November, were checked for the date the declaration was witnessed. If the declaration was witnessed on or before election day, the postal vote was admitted for further scrutiny in accordance with new provisions included in the Electoral Act 2002 in 2010.

Legislative changes were made in 2010 allowing people who could prove their identity to enrol on-the-day and cast a provisional vote if their name could not be found on the roll anywhere in Victoria. Provisional vote applications were checked after election day to ensure electors were eligible to enrol prior to votes being admitted for further scrutiny.

The introduction of on-the-day enrolment and provisional voting meant that there were no un-enrolled declaration votes in 2010. The number of not-on-roll absent and early votes was greatly reduced

as access to a whole of State roll enabled Election Officials to check whether electors were enrolled prior to issuing one of these types of votes.

The VEC processed 36,810 declaration votes, 34,546 on-the day enrolment provisional votes and 2,264 early and absent votes where elector details could not initially be found on the roll. This figure is a decrease on the 74,403 declaration votes at the 2006 State election. Figure 46 shows the numbers of declaration votes checked by the VEC and the number admitted to the count.

Type of vote	Number checked by VEC		Number admitted to count*	
	2010	2006	2010	2006
Early	1	1,499	0	518
Absent	2,263	33,237	290	4,461
Un-enrolled	NA	39,667	NA	2,617
On-the-day enrolment provisional	34,546	NA	29,272	NA
Total	36,810	74,403	29,562	7,596

Figure 46: Declaration votes received at 2010 Victorian State election

**Note: The number of early and absent votes admitted to the count represents those electors whose details were found on the roll in this subsequent check. The number of on-the-day enrolment provisional votes admitted represents those electors who were eligible to enrol and could prove their identity.*

At the 2010 State election all early voting centres were equipped with computers containing the electoral roll for the entire State, and all voting centres were provided with a personal digital assistant (PDA) containing the entire State roll for look-up purposes. Therefore, the entitlement of all voters could be checked as they voted.

Netbooks (mini computers) were provided to 109 voting centres and were used at most mobile voting centres. The netbooks gave election officials access to a central copy of the entire State roll to mark each elector's name directly. The netbooks greatly assisted in ensuring correct elector enrolment details for declaration votes and eliminated the requirement for absent electors to complete a written declaration when voting. Election officials could also see if an elector had voted previously.

The substantial drop in the number of electors who presented to vote on election day unaware that they were not on the roll may be attributable to the recent federal election. To ensure the number of electors enrolling on the day remains manageable within the voting centre, it is essential that the VEC pursue direct enrolment update arrangements, and the enrolment

on the day process remains as a savings provision (i.e. only applying to electors that cannot be found on the roll).

On-line roll mark off

The VEC developed an application that allowed election staff to query the entire State roll and mark-off electors as having voted in real time. The application was rolled out using 1,080 netbooks used during the early voting period and on election day. Nearly 350 netbooks were used at early voting centres and around 550,000 early votes were processed. On election day the VEC used more than 750 netbooks linked back to the VEC over the Telstra NextG wireless network. The application was used to process almost 200,000 absent and ordinary votes.

Counting after election day

Further primary counts were carried out after election day, when Election Managers received declaration votes from other electorates and completed any processing required before counting. By Thursday 2 December, five days after election day, 93.6% of all primary counts had been completed.

Rechecks

All district and region ballot papers were further rechecked by election officials following the completion of primary counting. Results were adjusted following each recheck to correct any discrepancies in counting or sorting identified during the recheck process.

Preference distributions

Preference distributions to determine the result of an election are required in each Legislative Assembly district where no candidate obtains an absolute majority (more than 50 per cent) of the first-preference votes. Preference distributions were conducted in 44 districts.

Following the re-check, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is declared excluded, and votes for that candidate are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the preferences on the excluded candidate's ballot papers. This process continues until one candidate obtains an absolute majority of the formal votes.

In 13 districts, the preference distribution reached a result while there were still more than two candidates remaining.

District Recounts

No recounts were requested in any of the 88 Legislative Assembly Districts.

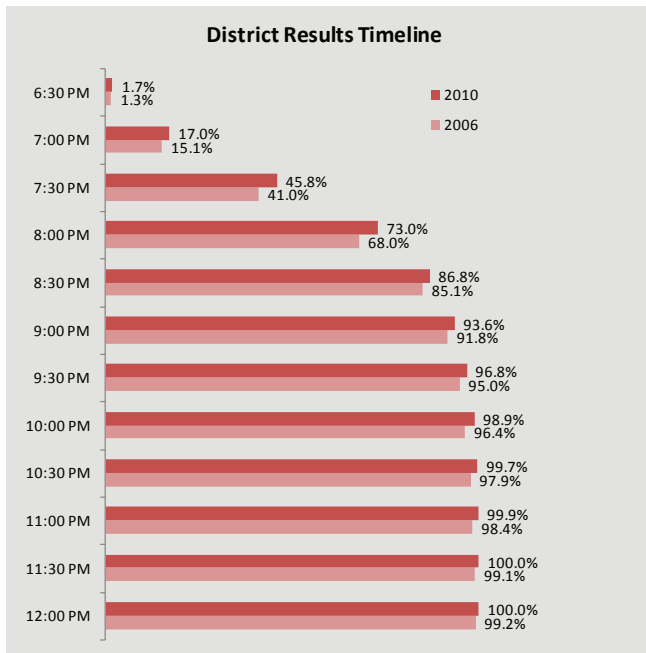


Figure 47: Progressive timeline for calculation of District results, Victorian State elections, 2006-2010

Region count

First-preference votes for the Legislative Council were counted at voting centres and at election offices on election night. All first-preference counts for Region ballot papers took place in the District.

For the 2010 State election, the VEC established one Region Recheck Centre in each of the eight Regions. On completion of the first-preference count, and commencing the Monday after election day, all Region ballot papers held in each District election office in the State, up to and including election night, were transferred to one of the eight Region Recheck Centres.

A full recheck of all Region ballot papers took place in the Region Recheck Centres. During the recheck, all votes were kept in their particular parcels. No amalgamation of votes took place at the Region Recheck Centre. Each individual ballot paper was checked for correct sorting and all ballot papers were recounted.

