

Government response to EMC report on By-elections

Recommendations made by the Electoral Matters Committee in its report on its *Inquiry into the conduct of the 2025 Prahran and Werribee by-elections*

Background

The Victorian Government thanks the Electoral Matters Committee (EMC) for its report on its *Inquiry into the conduct of the 2026 Prahran and Werribee by-elections*, and acknowledges the valuable work undertaken by the EMC, including engagement with stakeholders.

Government response to recommendations directed to government

The government's response to each of the EMC's recommendations directed to the government is as follows.

No.	Recommendation	Government response
1	That the Government introduce legislation amending section 63 of the Electoral Act to allow the Speaker to appoint the day for the close of rolls to be up to 35 days after the issue of the writ and the final nomination day to be up to 56 days after the issue of the writ (for by-elections).	<p>Support-in-principle</p> <p>Government supports measures which aim to increase voter turnout and acknowledges the timing impacts with by elections occurring over the December-January holiday period.</p> <p>As noted by the Committee, limitations on election timelines in the Electoral Act ensure that districts are not unrepresented for too long and that speakers act appropriately.</p> <p>Further consideration of this recommendation is required to determine the appropriate balance between prescribing timelines and flexibility, noting the recommended amendments would extend by-election timelines by up to 56 days.</p> <p>Additionally, Government recently passed the <i>Electoral Amendment Act 2026</i>, which made related amendments to electoral timelines to:</p>

No.	Recommendation	Government response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring forward close of rolls from 7 days after the writ, to the day of the writ (for all election types). bring forward the start of the nomination day period from 10 days after the issue of the writ to 7 days, but did not change the end of the final nomination day period (up to 28 days) (for by-elections). <p>The effect of these changes will be reviewed and considered before further changes to by-election timelines are made.</p>
6	<p>That the Government introduce legislation amending the Electoral Act to reduce the early voting period to 7 days and the period for mobile voting to 9 days before election day.</p>	<p>Do not support</p> <p>The <i>Electoral Amendment Act 2026</i> has amended the commencement of the early voting period from the Monday after the final nomination day, to the Wednesday that is 10 days before election day.</p> <p>While Government supported a similar recommendation in-principle in its response the EMC report from its <i>Inquiry into the conduct of the 2022 Victorian state election</i>, consultation with stakeholders including the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), identified operational concerns with a further reduction of the early voting period.</p> <p>Government acknowledges the VEC’s response to this recommendation, which notes the potential impacts on resourcing and voter experience if the early voting period was further shortened.</p>
7	<p>That the Government introduce legislation to establish a legal framework for campaigner registration at voting centres, as previously recommended by the Committee in its report on the 2022 Victorian state election.</p>	<p>Support-in-principle</p> <p>Government will consult with the VEC to determine whether a legislated framework is required. The consultation will consider the VEC’s review of its current voluntary campaigner registration trial, and the outcome of the adjustments made by the VEC to the trial at voting centres at the 2026 Nepean District by-election.</p>

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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