

Victorian Electoral Commission
Annual Report 2005 - 2006



History

Elections for the Victorian Parliament began when Victoria achieved independence from New South Wales in 1851. In 1910, Victoria's first Chief Electoral Inspector was appointed to head the new State Electoral Office.

For 70 years the State Electoral Office existed as part of a public service department. In the late 1980s, however, it became increasingly clear that it was inappropriate for the conduct of elections to be subject to ministerial direction.

On 1 January 1989, legislation established the independent statutory office of Electoral Commissioner who was to report to Parliament instead of a Minister.

In 1995, the State Electoral Office was renamed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC).

Legislation

Four main pieces of legislation govern the VEC's operations:

- *Electoral Act 2002*;
- *Constitution Act 1975*;
- *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982*; and
- *Local Government Act 1989*.

VEC Activities

The VEC's primary responsibilities include:

- conducting parliamentary, local government, and certain statutory elections;
- maintaining the register of Victorian electors;
- implementing electoral representation reviews of local councils; and
- promoting public awareness and understanding of electoral issues.

The VEC's **vision** is for all eligible Victorians to be fully informed so that they may actively participate in an impartial electoral system.

The VEC's **mission** is to conduct fair and impartial elections, efficiently and according to law, and to maintain the integrity of the Victorian electoral system.

The VEC's **values** are:

Independence – acting without fear or favour, and without direction from government or ministers;

Impartiality – treating all election participants equally and acting in accordance with legal requirements;

Professionalism – providing the best and most efficient service to all Victorians;

Integrity – understanding and protecting the importance of the VEC's position in the democratic system; and

Respecting each other – appreciating that all staff are different, promoting a work environment that respects safety and well being, and understanding that staff have a life outside of work.

More information

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The Year in Numbers

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Number of enrolled electors (as at 30 June)	3,251,836	3,265,948	3,281,336	3,337,946	3,323,719
Total enrolment changes	565,730	597,902	457,608	542,033	430,413
Changes from VEC enrolment initiatives	94,774	223,706	117,611	112,566	128,833
State elections	-	1	-	-	-
State by-elections	-	2	-	-	-
Local government elections	17	54	-	25	54
Local government by-elections	5	5	9	6	4[^]
Statutory, commercial and community elections	55	38	97	18	6
Local government representational reviews	-	-	9*	30	0
Staff numbers (as at 30 June)**	67.2	66.8	65.4	72	79.5
Total expenditure	\$21.5m	\$44.7m	\$13.8m	\$18.9m	\$25.0m
Revenue paid to the Consolidated Fund	\$2.5m	\$6.6m	\$1.5m	\$5.6m	\$8.8m

Footnotes

[^]Includes two countbacks

*In 2003-04 it was reported that a review was conducted of Surf Coast Shire. This review was conducted under terms of reference established by the Minister for Local Government, but has not been conducted under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989.

**Reported as Full Time Equivalent

Letter to the Minister

September 2006

Dear Attorney,

I am pleased to submit to you for presentation to Parliament, the 2005-06 Annual Report of the Victorian Electoral Commission.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 1994.

The report also includes the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for 2005-06.

Yours sincerely



Steve Tully,
Electoral Commissioner.

Electoral Commissioner's Report

Two important priorities have dominated the past year for the VEC. In the first half of the year we faced the responsibility of conducting 54 concurrent local government elections, while in the second half of the year our focus turned to critical planning and preparation for the State election in November 2006.

During this time we continued to provide election services to the non-government sector and provided services for other State and territory elections.

The conduct of the 54 local government elections was a significant achievement for the Commission, particularly as each election has its own individual characteristics.

We went into the local government elections well supported with the appointment of Liz Williams as our new Deputy Electoral Commissioner. Liz brings a wealth of electoral experience to the role, both from an operational perspective as well as possessing a strong policy overview.

Local government elections presented some new challenges, not the least of which included a shorter timeline to produce the voters rolls, a greater mix of counting methods (preferential and proportional representation) and an increased number of computer counts. All challenges were ably met and provided some excellent learnings.

We have worked to improve the election service we provide by consulting with important stakeholders. The Deputy Electoral Commissioner and I have had regular meetings with the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association. This relationship, along with our relationship with Local Government Victoria will be important in examining any modifications to the conduct of local government elections and electoral representation reviews.

The conduct of the State election is now clearly on the horizon and I am pleased with our progress towards election day in November and, in particular, some new initiatives.

Resulting from a key strategy in our Disability Action Plan, the entire Management Group met with our newly-formed Electoral Access Advisory Group twice during the year. These sessions provided an extremely useful forum for some practical solutions to improve accessibility to the Victorian electoral system. I look forward to including the Group in our evaluation of the 2006 election, and will invite them to contribute to our next Disability Action Plan. Similar work has also been conducted to involve culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Work has also occurred on working towards a trial of electronic voting. The electronic voting kiosks will be established at six centres around the State, and will provide the opportunity for Victorians with vision impairment to vote in secret for the very first time.



“Looking forward, I see a lot of our planning coming to fruition and feel a sense of building excitement as we move closer to the State election.”

Steve Tully Electoral Commissioner

We've enhanced our own internal consultation and communication. Our Consultative Committee, which includes members of all Branches, hosted a planning day for the organisation in the beginning of the financial year. The day allowed all staff to revisit our values, and identify strategic directions for the coming year. The Committee meets regularly and has organised a number of initiatives to improve inter-Branch communication.

In addition, we have increased our level of reporting. A report on the conduct of the 54 local government elections, and another on the conduct of the 39 electoral representation reviews were completed this financial year. These will be forwarded to the Minister for Local Government in July 2006, and provide a comprehensive record of these major electoral activities.

I have made a commitment to provide the Minister with a yearly report on local government electoral activity.

Looking forward, I see a lot of our planning coming to fruition and feel a sense of building excitement as we move closer to the State election. This election will herald a number of 'firsts' for us – electronic voting for the vision impaired, new website initiatives and focussed attempts to encourage those sections of the community with lower than average participation. It is an exciting time.

Of course, we wouldn't have achieved what we have without the tireless dedication of our entire VEC team of staff and senior election officials. Their utter professionalism and commitment to do their best continue to be our key attributes.

Steve Tully
Electoral Commissioner

Year in Review

Quality election services

Ensure that election services meet the needs of all members of the community.

Corporate Objective: Continue to improve the quality of parliamentary, local government and commercial and community elections to ensure the integrity of democracy in Victoria.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
Review and implement the impact of legislative changes, identify service improvements for voters (especially those with special needs) and develop a revised strategy for the delivery of election services.	Establishment of Electoral Access Advisory Group to provide advice on service improvements (see p 16).	Trial of electronic voting at six E centres (see p 17).
Implement a comprehensive recruitment, training, assessment and appointment program for election officials to ensure the effective conduct of elections.	Development of new training video for election officials to demonstrate key values of excellent customer service (see p 18).	Distribute training video to all election officials for the State Election (see p 18).
Deliver excellent State, local government, and commercial and community election services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a resourcing strategy to procure and provide services and materials for election offices and voting locations to effectively conduct elections. Identify, establish and maintain the infrastructure required to effectively conduct State, local government and commercial and community elections. 	Conducted 54 local government elections that included 1,263 candidates and over 2.5 million enrolled voters (see p 19).	Conduct of the 2006 State election (see p 16).

Timely and accurate enrolment and roll services

Facilitate the enrolment of eligible Victorians and maintain an up-to-date register of electors.

Corporate Objective: Ensure the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
At a national level, establish a framework for evaluating the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.	Enrolment participation above the national average (see p 27).	Continue to maintain above national average participation rates (see p 27).
Develop and implement strategies to validate, improve and report on the accuracy of VEC enrolment processing activities and on the accuracy of information held on the Victorian register of electors.	Utilised spatial data to prepare the roll for a liquor licensing poll (see p 28).	Conduct a compare rolls process with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) prior to the State election (see p 28).
Continue to develop and implement enrolment strategies that encourage and assist eligible Victorians to enrol and maintain their enrolment.	The VEC's Continuous Roll Update program contributed 29.6% of all contributions to the roll (see p 27).	Significant work will be required to update elector changes and new enrolments prior to the 2006 State election (see p 32).
Assess and process enrolment information and identify and implement opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of enrolment information processing and the enrolment register.	Improved data exchange with the AEC minimised duplication between the two roll update programs (see p 32).	Investigate technology options to improve accuracy of the roll and reduce processing time required to maintain electoral register (see p 32).
Monitor the progress of the implementation of Commonwealth legislation that provides for proof of identity and address at point of enrolment, and negotiate strategies relating to changes to the joint electoral enrolment procedure between the State and the Commonwealth.	Attorney-General briefed on amendments made to the Commonwealth legislation in June 2006 (see p 32).	

Corporate Objective: Deliver high quality enrolment information products, mapping products and services to stakeholders.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
Review, monitor and implement the impact of legislative changes and develop a revised strategy for the compilation and delivery of electoral rolls, enrolment information and mapping products.	Produced 54 rolls for local government elections within a shorter timeframe prescribed in legislation (see p 33).	The provision of roll products for the 2006 State election, including copies of the roll for candidates on a CD-Rom (see p 34).
Continue to provide high quality enrolment information products, mapping products and services to stakeholders. Identify and implement opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of processes.	Mapping products produced for the conduct of the 54 local government elections (see p 34).	Use of mapping technology to provide a new voting centre look-up function for voters for the 2006 State election (see p 34).

Corporate Objective: Maximise public confidence in the security of personal information held by the VEC.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
Ensure that the privacy of personal information held by the VEC is protected and that disclosures of enrolment information meet legislative requirements.	A major review conducted of the enrolment information collected on Victorian electors under the joint roll arrangement with the AEC (see p 37).	The VEC will remain committed to upholding the integrity of the enrolment register, through assessing requests in accordance with the legislative provisions (see p 37).

Year in Review

Community understanding and participation

Engage and inform members of the community so that they are able to fully participate in the electoral process.

Corporate Objective: Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2006 State election and any by-elections.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
<p>Develop and implement a coordinated communication strategy (advertising, public relations, on-line and telephone services) to provide information and engage the community about enrolment and voting to all Victorians, with a special emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing information to the community about the new Legislative Council electoral system and changes to voting procedures; providing specialised information to those communities where voter participation is low; and providing more effective information about the location of voting centres. 	<p>An information leaflet on the new Upper House system was developed (see p 39).</p> <p>Consultative forums held with the Electoral Access Advisory Group and CALD Advisory Group on specialised information services (see p 39).</p>	<p>Mail-out to all electors providing details of the new Upper House changes (see p 40.).</p> <p>Implementation of the advertising campaign for the 2006 state election. (see p 40).</p>
<p>Redevelop the VEC's website in order to provide current on-line information and services that meet the needs of all voters and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Website redesigned, taking into account accessibility features (see p 40).</p>	<p>Provide information in alternative formats, including 18 languages other than English, Easy English guides, and audio versions (see p 47).</p>

Corporate Objective: Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2005 local government elections and any by-elections.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
<p>Work with municipal councils to develop and implement co-ordinated communication campaigns at local government elections in 2005.</p>	<p>Individual communication campaigns provided to each council, including advertising and media services (see p 40).</p>	<p>Explore options for increased statewide advertising when all elections conducted simultaneously (see p 45).</p>

Corporate Objective: Encourage a culture of democratic participation and community engagement, particularly among those whose participation is identified as lower than average.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
<p>In partnership with the AEC and other organisations, implement an electoral education strategy to increase Victorians' engagement in and understanding of the electoral system.</p>	<p>Third version of "Your Opinion Counts" distributed to over 1,000 secondary schools (see p 46).</p>	<p>In partnership with <i>The Age</i>, promote Democracy Week through a 16-page education supplement. "Make Your Vote Count" learning materials for literary/ESL teachers. (see p 47)</p>

Fair and equal representation

Provide support services during electoral representation reviews to help ensure fair and equal representation for Victorian electors.

Corporate Objective: Provision of high quality electoral representation review services to local government.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
<p>Develop and implement a framework, procure resources and, in consultation with the Local Government and Regional Services Division, develop a timetable for the conduct of local government representation reviews.</p>	<p>Report prepared on the conduct of the previous 39 electoral representation reviews (see p 48).</p>	<p>Plan for the conduct of the remaining 39 electoral representation reviews (see p 49).</p>

Organisational effectiveness

Effective administration and a skilled workforce are crucial to the delivery of accessible, high-quality electoral services.

Corporate Objective: Ensure the receipt of funds, payment of expenses and maintenance of the VEC's operations within budget and according to legislation.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
Effectively manage the VEC's financial systems and infrastructure.	See Financial Statement (see p61).	

Corporate Objective: Ensure the availability of a skilled workforce needed by the organisation to deliver its corporate and legislative objectives.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
<p>Ensure the VEC has a workforce that is able and ready to efficiently deliver accessible, high quality electoral services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and attracting people with the skills and knowledge required; developing and retaining a dynamic and highly skilled workforce; implementing an effective performance management system; and creating a working environment that is safe, supportive and free from discriminatory behaviour. 	Implemented systematic Occupational Health and Safety Management System (see p 54).	Continue to improve on staffing and work practice priorities including performance management and workplace health and safety (see p 55).

Corporate Objective: Provide for effective communication between staff at all levels across the VEC.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
Establish a consultative committee, with representatives from each Branch to channel information between staff and Management Group on particular strategic and operational issues.	Consultative Committee Charter developed and launched (see p 56).	Continue to meet regularly and review major people management issues (see p 56).
Develop a skills training program with a strong focus on communication skills.	A total of 187.4 learning and development days completed (see p 52).	Facilitate a comprehensive learning and development strategy (see p 55).
Encourage open communication through regular staff meetings, staff newsletters, and providing staff members with access to all minutes, including those from Management Group meetings.	Quarterly internal staff newsletter distributed (see p 56).	Conduct an organisational communication audit and develop an internal communication strategy (see p 56).

Corporate Objective: Ensure the VEC has an ongoing, effective and cost-efficient IT environment to conduct its business.

Strategy	Key Achievements in 2005-06	Future Directions
<p>Provide an IT management function to align current and emerging technology with organisational strategies, policies and standards.</p> <p>Plan, deploy and support IT infrastructure to meet the requirements of State and local government elections.</p> <p>Ensure the VEC's IT environment is covered by appropriate risk and security management plans.</p> <p>Focus on IT requirements for State election, including testing of new technology.</p>	<p>Developed Information Technology Strategic Plan (see p 57).</p> <p>Provided IT technology required to support 54 local government elections (see p 57).</p> <p>Conducted a security audit (see p 57).</p>	Focus on IT requirements for State election, including testing of new technology and the changes resulting from the new Upper House (see p 57).

Corporate Governance

A basis in legislation

The VEC's business is underpinned by legislation.

The *Electoral Act 2002* is Victoria's principal electoral Act, providing for the enrolment system and the conduct of parliamentary elections. It sets out the VEC's primary responsibilities, which are to:

- conduct parliamentary elections and by-elections;
- conduct local government elections and by-elections, and certain statutory elections;
- ensure the enrolment of electors;
- prepare electoral rolls for parliamentary elections, voters lists for local government elections and jury lists;
- contribute to public understanding of the electoral system and awareness of and participation in elections;
- conduct and promote research into electoral matters;
- provide advice to the Attorney-General and Parliament on electoral issues; and
- report to Parliament on the VEC's activities.

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.

The *Local Government Act 1989* provides for local government elections and electoral representation reviews, and requires the VEC to supply voters' lists to councils.

A number of other Acts impose duties on the VEC. For example, the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* relates to the conduct of liquor licensing polls and the *Juries Act 2000* refers to the provision of information. Further details are available at Appendix 1.

Role of the Electoral Commissioner

The Electoral Commissioner's chief responsibility is to conduct elections according to law and with complete impartiality.

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

By virtue of section 16(1)(c) of the *Public Sector Management and Employment Act 1998*, the Electoral Commissioner has all the functions of a department head in relation to officers and employees of the VEC.

The Victorian Electoral Commission

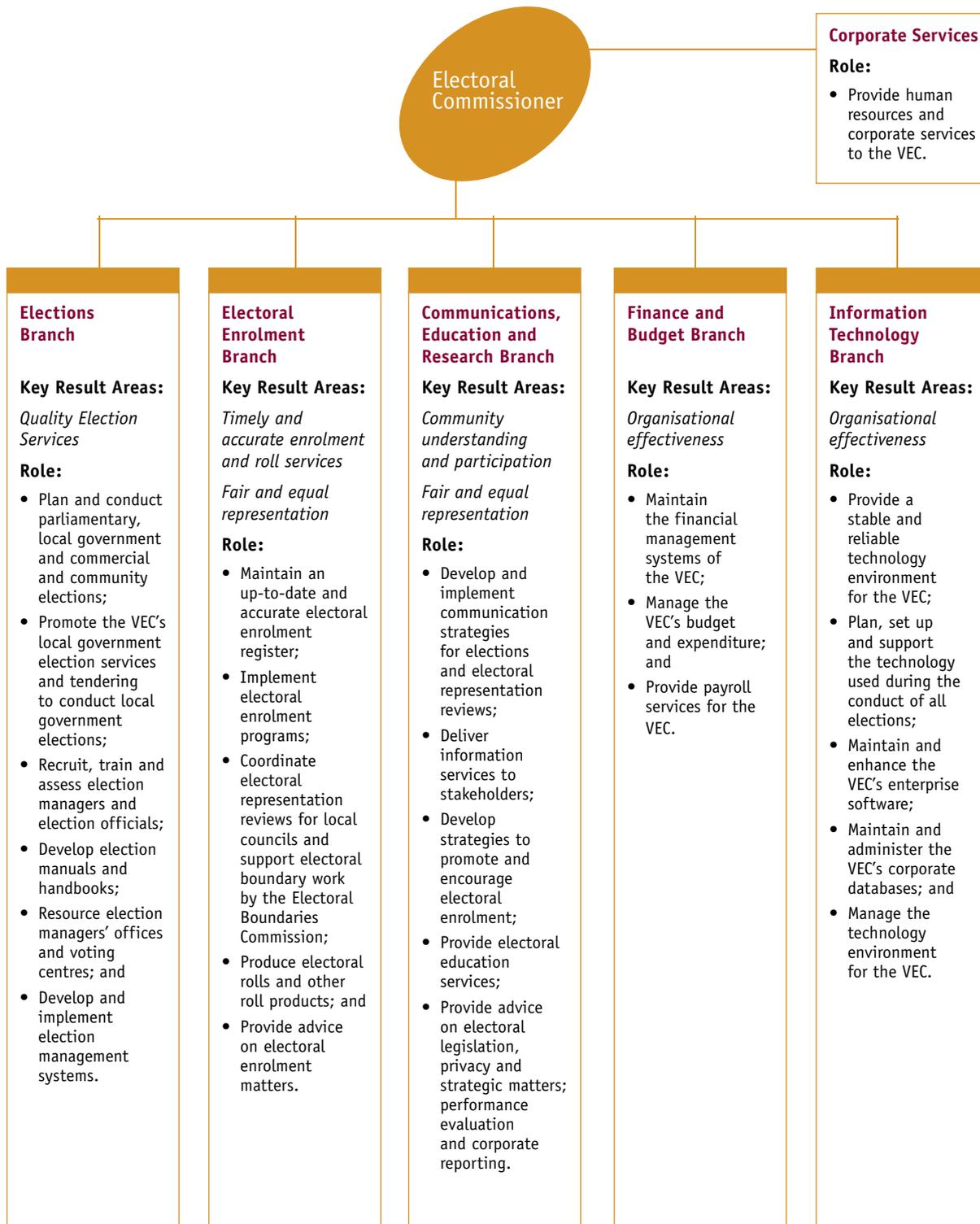
The VEC is the administrative agency through which the Electoral Commissioner's legislative obligations are exercised.