As the recheck was completed, the ballot papers marked below-the-line were separated from those marked above-the-line and from informal ballot papers. Individual parcels containing below-the-line ballot papers were transferred to the centralised computer-count centre at Etihad Stadium commencing Friday 3 December with the final

transfer of below-the-line ballot papers taking place on Thursday 9 December.

All formal ballot papers marked above-the-line and informal ballot papers remained in the Region Recheck Centres. If a recount had been required, these ballot papers would have been transported to the computer count centre.

Reconciliation of all below-the-line ballot papers was undertaken at the computer-count centre for each parcel of votes. Once reconciled, the below-the-line ballot papers were batched in preparation for data entry into the VEC's computer-count application.

Three teams of 20 data-entry operators were established for the computerized count. Each team was responsible for data-entry of ballot papers for two or more regions. The computer-count application identified ballot papers deemed to be informal during data-entry. Once data-entry had been completed for each batch of ballot papers, the informal papers were passed to the informal checking team for further scrutiny and if declared to be informal by the Election manager were removed from the batch and counted as informal papers.

All below-the-line ballot papers were entered into the computer count application twice. The computer count application identified any discrepancies between first round and second round data entry. The data entry operator was able to review the preferences entered and, if incorrectly entered, rectify the issue prior to saving the preferences from the ballot paper.

Once all below-the-line ballot papers data had been entered a second time, the total number of above-the-line ticket votes for each group for each voting centre or declaration parcel of votes was uploaded into the computer-count system. The total ticket votes for each voting centre or declaration parcel of votes consisted of the above-the-line ballot papers held at the Region Recheck Centre, plus the number of above-the-line ballot papers identified at the count centre.

Once all above-the-line and below-the-line data had been entered into the computer-count application for each region, the total number of informal ballot papers for each region was uploaded into the system, the total informal votes comprised of those held at the Region Recheck Centre, and those identified at the count centre.

Once all ballot papers to be included in the calculation of results had been included in the computer count application a final reconciliation of all ballot papers for each Region took place prior to the results being calculated. Scrutineers were able to observe all aspects of the count.

The calculation of results commenced at 12.00noon on Tuesday, 14 December. The results were calculated in alphabetical order. All eight calculations were completed by approximately 1.00pm. Results were published as 'provisional', awaiting the declaration of results at 4.00pm Wednesday 15 December.

Computer Count

For the 2010 Region (Upper House) count, the VEC implemented wide ranging changes to the processes to handle manage and track the Upper House ballot papers. The VEC's Computer Count application was enhanced to support these new processes.

The VEC also developed a new application used to manage the tracking, reconciliation creation and processing of ballot papers and carried out extensive testing in preparation for the count. The software was successfully used during the Upper House count at Etihad Stadium.

Process summary and transparency

Counting at all stages was conducted in the presence of scrutineers.

For the Legislative Assembly, preliminary first-preference counts were conducted in voting centres and election offices. All ballot papers were further rechecked for correct sorting and counting. All Legislative Assembly results were progressively displayed on the VEC website.

For the Legislative Council, preliminary first-preference counts, above and below-the-line were conducted in voting centres and in election offices.

	District total	Region total	Difference	%
Eastern Metropolitan	401,210	401,076	134	0.03
Eastern Victoria	428,895	428,752	143	0.03
Northern Metropolitan	413,267	413,270	-3	-0.0007
Northern Victoria	400,878	400,893	-15	-0.004
South Eastern Metropolitan	411,997	411,697	300	0.073
Southern Metropolitan	391,624	391,440	184	0.05
Western Metropolitan	443,310	443,257	53	0.012
Western Victoria	438,684	438,476	208	0.047

Figure 48: Comparison of numbers of ballot papers counted, Districts and Regions

Prior to calculating provisional upper-house results, all candidates and registered political parties were provided with the opportunity to collect a comprehensive set of reconciliation reports including:

- Full Region reconciliation reports showing the total votes expected in the count for each Region
- Ticket allocation reports showing the number of ballot papers marked above the line for each group and the preference allocation according to their ticket
- Primary Region results by voting centre and other vote types for all Regions
- Rechecked Region results by voting centre and other vote types for all Regions
- Primary District results by voting centre and other vote types for all Districts
- Rechecked District results by voting centre and other vote types for all Districts
- A comparison of total District and Region votes by voting centre and other vote types, including totals for District Primary, District 2CP, District Recheck, Region Primary and Region Recheck
- Rejected declaration votes by District
- Statewide two-party preferred result

Following the calculation of provisional results for each region on Tuesday 14 December, the full distribution of preferences for each region was made available for interested parties for review. The reports were also available on the VEC website.

No requests for recounts were received prior to the formal declaration of the result for each region on Wednesday 15 December.

The return of the Writs

The Writs for the State election were returned on Friday, 17 December 2010 to the Lieutenant Governor, The Honourable Chief Justice Marilyn Warren AC.

Section 10 - Compulsory voting enforcement

After the conduct of elections, by-elections and polls in which voting is compulsory, the VEC carries out compulsory voting enforcement where legislated, and when a council contracts the VEC to do so.

Three stages of enforcement (or non-voter follow-up) are managed by the VEC.

1. Despatch of Apparent Failure to Vote Notices to those electors who appear not to have voted in an election. Apparent non-voters have 28 days from the date of the notice to provide a valid excuse for failing to vote.
2. Follow-up (by Infringement Notice) of electors who did not respond, or who provided an invalid response to the Apparent Failure to Vote Notice. A penalty amount is applied (currently set at \$60.00). Non-voters have 42 days to respond to the Infringement Notice by either submitting a valid response or by making the penalty payment.
3. A Penalty Reminder Notice is sent to those who do not respond to the Infringement Notice. An amount for prescribed costs is added to the original penalty amount.

Roll scanning

For the 2010 State election, the first stage of the non-voter follow-up process commenced in mid-December. Elector information reports completed at voting centres on election day detailing elector excuses for not voting and postal vote declarations received too late to be admitted to the count were processed through the compulsory voting module of the Election Management System. These electors were marked as not able to vote on election day.

Scanning of the 7,997 marked rolls from election day voting centres commenced in mid-January 2011. This activity is a major component of the non-voter follow-up exercise, taking approximately four weeks to complete. The technology used for roll scanning allows for a two per cent tolerance when reading the marks on the roll against the number of marks detailed on the scannable roll cover completed by the issuing officer. The tolerance level is set to allow for possible errors, by the issuing officer at a voting centre, during the reconciliation of ballot papers. Where the tolerance level is exceeded, each scannable roll is manually reconciled by counting each mark on each page of the roll. This ensures that every electors who was marked on a roll as having voted at a voting centre is recorded in the VEC's Election Management

System, and helps ensure that electors are not incorrectly issued with an 'Apparent Failure to Vote' notice.

Once scanning was complete, the VEC generated a file of 'possible' multiple voters. A total of 1,063 multiple records required further investigation and these voters were sent a letter seeking clarification of how and where they voted. This process is currently underway. It should be noted that the number of apparent multiple voters in any one electorate does not impact on the final result. In almost all cases, an administrative error has contributed to the elector being marked on the roll more than once.

Stage one - Apparent Failure to Vote notices

Apparent Failure to Vote notices were generated in early-April and mailed to electors over the following two weeks. The first stage of the non-voter follow-up process is conducted under Part 9, Division 2 of the Electoral Act 2002. Subsequent follow-up of electors who do not respond to, or who provide an invalid response is conducted under the Infringements Act 2006.

At 13 April 2011, the VEC had posted 179,646 Apparent Failure to Vote notices to electors. The deadline for response is late May 2011.

Further stages

Non-voters may receive two further notices from the VEC. The first is an Infringement Notice. This stage incurs a penalty amount currently set at \$60 and is due for completion by late July 2011. The third stage of the non-voter follow-up process will be the mailing of Penalty Reminder Notices to all outstanding non-voters. The anticipated completion date of the Penalty Reminder Notice stage is mid-September 2011. Further follow-up of all remaining non-voters may be instigated in the Infringements Court.

Total voters enrolled	3,582,232
Total voted	3,329,865
Electors who did not vote *	252,367
Apparent Failure to vote notices sent	179,646

Figure 49: Compulsory voting enforcement figures, 2010 Victorian State election

*Includes electors who provided a valid excuse prior to the 'apparent non-voter' notices being sent

Section 11 – Complaints

The VEC received 167 written complaints relating to the 2010 State election between October 2010 and April 2011. Many of these complaints related to issues beyond the VEC's control such as fundraising at voting centre venues, candidates' campaign material being distributed or displayed on public and private property or the weather on election day.

A significant number of correspondents registered complaints related to a misunderstanding of the electoral process, or to the content of candidates' campaign material. These generally related to legislated processes or definitions and were resolved by explanation or the provision of information. The VEC will consider ways of including relevant explanations and information in its electoral education.

The VEC aimed to respond to complainants within one business day of receiving the complaint and in the majority of cases this was achieved. In some cases where a complaint required investigation or follow up with third parties, the complainant was notified of the receipt of the complaint as soon as possible and follow up correspondence was sent.

A small number of correspondents sent multiple and ongoing correspondence to the VEC relating to the same or similar issues, requesting clarification or expressing dissatisfaction with responses to the original complaint.

Complaints about services to voters

The VEC received 103 written complaints about its services to voters. This is an increase on the number received in this category in 2006. However, as noted above, a large proportion of these complaints involved the elector seeking assistance. Although registered as complaints, these were resolved by the provision of further information or clarification of terminology.

Early voting centres

Sixteen complaints were received in relation to early voting centres, including difficulty locating particular centres, the lack of an early voting centre in a particular area, the hours and suitability of the location.

Voting centres

Five complaints were received in relation to the accessibility of voting centres. One of these was

lodged through the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Humans Rights Commission and one through the Australian Equal Opportunity and Humans Rights Commission. Both of these complaints were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainants.

As previously reported, finding accessible venues for voting centres is extremely difficult, and the VEC makes every effort to make voting accessible to all electors. The VEC strives to find solutions to the lack of accessible voting centre venues and has been able to negotiate outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties in both cases, and may assist with this aim.

Twenty-eight complaints were received in relation to processes at voting centres. This included complaints about delays (6), the appropriateness of certain locations as voting centres including access considerations. All complaints were investigated.

Election officials

Twelve complaints were received in relation to staff attitude or conduct. All complaints were investigated, and rectified if necessary. One person had an offer of employment incorrectly withdrawn and was offered, and took up, alternative employment with the VEC. Another official was provided with additional training to ensure correct procedures were followed.

Information and advertising campaign

Three complaints were received about the EasyVote Guide, which was mailed to every elector. These complaints related to the content and the issuing date.

Overseas voting

Two complaints were received from electors situated overseas at the time of the election, one in relation to not being able to register as a general postal voter. The other complaint related to the VEC not providing a voting venue in a specific country.

Other complaints

Other complaints received related to the fold on the Legislative Council ballot paper (6), fund-raising activities at voting centre locations (2) and the distribution, authorisation, format and lack of how-to-vote-cards (7).

Complaints about candidates or political parties

Twenty complaints were about political parties and eighteen about candidates. Four formal complaints related to the distribution of postal voting applications by political parties.

Under the Electoral Act 2002 (s.101), organisations and individuals other than the VEC are able to reproduce postal voting application forms and include them with campaign materials. The complaints primarily related to the legislative authority for parties to distribute postal vote applications, and the use of electors' details for this purpose.

The VEC will put forward for noting the subject of the distribution of postal vote applications by parties.

One of the complaints concerned the distribution of postal voting application forms prior to the issue of the Writ. Under the Act, a postal vote application received prior to the issue of the Writ cannot be processed, and the VEC must send another application to the elector. This causes the elector confusion and frustration. To alleviate this in 2010, the VEC requested that parties waited until after the issue of the Writ to distribute postal voting applications, if they were planning to do so. One party did not fully comply with this request, thus affecting a small number of locations, and causing concern among other parties.