The VEC is divided into five Branches as well as the Corporate Services area. The responsibilities of each Branch are listed in the organisational chart on page opposite.

Unlike many other government agencies, the VEC's workload fluctuates depending on election cycles. Legislative changes have resulted in Victorian local government elections taking place over a four-year cycle. State elections also occur every four years and the VEC's work reaches a peak in the year prior to these elections taking place.

Other ongoing work of the VEC in enrolment, research and development, conducting electoral representation reviews of local councils, and conducting commercial and community elections continues around these election cycles.

Management Group



Management Group

Electoral Commissioner

STEVE TULLY

Mr Tully was appointed as Victoria's Electoral Commissioner on 24 January 2005. Previously Mr Tully was South Australia's Electoral Commissioner, a position he had held since 1997, after holding the position of Deputy Electoral Commissioner from 1996. Mr Tully has a variety of experience in public sector departments including the Department of Agriculture, the Public Service Board, the Department of Local Government and the Arts, as well as the Mental Health Service of South Australia as the Chief Operating Officer.

Deputy Electoral Commissioner

From 20 September 2005

Manager, Elections Branch - Election Administration

LIZ WILLIAMS

Ms Williams was appointed Deputy Electoral Commissioner in September 2005 and has been Manager of Election Administration since February 2005. She commenced with the Victorian Electoral Commission in 1992, and is responsible for the appointment, training and support of Returning Officers and their staff, and the management of election contracts with local government and commercial clients. She has significant electoral experience, due to her various roles during the conduct of State, local and non-government elections.

Key result area: Quality elections services

Manager, Elections Branch - Election Services

GLENDIA FRAZER

Ms Frazer commenced work with the VEC in 1988 as a Returning Officer for the State election, and maintained that appointment at the 1992 and 1996 State elections. Ms Frazer has developed an extensive knowledge of local government and State government elections, with significant experience in information technology. Ms Frazer is currently responsible for the Computer and Voting Services Team as well as the management of the VEC's warehouse, compulsory voting and support of the Election Management System (EMS).

Key result area: Quality elections services

Manager, Electoral Enrolment Branch

PAUL STRICKLAND

Mr Strickland has gained comprehensive experience and expertise in a range of election operations over a 20 year period of employment at the VEC. He has applied modern mapping technologies to the VEC's business environment, enhancing the conduct of local government electoral representation reviews and State redivision processes. Mr Strickland was appointed Manager of the Electoral Enrolment Branch (EEB) in October 2005 and had been Acting Manager since November 2003.

*Key result areas: Timely and accurate enrolment and roll services
Fair and equal representation*

Manager, Communications, Education and Research Branch

SUE LANG

Ms Lang commenced with the VEC in January 2006 and is responsible for coordinating the VEC's communication, education and research strategies. Ms Lang has spent almost half of her working career in senior communication roles within the metropolitan water industry, but also has valuable experience gained within local government, statutory authorities and state government. She has particular experience in major public awareness programs.

*Key result areas: Community understanding and participation
Fair and equal representation*

Manager, Information Technology Branch

SIMON HANCOCK

Mr Hancock commenced at the VEC in April 2000 and was appointed Manager of the newly formed Information Technology Branch in October 2003. Prior to working at the VEC, Mr Hancock worked for a number of information technology companies providing project management and technical consultancy over a range of industry settings.

Key result area: Organisational effectiveness

Manager, Finance and Budget Branch

DAVID CLARKE CPA

Mr Clarke was appointed to the role of Manager, Finance and Budget in January 2004. Previously, Mr Clarke worked in private industry in audit, spent ten years at the former City of Prahran and six years at the Mildura Rural City Council. His roles in local government have included Finance Manager and Director of Finances. Other roles have included Secretary of Mildura Cemetery Trust and Executive Officer of Mildura Regional Waste Management Group.

Key result area: Organisational effectiveness

Manager, Human Resources

GILL BRAY

Ms Bray commenced with the VEC in December 2000 in the position of Human Resource Coordinator. Ms Bray is an experienced HR Practitioner with close to ten years experience in both the private and public sector. She has significant experience in people management initiatives across the HR spectrum, including performance management, recruitment, learning and development, OH&S, and employee relations.

Key result area: Organisational effectiveness

VEC Departures

DOUG BEECROFT

Mr Beecroft retired from the VEC in January 2006. He had been with the VEC since 1995 and managed the Branch responsible for coordinating the VEC's communication and education strategies and corporate services. He was appointed Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner from 2 December 2003, and was Acting Electoral Commissioner from 1 July 2004 until 23 January 2005, during which time Mr Beecroft was responsible for the conduct of 25 local government elections. In his time at the VEC, Mr Beecroft oversaw several State and local government election communication campaigns. Mr Beecroft made a significant contribution to the development of the education program at the VEC, including strategic direction in targeting Victorians who were under-represented.

The VEC Management Group



Steve Tully



Liz Williams



Glenda Frazer



Paul Strickland



Sue Lang



Simon Hancock



David Clarke



Gill Bray

The VEC's Audit Committee

The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist the Electoral Commissioner in fulfilling the VEC's responsibilities as they relate to the accounting, operational practices, controls and risks of the Commission.

This involves the oversight of financial performance and reporting, the scope of work, performance and independence of the internal and external auditors, the operation and implementation of the risk management framework, and matters of accountability and internal control.

In 2005-06 the Committee comprised:

- Mr Robert Yeo (Chairman), Partner, Hall Chadwick Chartered Accountants;
- Ms Elisabeth Reeves, accountant and senior election official; and
- Ms Alex Zavisic, Senior Analyst, Department of Treasury and Finance.

The Committee held four formal meetings during the year, with other informal meetings and discussions between members and the Electoral Commissioner and Manager of Finance and Budget on various issues and outcomes. The internal auditors, WHK Day Neilson, also attended each formal meeting.

Various items were considered and discussed at these meetings, and these included:

1. Year ending 30 June 2005 Annual Accounts
 - review the draft and final statements; and
 - receive and review the Auditor General's audit program and management letter, and follow-up action taken in relation to points raised.
2. Oversee the internal audit function and initiate and review audits conducted for:
 - confidentiality of VicRoads data;
 - Fringe Benefits Tax compliance;
 - review of compliance with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) purchasing card rules;
 - implementation of International Accounting Standards;
 - review of status and compliance with the Financial Management Compliance Framework;
 - candidates' deposits and voting fines Trust account review;
 - review processes for purchasing and recording inventory, attendance and review of the stocktake process, and review and comment;
 - review of compliance with the DTF's taxation rules;
 - accounts payable and accounts receivable processes and controls;
 - asset management; and
 - budgeting and management reporting, Company Secretarial and Corporate Governance Review.
3. Receive updates and discuss the report on the VEC Budget and Operational Review.
4. Review of the costing of the November 2005 local government elections.
5. Review enhancements to the Financial Management Compliance Framework, including the establishment of KPI's.
6. Review and monitor VEC compliance with the introduction of International Accounting Standards.
7. Review of the listing of all fees and penalties in the *Electoral Act 2002* which are indexed annually and included on a website administered by the Department of Justice.
8. Review updates to VEC financial policies and procedures.
9. A review of the legislation and regulations which affect the VEC.
10. Monitor and review the risk framework including the recording and evaluation of risks, a Risk Management Plan, and a Disaster Preparedness Plan.



Members of the Consultative Committee

From Left to Right (rear): Shane Fewings (IT Branch), Gill Bray (HR Manager), Peta McCammon (Communication, Education and Research Branch), Trish Withers (Electoral Enrolment Branch) Geoff Nott (Elections Branch).
Seated: John Marsicovetere (Warehouse), Dawn Benson (Finance Branch) and Steve Tully (Management Group).
Absent: Michael Robinson (Elections Branch).

For more details of the Consultative Committee see page 56.

Electoral Stakeholders

The needs and interests of the VEC’s stakeholders vary according to their roles in the electoral process.

All Victorians

The VEC assists all Victorians by providing information about Victoria’s democratic electoral systems and electors’ rights and responsibilities to enrol and vote.

Victorians must be confident that the VEC provides excellent services, as well as value for money.

Election clients

The VEC conducts elections on behalf of local councils and other organisations. Councils seek competitive tenders for the conduct of their elections. The VEC provides the highest quality election services at a cost-effective price.

The VEC has a statutory responsibility to conduct certain statutory elections and provides specialised election services to a range of organisations.

Election participants

The VEC provides candidates and registered political parties with information and services to enable them to participate in the electoral system, and it ensures that all processes are fair and impartial.

Election researchers and commentators

The VEC encourages electoral research that provides a basis for robust community debate and understanding about the broader electoral system. The media also provides vital opportunities for the VEC to motivate and inform voters.

Elected representatives

The VEC provides Members of Parliament with accurate and timely elector information to help them undertake their duties.

Risk Management

The VEC operates within well-defined corporate governance accountabilities that are linked to the responsibilities of individual officers (see the organisational chart on page 9).

The VEC develops comprehensive risk management strategies for all electoral events. This is essential given the critical nature of election arrangements and the fixed timeframes that operate during an election. These strategies cover key aspects of election management, infrastructure, communication strategies, recruitment, and information technology.

In addition, the VEC conducts risk evaluations to identify organisational risks and evaluate the controls that are in place. The evaluations provide a risk rating of potential hazards identified across operational and non-operational activities with the outcomes presented to the Audit Committee as part of its charter to assess the risks to the organisation. The process highlights whether the risks identified have extensive controls in place and that a periodic review of those controls is required.

A comprehensive Disaster Preparedness Plan is being developed and will be implemented prior to the 2006 State election.

Electoral Council of Australia

The Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) is a consultative forum with membership comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory Electoral Commissioners. The Council meets approximately every three months and at the time of elections to consider the maintenance of the electoral rolls, the operation of new electoral legislation, 'best practice' in the management of elections and other matters of common interest. During 2005-06, the ECA undertook projects and consulted on a range of issues including the following:

- changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* to provide for proof of identity requirements at the time of enrolment and raise the threshold for the disclosure of donations to political parties;
- the use of new technology at the voting centre to assist voting;
- the development by the AEC of a new computer system for the maintenance of the joint electoral rolls;
- continued sponsorship of a three-year research scholarship at the ANU on the development of Australian electoral administrations; and
- management (with the ACT Electoral Commission) of an electoral educators' conference in October 2005.

A subcommittee of the ECA, the Enrolment Steering Committee (ESC) met regularly to jointly manage the Continuous Roll Update (CRU) program for the review of the joint rolls. In 2005-06 the ESC prepared a report on the CRU program, developed the ECA CRU Strategic Plan and provided input to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for their publication; *A Conceptual Framework Supporting the Electoral Roll*.

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives Victorians the right to access certain classes of documents held by government agencies. Freedom of Information (FOI) procedures are detailed in Appendix 8 of this report.

The VEC received two FOI requests for the 2005-06 financial year. One was finalised during the year while the other was still ongoing at year end.

Security of Personal Information Held by the VEC

The VEC is subject to the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (IPA). The VEC must act in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the IPA to protect the personal information that it collects from electors and other individuals.

The VEC collects personal information only in order to fulfil its functions under the *Electoral Act 2002*. The personal information collected, used and disclosed by the VEC falls into six main categories:

- enrolment information – personal information associated with the maintenance of the register of electors (see the section on enrolment information for further details (p 34);
- political party registration information – personal information associated with the registration of political parties;
- candidate information – personal information associated with nomination of candidates for election and subsequent administration of elections;
- voting information – personal information associated with voting in elections;
- human resources information – personal information associated with the employment of full-time and temporary staff; and
- miscellaneous contact information – personal information about business contacts in other organisations, the media and complainants etc.

The VEC's policies regarding its management of this personal information are set out in its Privacy Policy, which is available at www.vec.vic.gov.au or at the VEC.

Access and correction of personal information

Individuals have rights of access and correction under the IPA in relation to any personal information about them held by the VEC. The VEC complies with these requirements by following the FOI processes laid down in the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* in the event that it receives a request relating to accessing and correcting personal information.

No such requests were received during the reporting period.

Complaints about privacy

No complaints about privacy were received in the reporting period.

Whistleblowers

The VEC provides information to staff on the provisions of the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001* and has established structures for receiving and considering disclosures in accordance with the Act. There were no disclosures during 2005-06.

The VEC's procedures under the Act are detailed on the VEC's website, www.vec.vic.gov.au.

Quality Election Services

Ensure that election services meet the needs of all members of the community.

Corporate Objective: Continue to improve the quality of parliamentary, local government and commercial and community elections to ensure the integrity of democracy in Victoria.

Parliamentary election services

There were no State elections or by-elections in 2005-06.

Strategy: Review and implement the impact of legislative changes, identify service improvements for voters (especially those with special needs) and develop a revised strategy for the delivery of election services.

Legislation passed in 2003 provided for a fixed election date for Victorian State elections. The next State election is scheduled for Saturday, 25 November 2006.

The legislation also introduced proportional representation for election of the Legislative Council. Proportional representation has not previously been used at Victorian State elections, which requires the VEC to inform all Victorian electors and officials of the amendments for the election. The VEC has also been required to make significant modifications to its election management system, as well as manuals and procedures, to enable the computerised counting of votes required to efficiently administer the proportional representation system.

The last financial year has been filled with extensive planning in preparation for the State election. This has included the identification and review of voting centres and mobile voting centres; the purchase of materials, furniture and equipment; updates to procedures, manuals and training programs; and examination of IT and election office arrangements.



The Electoral Access Advisory Group met with members of the VEC Management group to discuss initiatives to improve access.

Planning in consultation to identify service improvements

During 2005-06 the VEC developed its second Disability Action Plan. Building on extensive consultation from 2002, the VEC consulted with a group of peak bodies to develop some broad objectives to improve access to the Victorian electoral system. These objectives were then made available for public comment for six weeks. In addition, the Electoral Commissioner wrote to over 60 organisations requesting assistance in the development of the Plan. Based on the feedback received, the VEC developed a final Disability Action Plan, which was published in October 2005.

The Plan focuses on the 2006 State election, and prioritises those areas identified in the consultation process.

Importantly, the VEC established an Electoral Access Advisory Group (EAAG) to advise the VEC Management Group in planning for the November 2006 State election. The first meeting of the Advisory Group was held on 12 December 2005, and a subsequent meeting was held on 23 March 2006 (see picture above). Organisations represented included: Alzheimer's Victoria, Scope, MS Society, Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC), Rural Access workers, Council for Intellectual Disabilities (CIDA), the Office of the Public Advocate, Better Hearing, Western Region Network for Disability, Paraquad, Action for Community Living, Richmond Fellowship, Vision Australian and Arthritis Victoria.

The Electoral Access Advisory Group provided advice on:

- the location of full wheelchair-accessible venues, and new signs for accessible parking;
- Easy English signage at voting centres;
- training materials and position descriptions to provide appropriate assistance to people with a disability;
- vests to be worn by election officials to help voters easily identify staff able to provide assistance;
- communication products, including accessible formats such as Easy English and audio files;

- assistance in the production of a training video; and
- advice on easy-to-grip pencils and magnification tools.

The Group also discussed the wide-ranging issues associated with sourcing voting centres with good accessibility features.

The EAAG will play a vital role in the evaluation of the State election, as well as the development of the next Disability Action Plan.

Electronic voting

In May 2005, the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee tabled a report titled *Victorian Electronic Democracy*, which included a recommendation that the VEC develop and implement a system of electronic voting machines. Subsequently, the Acting Attorney-General requested that the VEC report on the feasibility of implementing an electronic voting trial, including developing and testing the appropriate hardware and software.

The VEC went to public tender to appoint a company to build and deploy an electronic voting solution to be trialled at the November 2006 election. The VEC selected Hewlett-Packard Australia in partnership with Scytl Secure Electronic Voting. The VEC has been working closely with these companies to ensure that the software meets the needs of the Victorian electoral system and provides secure, safe and secret voting. The VEC has also consulted with groups representing people with a disability to ensure the system is as accessible as possible.

In May 2006, the *Electoral and Parliamentary Committees Legislation (Amendment) Bill* was introduced to Parliament and passed in July 2006. This legislation provides for electronic voting for voters with vision impairment. The VEC intends to trial electronic voting using kiosks at six voting centres around Victoria at the 2006 election.

These centres, called E Centres, will provide voting facilities for all electorates during the early voting period and on election day. All E Centres will also have a range of materials and equipment to assist voters who may need special assistance to vote.



Filming of the training video was a massive logistical task as it included establishing a voting centre for a whole day. VEC staff and other community volunteers took on the roles of party workers, voting centre staff, scrutineers and voters (see p 18).

Review of registered political parties

Political parties gain important benefits from being registered, including having the party's name next to its candidates' names on ballot papers, a central nomination process, public funding and enrolment information.

To be eligible for registration, a political party must have at least 500 members who are Victorian electors, who are members in accordance with the rules of a political party, and are not members of another registered political party or of a party applying for registration.

The VEC's activities in 2005-06 fell into two main areas: reviewing the eligibility of already registered parties, and processing applications for registration by new parties.

The VEC completed a review of the 11 registered political parties under section 52 of the *Electoral Act 2002*. On 5 July 2005, the Hope Party Victoria ethics equality ecology was de-registered because the VEC was satisfied that the party no longer had sufficient members to be eligible for registration. On 1 July 2005, the VEC wrote to the people on lists provided by the four larger political parties (Australian Labor Party – Victorian Branch, Liberal Party of Australia – Victorian Division, National Party of Australia – Victoria and The Australian Greens – Victoria). Responses by 11 July showed that that all four parties had at least 500 eligible members, and so should retain their registration.

On 27 July 2005, Parliament passed the *Electoral Legislation (Further Amendment) Act 2005*. The Act required all registered parties to apply to the VEC for re-registration by 30 June 2006 (and thereafter in the middle of each term of Parliament), providing the same kinds of information as in an initial application for registration. All the registered parties submitted their applications for re-registration, including lists of members, by the deadline. By 30 June 2006, the VEC had re-registered 10 of the 11 registered parties. The Socialist Alliance's application for re-registration was received on 29 June 2006, and had not been processed by the end of the period.

The VEC processed two applications for registration by new parties in 2005-06. The first application from The Country Alliance had sufficient "Yes" responses to make it clear that the party had at least 500 eligible members. The Country Alliance was registered on 15 August 2005.

On 22 May 2006, the Family First Party Victoria Inc applied for registration. By 30 June 2006, the VEC had received 565 "Yes" responses from party members.

Strategy: Implement a comprehensive recruitment, training, assessment and appointment program for election officials to ensure the effective conduct of elections.

Significant work has been undertaken in reviewing the training packages for election officials. This included the immense task of reviewing and writing new procedures for the new Upper House system.

To complement the extensive manuals provided to election officials, a new training video is in the process of being developed, which will be provided to every election official.

The video is an important way to ensure all voting centre staff continue to consult their manuals on election day, but equally important, to demonstrate the key values of excellent customer service. In this regard, voters appearing in the video represented the whole community, including those from non-English speaking backgrounds and those with a disability.

Some 43 Election managers and over 100 Assistant Election managers have been appointed and are currently being trained in preparation for the November 2006 State Election.

Local government elections services

The VEC has been active in the conduct of local government elections since 1994, when an amendment was made to the *Local Government Act 1989* that enabled councils to tender for the provision of election services. Councils can conduct their own elections or invite tenders for election services from the VEC, the AEC or another council. The AEC has subsequently withdrawn from submitting tenders for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria and the VEC has tendered for, and conducted, all local government elections in Victoria since March 2003.

Elections can be conducted by either postal or attendance voting, with the method of election being determined by each council. The benefits of the postal voting system are generally acknowledged to include a higher voter turnout, a lower rate of informal voting and lower cost. The majority of councils now hold their elections by post.

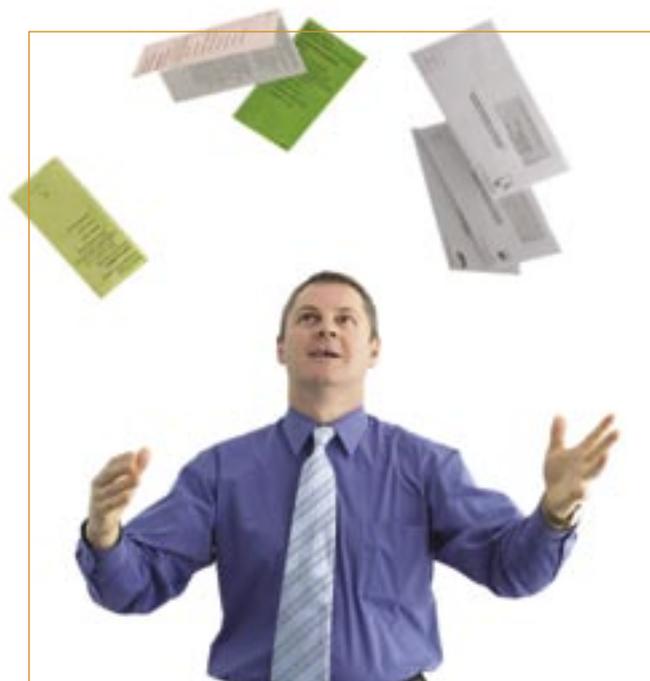
Figure 1 Local government elections conducted 2001 – 2006

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
VEC Postal	15	47	0	22	48
Attendance	2	7	0	3	6
VEC Total	17	54	0	25	54
AEC Postal	3	0	0	0	0
AEC Attendance	2	0	0	0	0
AEC Total	5	0	0	0	0

Local government legislation

In December 2003, amendments were made to the *Local Government Act 1989*, which introduced fixed four-year terms for the conduct of local government elections. From November 2008, all local government elections will be conducted simultaneously across Victoria on a four-yearly basis. Council election dates have been revised in preparation for these arrangements, with 25 councils having elections in November 2004 and 54 councils having elections, in November 2005.

The amendments also included the introduction of proportional representation for unsubdivided councils or multi-councillor wards.



Geoff Nott pictured with ballot papers from the local government elections.

“The key to dealing with something like this is a lot of planning, preparation and communication with all stakeholders.”

With 54 local government elections taking place at the same time, the Election Services Team had to spring into action to get the requisite information to voters within legislated timeframes.

Voting Services Coordinator, Geoff Nott, was responsible for overseeing the mail-out of the ballot packs for the postal elections and the information materials for the attendance elections. Over a three-day period Tuesday, 8 November to Thursday, 10 November, the VEC mailed nearly two million ballot packs for 48 postal elections.

“For postal elections, we sent every eligible voter a ballot pack that included a postal vote declaration, a combined ballot paper and candidates’ statements with instructions on how to vote by post, and a prepaid envelope for the return of the ballot paper,” says Geoff.

“Voters in attendance elections were sent an EasyVote card and all the information needed to vote, including the location of voting centres. For some of the 41 uncontested wards, voters were sent a flyer informing them that the ward was uncontested.”

Voters who were registered as general postal voters for the attendance elections were also mailed a postal ballot pack. In total, over 2.5 million products were delivered by mail. Multi-language leaflets with voting instructions translated in 19 languages were also sent to voters for 14 selected councils.

“We started planning in late July, with a meeting involving all the major service providers, so that everyone was aware of the timeframes and how their role fitted into the bigger picture. Detailed planning, preparation and the commitment of a great team working well together saw us hit all our deadlines.”

Strategy: Deliver excellent State, local government, and commercial and community election services.

Following the tender process, in November 2005 the VEC successfully conducted elections for 54 councils.

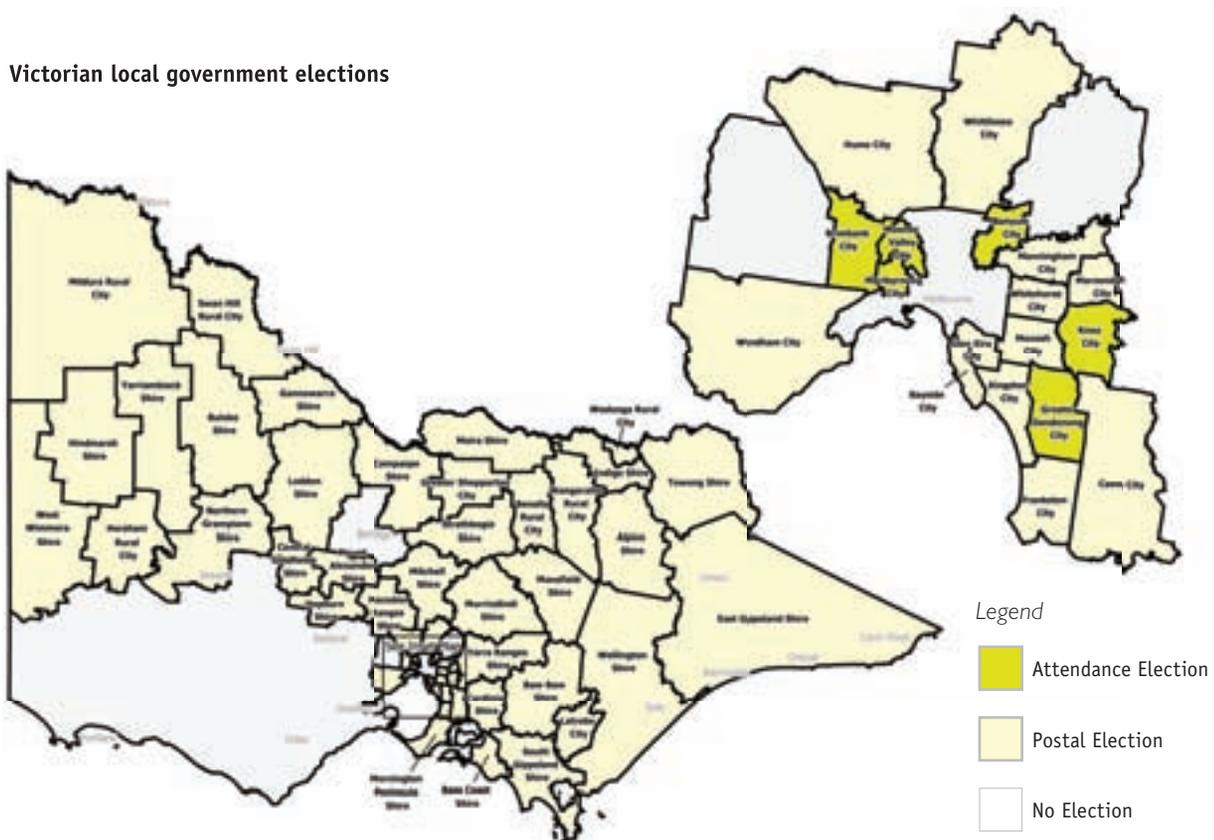
Figure 2 – Elections conducted in November 2005

Council	Enrolled Voters	Candidates	Vacancies	Voting Method	Counting Method
Alpine Shire Council	11,409	14	7	Postal	Proportional representation
Banyule City Council	90,223	39	7	Attendance	Preferential
Bass Coast Shire Council	37,185	29	7	Postal	Preferential
Baw Baw Shire Council	28,966	21	9	Postal	Preferential
Bayside City Council	67,506	35	9	Postal	Preferential
Benalla Rural City Council	11,106	15	7	Postal	Preferential
Brimbank City Council	116,393	50	11	Attendance	Proportional
Buloke Shire Council	6,398	13	9	Postal	Proportional
Campaspe Shire Council	27,998	15	7	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Cardinia Shire Council	39,538	23	7	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Casey City Council	137,859	44	11	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Central Goldfields Shire Council	10,996	8	7	Postal	Preferential/proportional
East Gippsland Shire Council	36,792	18	8	Postal	Proportional
Frankston City Council	85,816	31	9	Postal	Proportional
Gannawarra Shire Council	9,203	8	7	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Glen Eira City Council	95,178	61	9	Postal	Proportional
Greater Dandenong City Council	89,983	47	11	Attendance	Preferential
Greater Shepparton City Council	40,271	18	7	Postal	Proportional
Hepburn Shire Council	13,759	19	5	Postal	Preferential
Hindmarsh Shire Council	5,201	10	6	Postal	Proportional
Horsham Rural City Council	14,594	9	7	Postal	Proportional
Hume City Council	99,120	40	9	Postal	Proportional
Indigo Shire Council	11,816	7	7	Postal/Uncontested	Proportional
Kingston City Council	405,498	50	7	Postal	Preferential
Knox City Council	107,546	44	9	Attendance	Preferential
Latrobe City Council	51,309	18	9	Postal	Preferential
Loddon Shire Council	7,969	7	5	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	29,955	23	9	Postal	Proportional
Manningham City Council	85,549	24	8	Postal	Proportional
Mansfield Shire Council	9,333	13	5	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Maribyrnong City Council	48,420	40	7	Attendance	Preferential
Maroondah City Council	75,910	31	7	Postal	Preferential
Mitchell Shire Council	23,040	17	9	Postal	Proportional
Mildura Rural City Council	36,050	15	9	Postal	Proportional
Moira Shire Council	21,901	16	9	Postal	Proportional
Monash City Council	119,466	46	11	Postal	Proportional
Moonee Valley City Council	82,580	27	7	Attendance	Preferential
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	135,235	32	11	Postal	Preferential
Mount Alexander Shire Council	14,811	28	7	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Murrindindi Shire Council	13,533	10	6	Postal	Preferential
Northern Grampians Shire Council	10,787	14	9	Postal	Proportional
South Gippsland Shire Council	26,167	19	9	Postal	Proportional

Council	Enrolled Voters	Candidates	Vacancies	Voting Method	Counting Method
Strathbogrie Shire Council	8,890	10	7	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Swan Hill Rural City Council	14,544	12	7	Postal	Preferential/Proportional
Towong Shire Council	5,435	8	5	Postal	Proportional
Wangaratta Rural City Council	20,95	17	7	Postal	Proportional
Wellington Shire Council	41,388	14	9	Postal	Proportional
West Wimmera Shire Council	4,113	5	5	Postal/Uncontested	Proportional
Whitehorse City Council	111,722	42	10	Postal	Proportional
Whittlesea City Council	88,269	22	9	Postal	Proportional
Wodonga City Council	24,477	15	7	Postal	Proportional
Wyndham City Council	75,362	24	9	Postal	Proportional
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	102,806	37	9	Postal	Preferential
Yarriambiack Shire Council	6,731	9	7	Postal	Proportional
	2,596,139	1263	427		

*includes voters who are enrolled in uncontested wards

Victorian local government elections



The conduct of the 54 local government elections followed a legislative timeline. The table below outlines the key election dates:

Figure 3 - Key election dates

	Postal Elections	Attendance Elections
Exhibition roll date	Thursday, 18 August	Thursday, 18 August
Public inspection of exhibition roll	Friday, 23 September – Friday, 30 September	Friday, 23 September – Friday, 30 September
Entitlement date	Friday, 30 September	Friday, 30 September
Certification of voters' roll	Thursday, 20 October	Friday, 21 October
Opening of nominations	Thursday, 20 October	Friday, 21 October
Close of nominations	Tuesday, 25 October (4.00 pm)	Wednesday, 26 October (4.00 pm)
Last day for lodgement of candidate statements and photos	Wednesday, 26 October (4.00 pm)	
Opening of postal voting (attendance)		Thursday, 27 October
First day for registration of how-to-vote cards (attendance)		Thursday, 27 October
Opening of early voting (attendance)		Thursday, 27 October
Last day for lodgement of indication of preferences	Friday, 28 October (4.00 pm)	
Dispatch of ballot packs	Tuesday, 8 November – Thursday, 10 November	
Last day for registration of how-to-vote cards (attendance)		Friday, 18 November (12.00 noon)
Close of postal voting (attendance)		Thursday, 24 November (12.00 noon)
Close of early voting (attendance)		Friday, 25 November
Last day of voting (postal)	Friday, 25 November (6.00 pm)	
Election day	Saturday, 26 November	Saturday, 26 November (8.00 am – 6.00 pm)
Declaration of result (general date)	Sunday, 27 November	Sunday, 27 November

Services to candidates

A total of 1,263 nominations were received for the 427 vacancies in the November 2005 elections. Especially large fields of candidates contested the elections for the Glen Eira City Council (61), Brimbank City Council (50), and Kingston City Council (50).

During an election, the VEC's Returning Officers are the first point of contact for candidates.

Each candidate was provided with an information kit containing:

- a candidate handbook;
- a nomination form;
- a scrutineer handbook;
- a form for appointment and declaration of scrutineer;
- a form for submitting candidate's statement (postal elections);
- a sample candidate statement and indication of preferences (postal elections);
- an application form for registration of a how-to-vote card (attendance elections);
- an election campaign donation return form;
- information on preferential and proportional representation counting systems;
- key election dates;
- a map of the municipality; and
- the Returning Officer's contact details.

The Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2005 require the VEC to place candidate statements on a website maintained by the VEC. Some 1,016 candidate statements were submitted and available on the VEC website. In addition, the same councils placed audio versions of the candidate statements on the website for voters with a print disability. (For more details see p41 the Chapter on *Community Understanding and Participation*).

Information sessions for candidates

The VEC provided a short overview of the electoral process for prospective councillors during sessions conducted by the Municipal Association of Victoria. A total of 32 sessions were conducted in August and September 2005.

The VEC also conducted 64 sessions across the 54 municipalities for prospective candidates, specifically on the election process. These were conducted by the appointed Returning Officers for each election, and were held prior to the opening of nominations, between Tuesday, 18 October, and Thursday, 20 October.

In addition, the VEC conducted five information sessions for prospective local government candidates on proportional representation. These were conducted between 20 and 24 October.

Services to voters

The VEC provided a range of election services to voters eligible to vote at the 2005 local government elections. A total of 2,596,139 voters were enrolled for a local government election at the close of rolls.

To help voters participate in the elections:

- the VEC sent ballot papers to over 1.9 million voters to enable them to vote in postal elections;
- 134 voting centres were established on election day for the six attendance elections;
- early voting and postal voting was available for all attendance elections;
- voting facilities were available at all postal election offices for voters who required replacement ballot material;
- municipality-wide electoral rolls were available at voting centres, removing the requirement that electors vote at a voting centre in their ward;

- voters were able to call the Returning Officer or the VEC's hotline if they had any enquiries about the elections, including interpreter numbers and a TTY number;
- dedicated web pages were listed on the VEC's website for each council election; and
- staff at Victorian Vision Australia centres were available to provide voters with equipment to assist in reading voter information and completing ballot papers.

Complaints and appeals

The VEC received 215 written complaints relating to the November 2005 local government elections.

The majority of these complaints related to the behaviour of candidates. Most suggested that candidates had breached provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989* by distributing election material that was misleading, defamatory or unauthorised. A total of 101 of the 215 complaints which alleged a breach of the Act demonstrated sufficient substance to be referred to Local Government Victoria, the body which has responsibility for the administration of the Act. The remaining 114 complaints were considered by the VEC and responded to directly.

Following the elections, 10 applications were lodged with the Municipal Electoral Tribunal (MET). The MET is established under the *Local Government Act 1989* to consider disputes arising from local government elections. Applications are made to the Magistrates Court. Applications lodged with the MET in 2005, and matters finalised from the previous reporting period, are summarised in Appendix 5.

Compulsory voting

Councils were able to contract the services of the VEC to enforce compulsory voting. The VEC standardised a set of acceptable excuses across all councils that were in addition to those prescribed in legislation.

The service included the following stages:

1. An Apparent Failure to Vote Notice with a request for an explanation for failing to vote was sent to each voter who appeared to have failed to vote. No penalties were collected against this notice.
2. An Infringement Notice was sent to each voter who did not respond to the initial Apparent Failure to Vote Notice, or who did not provide a valid excuse for failing to vote. The Notice included the request for the payment of the penalty set at \$52.40.
3. A Courtesy Letter was sent to each voter who did not reply to the Stage 2 process, or who did not provide a valid excuse for failing to vote. The Courtesy Letter stage is currently administered under Schedule 7 of the *Magistrates Court Act 1989*. The penalty for this stage includes an additional \$18.85 in costs, taking the total penalty to \$71.25.

Figure 4 – Compulsory voting

Compulsory Voting Enforcement for Local Government Elections November 2005	
Total Electors Enrolled(In Contested Wards)	2,405,941
Total Electors who voted	1,808,968
Electors who did not vote	596,973
Failure to Vote Notices sent	236,082
Penalties paid *	\$2,804,291

* as at 30 June 2005

Local government by-elections and countbacks

The VEC conducted two local government by-elections and two countbacks in 2005-06. By-elections occur when an elected councillor resigns or dies before the end of their term for a single-vacancy election. A countback is conducted where a vacancy arises in a multi-member municipality or ward which used proportional representation for counting.