The majority of the remaining complaints regarding political parties or candidates related to candidates failing to authorise or incorrectly authorising electoral material, or alleging that electoral material was deceptive or misleading. A further eleven complaints related to material distributed by private citizens in support of particular candidates or parties. These complaints related to lack of authorisation (8) and misleading or deceptive election material (3).

Where a complaint regarding the authorisation of material founded, the relevant candidate or party was asked to appropriately amend the material and undertake to observe correct authorisation procedures in future.

Other complaints related to electoral material located on public property or distributed on private property, and the manner of campaigning at public places such as railway stations and voting centres

Complaints about the media

The VEC received two complaints about the media. One related to overall coverage, the other to the labeling of electoral advertising. A further complaint was received in relation to the airing of electoral advertising during the "blackout period". This is not covered by electoral legislation and the complainant was referred to the appropriate authority.



Figure 50: Categories of complaints received at 2010 Victorian State election

Section 12 – Independent evaluation of the VEC’s performance

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) engaged Colmar Brunton Social Research (CBSR) to conduct research to evaluate the services at the 2010 Victorian State election. The research aimed to measure the effectiveness of voting services for a number of specific populations:

- Voters who are casting their vote inside and outside of their electorate
- People who needed to cast their vote in a language other than English
- Vision impaired voters
- Voters casting their vote from overseas (namely, the United Kingdom)
- Voters who were not on the electoral roll on election day
- Candidates who were standing for government
- Electoral Officials

The quality of services on election day, such as the helpfulness of staff and effectiveness of signage, was assessed as well as services leading up to Election Day such as information campaigns, the VEC Hotline and the VEC website.

A full report of the research will be published on the VEC website.

Satisfaction with voter services

Satisfaction with voter services was high amongst the great majority of voters at the 2010 Victorian State Election. Election officials were praised for their helpfulness and assistance, and the layout and organisation of voting centres was also well perceived. These high ratings were given by voters using the range of different methods to vote, including on-the-day, postal and early voting.

In aggregate across all voter types (ordinary, absent, early and postal), over nine in ten voters (91%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the VEC’s services. Only 3% expressed dissatisfaction. These proportions are slightly higher than the overall satisfaction figures from 2006 of 88% satisfied, 5% dissatisfied (significantly greater at the 90% confidence level, though not at the 95% confidence level).

The one area that stood out as showing room for improvement on the day of the election was signage outside of voting centres, which generally received lower ratings than all other aspects of services and resources.

While still positive on the whole, voters typically gave less favourable ratings to information provided in the lead up to the election, compared with services and information on the day. In particular, voters called for a greater volume of advertising and information, specifically about where to vote, or when to vote for early voters.

Despite promotion of the VEC website for the 2010 election, recall and usage of the website has not increased since 2006. While awareness of the website was relatively high for most voters, actual use of the website was low, in some cases lower than in 2006.

Opportunities also exist to improve information provided to people who wish to vote early. These voters gave substantially lower ratings to the quality of information compared with voters who voted on Election Day.

Satisfaction with services to candidates

Candidates were typically quite positive about services provided by the VEC.

- All candidates were either extremely satisfied (73%) or satisfied (27%) with the managers in relation to arranging their nomination to stand within the electorate;
- Likewise, all candidates (independents) were either extremely satisfied (55%) or satisfied (45%) in terms of receiving how to vote cards for registration;
- Almost all candidates (97%) were either extremely satisfied (72%) or satisfied (25%) with how impartially the manager acted;
- Nine out of ten (90%) candidates were either extremely satisfied (56%) or satisfied (35%) with the manager’s response to their enquiries;
- Nine out of ten (90%) candidates were either extremely satisfied (64%) or satisfied (26%) with how the manager conducted the computerised draw for ballot paper positions;
- More than eight out of ten (85%) candidates were either extremely satisfied (46%) or satisfied (40%) that the information provided about election arrangements was accurate;
- Eight out of ten (80%) candidates were either extremely satisfied (38%) or satisfied (42%) with the arrangement of early votes; and
- Eight out of ten (78%) candidates were either extremely satisfied (32%) or satisfied (46%) with the overall arrangements at voting centres on Election Day.

There were no significant differences between

successful and unsuccessful candidates for the rating of the election manager, nor for any other of the service rating or satisfaction measures.

Satisfaction with services to political parties

All interviewed representatives from political parties perceived very high levels of quality of VEC services during the 2010 State Election. Services provided were seen to not only meet the needs of political parties and voters, but to go well beyond the baseline standard required. It was also noted that the services provided by VEC are uniformly high election-to-election, and that services at the 2010 State Election continued a long-standing tradition of quality.

Overall, key themes emerging from the interviews centred on:

- “Solid performance”
- “Above and beyond – VEC gets more than just a pass-mark”
- “Excellent: responsive, timely and accurate”.

Satisfaction with services to Election officials

Almost all officials surveyed (98%) reported receiving a manual from the VEC to help them prepare for their role. Of those that received a manual, nine out of ten (92%) were either extremely satisfied (44%) or satisfied (48%) that the manual helped them prepare for their role.

Eight out of ten (84%) officials surveyed completed online training before Election Day. Of those that completed the online training, eight out of ten (79%) felt the training was either extremely effective (31%) or effective (48%) in helping them prepare for their role.

Nine out of ten (91%) officials received a training DVD from the VEC. Of those that received the DVD, eight out of ten (82%) used the DVD to help them prepare for their role; two out of ten (18%) did not use the DVD.

Of those officials that gave high ratings for the support they received from voting centre managers, election liaison officials and voting centres, half (48%) felt that everything went well. Two in ten (20%) felt the voting centre managers, election liaison officials and voting centres were well prepared, approachable and professional. Other reasons included the staff were well informed, supportive and worked together (13%), it was a good atmosphere (7%), the staff managed issues well (4%), and there was special

support for those who needed it (4%).

Of those officials that gave low ratings for the support they received from voting centre managers, election liaison officials and voting centres, two in ten (7%) felt the venue was overcrowded, too small, unsuitable, disorganised (7%). Other reasons included weather issues (6%), poor organisation and planning (5%), problems with equipment (5%) and not enough palm pilots (2%).