Figure 5 – Local government by-elections and countbacks

Election	Type	Election Day	No. of Voters
Warrnambool City	Countback	27 July 2005	N/a
Hepburn Shire – Cameron Ward	By-election	4 March 2006	2649
Corangamite Shire – Central Ward	By-election	18 February 2006	5730
Northern Grampians	Countback	27 January 2006	N/a

Local government elections future directions

The amendments to the *Local Government Act 1989* will mean that all 79 local government elections will be conducted simultaneously in November 2008. The task of conducting all 79 elections simultaneously will be a significant challenge.

At the conclusion of the financial year, a report on the conduct of the 54 local government elections was completed and will be provided to the Minister for Local Government in July 2006. The report includes suggestions for legislative change to be considered in conjunction with the Municipal Association of Victoria, and Local Government Victoria.

Statutory, commercial and community election services

Independent election services

The VEC is an independent provider of election services with a recognised reputation. Its experience in conducting State and local government elections enables the VEC to provide expert, independent election services to commercial and community organisations.

A range of legislation also requires the VEC to conduct specific statutory elections and polls. This includes elections for the boards of management of community health centres, the Victorian Institute of Teaching, liquor licensing and agriculture polls.

The VEC conducts elections and polls for organisations including superannuation funds, credit unions and universities. The VEC conducts these elections and polls following consideration of their public interest, the size and timing of the election and the nature of the organisation. These elections and polls are conducted on a full cost recovery basis.

Statutory elections and polls

Figure 6 – Statutory elections conducted

Statutory Elections Conducted	2004-05	2005-06
Liquor Licensing Polls	1	0
Community Health Centres	7*	1
Industry Development Polls	1	0
Victorian Institute of Teaching	0	1
Total Statutory Elections	9	2

*Includes countbacks - a countback occurs where a board member of a community health centre either resigns or dies. The votes of the vacating board member are transferred to unelected members to fill the vacancy.

Community health centre elections

The *Health Services (Amendments) Act 2000* requires the VEC to conduct elections for elected positions on the boards of community health centres (previously all board members had been appointed). In accordance with Regulation 28 of the Health Services (Community Health Centre Elections) Regulations 2001, the Department of Human Services engaged the VEC to conduct the countback for the Bass Coast Community Health Centre, on 17 December 2005.

Victorian Institute of Teaching Council elections

The VEC was required to conduct the Victorian Institute of Teaching Council Elections on 15 September 2005. The election was conducted by post, with 16,417 votes representing a 17.17% participation rate.

Non-statutory commercial and community elections

The VEC conducted four non-statutory commercial and community elections in 2005-06. There is no obligation upon the VEC to conduct these elections, and the conduct of the elections is based on a set of criteria including the number of voters, the existence of formal election rules, and the timing of the election.

Figure 7 – Non- statutory commercial and community elections

	Poll Date	Type	Voters	Participation
Police Association Credit Cooperative	30 Sept 2005	Postal	57,780	8911 (15.42%)
Victorian Public Service Agreement 2006	9 March 2006	Postal	28,684	10,818 (37.71%)
Victorian Canine Association	31 March 2006	Postal	9,362	901 (9.62%)
La Trobe University Union Board	4 May 2006	Attend -ance	20,000	651 (3.25%)

Services to interstate and overseas commissions

The VEC provided early voting and pre-poll services for the following interstate electoral Commissions:

Commission	Election Type	Date	Votes Issued
QLD Electoral Commission	Chatsworth & Redcliffe District By-elections	20 Aug 2005	*
NZ Chief Electoral Office	NZ General Election	17 Sep 2005	533
State Electoral Office NSW	Macquarie Fields, Maroubra & Marrickville District By-elections	17 Sep 2005	2
NT Electoral Commission	Alice Springs Town Council By-election	24 Sep 2005	*
State Electoral Office NSW	Pittwater District By-election	26 Nov 2005	4
WA Electoral Commission	Victoria Park District By-election	11 Mar 2006	5
State Electoral Office SA	SA State Election	18 Mar 2006	348
Tasmanian Electoral Commission	Tasmanian House of Assembly Elections	18 Mar 2006	2
QLD Electoral Commission	Gaven District By-election	1 Apr 2006	*
Tasmanian Electoral Commission	Tasmanian Legislative Council Elections Divisions	6 May 2006	^

* Postal vote applications only

^ No votes issued

Timely and accurate enrolment and roll services

Facilitate the enrolment of eligible Victorians and maintain an up-to-date register of electors.

Corporate objective: Ensure the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.

Our democratic system assumes that eligible citizens value their right to vote and take seriously their legal responsibility to enrol and update their electoral enrolment. Ideally, this would mean that the electoral enrolment register would contain up-to-date enrolment records of all eligible electors at any point in time.

In reality, the enrolment register is never complete or fully up-to-date. There is always a lag between people turning 18 and enrolling, and between voters changing their address and notifying the VEC. Regrettably, some people will never enrol to vote.

The enrolment register requires continuous updating so that accurate electoral products can be produced for parliamentary or local government elections and by-elections. In addition, there are statutory obligations to provide roll products to the Juries Commission, registered political parties and members of Parliament. Roll and mapping products are also utilised in the analysis of local government electoral representation reviews.

The VEC is engaged in a number of activities to keep the enrolment register as current as possible.

Joint roll arrangement

Since 1953, the Commonwealth and Victoria have co-operated in a joint approach to the management of electoral information. This joint approach is made possible through two related instruments known as the Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure and the Service Level Agreement (Agreement).

The Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure enables the AEC and the VEC to exchange enrolment information for the purpose of maintaining and updating the electoral rolls. This enrolment information results from direct enrolment of electors and response to enrolment initiatives by the AEC and the VEC and the exchange of information ensures consistency between the Federal and State electoral rolls. The procedure also enables a single elector to complete a single enrolment form to enrol to vote in Federal, State and local government elections.

The Service Level Agreement outlines the means by which enrolment information will be collected from electors.

A memorandum of understanding for the 2006-07 financial year is currently being negotiated. It is proposed that the memorandum will include provision for the suspension of AEC continuous roll update (CRU) activities in the period prior to the State election, as well as details of the arrangements for close of roll for the 2006 State election.

Figure 8 – VEC and AEC contributions to the Victorian enrolment register

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
From VEC initiatives	117,611	112,566	128,833
VEC as a % of total	25.7%	20.8%	29.80%
From AEC initiatives	339,997	429,476	301,580
AEC as a % of total	74.3%	79.2%	70.2%
Total changes	457,608	542,033	430,413

The VEC exceeded the target of a 25% contribution to the roll.

Strategy: At a national level, establish a framework for evaluating the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.

The issue of providing accurate measures of enrolment participation and completeness has been addressed in conjunction with Commonwealth and interstate Commissions.

A new methodology was presented at the December 2005 meeting of the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA). While there are a number of assumptions underpinning the model, the model has been accepted by the ECA as an appropriate means of measuring enrolment participation rates.

Figure 9 - Participation rate - percentage of estimated eligible population that are enrolled

Date	Vic	Aust
2005-06 Second quarter*	94.42%	92.88%
2004-05	94.53%	92.51%
2003-04	94.04%	92.63%

*Only second quarter data available at time of print

Based on the new methodology, Victoria is above the national average.



Scott Berger – pictured with enrolment initiatives including the VEC birthday card for 17 year olds.

“This is the second time we’ve prepared rolls for such a large number of local government elections at the same time, but this year we had an additional update process to perform”.

As Scott Berger, Administration & Information Services Officer, explains “The process for preparing voters’ rolls for local government elections is always complex, but for these elections there was an additional update process, as well as less time to complete the entire process.”

The preparation of the voters’ roll for local government elections is crucial to ensure that all eligible electors have an opportunity to participate. Preparing the rolls involves merging data from each council’s property database with data from the Victorian register of electors.

“Data matching is automated as much as possible, but still involves a lot of manual checking for both VEC and council staff. To minimise the volume of work at the last minute for these elections, we worked through a preliminary process with councils.”

New legislation meant that the VEC had to process elector changes between the day the roll was on public display, and the last day people had to enrol.

“The benefit of the new legislative change was that voters had more time to update their enrolment details, but as a result the VEC, with councils, had to make sure all those updates were processed in time for the final roll preparation. This required new software and procedures for both the councils and the VEC.”

The very tight timeline for the update process meant that in the last fortnight, VEC staff worked seven days a week and the computer systems ran 24/7 to ensure that the final rolls were as complete and accurate as possible.

Strategy: Develop and implement strategies to validate, improve and report on the accuracy of VEC enrolment processing activities, and the accuracy of information held on the Victorian register of electors.

Roll comparisons with the Australian Electoral Commission

Prior to the November 2005 round of local government elections, the VEC conducted a 'compare rolls' process with the Australian Electoral Commission. The compare roll process identified electors on the VEC roll who were not on the AEC's roll, and vice versa for a total difference of 1,891.

Matches and discrepancies were investigated, including the use of external data such as prisoner data files and Births, Deaths and Marriages data. Those that needed to be updated on the AEC roll were forwarded to the AEC for action.

Another 'compare rolls' process will be run in late July and early August, prior to the 2006 State election. This will allow sufficient time to investigate any discrepancies before the mail-out to all State electors commencing on 2 October 2006.

Use of spatial data to improve the accuracy of the electoral register

The VEC investigated options to use spatial data to assist in maintaining the electoral register and improve accuracy. The process involves geocoding an address to assign a geographic reference, such as longitude and latitude, which indicates its physical location in Victoria.

Preparing the roll for the Amici Liquor Licensing Poll (to be conducted in July 2006), provided an opportunity to trial the use of geocoding and spatial queries in roll preparation. A liquor licensing poll occurs when an application for a liquor licence is received in a dry neighbourhood.

The preparation for the roll in these cases involves identifying resident addresses that are within approximately 500 metres of the applicant's premises, and which are also in the dry zone. For the trial, a roll was created in the usual way – identifying the streets and Census Collection Districts in the area and extracting those addresses from the register to form a roll. In addition, a new method was tested, where all elector address' within the dry area were given a geocoded point. Those points within 500 metres of the applicant were then selected and those addresses were used to form a second roll. When the two rolls were compared there was no difference.

The trial was judged a great success as:

- the new method of preparing the roll took less time, was more accurate and less complicated than the method previously used;
- it showed that address information on the register could be accurately coded to point data using spatial technology;
- it proved that geocoding addresses was an effective means of validating data held on the register; and
- it justified continuing the project to investigate the feasibility of geocoding all addresses on the enrolment register.

The success of the trial led to a decision to adopt this method for preparing all future rolls for special polls and justified further investigation in geocoding the whole address register. An analysis is currently being undertaken to determine what would be required to geocode all address information on the electoral register, the best method to use, and the costs and likely resources required to process the manual geocoding element.

Strategy: Continue to develop and implement enrolment strategies that encourage and assist eligible Victorians to enrol and maintain their enrolment.

The VEC has a range of strategic programs to help Victorians enrol or update their enrolment details and ensure that the enrolment register is accurate at any point in time. The VEC utilises a Continuous Roll Update (CRU) program, where Victorians are contacted directly via a mail-out when they are required to enrol or update their enrolment, as well as making enrolment forms available in key locations and online.

The VEC's CRU program comprised the following initiatives:

Figure 10: VEC's CRU Program

VEC ENROLMENTS	Description	YTD-05/06	% of VEC Enrolments	% of YTD Enrolments
CRU Mail-out				
Rental Bond	Tenants who have recently lodged tenancy bonds	11,176	8.8%	2.6%
TRU Energy	New connections	5,374	4.2%	1.3%
VCAA	All year 11 and 12 students turning 17 who are registered to do VCE	19,261	15.2%	4.5%
VicRoads	New licence holders and changes of address on licence and registration	51,939	41.0%	12.1%
VTAC	Students applying to a tertiary education institution	3,353	2.6%	0.8%
Total		91,103	71.80%	21.30%
CRU Non Mail-out				
2002 Redivision Mail-out*	Completed enrolment applications from the mail-out to advise electors of the electorates where they were enrolled to vote at the 2002 State election	215	0.2%	0.1%
Joint AEC/VEC Enrolment Form	Enrolment applications received on forms available at post offices	4,560	3.6%	1.1%
Liquor Licensing Victoria	Enrolment applications received on the joint identity card and electoral enrolment form	1,273	1.0%	0.3%
Supermarkets	Enrolment applications received on forms available at Coles and Bi-Lo supermarkets	1,679	1.3%	0.4%
VEC General (G)	Enrolment applications received from forms available from the VEC	5,982	4.7%	1.4%
VEC Internet	Enrolment applications received from forms available from the VEC internet site	5,070	4.0%	1.2%
VEC Municipal - (M)	Enrolment applications available from municipal offices	16,951	13.4%	4.0%
Total		35,730	28.20%	8.50%
Total VEC		126,833	100.00%	29.80%
Target				25%
AEC ENROLMENTS				
All		301,580		70.2%
Total AEC		301,580		
TOTAL ENROLMENT		428,413		100%

VTAC - Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

VCAA - Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority

The following table is a summary of the response rates for each program. The table highlights the success of the VEC birthday initiative, where a birthday card is sent from the Electoral Commissioner to 17 year-old Victorians encouraging them to provisionally enrol.

Figure 11: Enrolments received from each mailout

CRU Activity	Mail-out				Enrolments Received		
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Total mail-out	Total received	Percentage received
VicRoads (New licence holders and change of address)	122,194	34,352	38,557	30,351	225,454	51,939	23.0%
Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre - VTAC	0	7,894	4,336	0	12,230	3,353	27.4%
Rental Bond	24,730	0	0	23,745	48,475	11,176	23.1%
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority – VCAA (Birthday card)	14,842	14,796	12,060	14,363	56,061	19,261	34.3%
TRU Energy	8,870	0	6,387	4,035	19,292	5,374	27.9%
TOTAL	170,637	57,042	61,340	72,494	361,512	91,103	

* In August and September 2002 the VEC sent an enrolment confirmation card to each of Victoria's 3.2 million voters.

Section 27 of the *Electoral Act 2002* requires the VEC to regularly review the register of electors and to ensure that the details of electors are accurate. This includes amendments that are not instigated by the electors themselves.

The VEC also removes electors from the register in certain circumstances. The VEC receives information from the AEC, the Office of Births, Death and Marriages, Corrections Victoria and other sources.

An enrolment objection is a notice that requires a person to confirm that the address where they are enrolled is their principal place of residence, or to confirm that they are entitled to be enrolled. In Victoria, notices of objection are issued regularly by the AEC on behalf of the VEC, in accordance with the provisions of the *Electoral Act 2002* and the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Figure 12: A summary of changes to the Victorian Electoral register

Enrolment Transaction Summary	
Source	
VEC Transactions	
Enrolment Transactions collected by the VEC and processed by the AEC	
CRU	
Mailout (Enrolments received)	
Transaction type	
Bond	11,176
TRU Energy	5,374
VCAA	19,261
VicRoads	51,939
VTAC	3,353
Sub total	91,103
Non-Mailout (Enrolments received)	
Transaction type	
VEC General - (G)	5,982
Joint AEC/VEC Enrolment Form (Green)	4,560
Liquor Licencing Victoria	1,273
Re-Division Mailout	215
VEC Internet	5,070
VEC Municipal - (M)	16,951
Supermarkets	1,679
Sub total	35,730
Enrolment advice	
Transaction type	
BreastScreen Victoria Inc RTS Mail	355
MP's RTS Mail	812
Youth Booklet RTS Mail	14
State elections RTS Mail	0
State election elector information reports	0
Local Government elections RTS Mail	43,767
Local Government elector information reports	24,000
Non-Voter follow-up RTS mail	0
Sub total	68,948
Special Category Applications	
Transaction type	
GPV Applications	438
Overseas Elector Applications	199
Itinerant Elector Applications	28
Silent Elector Applications	243
Sub total	908
Elector Detail Changes (State & Muni)	1,843
Combined sub total	198,532
Total	1,016,080

Enrolment Transaction Summary	
Source	
AEC Import	
"AEC Transactions"	
Transaction type	
Additions	131,663
Changes	349,275
Deletions	144,450
Non Elector Change (Nectrans)	92,760
Sub total	718,148
Exceptions Generated	98,758
Possible duplicates sent to the AEC	642
Sub total	817,548

Strategy: Assess and process enrolment information and identify and implement opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of enrolment information processing and the enrolment register.

Minimise duplication between VEC and AEC CRU programs

To reduce the possibility of duplication between the VEC and AEC, the VEC implemented changes to its CRU software in February 2006. Now the VEC uses data from the AEC to identify all addresses that have been targeted by the AEC as part of its own CRU programs. This reduces the chance of an elector receiving an enrolment form from both the VEC and AEC.

In addition, the VEC also provides the AEC with data that contains details of the potential electors the VEC targets, information on whether an application has been received from an elector targeted and whether follow-up action has been instigated. This enables the AEC to delete records from their mail-out activities that the VEC target, and to instigate targeted field work for the addresses where people did not respond to a VEC CRU mail-out.

Since the new process has been in place, 46,533 out of 193,428 records (or 24.05%) have been deleted from the VEC mail-out activities.

Improved processing of VEC's CRU activities

Enhancements to the CRU program introduced in February included new functionality that allows enrolment forms to be electronically scanned. This has reduced the resources required for processing returns. A total of 41,320 responses from all VEC enrolment-related mail-outs were processed through the enrolment register during the second quarter of 2005-06, an increase on the 40,887 that were processed during the first quarter.

Further enhancements scheduled will enable further automation of the process, so that the resources required for processing CRU responses will be reduced considerably.

Strategy: Monitor the progress of the implementation of Commonwealth legislation that provides for proof of identity and address at point of enrolment and negotiate strategies relating to changes to the joint electoral enrolment procedure between the State and the Commonwealth.

In June 2006, the Commonwealth Government passed legislation regarding proof of identity provisions. Once enacted, people completing a claim for enrolment for voting at Federal elections will be required to:

- provide their driver's licence number as proof of identity; or
- if they don't have a driver's licence, have the claim witnessed by a prescribed officer who has sighted prescribed forms; or
- if they don't have the prescribed forms, have the claim witnessed by two people who are on the roll, have a driver's licence and can testify that they have known the person for at least one month (the two people witnessing the form must provide their driver's licence details).

The new legislation is planned to take effect after the State election in November. The Electoral Commissioner has written to the Attorney-General advising him of the amendments.

Future directions

Significant work will be required to assist electors to update their enrolment details for the State election. This will be a major task, as all electors in the State will receive a mail-out to confirm if their details are correct. This will be complemented by a large-scale television, radio and press campaign in the lead up to the State election, encouraging Victorians to enrol and update their details.

There will be less time available for producing the state roll, as the close of rolls now moves from three days to seven days after the issue of the writ. Discussions have occurred with the AEC to ensure update processes are able to meet the high demand during this period, and the VEC has significant contingencies in place.

Corporate Objective: Deliver high quality enrolment information products, mapping products and services to stakeholders.

Strategy: Continue to provide high quality enrolment information products, mapping products and services to stakeholders. Identify and implement opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of processes.

Electoral enrolment products

Rolls for local government elections

Where a council engages the VEC to conduct an election, the voters roll is prepared on behalf of the council by the VEC. The production of each roll is a complex process that requires the VEC to merge data from the State register of electors with data provided by the council (referred to as the Chief Executive Officer's list). The information contained on the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO's) list relates principally to people eligible to vote because they own property in the municipality but reside elsewhere; and typically comprises about 15% of the total roll for a council. Merging these data to form a roll for an election is made more difficult because data is provided in a number of different formats.

In 2005-06 voters rolls were produced for the 54 local government elections conducted by the VEC. Roll preparation involves a preliminary process, which starts six months before election day. The preliminary process aims to identify and provide feedback to councils about any issues with data which will slow down final processing or cause problems with the completeness or accuracy of the final voters rolls. The council roll data is merged with State roll data; deceased persons and duplicates are identified and removed and addresses standardised for mailing ballot papers and voter cards. The production of the 54 rolls involved an additional update process (see case study on page 27). In 2005, all rolls were ready for certification by councils' Chief Executive Officers by late October.

Members of Parliament and registered political parties

The *Electoral Act 2002* requires the VEC to provide each Member of Parliament (MP) with the details of additions and deletions to the register of electors for that Member's electorate. This information is provided monthly (except December, during the holiday period and September, during council roll production) in the form of a complete electorate roll with changes since the last update clearly identified.

Registered political parties are entitled to receive enrolment information from the VEC.

The three parliamentary political parties also receive an electronic copy of the register of electors every month, except December and September.

Juries Commissioner

The VEC provides the Juries Commissioner with rolls containing the names and addresses of electors randomly selected from the register of electors. From these rolls, jury lists are prepared to select people for jury duty. Rolls are provided to the Juries Commission as required.

The VEC is also required to automatically record an exemption for each person selected for jury duty exempting them from being randomly selected again for further jury service for a specified, but variable, period. Exemption information is supplied by the Juries Commission and recorded by the VEC against the elector's record on the register of electors.

The following table details the number of roll products made available through the *Electoral Act* and *Juries Act*.

Figure 13 – Roll products made available

Details	Quantity
Extracts for State Revenue Office	7
Dept Human Services, Adoption and Family Records Service	2
Number of MP Lists	1452
RPP Rolls	51
Jury Lists	44
BreastScreen Extracts	4

Mapping products and services

The VEC is responsible for producing local government boundary maps for electoral representation reviews, and maps of State electoral boundaries for the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

The production of any map is a complex process that involves combining and formatting a variety of data sources. The final maps produced are visual presentations of a multitude of pieces of data. The VEC receives these data, known as spatial data, about roads, parks, housing developments and property data, and builds a comprehensive map of the designated area that is easily understood for the general public.

The VEC prepares hard copy maps for a number of internal and external purposes.

The following maps were prepared for the 2005 local government elections:

- maps for standard printed products – advertisements, brochures, candidate statements, voter cards and candidate kits;
- general purpose maps – statewide maps showing postal and attendance elections, statewide maps showing municipalities having an election;
- website maps – metropolitan and regional versions showing municipalities having elections;
- planning maps – voting centres by municipality, metropolitan and regional server location map; and
- other – maps of particular boundary areas for Returning Officer, media briefing session map, wall maps for Returning Officers' offices.

Future directions

In addition to the production of the voters roll for the State election, the VEC will also produce the roll for candidates. For ease of use for candidates, this roll will be made available on CD-Rom.

The use of the mapping skills and technology available to the VEC will be utilised in a new voting centre look-up facility for electors. The look-up facility, which will be accessible on the VEC website, will return details of the five voting centres closest to the elector, including a detailed map indicating the centres.

Corporate Objective: Maximise public confidence in the security of personal information held by the VEC.

Strategy: Ensure that the privacy of personal information held by the VEC is protected and that disclosures of enrolment information meet legislative requirements.

The register of electors contains personal enrolment information about the vast majority of Victorians, including name, address, date-of-birth and gender information. The confidence of voters in the privacy and integrity of the register of electors is essential in order for voters to continue to register and update their personal details with the VEC, as well as for public confidence in the electoral system generally. Protecting the privacy of voters' personal enrolment information is therefore of fundamental importance to the VEC.

Mandatory provision of enrolment information

The *Electoral Act 2002* stipulates that specified enrolment information must be made available to the individuals and organisations, as follows:

- The list of Victorian electors (names and addresses only) must be made available for public inspection at the office of the VEC. Information can only be searched by name.
- The latest print of any electoral roll produced for an election (which contains name and address details only) must be made available for public inspection free-of-charge at locations and during times determined by the VEC.
- Enrolment information must be provided to registered political parties, Members of Parliament and election candidates under section 33 of the *Electoral Act 2002*. This information must only be used for election-related purposes. Members of Parliament may also use this information to exercise their functions on behalf of their constituents. Severe penalties apply if this information is misused.
- Enrolment information must be provided to the Juries Commission to enable people to be called up for jury duty under section 19 of the *Juries Act 2000*.
- Enrolment information must be provided to municipal councils for elections under section 21 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Discretionary provision of enrolment information

In exceptional circumstances, the VEC has the discretion, under section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, to release enrolment information to other individuals or organisations. Before releasing any enrolment information, the VEC must consult with the Victorian Privacy Commissioner and determine that the public interest in providing the requested information outweighs the public interest relating to protecting the privacy of that personal information. Strict conditions are applied if information is provided. If these conditions are not met and enrolment information is misused, then penalties apply.

Reporting requirements

Section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002* provides that the VEC must, on receipt of a request for electoral enrolment information under the section, make a finding as to whether or not the public interest in providing the requested information outweighs the public interest in protecting the privacy of personal information in the particular circumstances.

Section 35 of the *Electoral Act 2002* provides that the VEC must report annually to Parliament on the provision of any information under section 34 and on any finding made under that section during the reporting period.

During the 2005-06 reporting period, the VEC considered 17 requests made under section 34. Of those 17 requests, the VEC approved eight during the period. They are listed below.

Figure 14 – Requests for information approved during the current reporting period

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Individual request for relatives' details	Sought written confirmation of enrolment address for self and parents in order to settle a legal matter overseas.	Request approved on the basis of the public interest in providing confirmation.
State Revenue Office	Requested approval to load electronic electoral roll data into its Privacy Register Application.	Request approved on the basis of greater privacy protections through the use of the Application.
Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help (VANISH)	VANISH is a Department of Human Services funded organisation created to provide search assistance and support to adopted people. Requested enrolment information to undertake accurate searches in cases where the identity of a birth relative cannot be confirmed from public records. Done with a view to contacting the person in order to seek consent to release their enrolment information to an adopted person.	Request approved on 7 March 2006, on the basis that provision of this information would minimise the potential for privacy breaches and significant and unnecessary emotional trauma.
Victoria Police: Ethical Standards Department (ESD); Records Services Division (RSD); Licensing Services Branch (LSB); State Intelligence Division (SID); Major Fraud Investigation Service Division (MFISD)	Victoria Police requested a copy of the full register of electors in order to assist ESD, RSO, LSB, SID and MFID to perform its law enforcement functions by assisting it to verify or locate a person.	The request was approved in the last reporting period but had not been implemented pending an Online Electoral Enrolment Information look-up facility being established under a protocol agreed between Victorian Police and the VEC. The on-line look-up facility was put into operation in March 2006.
Ad-hoc Victoria Police requests	The VEC received four individual requests from Victoria Police during the reporting period. They were based on various operational needs.	Three of these requests were approved on the basis that law enforcement requirements justified the release of personal information in the circumstances. One request was approved on the public interest basis of providing next of kin information.

The VEC refused seven requests during the period. These requests are listed below.

Figure 15 – Requests for information refused during the current reporting period

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Department of Justice Enforcement Management Unit	Requested enrolment information to assist in locating unpaid infringements.	Refused on 15 February 2006 on the basis that the amounts to be collected from individuals as a result of having access to the electoral roll would be relatively minor, and provision of enrolment information may have impact on the integrity of the electoral roll.
Department of Sustainability and Environment	Requested access to the Victorian electoral roll to conduct research into the value which the wider community places on non-consumptive uses of land.	Refused on 5 May 2006 on the basis that providing information for the policy research purposes does not sufficiently meet public interest requirements.
Individual requests	There were five requests from individuals. One was seeking information for family tracing purposes, one was for serving divorce papers; one was for information to assist in a family trust, one was to assist with a bankrupt estate, and one was to assist with duties as a Justice of the Peace.	These requests were refused because the details provided by the individuals did not meet the VEC's requirements. The requests were refused on 25 July 2005, 4 August 2005, 24 March 2006, 10 May 2006 and on 16 May 2006.

Two requests received by the VEC are still pending. These requests are listed below.

Figure 16 – Requests for information still pending

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Infertility Treatment Authority	Requested to assist in conducting searches on individuals involved in donor-assisted births.	A determination on this request is pending.
Women's Health, Dept. of Medicine, Monash University Alfred Hospital.	The Women's Health, Dept. of Medicine, Monash University Alfred Hospital requested on 1 May 2006 access to name, address, date of birth and gender information to assist in conducting a study into the health effects of testosterone therapy.	A determination on this request is pending.

Access to the electoral roll by Victoria Police

In 2003, the VEC received requests from branches and divisions within Victoria Police for the VEC to provide electoral enrolment information for criminal investigation purposes. Subsequently, the VEC sought the means by which the public interest in legitimate policing could be balanced with the public interest in privacy and confidence in the electoral system. The VEC suggested a possible way forward through the establishment of a remote on-line access to the enrolment register, with the VEC always controlling access, to allow authorised users to verify a person's details on a case-by-case basis.

After extensive discussions with police representatives, and taking into account the Privacy Commissioner's views, the VEC agreed to establish an on-line look-up facility which would meet most of the needs of Victoria Police, while ensuring that the privacy interests of Victorian electors are respected.

The VEC made a finding on 22 February 2005 to give effect to the requirements under s.34(1) of the *Electoral Act 2002*, and a protocol was developed in February 2005 to provide Victoria Police with limited and controlled on-line access to electoral enrolment information.

The protocol enabled access to a limited number of officers/employees in the following units of Victoria Police:

- Ethical Standards Department (a maximum of 20 individuals);
- Records Services Division (a maximum of 10 individuals);
- Licensing Services Branch (a maximum of 10 individuals);
- State Intelligence Division (a maximum of 70 individuals); and
- Major Fraud Investigation Service Division (a maximum of 20 individuals).

Access in each case was limited to specified uses and purposes.

The VEC developed a customised on-line application for the purpose of enabling Victoria Police to have access to the electoral roll for approved purposes, and the application was put into operation in March 2006.

The VEC will periodically monitor and audit transaction statistics, including usage patterns by individual authorised officers, to ensure that the use falls within the agreed and expected parameters. The VEC will also supply monthly (electronic) usage reports to nominated supervisors in the Victoria Police units which have access, so that they can carry out their own checks. In addition, an independent monitor will have unrestricted access on request to the records maintained by VEC and to Victoria Police records relevant to the justification of any use of the facility.

Provision of the on-line application to Victoria Police will largely remove the need for individual police to make ad-hoc requests for access to the electoral roll.

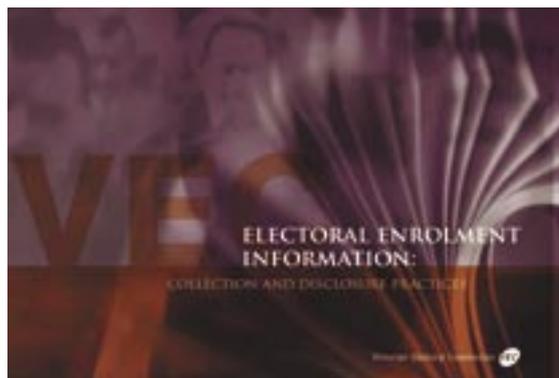
The VEC has provided, or now provides, enrolment information under section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, to the following organisations:

- Barwon Health;
- BreastScreen Victoria;
- Cancer Council Victoria;
- the State Revenue Office;
- the Victorian Department of Human Services, Adoptions Information Service and Adoption Information Services approved under the *Adoptions Act 1984* (Centacare, Uniting Care Connections and Anglicare Western);
- VANISH;
- Victoria Police (on an ad-hoc basis); and
- Victoria Police (following development of the on-line look-up facility).

Review of VEC and Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) collection and release of enrolment information

Enrolment information is collected from and about Victorian electors by both the VEC and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) under a joint roll arrangement. The information collected from Victorian electors forms the basis of both State and Commonwealth electoral rolls.

The VEC receives many requests from electors about what use is made of electoral roll information and there is some confusion around relevant Commonwealth and State legislation. To make clear to Victorian electors what happens to their enrolment information, the VEC in conjunction with the Victorian Privacy Commissioner engaged a consultant in October 2005 to examine and report on the collection, use and disclosure of Victorian enrolment information.



The Electoral Enrolment information booklet on collection and disclosure practices.

In January 2006 a report was produced that set out clearly and comprehensively how a Victorian elector's enrolment information is collected, used and disclosed, by both the VEC and the AEC, including exchanges between VEC and AEC.

The VEC has since published a booklet illustrating how Victorians' enrolment information is used and disclosed by the VEC and the AEC. This is in keeping with the major principle of disclosure under Victorian Privacy legislation, and will serve to make the process clear to all stakeholders.

The VEC has already made various alterations to existing VEC materials (such as enrolment forms) to more accurately reflect how enrolment information is used and disclosed.

Future directions

The VEC will remain committed to upholding the integrity of the electoral register in order to maximise public confidence and to encourage public enrolment, through assessing requests for electoral enrolment information in accordance with the legislative provisions. The VEC will continue to maintain a high privacy standard, and assess whether the ongoing provision of data is appropriate and justified by the recipients' continued compliance with agreed obligations.

Community understanding and participation

Engage and inform members of the community so that they are able to fully participate in the electoral process.

Facilitating democratic participation

A healthy democracy exists when eligible members of the community participate in the electoral system. Compulsory voting requires the VEC to provide services that enable all members of Victoria's diverse community to enrol and vote. The VEC has a responsibility to demonstrate the relevance of the democratic system to people's lives and their communities. As the electoral environment changes, the VEC must also provide specialised services to voters with special needs, and encourage those who choose not to exercise their democratic right to actively participate in the electoral system.

In particular, the November 2006 State election will usher in a vastly different electoral environment, with the biggest changes to the Legislative Council (Upper House) in its 150-year history. As a result of legislation passed in 2003, the system for electing members to the Upper House will change from preferential voting to proportional representation. In addition, the new Upper House will have 40 members (each elected for a four-year term) while Victoria will be divided into eight new electoral regions of five members each. Current rotating terms will expire.

Such changes to the electoral environment represent a challenge to the VEC. The VEC must communicate to voters how the new Upper House system will affect the way Victorians are represented, the way they vote and how votes are counted.

In conjunction with communicating the broader obligations and incentives to participate in the electoral system, the VEC also recognises that there may be barriers to engaging low voter participation groups.

Considerable resources and effort have been invested to consult with individuals and peak bodies to ensure that the electoral information provided achieves improved access to voting in Victoria. Research has also found that for particular groups, the provision of electoral information alone is not sufficient. The education strategy is an important component of increasing participation and engagement with the electoral system.

Corporate Objective: Maximize public understanding and participation at the 2006 State election and any by-elections.

Strategy: Develop and implement a coordinated communication strategy (advertising, public relations, on-line and telephone services) to provide information and engage the community about enrolment and voting to all Victorians, with a special emphasis on:

- providing information to the community about the new Legislative Council electoral system and changes to voting procedures;
- providing specialised information to those communities where voter participation is low; and
- providing more effective information about the location of voting centres.

An advertising agency was appointed by the VEC in March 2006 to update and extend the 2002 State election communication campaign for use in the November 2006 State election. The campaign objectives are to maximise enrolment, increase general public awareness of the changes to the Upper House, minimise informal voting and maximise voter participation at the election. Detailed planning and delivery of this campaign is underway, based on the "Every vote will shape Victoria" theme and illustrated by the use of claymation models for television and press advertising.

In addition to the comprehensive advertising campaign, the VEC is developing a number of targeted strategies to raise awareness of the State election within specific audiences. The VEC has also printed an information booklet on enrolling and voting in collaboration with the AEC. *Every vote will shape Victoria - A guide to enrolling and voting in Victoria* includes a tear-out enrolment form and will be made available through community information centres, Members of Parliament, Information Victoria and AEC Divisional Offices.

Communicating the Upper House changes

As part of the VEC's commitment to informing voters of the new Upper House, an information leaflet that explains the Upper House system, how to vote and how votes will be counted has been developed. This leaflet is available through community information centres, local councils, Members of Parliament and Information Victoria. The VEC's website has also promoted these changes and the Electoral Boundaries Commission was given its own website at www.ebc.vic.gov.au, which provides details about the Commission as well as past redivisions.

To encourage accurate understanding of the new Upper House, the VEC conducted a media briefing attended by journalists from *The Australian*, *The Age*, *Herald Sun* and AAP in April 2006. Public awareness of the changes was also raised through the VEC's display in the travelling exhibition organised by State Parliament: *Bills, Bells and Ballots – 150 years of Victoria's Parliament* and at the annual Victorian Parliament Open Day held on Saturday, 24 June.

In partnership with State Parliament, five sessions on the changes to the Upper House were provided to a total of 110 community educators.

Specialised information

The VEC finalised the *Disability Action Plan* in October 2005 and formed a partnership with representatives from a range of disability organisations (the Electoral Access Advisory Group). At the 2006 State election, the VEC will extend its range of information formats to include audio and Easy English files on the VEC's website.

In June 2006, the VEC conducted a focus group with peak bodies engaged in work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. A number of suggestions regarding the extended use of communication channels and targeting messages to different language groups will be worked in to the 2006 State election communication campaign.

Research into electoral participation and barriers to participation of Indigenous groups also took place in June 2006 and will inform the VEC's approach to increasing engagement in the 2006 State election.



Michelle Weksler pictured with the design competition brochure.

"With young people you can't just send out information, you need them to interact. The design competition gives young people a chance to impact on their own public sphere."