Of those that attended a face to face training session, nine out of ten (91%) felt that the training was either extremely effective (32%) or effective (59%) in preparing them for their role.

Of those officials that gave high ratings for the support they received from voting centre managers, election liaison officials and voting centres, half (48%) felt that everything went well. Two in ten (20%) felt the voting centre managers, election liaison officials and voting centres were well prepared, approachable and professional. Other reasons included the staff were well informed, supportive and worked together (13%), it was a good atmosphere (7%), the staff managed issues well (4%), and there was special support for those who needed it (4%).

Of those officials that gave low ratings for the support they received from voting centre managers, election liaison officials and voting centres, two in ten (7%) felt the venue was overcrowded, too small, unsuitable, disorganised (7%). Other reasons included weather issues (6%), poor organisation and planning (5%), problems with equipment (5%) and not enough palm pilots (2%).

Response to evaluation

The VEC is satisfied with the findings of the research, and believes that it provided excellent electoral services to all stakeholder groups. A small proportion of the figures is not statistically significant due to the number of respondents, and may need additional follow up to assist with future election planning.

The VEC will further analyse the results of the formal research in conjunction with internal evaluation, staff debriefing, complaints and Parliamentary recommendations. Findings will assist the VEC when planning the delivery of future election services.

Section 13 – Electoral legislation

To assist with the Committee’s inquiry, the VEC provides the following information on the impact of new and changing technology, community expectation and current electoral legislation. Included are matters for noting, as well as an indication of matters the VEC intends to include in its full election report as recommendations for consideration by the Parliament.

Matters for noting

The following matters will be included in the VEC’s Report to Parliament on the 2010 State election for Parliament to note.

Postal voting

Party involvement in postal voting

The VEC continues to be concerned about party involvement in the distribution of postal vote applications. Section 101 of the Electoral Act 2002 (the Act) allows for other individuals or groups besides the Electoral Commission to distribute postal votes. This causes elector confusion regarding the source of postal vote applications as electors assume that any postal vote applications available at State elections are provided by the VEC. Four formal complaints related to the distribution of postal voting applications by political parties were received during the 2010 State election, along with a number of telephone calls and emails relating to the issue.

The VEC requests that the Committee notes that this issue continues to raise concerns among electors.

How-to-vote card registration

At the 2010 State election the VEC was required to publish all registered how-to-vote cards on the VEC’s website. A total of 1,101 how-to-vote cards were registered at the election.

A number of parties and candidates registered more than one how-to-vote card at the election with the intention of selecting one of these cards for distribution on election day. It is therefore possible that cards not intended for distribution, could be downloaded and distributed by a third party without authority.

The VEC requests that the Committee notes the issues relating to the publication of registered how-to-vote cards.

General postal voters

Section 24 of the Act describes the criteria and the process for a person to apply to be registered as a General Postal Voter (GPV) for State elections.

GPVs have their ballot material sent to them automatically at the time of a State election, without having to make further application.

When processing returned postal vote declarations, the Election Manager compares the signature of the elector on each returned postal vote declaration with the signature of the same elector on the postal vote application.

All declarations have an accompanying application except those from GPVs. It should be noted that VEC Election Managers check that declarations from GPVs have been signed, but the signature is not checked against any reference documentation. The VEC accepts postal vote declarations from GPVs that are signed and witnessed.

The VEC requests that the Committee notes the process put in place by the VEC for the scrutiny of GPVs.

Terminology - unsound mind

The Constitution Act 1975 outlines the qualifications for being on the electoral roll. Section 48 (2) (d) provides that “by reason of being of unsound mind, [a person who] is incapable of understanding the nature and significance of enrolment and voting”, is not entitled to be on the roll of electors.

Dissatisfaction with the use of the term ‘unsound mind’ is often expressed to the VEC by members of the public and by disability groups. The VEC requests that the Committee note the VEC’s ongoing concern about the inclusion of the term ‘unsound mind’.

Electronic voting franchise at local government elections

The VEC is currently unable to provide electronic voting at local government elections due to legislative constraints (i.e. currently, the Local Government Act 1989 and the City of Melbourne Act 2001 do not have provisions for electronic voting). The VEC considers, however, that voting electronically would provide the same benefits to electors at this level of government as it does to electors at State level. Moreover, the VEC considers that there are some valuable opportunities to trial electronic voting in other ways at local government elections.

One possibility would be to trial electronic voting for people with poor English-language skills at an

attendance election in a municipality with a high proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse voters. Data from previous elections show that these municipalities, Brimbank and Moreland City Councils for example, tend to have very high informality rates. Municipalities with large numbers of candidates tend to also have higher rates of informality. A trial of this nature would allow the VEC to assess the effectiveness of electronic voting as a solution to this problem.

A second possibility would be to conduct all voting electronically in one particular municipality and then calculate the results by importing the data into the VEC's counting software, rather than printing the votes. As mentioned above, this could provide cost advantages, faster results and a reduction in possible errors.

To make either scenario more affordable through reducing the amount of infrastructure required, the VEC recommends allowing electronic voting for two weeks prior to election day, rather than on election day. The VEC notes that this parallels postal voting, where voters have an extended time to fill in their ballot papers in most local government elections.

The VEC requests that the Committee note its support of broadening the operation of electronic voting to include local government elections.

Intention to make recommendations

The following matters are of concern to the VEC, and it is intended that they be included in the VEC's Report to Parliament on the 2010 State election as recommendations for consideration by the Parliament.

Close of roll seven days after issue of the Writ

After the 2002 State election, the close of roll was moved from three days after the issue of the Writ to seven days after the issue of the Writ. The extension of the close of roll date introduced practical problems for the VEC as it reduced the time available to the VEC to produce roll products in time for early voting, nomination checking and for candidates for campaigning purposes.

The VEC believes that with a fixed date election, there is sufficient opportunity for electors to update their details before the close of roll. Additionally, the introduction of enrolment on the day enables those electors who miss the close of roll deadline to enrol and vote during the election.

To allow sufficient time for the production of roll products, the VEC will recommend that consideration be given to amending the legislation so that the close of roll occurs three days after the issue of the Writ. This would assist in ensuring complete roll products for the commencement of early voting and the processing of nominations.

Postal voting

Signing and witnessing of postal vote applications

Sections 101-103 and 106 of the Electoral Act 2002 describe the process by which an elector may apply to vote by post during a State election. An application to vote by post must be in the prescribed form (Form K, Electoral Regulations 2002) and must be signed by the elector and a witness. Applications that are not signed and/or witnessed are rejected. At the 2010 State election, 3,285 postal vote applications were rejected as defective because they were not signed and/or witnessed.

For the March 2011 New South Wales state election, under new legislation, the New South Wales Electoral Commission introduced on-line postal vote applications. Electors completing an on-line postal vote application were not required to sign the application or have it witnessed. Additional verification processes were implemented to ensure that the elector applying for the postal vote was eligible to do so and was the person named on the roll and the application.

The VEC will recommend that consideration be given to extending legislation to allow for a more simplified method for electors to apply for a postal vote at state elections.

Witnessing of postal vote declarations

Sections 104-106 of the Electoral Act 2002 describe the process for issuing a postal vote declaration and ballot paper and include directions on how a postal voter should complete the postal voting material.

The postal vote declaration returned by the postal voter must also be completed in the presence of an authorised witness and the authorised witness must sign and add their title or capacity of witness, either an elector (their name is on the roll), or an election official, to the postal vote declaration.

Many witnesses found the completion of this section of the application confusing. A large number of electors wrote "Mr" or "wife" etc, as opposed to 'elector'.

The Election Manager checks the elector's signature on the returned postal vote declaration against the signature on the original application. Declarations are rejected where the signatures do not match.

The Election Manager is also required to reject returned declarations that are not witnessed even though they are signed by the elector.

The VEC will recommend that consideration be given to removing the requirement for postal vote declarations to be witnessed where the signature on an application has already been verified by a witness.

Commencement of early voting

The VEC continues to be concerned about the commencement of the early voting period, and has previously raised this matter for consideration by the Parliament. Section 99 (1)(a) of the Electoral Act 2002 directs that early voting is to commence at 4.00pm on the final nomination day. This allows the VEC only four hours to conduct the ballot draw, and to print and distribute ballot papers to voting centres for the commencement of early voting.

The practical difficulties of issuing ballot papers on the same day as the ballot draw arose again at the 2010 State election. This is especially so for the Upper House, as electors who vote on that day are restricted to voting below-the-line. Group voting ticket lodgment did not close until midday on Sunday, 14 November, two days after the commencement of early voting.

The VEC will recommend that the Act be amended so that early voting commences on the Monday after nominations close. This will allow additional time for the VEC to produce and distribute ballot papers and permit electors to vote above-the-line if they so choose.

Clarification of terminology - bribery

Section 151 (2) of the Act states: "A person must not, in order to influence or affect any person's election conduct, give or confer, or promise or offer to give or confer, any property or benefit of any kind to the person or any other person".

The VEC will seek definitive clarification on the specifics of a dollar amount, or classification of gift, that could constitute bribery.

Misleading or deceptive electoral material

Section 84 (2) of the Act refers to the contents of electoral advertisements, handbills, pamphlets or notices printed, published or distributed during an election. The VEC believes that the current provisions are not sufficiently specific and could lead to material that was misleading being distributed to electors and thereby inducing an elector to complete their ballot paper in way other than directed on the ballot paper.

The current legislation states:

"A person must not during the relevant period –

- (a) print, publish or distribute; or
- (b) cause permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed –

an electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice that contains a representation or purported representation of a ballot paper for use in that election that is likely to induce an elector to mark the elector's vote otherwise than in accordance with the directions on the ballot paper."

The VEC will recommend that consideration be given to amending the legislation as follows:

- "(b) cause permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed –
an electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice that contains a statement that is likely to induce an elector to mark the elector's vote otherwise than in accordance with the directions on the ballot paper, regardless of whether it contains a representation or purported representation of a ballot paper for use in that election."

Electronically assisted voting at State elections

Section 110D of the Act enables access to electronic voting at an electronic voting centre by an elector who otherwise cannot vote without assistance because of:

- assistance visual impairment;
- a motor impairment; or
- insufficient literacy skills (whether in the English language or in their primary spoken language).

Section 100 (2) enables electors voting interstate or overseas to vote using such means of electronic voting as is provided at the early voting centre.

At the 2010 State election stand-alone electronic kiosks and telephone voting options were provided at 101 early voting centres within Victoria. Electronic kiosks were also provided at three locations in the

United Kingdom with telephone voting available at the offices of State and Territory Electoral Commissions outside Victoria.

The highest percentage of electors voting electronically was in the United Kingdom, with over 700 votes cast electronically. Additionally, the VEC provided an emailed ballot material service at the State election for electors who were travelling interstate or overseas in remote locations and did not have a fixed postal address or would experience difficulty in accessing mail services. A total of 1,212 electors requested emailed ballot material at the 2010 State election.

While the VEC is able to roll out and support the infrastructure required for electronic voting at an early voting centre, there is a very low take up rate within Victoria by electors detailed in Section 110D of the Act. This could be attributed in part to the fact they must attend an early voting centre to vote electronically.

At the March 2011 New South Wales State election, the New South Wales Electoral Commission implemented Technology Assisted Voting (iVote). The application provided electors, who would otherwise have had difficulty either attending a voting centre or casting an independent and secret ballot, to do so via the internet. Voters registered to use the iVote system and were provided with passwords that allowed them access to their District and Upper House ballot papers.

The VEC will recommend that consideration be given to amending the Act to enable the VEC to issue votes electronically via web services to those electors currently covered under s110D of the Act.

Procedure for ascertaining number of votes for Council candidates

The VEC is aware of different interpretations that have been placed on S.114A (28)(c) of the Act, which defines what constitutes a separate transfer when distributing preferences for Council candidates. The matter was raised in a submission to the inquiry into the conduct of the 2006 State election.