Research shows that the youth market is one of the least engaged when it comes to enrolling and voting. Although Victoria's youth participation is higher than the national average, it is still much lower than Victoria's overall participation rate.

VEC Education Officer, Michelle Weksler, works on initiatives to encourage young people to enrol and vote as part of VEC's wider education program, which also includes teacher professional development and curriculum programs.

"We reach young people through their local contact avenues, schools for example. It's important to be able to provide appropriate resources for teachers to assist them to prepare lessons that are not only accurate, but also engaging for the students. Updating the 'Your Opinion Counts' resource for secondary schools was extremely important to reflect the recent changes to legislation, and make it relevant for the 2006 State election."

Informing and educating young people requires a different approach from communicating with other audiences.

"For the communication to be successful, it has to speak to young adults in their own language," says Michelle. "An example is our poster design competition, which targets design students, a group that expresses themselves through design and visual mediums. Through this competition the VEC is tapping into their own method of expressing themselves and communicating with their peers."

The initiatives are providing information to young people at a peak time – when they are just about to enter the adult world and are already starting to engage.

Strategy: Redevelop the VEC's website in order to provide current on-line information and services that meet the needs of all voters and other stakeholders.

The VEC undertook the task of redesigning its website throughout 2005. A new format was created to provide a more contemporary look and feel, content was restructured for easier navigation, and pages containing information about Victoria's new Upper House were created. Throughout the redesign process, special effort was made to achieve a more accessible website.

Some of the highlights of the new website include detailed information about enrolling and voting in 18 languages other than English; the ability to email queries to the VEC; more information for voters with a disability; statistics comparing local government elections; a range of new publications; and the proportional representation slideshow - an illustrated guide to the counting of votes using proportional representation.

Future directions

The next financial year will involve the implementation of the advertising campaign for the 2006 State election, and a mail-out to all eligible electors. These will be complemented by initiatives targeted to those groups whose participation has been lower than the average.

Corporate Objective: Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2005 local government elections and any by-elections.

Strategy: Work with municipal councils to develop and implement co-ordinated communication campaigns at local government elections in 2005.

Approximately 2.4 million Victorian voters were eligible to vote at the local government elections in November, representing nearly two-thirds of the entire State. The VEC developed communication campaigns for each election, which aimed to raise voters' awareness of their rights and obligations, maximise voter turnout, and minimise the informal vote.

Unlike a State election where one single communication campaign is developed, each local council has its own communication campaign. The VEC provided each council with a statutory campaign service and the opportunity to add optional services to this campaign.

In developing and selecting these optional services, the VEC and councils took into account the method of election, the location and size of the municipality, available media coverage, the special needs of voters and the council's budget.

Local government elections advertising

Press advertising formed the basis of the communication campaign for each local government election. These advertisements communicated key election messages in the most widely circulating newspapers in each municipality.

The VEC placed 696 press advertisements in up to 147 newspapers across Victoria throughout the 2005 local government elections. Councils also contributed to a full-page advertisement reminding people to vote in the *Herald Sun* on Monday, 14 November. In addition, the VEC placed two advertisements in the *Herald Sun* at no cost to the 54 councils. These advertisements aimed to improve understanding of the proportional representation system, and to clarify who can receive assistance to vote.

In total, nine councils participated in a shared radio advertising campaign, while two councils engaged the VEC to develop TV advertising.

Media services

Obtaining media coverage was an important part of the communication campaign. Media releases issued by the VEC provided journalists with factual and accurate information when reporting on the conduct of an election.

During the elections, localised media releases achieved a high level of coverage in the press, broadcast and telecast media specific to each election. Statewide media releases also achieved significant coverage, with items appearing in *The Age*, *Sunday Age* and *Herald Sun* and across the airwaves on ABC 774, Radio National, 3AW, 3MP, FOX FM, Gold 104.3 FM, Magic 693, Mix 101.1 FM, Nova 100.3 FM and SEN 116.

The VEC also conducted a media briefing session in October to help ensure accurate reporting. The briefing was well attended by journalists from *The Age*, *Herald Sun*, Leader Community Newspapers and the Fairfax Group.

Election information to voters from non-English speaking backgrounds and special needs groups

The VEC provided telephone numbers to enable non-English speaking voters to access recorded messages, followed by the option to speak with a member of the VEC staff via an interpreter. Dedicated telephone numbers were available for 12 languages, along with an additional number to respond to enquiries in all other non-English languages. The telephone numbers were in newspaper advertising for the councils that had identified this need, as well as in the *EasyVote* cards distributed to voters in attendance elections. A total of 1,268 callers requested an interpreter.

The VEC also aired radio advertising in 19 community languages. Combined radio advertising campaigns were developed for Brimbank, Frankston, Glen Eira, Hume, Maribyrnong, Monash, Moonee Valley, Greater Shepparton and Whittlesea City Councils. A total of 293 advertisements went to air across nine radio stations.

In addition, the VEC distributed media releases translated into 13 languages to 64 ethnic publications throughout the communication campaign. This resulted in 65% of media releases being published in the ethnic press.

Information on enrolling and voting was also available in 11 languages on the VEC's website.

Figure 17 – Number of visits per language group to non-English pages on the VEC website

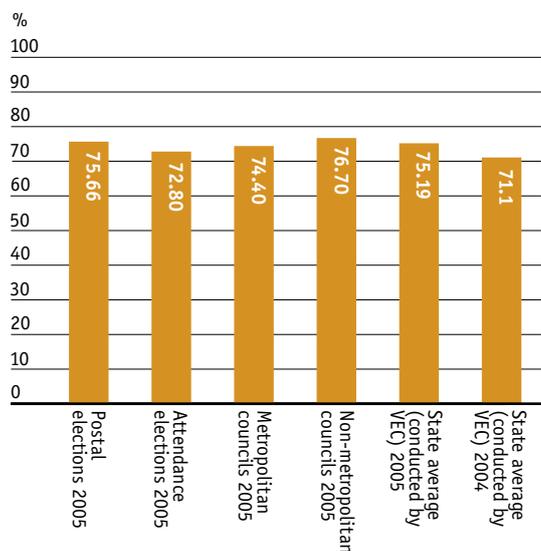
Arabic	235
Chinese	354
Croatian	220
Greek	237
Italian	298
Macedonian	187
Serbian	203
Somali	191
Spanish	268
Turkish	241
Vietnamese	232
TOTAL	2666

The VEC continued to provide vision and print impaired voters information through advertisements on Vision Australia's radio station 3RPH. In addition, large print files were available for downloading from the VEC website. A number of councils also chose to provide candidate statements as audio files on the VEC website for voters with a print disability.

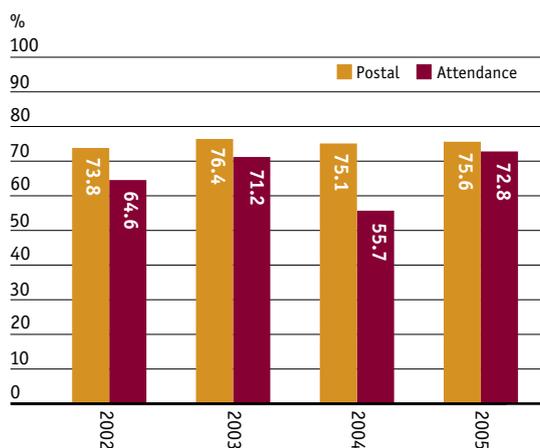
Figure 18 – Number of visits to audio candidate statements on the VEC website

Council	Visits
Baw Baw	28
Bayside	94
Benalla	10
Frankston	81
Hepburn	14
Hindmarsh	5
Hume	64
Macedon Ranges	48
Manningham	56
Moira	13
Mornington Peninsula	92
Mount Alexander	46
Murrindindi	10
Shepparton	50
Swan Hill	10
Wellington	29
Whittlesea	50
Wyndham	63
Yarra Ranges	102
TOTAL	865

Voter participation of local government elections conducted by the VEC in November 2005



Voter participation at postal and attendance elections 2002-05



A telephone typewriter (TTY) number is available throughout the year, and was advertised on all VEC publications throughout the local government elections communication campaign.

For the first time, the VEC produced a guide to enrolling and voting in Easy English format in consultation with Scope, and supplied an information brochure to carers on voting rights.

VEC website

The VEC provided a customised homepage for each local government election on its website. To help ensure that the VEC was the primary source of online election information, councils were invited to link their website to their elections homepage on the VEC website.

During the nomination period, candidate nominations received were added to the website on a daily basis. The website pages were the most popular during the nomination stage, the week of the elections and during the publication of results.

Figure 19 – Number of visits to the VEC website during the 2005 local government elections

Period	Visits
18-24 October	3,690
25-31 October	10,572
1-6 November	3,376
7-13 November	4,280
14- 20 November	6,189
21-27 November	13,769
28-30 November	7,679
TOTAL	49,555

EasyVote cards

A personalised *EasyVote* card was distributed to voters in the six attendance elections. In one case, the delivery of the *EasyVote* card was not delivered until one day before the election. The *EasyVote* card provided the voter with information as to the ward in which they are enrolled, the name of the candidates, steps on how to vote, and a tear-off section with a map indicating the closest voting centres.

When voters brought their *EasyVote* card with them to the voting centre, staff were able to clearly see the name of the elector, which made it considerably easier and more efficient to mark people off the roll.

Voter participation and informal voting at local government elections

Voter participation and informal voting rates are useful indicators of the health of an electoral system. It is important to note, however, that these may be affected by factors other than the services provided by an electoral authority. Such factors may include interest in the election, election issues, the geography and the demographic composition of the electorate, and even the weather on election day.

Communication and education campaigns produced by the VEC seek to maximise voter participation and reduce informal voting by providing Victorians with all the information they need to participate fully in an election.

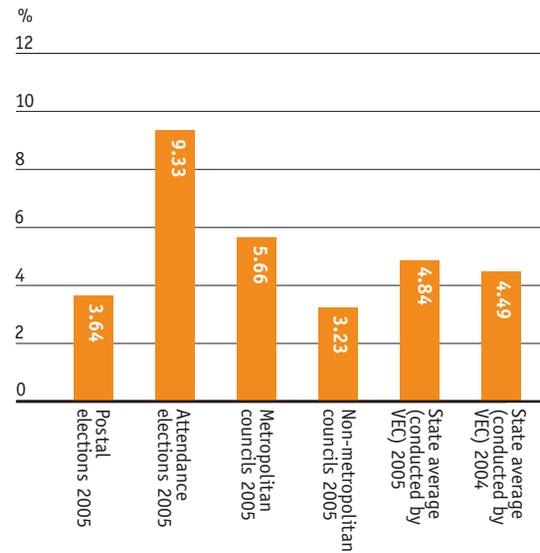
Voter participation

Of the 54 local government elections held in 2005-06, 18 were in metropolitan areas. The voter turnout for these elections averaged 74.40%.

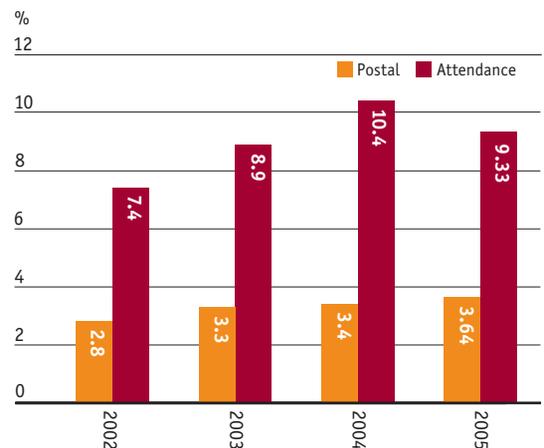
Figure 20 – Voter participation at metropolitan local government elections in November 2005

Council	Performance	2005 voter return	2003 voter return	Method
Banyule City Council	↑	72.74%	67.01%	Attendance
Bayside City Council	↑	74.53%	74.45%	Postal
Brimbank City Council	↑	79.99%	75.27%	Attendance
Casey City Council	↓	74.32%	74.37%	Postal
Frankston City Council	↓	70.23%	70.45%	Postal
Glen Eira City Council	↑	70.83%	70.82%	Postal
Greater Dandenong City Council	↓	70.39%	72.61%	Attendance
Hume City Council	↓	74.81%	75.15%	Postal
Kingston City Council	↓	74.32%	75.38%	Postal
Knox City Council	↑	76.26%	73.55%	Attendance
Manningham City Council	↓	78.49%	78.55%	Postal
Maribyrnong City Council	↓	65.84%	65.95%	Attendance
Maroondah City Council	↑	75.33%	74.95%	Postal
Monash City Council	↑	77.92%	76.75%	Postal
Moonee Valley City Council	↓	65.18%	68.28%	Attendance
Whitehorse City Council	↓	76.09%	76.17%	Postal
Whittlesea City Council	↓	78.63%	79.70%	Postal
Wyndham City Council	↓	72.93%	75.32%	Postal

Informal voting at local government elections conducted by the VEC in November 2005



Informal voting at postal and attendance elections 2002-05



Informal voting

Informal voting is a broad indicator of people's understanding of the electoral system. Evidence seems to suggest that informal voting may be affected by several factors, including the method of election, the number of non-English speaking voters in a municipality, and the number of candidates.

Figure 22 shows the informal voting performance at the 2005 elections. Analysis of the informal voting rate in the November 2005 elections indicates that as the number of candidates increased, so too did the level of informal voting.

Figure 21 – Voter participation at regional and outer-metropolitan local government elections in November 2005

Council	Performance	2005 Voter Return	2003 Voter Return	Method
Alpine Shire Council	↓	76.33%	77.12%	Postal
Bass Coast Shire Council	↑	73.46%	71.69%	Postal
Baw Baw Shire Council	↓	79.45%	81.81%	Postal
Benalla Rural City Council	↓	81.13%	84.18%	Postal
Buloke Shire Council	↓	82.53%	84.12%	Postal
Campaspe Shire Council	↑	80.73%	78.70%	Postal
Cardinia Shire Council	↑	75.06%	74.15%	Postal
Central Goldfields Shire Council	↓	79.28%	82.63%	Postal
East Gippsland Shire Council	↓	78.56%	81.00%	Postal
Gannawarra Shire Council	↓	79.50%	86.78%	Postal
Greater Shepparton City Council	↑	83.19%	81.33%	Postal
Hepburn Shire Council	↑	76.20%	74.50%	Postal
Hindmarsh Shire Council	↓	84.80%	86.28%	Postal
Horsham Rural City Council	↓	83.18%	84.39%	Postal
Indigo Shire Council	n/a*	n/a*	83.30%	Postal
Latrobe City Council	↓	77.17%	78.79%	Postal
Loddon Shire Council	↓	77.59%	81.60%	Postal
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	↑	76.79%	70.24%	Postal
Mansfield Shire Council	↑	78.51%	78.25%	Postal
Mildura Rural City Council	↓	79.39%	81.22%	Postal
Mitchell Shire Council	↓	75.88%	75.92%	Postal
Moira Shire Council	↓	81.08%	82.57%	Postal
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	↓	70.95%	72.90%	Postal
Mount Alexander Shire Council	↑	81.18%	78.86%	Postal
Murrindindi Shire Council	↑	75.66%	74.06%	Postal
Northern Grampians Shire Council	↓	78.63%	83.16%	Postal
South Gippsland Shire Council	↑	79.09%	78.44%	Postal
Strathbogie Shire Council	↓	84.73%	85.68%	Postal
Swan Hill Rural City Council	↓	78.94%	83.25%	Postal
Towong Shire Council	↓	81.31%	82.10%	Postal
Wangaratta Rural City Council	↓	82.62%	82.75%	Postal
Wellington Shire Council	↓	69.92%	79.22%	Postal
West Wimmera Shire Council	n/a*	n/a*	82.00%	Postal
Wodonga City Council	↑	79.46%	78.32%	Postal
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	↑	75.29%	74.74%	Postal
Yarriambiack Shire Council	↑	83.71%	78.00%	Postal

* Indicates an uncontested election.

Figure 22 – Informal rates for the local government elections in November 2005

Council	Performance	2003 % Informal Vote	2005 % Informal Vote	Method of Election
Alpine Shire Council	↓	4.76	4.27	Postal
Banyule City Council	↑	6.24	6.84	Attendance
Bass Coast Shire Council	↑	2.19	2.45	Postal
Baw Baw Shire Council	↑	1.82	2.43	Postal
Bayside City Council	↓	2.90	2.56	Postal
Benalla Rural City Council	↑	1.56	2.24	Postal
Brimbank City Council	↑	13.98	16.17	Attendance
Buloke Shire Council	↓	1.06	0.87	Postal
Campaspe Shire Council	↑	1.88	2.23	Postal
Cardinia Shire Council	↑	2.68	2.83	Postal
Casey City Council	↓	3.44	3.19	Postal
Central Goldfields Shire Council	↑	1.19	3.27	Postal
East Gippsland Shire Council	↓	4.90	3.34	Postal
Frankston City Council	↑	2.99	4.84	Postal
Gannawarra Shire Council	↑	0.88	1.93	Postal
Glen Eira City Council	↑	8.73	8.97	Postal
Greater Dandenong City Council	↑	7.25	7.83	Attendance
Greater Shepparton City Council	↑	5.63	6.44	Postal
Hepburn Shire Council	↑	1.75	1.99	Postal
Hindmarsh Shire Council	↑	1.05	0.84	Postal
Horsham Rural City Council	↑	2.58	2.69	Postal
Hume City Council	↑	2.70	3.79	Postal
Indigo Shire Council	n/a*	3.75	n/a*	n/a*
Kingston City Council	↓	3.24	3.22	Postal
Knox City Council	↓	7.58	6.83	Attendance
Latrobe City Council	↑	2.39	3.23	Postal
Loddon Shire Council	↓	1.85	1.56	Postal
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	↓	4.95	3.31	Postal
Manningham City Council	↓	3.37	3.11	Postal
Mansfield Shire Council	↑	1.32	2.14	Postal
Maribyrnong City Council	↑	7.12	8.01	Attendance
Maroondah City Council	↑	2.82	3.12	Postal
Mitchell Shire Council	↑	1.91	2.41	Postal
Moira Shire Council	↑	1.69	1.71	Postal
Monash City Council	↑	2.65	4.42	Postal

Council	Perfor- mance	2003 % Informal Vote	2005 % Informal Vote	Method of Election
Mildura Rural City Council	↓	6.32	4.59	Postal
Moonee Valley City Council	↓	8.98	8.30	Attendance
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	↑	2.12	2.62	Postal
Mount Alexander Shire Council	↑	1.57	3.01	Postal
Murrindindi Shire Council	↑	2.27	3.11	Postal
Northern Grampians Shire Council	↑	2.46	2.88	Postal
South Gippsland Shire Council	↑	1.84	2.26	Postal
Strathbogie Shire Council	↑	1.53	1.84	Postal
Swan Hill Rural City Council	↑	1.56	1.80	Postal
Towong Shire Council	↑	1.76	1.88	Postal
Wangaratta Rural City Council	↑	2.17	5.56	Postal
Wellington Shire Council	↓	7.83	4.69	Postal
West Wimmera Shire Council	n/a*	1.81	n/a*	n/a*
Whitehorse City Council	↓	4.14	3.36	Postal
Whittlesea City Council	↑	2.48	2.99	Postal
Wodonga City Council	↑	3.33	5.48	Postal
Wyndham City Council	↑	2.14	3.48	Postal
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	↑	2.54	3.31	Postal
Yarriambiack Shire Council	↑	1.33	1.64	Postal

* Indicates an uncontested election.

Future directions

In November 2008, all 79 local government elections will be held on the same day. This will provide significant opportunities to offer more statewide advertising through promotion of local government elections as a single significant event across the entire state.

Corporate Objective: Encourage a culture of democratic participation and community engagement, particularly among those whose participation is identified as lower than average.

In June, the VEC provided a submission to the Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Education, conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. The submission addressed three specific terms of reference and outlined the VEC's view that electoral education is at least as important as its other functions.

The submission outlined the VEC's future priorities as:

- a continued focus on groups that are under-represented in enrolment and voting;
- programs that encourage democratic engagement;
- programs that make the teaching of civics and citizenship more accessible to teachers; and
- a stronger visibility of education resources and materials in the community.

The VEC also welcomed the opportunity to discuss any matters raised in the submission at a hearing with the Committee.

Strategy: In partnership with the AEC and other organisations, implement an electoral education strategy to increase Victorians' engagement in and understanding of the electoral system.

The VEC continued with the strategic direction to target those Victorian who have lower levels of participation in the electoral system.

Young people aged 18 to 24 years

Secondary Schools Democratic Engagement School Grants Program

The Grants Program was introduced in 2004-05, and continued in 2005-06. The engagement projects implemented in 2005-06 at those schools included:

- a Parliament experience for Year 8 and 10 students from North Geelong Secondary College;
- a student Leadership Forum at St Monica's College, Epping;
- Civics and Citizenship Teacher Professional Development in Melbourne for Kalianna Special School, Bendigo;
- attendance at Civics and Citizenship Conference in Melbourne by staff from four of the Grants Schools;
- artwork promoting participation in the local government elections by Braybrook Secondary College; and
- new Civics and Citizenship teaching resources for students at Robinvale Secondary College.

Publications, resources and competitions

A multi-media teaching resource for disengaged young people that promotes positive democratic practices was produced through the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) project, 'Have Your Say.' The project was accessed by 37 students at Prahran Community Centre and St Kilda Youth Services.

Teacher Professional Development - Civics and Citizenship

The *Your Opinion Counts* resource for teachers was, reprinted, with over 1,000 copies distributed to all secondary schools for use in the lead-up to the 2006 State election. This has proved a valuable resource for teachers. To complement the resource kit, professional development activities for teachers were held in October 2005, December 2005 and May 2006. The activities involved 46 secondary teachers and linked the VEC publications with the new Victorian Essential Learnings Standard, (VELS).

School visits, expos and conferences

Visits to conduct school elections were held at Narre Warren, Newcomb, Ashwood, Broadmeadows and Flemington and involved approximately 1200 students. Education officers also attended Monash University Orientation Week, in March 2006, where a total of 110 enrolments were collected.

The VEC was:

- a participant at the Comview Conference in November 2005, which is the largest teacher development program run every year by the Victorian Commercial Teachers Association. The VEC display received over 200 visits from teachers. In addition, the VEC conducted a professional development activity for 24 teachers at the Conference.
- represented at the Age Careers and VCE Expo in March 2006. Just over 100 new enrolments were completed and over 250 Year 11 and 12 students visited the VEC display.
- again a key contributor to the State Parliament Open Day on Saturday, 24 June. Over 4,000 people visited the VEC's display and, as in 2004 and 2005, a voting centre was established to encourage young people to cast votes for a Best Exhibit Poll and a total of 545 young people cast votes and assisted in the vote count. Other displays focused on new enrolments, assisted enrolment enquiries, highlighted the Upper House redivision, and promoted participation in November's State election.

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD)

The *Make Your Vote Count* Electoral Education Resource for teachers of low literacy and English as Second Language (ESL) students was trialled at the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) in Melbourne. The Project Team accessed over 500 students during the testing and evaluation stage. A leading curriculum writer was engaged to ensure the educational validity of the materials, as well as design teacher support and navigation features in the resource. The resource will be distributed in 2006/07.

People experiencing homelessness

An information brochure for agencies assisting homeless persons was trialled during the Maribyrnong City Council elections in November 2005. The trial was conducted at the Melbourne City Mission in Footscray and involved five workers from the Mission and contact with 30 homeless persons. Feedback and evaluation from the Melbourne City Mission was conducted in January 2006, and provided affirmation that the brochure had been well-received, as there had been an absence of information for this target group.

Future directions

The Schools Grants Program will continue, but will be aligned with the teaching year rather than the financial year.

Democracy Week in October 2006 will be celebrated with school competitions and activities developed by the VEC, promoting all aspects of enrolment and voting. In addition, a 16-page supplement in the Age newspaper will be dedicated to electoral education for the State election and will feature competition winners.

The VEC will launch an online virtual voting experience in 18 translated languages via an animated interactive function. Other interactive components will engage students and teachers to support curriculum for both Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). In addition, the virtual experience will introduce 'first time' voters (both young and non-English speaking) to a simulated, demystified voting process.

Fair and equal representation

Provide support services during electoral boundary reviews to help ensure fair and equal representation for Victorian electors.

Corporate Objective: Provision of high quality electoral representation review services to local government.

Electoral representation review services to local government

In 2005-06, the VEC did not conduct any electoral representation reviews for local government.

Report to the Minister on electoral representation reviews

In 2006, the VEC prepared a report on the 39 electoral representation reviews conducted during 2004 and 2005. The aim of the report was to provide an analysis of:

- how the VEC conducted the reviews;
- what the VEC recommended;
- the principles and methods used by the VEC to come to its recommendations; and
- concerns raised during the reviews by various stakeholders.

Some of the key findings from the report include:

- over the 39 reviews, the VEC received 2,570 submissions, the vast majority coming from private individuals;
- in 57% of the reviews, the VEC recommended that the number of councillors stay the same and in 31% of the reviews, the VEC recommended that the structure stay the same;
- submissions were received supporting all types of structures and played an important role in the VEC's considerations;
- the VEC recommended boundaries for 125 wards, of which 121 were within the 10% variation in voter numbers permitted by legislation at the election after the review, and 115 are expected to be within the 10% variation at the 2008 local government elections; and
- feedback from participants suggested high levels of satisfaction with the VEC's public consultation process with the exception of "the use of data and evidence in reports" and "the analysis of submissions in reports", where the results were positive overall, but more mixed.

The final report will be submitted to the Minister for Local Government in early July.

Performance in past reviews

In the 2004-05 year, the VEC conducted electoral representation reviews for 30 councils.

The VEC works to make sure that the boundaries it sets during the course of a review will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due – a period of eight years. This is achieved by taking account of likely future changes.

It should be noted that:

- as other factors are taken into consideration during the course of a review, it is not always possible to place a ward at its ideal deviation from the average;
- projected growth generated through housing development can be subject to variation as it is dependant on a number of factors including economic issues; and
- the rate of growth in some areas cannot be contained within the constraints of a ward configuration.

As at 30 June 2006, in all but two wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor, where a review was conducted in 2003-04 or 2004-05, was within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.

Future directions

The *Local Government Act 1989* requires electoral representation reviews to be conducted as follows:

- a. in the case of the first review that is conducted in accordance with the new provisions, at a time specified by the Minister for Local Government by a notice published in the Government Gazette;
- b. after the first review has been conducted, a review is then required before every second general election; and
- c. in respect of a particular council, at any time specified by the Minister for Local Government by a notice published in the Government Gazette.

Some 39 councils have now conducted their first review in accordance with the new provisions of the legislation. The next reviews for these councils are due in the period prior to the November 2012 local government elections. The legislation specifies that the review is required before every second general election, and that it cannot be commenced until two years before that general election. The legislation also requires the review to be completed six months before the general election. This means the window of opportunity for conducting the reviews that are required in the period prior to the 2012 round of local government elections is between November 2010 and May 2012; a period of 18 months.

For the remaining 39 councils yet to conduct a review in accordance with the new provisions of the legislation, the Minister for Local Government is required to specify a time for when these reviews will be conducted. It is expected that the Minister will require the remaining reviews to be conducted in the period prior to the 2008 round of local government elections. The suggested time frame for conducting these reviews is between November 2006 and May 2008.



Chris Gribbin pictured with electoral representation review reports

“Having managed 39 electoral representation reviews for councils in the last two financial years, the fact that we didn’t have any scheduled this year provided a window to conduct an analysis of the review process.”

Having been involved in preparing some of the reports for local government electoral representation reviews, Policy Officer Chris Gribbin, was well placed to coordinate the report on some of the principles and methods the VEC used to come to its recommendations.

The report provided the opportunity to test a number of the VEC’s hypotheses (especially regarding proportional representation) by analysing data from the 2004 and 2005 local government elections.

“One of the key intentions of the report was to discuss the VEC’s principles and methodology in greater detail than has been possible previously. Not only have we explained what factors were considered when determining the most appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure for a municipality, but also what factors we didn’t take into account and why,” says Chris.

“The process also provided an opportunity to identify any process improvements that could be made and we have captured those improvements for the 2007 reviews.”

Organisational Effectiveness

Effective administration and a skilled workforce are crucial to the delivery of accessible, high-quality electoral services.

Corporate Objective: Ensure the receipt of funds, payment of expenses and maintenance of the VEC's operations within budget and according to legislation.

Strategy: Effectively manage the VEC's financial systems and infrastructure.

The VEC has established comprehensive budgeting, costing and reporting systems to manage and monitor operational and capital expenditure in line with approved Department of Treasury and Finance Appropriations.

Branch budgets are set annually with individual Branch Manager involvement, taking into account forthcoming election cycles and the priorities of the VEC's corporate and business plans. Annual budgets are prepared for the coming year and the following four years in advance, to advise Government of the VEC's likely future budget requirements. Budgets are detailed and incorporate the costs of the VEC's casual and fixed-term human resources across election cycles. The introduction of fixed date State elections has assisted in enabling more accurate budget forward estimates for the VEC.

The management of Branch budgets is supported by customised electronic reporting tools that enable managers to monitor and direct resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the VEC's priority outcomes.

In 2003, the Government initiated a review of the VEC's budget. A recommendation from the review related to the VEC's level of charging for local government elections. Local government elections include a number of services where costs were not recovered or fully recovered.

At the time of preparing quotations for the November 2004 elections, the VEC had not received any direction from the Government on this issue. Consequently, to minimise the impact of including these further costs, the VEC capped price increases on these items at 20% for councils conducting elections in 2004. For consistency, the VEC adopted the same pricing policy for the remaining councils conducting elections in November 2005.

The VEC takes no advantage of what could be perceived as its market power and a significant subsidy of election services remains.

Corporate Objective: Ensure the availability of a skilled workforce needed by the organisation to deliver its corporate and legislative objectives.

Strategy: Ensure the VEC has a workforce that is able and ready to efficiently deliver accessible, high quality electoral services.

Identifying and attracting people with the skills and knowledge required

The VEC considers its staff its most important asset. A highly motivated and skilled VEC workforce contributes to a healthy democracy. The VEC aims to employ and develop people who represent the diversity of the Victorian community, demonstrate impartiality and integrity, and are committed to delivering the highest standard of professional and effective electoral services.

While the VEC has a core full time equivalent (FTE) staff of 41.4, additional staff are employed on a fixed-term or casual basis in order to meet the requirements of preparing for, and conducting, State and local government elections. The complexity of providing local government election services, preparing for the next State election and the additional work performed in updating the Victorian electoral roll, has meant that there was an increase in the number of core staff in 2005-06.

In addition to those employed at the VEC head office, the VEC has a database of 226 Senior Election Officials (SEOs) who are trained and available for appointment as Election Managers during State elections, and as Returning Officers or Deputy Returning Officers during local government elections. All SEOs participate in extensive training programs prior to these elections.

In order to conduct the local government elections in November 2005, 54 SEOs were appointed as Returning Officers and 39 SEOs were appointed in the supporting role of Deputy Returning Officer.

The VEC also relies heavily on casual staff during elections. Casual staff are appointed and trained to work as administrative staff, election officials at voting centres and vote counters. Because many of these people are only appointed for election day, the VEC maintains a database to assist with the recruitment and training of election casuals. For example, the VEC appointed nearly 4,000 casual staff to assist with the conduct of the 2005 local government elections.

Selection and recruitment

Some 18 vacancies, including nine ongoing and nine fixed-term positions were filled in the lead-up to the local government elections in November 2005,

Of these, 10 vacancies were exempt from advertisement. Exemptions were granted in cases where there was no infringement of merit and equity principles, as the vacancy had duties and requirements of a specialised nature peculiar to the VEC.

Under the directions on public sector employment, employees may lodge a grievance application if they believe there were deficiencies in the recruitment process that prevented selection on merit. No grievances were lodged during the reporting period.

Implementing an effective performance management system

The VEC's Performance Management and Progression System is designed to provide an equitable progression system, where employees progress by 'meeting the progression criteria'.

Each Victorian Public Service (VPS) grade has a set of value ranges, which are clearly defined by a set of work 'descriptors'. The ranges within a grade recognise the changing nature of work and effort, and the structure allows for jobs and employees to grow within a grade. Progression is not automatic but rather recognises the performance of value-adding activities.

The VEC Performance Management and Progression System is designed to:

- clearly link the achievement of individual Performance Management and Progression Plans to the success of the overall Corporate Plan;
- provide tangible guidance to staff on the conduct and values to model when undertaking their duties; and
- facilitate a comprehensive learning and development strategy which supports current and future job and career needs.

The VEC worked with a company called Success Factors to develop and trial an on-line performance management service during 2005-06. The online system will streamline the existing system and help ensure individual's performance goals are aligned with the VEC's goals and objectives. It will also provide greater visibility and consistency in conducting reviews and rewarding performance.

Managers were provided with training during the year with regard to linking individual performance plans to the VEC's business objectives.



Shripad Joshi pictured with a Wyse terminal

"The set-up needs to be perfect, we don't get a second chance"

The IT infrastructure and support required to conduct 54 individual local government elections often goes unnoticed by the general public. However, the logistics and skills required to support the offices established around the State is a significant undertaking for the VEC.

Shripad Joshi is the VEC's IT Infrastructure Team Leader - "each local government election is run out of an election office resourced by the VEC. Many of the offices had different IT infrastructure requirements, some had the full suite of hardware and software, and others were provided with web-based links to existing hardware in nearby offices."

Setting up the requisite hardware was a resource intensive task that started with a bank of computers at the warehouse. The computers were uploaded with all the necessary software to conduct the election at a remote office.

"The configuring of computers had to be absolutely correct, as once the systems are out in the offices it is difficult to correct any major problems. Therefore, significant testing occurred before they were delivered. As soon as the computers were up and running, the IT branch provided online support to all the Election Managers from the head office site."

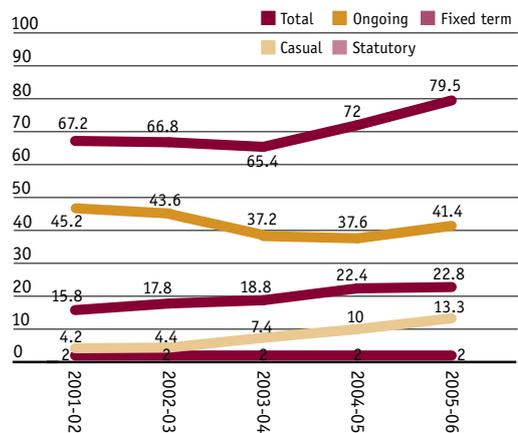
"In this round of elections, we tried utilising remote-access. While there were definite benefits in this system, there were some difficulties with speed and connectivity due to bandwidth."

As a result, Shripad worked on a system that would reduce the resource intensive hardware setup, and also provide the offices with fast access to the Election Management System and other software.

"The new Wyse system can be loaded centrally through a simple download process, rather than the configuration that is currently required and could save around 70% of the costs involved."

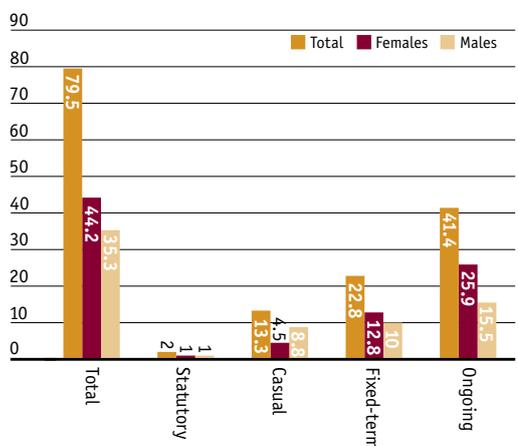
The new system will be utilised for the 2006 State election.

VEC head office full time equivalent (FTE) Staffing profile over the last five years



2001-02 17 Local Government elections.
 2002-03 Conducted the 2002 State Election, and 54 Local Government elections.
 2003-04 Tendered for 25 Local Government elections, conducted 10 electoral representation reviews, underwent a significant budget review.
 2004-05 Conducted 25 Local Government elections, and conducted 30 electoral representation reviews.
 2005-06 Conducted 54 Local Government elections.

VEC head office full time equivalent (FTE) Staffing profile as at 30 June 2006



Learning and development

Staff training undertaken during 2005-06 reflected the learning and development needs identified during the performance planning process. A total of 187.4 learning and development days (an average of 2.36 days per employee) were completed by staff who participated in programs, which included prevention of discrimination, bullying and harassment, team management, facilitation training, well-being workshop and a customer service workshop. There was also training for managers, team leaders and staff provided by beyondblue on depression in the workplace.

Creating a working environment that is safe, supportive and free from discriminatory behaviour

The VEC has an obligation to staff and visitors to provide a safe work environment that meets legislative requirements and is consistent with the duty of care provisions under the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

The VEC's staffing and work practices are determined and guided by:

- the *Public Sector Management and Employment Act 1998*;
- the *Public Administration Act 2004*;
- the Victorian Public Service (Non-Executive Staff) Agreement 2006;
- the VEC's human resource policies and procedures; and
- the VPS Code of Conduct.

Staff are kept informed of the VEC's organisational priorities and human resource systems through an induction handbook, its quarterly newsletter *VEClarations*, and staff meetings.