The VEC has obtained legal advice on the interpretation of this section. This advice confirms that the construction that the VEC has placed on s114A is preferred. However in order to avoid confusion, the VEC will recommend that the parliament amends S.114A (28) (c) of the Act to read –

- a transfer in accordance with subsection (12) (b) of all the votes of an excluded candidate that were transferred to that candidate from a particular candidate or candidates as the case

may be, at a particular transfer value.

This is consistent with the wording in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and the Local Government Act 1989*.

District By-elections

Under the Act, a Writ for a by-election must be issued by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly within one month of the vacancy occurring (s61 (2)). The maximum period in which to conduct a by-election is 58 days from the Issue of the Writ (S.63 (8) & S.63 (10)). Accordingly, the maximum period for conducting a by-election is approximately 3 months from the date the vacancy occurs. If the Writ for a general election is due to be issued within this period, the option not to conduct the by-election should be considered and the general election used to fill the vacancy.

Automatic Enrolment

Section 23A of the Act allows for enrolment by the Commission. The section applies to persons who would be entitled to be enrolled on the register of electors but have not made a claim for enrolment within 21 days of becoming eligible. The Commission may on its own initiative, having regard to information obtained under Section 26(4), send a notice to such a person, informing them that it proposes to enrol them in respect of their principal place of residence. The person has 14 days to advise the Commission if they are not entitled to be enrolled on the register of electors.

Section 20 of the Act allows for an arrangement between the Commonwealth and the State for a joint enrolment process. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and the VEC exchange information as part of that arrangement necessary for the preparation, maintenance and revision of the register of electors and the rolls.

There are a number of data sources available under the joint rolls arrangement suitable for automatically enrolling electors. For example, the AEC periodically conduct background reviews of the electoral roll to identify where electors may not be correctly enrolled. It compares enrolment information against two other data sources, such as motor registry data (obtained from the National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System (NEVDIS)) and Centrelink. Where the two external data sources have the same address for an elector but that elector is enrolled for a different address, the data could be used to automatically enrol the elector for their current address.

Under the current automatic enrolment provisions, the VEC cannot use data from the AEC for automatic enrolment purposes as the AEC is not an organization referred to under Section 26(4) of the Act.

The VEC will recommend that the Act be amended to allow data obtained by the Commission under Section 20 of the Act as part of the joint enrolment process to be used for automatic enrolment purposes.

Enforcement of compulsory enrolment

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) has traditionally taken the position of encouraging eligible electors to enrol and maintain their enrolment. This encouragement has been to protect an elector's right to vote should an election (local, State or federal) be called. Although changes to legislation were made in 2010 enabling electors to cast on-the-day enrolment provisional votes at a State election, electors not on the electoral roll at the 'close of roll' for federal and local government elections are ineligible to vote at that election.

To be eligible to enrol under the Act an elector must be 18 years of age, an Australian citizen or a qualified British subject, and have been living at a principal place of residence for at least a month.

The vast majority of enrolment amendments the VEC receives are those relating to a change of address. Each time an eligible elector moves home, they are required to update their enrolment within 21 days of the end of their first month of residence. Most electors are aware that voting is compulsory, but enrolment update is low on the list of priorities at moving time compared to having the utilities connected and their mail redirected. Most think they must update their enrolment, but given that there's no election on the immediate horizon, there's no urgency and then they forget. At the 2010 State election, 34,546 electors attended a voting centre erroneously believing they were registered on the roll. These electors cast an 'on-the-day enrolment provisional vote'.

At any one time, there may be up to 180,000 electors whose details are out of date, and a further 250,000 eligible electors not enrolled. Immediately prior to an election, this figure decreases due to the advertising and publicity conducted to remind people to update their enrolment. In the last seven days prior to the close of rolls for the 2010 State election, around 25,400 people updated their enrolment details. A further 12,800 electors either enrolled for the first time or re-enrolled because they had been removed from the roll for an address for which they were no longer entitled to be enrolled.

To ensure the integrity of the register of electors, the VEC conducts an ongoing Continuous Roll Update (CRU) program, in conjunction with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). Information is received from a variety of sources including VicRoads, the Rental Tenancies Bond Authority, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre. Using this data, the VEC sends enrolment forms to those electors who are eligible to enrol, or who have moved and not updated their enrolment. If no response is received, a reminder letter is sent. The average response rate to this program over the past five years is 23.5% with a downward trend.

With the introduction of automatic enrolment, the situation will improve, as the VEC will no longer need to send enrolment forms to those it can confirm are eligible to be enrolled. However, the VEC will send correspondence to people who are potentially eligible to enrol, where eligibility cannot be confirmed.

In 2009, because of the declining rate of response to the CRU program and the concern at both a State and Federal Parliament level regarding declining enrolment, and the consequent implications for the integrity of the register of electors, the VEC conducted a trial program. This trial targeted a group of electors who had not responded to a CRU mail out but were still on the register of electors for what appeared to be their old address. These electors were sent a follow-up letter to their new address to remind them they needed to re-enrol every time they moved and if they didn't re-enrol, risked being fined and may not be able to vote. The electors were also informed that if they had moved and the address they were still enrolled for was no longer their principal place of residence, the VEC was required to remove them from the register of electors in respect of that address. A pre-filled enrolment form was included and the electors were requested to check the details, sign the form and return it to the VEC. Only 20% of the 812 electors responded.

Electors who did not respond were sent a second follow-up letter informing them that they were to be removed from the register of electors on the grounds that the address they were enrolled for was not their principal place of residence. The electors were given 20 days to respond. The letter also informed the electors that if they had moved and not re-enrolled at the end of that period the VEC would commence legal action to enforce the compulsory enrolment provisions of the law. Letters were forwarded to both the enrolled address and the new address, and 45% of the electors responded to this mail-out.

The details of electors who had not responded to the

second follow-up letter were removed from the roll in accordance with the provisions with the Electoral Act 2002.

The VEC engaged the Victorian Government Solicitors Office (VGSO) to commence prosecution of the 213 remaining electors who had not responded. The VGSO sent letters to these electors with a pre-completed enrolment form, providing them with yet another opportunity to enrol. Recipients were given 14 days to respond, with the alternative being the commencement of prosecution. A total of 105 electors (55% less those returned as undeliverable) enrolled at this point.

The VGSO organised for summonses to be personally served on the outstanding 86 electors. The summons informed electors that if they lodged enrolment forms prior to the date of the court hearing, the matter would be withdrawn. Over half (45) of the summonses could not be served personally and no further action was taken in relation to these. Of the remainder, 87% completed enrolment forms and had the matter withdrawn.

Of the 12 cases outstanding, one requested to go straight to trial and the other 11 did not present for the court hearing, so ex parte hearings were requested and granted.

Summonses were prepared by the VGSO and served on the remaining electors. By the day of the trial, four electors had enrolled and another completed the enrolment form on the steps of the court (all these cases were withdrawn). A further two cases were withdrawn as a result of an abnormality in the process. The elector who chose to go to trial did not present in court, nor did the other four electors summonsed for ex parte hearings. All five were fined without conviction and charged statutory costs.

Over 99% of the original target group, that were contactable, enrolled. Based on the result of the trial the VEC sees merit in taking a firmer line on compulsory enrolment. However, as under the current arrangements further action must be taken through the courts, the process is expensive and ties up resources at the VEC, the VGSO and in the courts.

To make the process less expensive and avoid wasting resources of the courts, VGSO and the VEC, the VEC will recommend that legislation be introduced so that failure to enrol and failure to update enrolment details is made an infringeable offence.

It is not the VEC's desire to raise revenue from the collection of fines for failing to enrol – it is the VEC's desire to have all eligible electors on the roll and able to vote should an election occur. Removal of an elector from the roll and subsequent prosecution will

be a last resort after a number of contacts have been unanswered.

Electoral education fund

The Australian Electoral Commission's Youth Electoral Study found that students who have a positive experience of democracy in a school or community context are more likely to engage in normative political behaviour, including enrolling and voting, as adults.

Further research revealed barriers to the delivery of electoral education in schools, including a lack of teacher confidence in their knowledge of the democratic process, difficulties engaging students in what may be perceived as a dry subject, and a general feeling in students of inability to be able to affect change. To address these issues, the VEC developed Passport to Democracy, a very successful civics and citizenship program for secondary students.

Dynamic and interactive, Passport to Democracy aims to demystify political processes and institutions, and improve students' understanding of the democratic process and their role in shaping society. Students develop a deeper understanding of how decisions that affect them are made, and how they can engage within the community to achieve positive change.

Currently fully funded by the VEC, the Passport to Democracy is a comprehensive resource that includes a teacher's guide, student booklets, stimulus material such as photographs and videos, teacher and student blogs and 'passports' that are awarded to students who participate in the program. On request, the VEC also provides outreach officers to guide teachers in program delivery and to provide professional development.

Passport to Democracy continues to receive positive feedback from students and teachers. The VEC will recommend that Parliament consider setting up an Electoral Education Fund, using money from the enforcement of compulsory voting program. This fund would be used to build on the success of the program, supporting a rollout of Passport to Democracy to all schools across Victoria.

State Election 2010 Electors on Roll Statistics Close of Roll 9 November 2010

Appendix 1 Part 1

Dist No	District	Electors	Dist No	District	Electors
1	Albert Park	47,148	46	Lowan	38,478
2	Altona	51,138	47	Lyndhurst	41,578
3	Ballarat East	40,578	48	Macedon	47,847
4	Ballarat West	43,964	49	Malvern	37,798
5	Bass	49,279	50	Melbourne	43,916
6	Bayswater	37,101	51	Melton	43,639
7	Bellarine	44,369	52	Mildura	37,638
8	Benalla	36,987	53	Mill Park	41,032
9	Benambra	37,242	54	Mitcham	37,054
10	Bendigo East	40,730	55	Monbulk	37,887
11	Bendigo West	41,682	56	Mordialloc	41,690
12	Bentleigh	38,715	57	Mornington	40,195
13	Box Hill	38,898	58	Morwell	38,648
14	Brighton	38,366	59	Mount Waverley	36,917
15	Broadmeadows	37,424	60	Mulgrave	34,995
16	Brunswick	42,321	61	Murray Valley	38,342
17	Bulleen	35,488	62	Narracan	42,337
18	Bundoora	36,644	63	Narre Warren North	40,203
19	Burwood	38,951	64	Narre Warren South	52,340
20	Carrum	42,415	65	Nepean	39,050
21	Caulfield	37,692	66	Niddrie	36,805
22	Clayton	33,843	67	Northcote	40,423
23	Cranbourne	48,076	68	Oakleigh	35,602
24	Dandenong	35,535	69	Pascoe Vale	40,763
25	Derrimut	40,846	70	Polwarth	42,079
26	Doncaster	36,523	71	Prahran	39,257
27	Eltham	39,389	72	Preston	38,662
28	Essendon	39,853	73	Richmond	42,025
29	Evelyn	40,186	74	Ripon	37,619
30	Ferntree Gully	44,213	75	Rodney	36,437
31	Footscray	40,289	76	Sandringham	37,827
32	Forest Hill	36,414	77	Scoresby	39,121
33	Frankston	36,328	78	Seymour	41,103
34	Geelong	40,062	79	Shepparton	38,136
35	Gembrook	43,410	80	South Barwon	48,309
36	Gippsland East	41,418	81	South-West Coast	43,344
37	Gippsland South	39,215	82	Swan Hill	33,073
38	Hastings	45,194	83	Tarneit	47,784
39	Hawthorn	38,753	84	Thomastown	36,853
40	Ivanhoe	38,781	85	Warrandyte	41,472
41	Keilor	52,853	86	Williamstown	38,966
42	Kew	36,904	87	Yan Yean	54,134
43	Kilsyth	40,627	88	Yuroke	48,425
44	Kororoit	42,497		Total	3,582,232
45	Lara	44,088			

Appendix 1 Part 2

	Region	Electors
1	Eastern Metropolitan	426,300
2	Eastern Victoria	456,819
3	Northern Metropolitan	452,215
4	Northern Victoria	429,217
5	South Eastern Metropolitan	443,920
6	Southern Metropolitan	427,013
7	Western Metropolitan	480,219
8	Western Victoria	466,529
	Total	3,582,232