Providing flexible working arrangements

The VEC has a small core of ongoing staff and during election time it is often necessary for staff to work hours outside their normal requirements. Staff therefore have the opportunity to accrue flexi-time that may be taken as leave in times of lower activity. The VEC finds this an effective strategy to manage fluctuating work requirements, as well as providing a highly skilled workforce. The flexi-time is carefully managed within a policy framework which is regularly reviewed and updated. Limits on the level of hours that may be accrued are in place to ensure staff well-being remains a high priority to the organisation.

Staff are able to utilise a variety of options available under the VEC's Flexible Work Arrangements Policy, (updated this year). Management and staff, through mutual agreement, used the following options to effectively manage their work, personal and family commitment during the year:

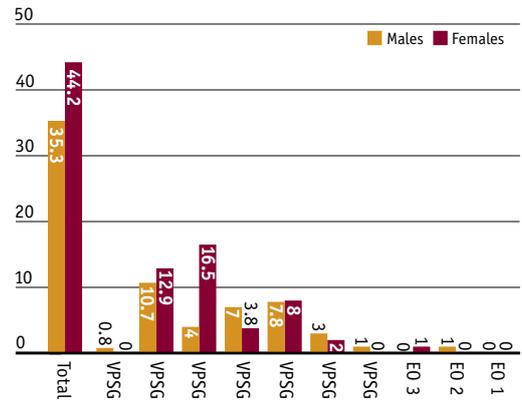
Flexible working hours	Variable daily start and finish times. Also includes the option to work variable days per week for example, working 38 hours a week over four days instead of five.
Make-up time	Time taken off during working hours may be made up after the event.
Telecommuting/working from home	Regular performance of work-related tasks in a home-based office, using telecommunications technology to communicate with the primary office. Telecommuting is often referred to as working from home, but is actually a more structured arrangement.
Seasonal variation to working hours	Working extra hours during peak seasons and less hours during lower workloads.
Part-time employment and job-sharing	Two or more people share one full-time job, each working part-time on a regular basis.
Parental leave at half-pay	Paid maternity, adoption or paternity leave is taken at half-pay or a period on full pay with a period of half-pay combined.
Career breaks	Unpaid leave for up to seven years.

Valuing workplace diversity

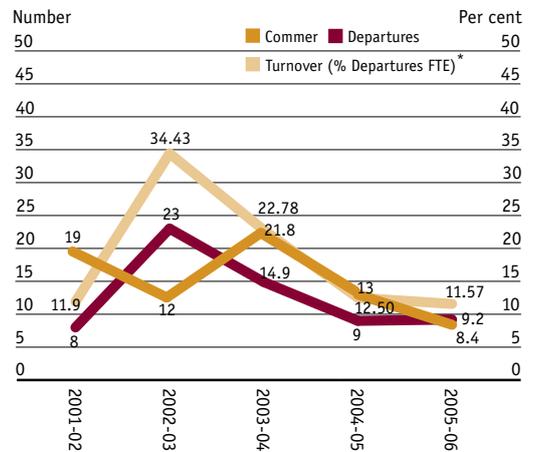
The VEC supports people management, which recognises and values individual differences in the workplace, and is consistent with merit and equity principles. The VEC also recognises diversity as individual or group differences. It can relate to either personal characteristics, some of which may be age, gender, disability, sexual preference, race and cultural background, or to other factors such as thinking and working styles, education, profession, life experience and skill levels.

Two staff members continued to be supported through Scope and were employed through Employment Futures, the employment division of Scope (Vic) Ltd, which provides services to people with disabilities.

FTE VPS levels of VEC head office staff as at 30 June 2006

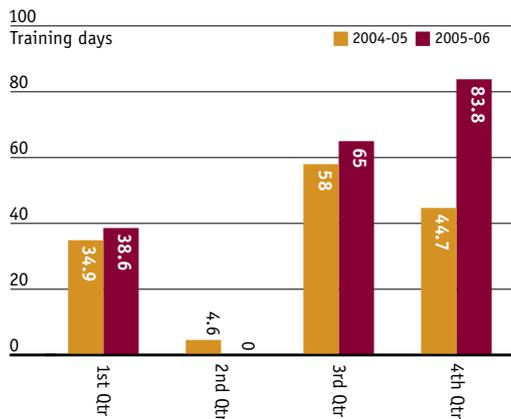


Recruitment, departures & turnover

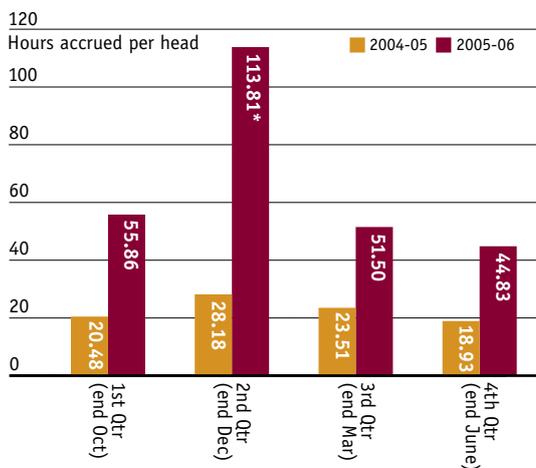


* Turnover increase marks the end of fixed term contracts following the last State Election and 54 local government elections conducted in 2002.

Learning and development



Average flex time accrued by grades 1-4 2005-06



* The 2nd qtr included the 54 local government elections.

Merit and Equity

The VEC's principles of merit and equity also ensure that organisational functions are delivered in a fair and equitable manner, where employees and stakeholders are not subject to discrimination or harassment.

The merit principle occurs when decisions in employment such as appointment, promotion and career development are based on the most competent person being selected. It ensures that decisions relating to individuals are made without discrimination or harassment.

The equity principle is about giving people a "fair go". It is applied to remove discrimination and its effects from the workplace. It also ensures that all individuals are treated fairly, reasonably and have their differences are respected.

Personal grievance management

The VEC has issue resolution processes covering the maintenance of healthy and productive working relationships. The VEC is committed to ensuring that principles of merit and equity are applied throughout the VEC, and work-related complaints are resolved quickly, confidentially and without prejudice.

The VEC did not receive any grievance applications during the reporting period.

Occupational health and safety and well-being

The VEC's work environment strategy has a focus on workplace safety and creating and maintaining a work environment that is safe, inclusive and one that enhances employee well-being.

During 2005-06, the VEC implemented a systematic Occupational Health and Safety Management System to meet legal obligations, prevent injuries, illnesses and hazards and create a safer work environment for all. This was implemented through the development of an Occupational Health and Safety Action Plan to prioritise key areas. There was an extensive review of all policies and procedures by the Consultative Committee and management and advice was received from an external consultant. As a result of the reviews, the Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures for the VEC now include Senior Election Officials (SEO's) and warehouse staff. Practical improvements based on the reviews, included demarcation of walkways and the construction of an outdoor car park at the warehouse to make the work environment safer.

Training on OH&S continued to be a key focus during the year, with an OH&S information session conducted for all staff, including contractors and SEOs. OH&S representatives completing a five-day training course and managers completed an OH&S workshop.

OH&S is now a regular agenda item on all staff, Branch, Management Group and Consultative Committee meetings and the VEC encourages reporting of near-misses to help prevent and reduce hazards and injuries.

All VEC staff continue to have access to the Department of Justice's employee assistance program, including a staff counselling service.

Claims for WorkCover

The VEC received three claims for WorkCover in 2005-06, resulting in the loss of 35.26 working days.

Employee relations

During 2005-06, there were no major industrial relations issues raised within the VEC. No time was lost due to industrial disputes.

Future directions

Over the next financial year, the VEC will continue to focus on the following staffing and work practice priorities as identified in the Corporate Plan:

Identifying and attracting people with the skills and knowledge required:

- recruit quality Senior Election Officials in appropriate locations to adequately support the conduct of State and local government elections and by-elections.

Developing and retaining a dynamic and highly skilled workforce:

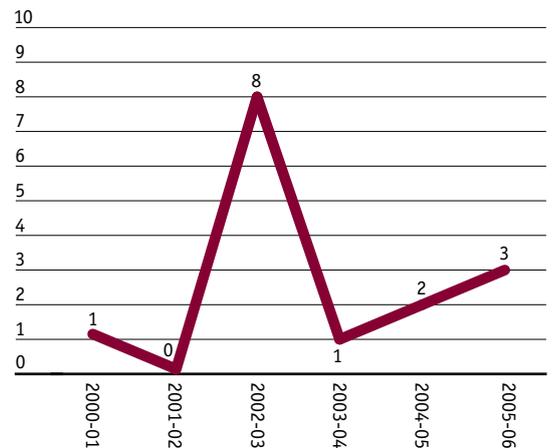
- ensure continuity of key skills;
- implement a performance management and progression system that clearly links the achievement of individual Performance Management and Progression Plans to the success of the overall Corporate Plan; and
- facilitate a comprehensive learning and development strategy which supports current and future job and career needs.

Creating a working environment that is safe, supportive and free from discriminatory behaviour:

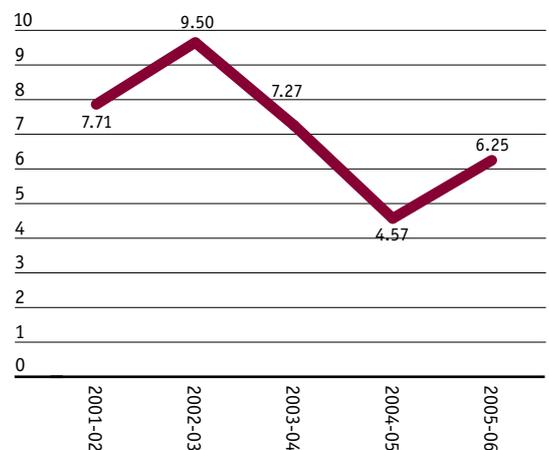
- continue to improve the workplace health and safety and well being of VEC staff and members of the public attending election offices and voting centres.

A strong emphasis will be placed on evaluation and review as the end of the current corporate planning cycle nears.

Claims received



Sick leave days average per head



Corporate Objective: Provide for effective communication between staff at all levels across the VEC.

Strategy: Establish a Consultative Committee, with representatives from each Branch to channel information between staff and management group on particular strategic and operational issues.

The VEC has a Consultative Committee comprising representatives from each Branch, a Management Group representative and the Human Resources Manager. The Committee provides a forum for representatives to address the needs of both employees and management. All policies that will have an impact on staff go through the Consultative Committee before endorsement by the Management Group. Members of the Consultative Committee also act as OH&S representatives.

During 2005-06, a charter outlining the vision and mission of the Committee was developed and launched. As set out in the charter, the role of the Committee is to contribute to the on-going enhancement of the organisational culture and working environment, and to actively support the well-being of all employees, by:

- providing effective mechanisms for communication flow between management and employees on major people management issues;
- enabling consultations that represents employee and management perspectives;
- providing options for management to consider regarding people management issues; and
- providing measures to improve the quality of working life for all employees.

During the last financial year, the Consultative Committee invited an external consultant to investigate the results of focus groups conducted by members of the Committee. The results indicated that staff were happy with certain areas of communication, but keen to improve others. The outcome was the introduction of a monthly electronic staff news bulletin, which has been well received by staff.

Committee members participated in a team management course to ensure the Committee worked effectively together, and completed a five-day OH&S training course as part of their joint role as OH&S representatives.

Strategy: Develop a skills training program with a strong focus on communication skills.

During 2005-06, the VEC provided numerous training and development opportunities for staff, as listed in the learning and development section, many with a focus on communication.

Strategy: Encourage open communication through regular staff meetings, staff newsletters, and providing staff members with access to all minutes, including those from Management Group meetings.

The VEC distributed a quarterly, internal staff newsletter, recently renamed *VEClarations*, as well as holding monthly meetings of all staff. The sessions were an opportunity to explain and showcase different areas of the organisation, and to encourage collaboration amongst different Branches.

The staff newsletter provides an opportunity to keep Returning Officers and warehouse staff informed of activities at head office and introduce new staff members.

Future directions

The Consultative Committee will continue to meet regularly to review people management issues and consult on OH&S issues. In addition, the Committee will assist in an organisational communication audit and in the development of an internal communication strategy.

Corporate Objective: Ensure the VEC has an ongoing, effective and cost-efficient IT environment to conduct its business.

Strategy: Provide an IT management function to align current and emerging technology with organisational strategies, policies and standards.

The Information Technology (IT) strategic plan was released during 2005-06. The plan outlined strategies and budgets for software, the upgrade of hardware, the upgrade of the server software including operating systems, and a review of technology delivery mechanisms for remote Election Managers' offices.

A new strategic planning cycle will be undertaken in early 2007.

Strategy: Plan, deploy and support IT infrastructure to meet the requirements of State and local government elections.

During 2005-06, the VEC provided the necessary IT technology to conduct 54 local government elections in Victoria. This included the use of the VEC's election management system to manage and administer the elections and the enrolment register in the production of the rolls.

The VEC provided the IT infrastructure for the Election Managers' offices, as well as for the computer counts held across Victoria. This involved a complex logistical operation to configure the hardware, as well as providing a Help Desk throughout the election period.

The infrastructure required to support the 54 elections incorporated 36 servers and 180 personal computers (PCs). Some 20 computer count environments were configured, deployed and supported to handle the electronic calculation of proportional representation. The set-up for a computer count requires a significant level of IT support.

The computer count application will also be used at the 2006 State election to conduct the new Upper House election count.

Work started during 2005-06 on the configuration and deployment of infrastructure to support the State election. This included set-up of all servers and PCs for the Election Managers' offices and remote access to the election management system for early voting centres. During the election, early voting centres will be able to access the State electoral roll electronically on portable devices, which will save time and provide greater flexibility.

Work also started on the website for the State election, including an improved look-up facility for the location of voting centres, and an improved method for generating results pages on election night through a 'virtual tally room,' as well as State election-specific pages.

Significant enhancements of applications were completed to support two countbacks this financial year.

There were also changes to the enrolment register to improve data processing for enrolments and data exchange.

Strategy: Ensure the VEC's IT environment is covered by appropriate risk and security management plans.

A security audit and testing was undertaken during 2005-06. The results of the audit and testing will be examined and any recommendations implemented in the coming financial year.

Regular risk reviews were also conducted before the local government elections, along with the continual monitoring of computer and network vulnerabilities.

Future directions

The VEC will focus on IT requirements for the 2006 State election, including the changes required as a result of the new Upper House structure.

Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission

The Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) is constituted under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982* to divide Victoria into State parliamentary electorates. The EBC must establish and maintain electorates of approximately equal enrolment (that is, not varying by more than 10% from the average for each House of Parliament) for the conduct of parliamentary elections.

The members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission during 2005-06 were:

- His Honour Chief Judge Michael Rozenes QC, Chief Judge of the County Court (Chairman);
- Mr Steve Tully, Electoral Commissioner; and
- Mr John Tulloch, Surveyor General.

Dr Paul Thornton-Smith is the secretary to the EBC. The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) provides administrative and technical support to the EBC.

The EBC's major task during 2005-06 was to complete a re-division of Victoria's Legislative Council electoral boundaries. The re-division was required as a result of the *Constitution (Parliamentary Reform) Act 2003*, which changed the size and structure of the Legislative Council. The re-division established eight new electoral regions covering the State.

Following advertising, public hearings and the analysis of submissions from the public, the EBC released proposed boundaries for the electoral regions on 7 July 2005 and invited written suggestions and objections about the proposed boundaries. Thirteen written suggestions and objections were received from political parties, members of Parliament, municipal councils and private individuals by the deadline of 8 August 2005.

After considering the suggestions and objections, the EBC concluded that the proposed boundaries and names of the electoral regions should not be altered. The EBC released the final boundaries of the electoral regions on 6 October 2005. These boundaries will apply at the State election on 25 November 2006.



Sarah Taylor pictured with the final Electoral Boundaries Commission Report.

"The mapping technology makes it a lot easier for the Electoral Boundaries Commission and the public to gain an understanding of the proposed and final boundaries".

The re-division of the Upper House changed the electoral boundaries from 22 provinces with four districts in each, to eight regions with 11 districts in each. Mapping Officer, Sarah Taylor, utilised sophisticated mapping software to prepare options to assist the Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) in its deliberations.

"The first phase of the project was to map suggestions and options that were made through the public submission process and present these visually to the EBC," says Sarah.

Taking into account the evidence presented in the submissions, the EBC set broad criteria for which options were to be developed.

"One of the criteria that the EBC adopted from the submissions was the use of the Yarra River and Great Dividing range as boundaries between regions, given that they were significant geographic features." The final boundaries adopted by the EBC was one of the options based on this criteria.

The maps Sarah and her division produced not only gave the EBC an excellent understanding of the boundary options, but also delivered the information in a format that was more easily understood and able to be commented upon by the general public.

The VEC's financial year in review (this section is not part of the audited statements)

The annual expenditure of the VEC fluctuates due to the cyclical nature of conducting State elections, local government elections, by-elections, electoral representation reviews and commercial elections.

This can be seen in the amount of Special Appropriation provided by the State Government to fund the activities of the VEC.

2001-02	\$17.841 million	Includes local government activity
2002-03	\$47.934 million	Includes State and local government activity
2003-04	\$15.136 million	Includes local government activity
2004-05	\$16.995 million	Includes local government activity
2005-06	\$23.812 million	Includes local government activity

The VEC's appropriation increased in 2005-06 due to the VEC conducting 54 local government elections, and spending in preparation for the November 2006 State election. This will increase further in 2006-07 with the VEC conducting the State election and then reduce substantially in 2007-08, as there is no major electoral activity. It will then fluctuate with local government and State elections being held every four years.

The VEC's financial statements are prepared in accordance with the State Government reporting requirements, which report all expenditure on the outputs described below, and revenue from special appropriation from the State Government.

Revenue from charges for local government and local government by-elections, Commercial elections and all other fees and charges, and expenditure, assets and liabilities relating to candidates deposits and local government election fines, is not included in the VEC Operating Statement and Balance Sheet. It is included as a note to the accounts.

Revenue, such as fees collected for conducting local government and commercial elections, by-elections and electoral representative reviews, is collected and controlled by the VEC, but is forwarded to the Department of Treasury and Finance as consolidated revenue. Revenue from local government election fines and forfeited candidate deposits is collected and controlled by the VEC, and regularly remitted to each Council.

Revenue and Expenses

Internally, the VEC monitors its expenditure based on election outputs.

A description of the Commission's outputs performed during the year ended 30 June 2006, and the objectives of these outputs, are summarised below.

Core Services	The ongoing services provided by the VEC including roll maintenance, education, research, administration, training and development of election officials.
State election	Preparation and conduct of the State election.
Local government elections	Preparation and conduct of local government elections.
Local government by-elections	Preparation and conduct of local government by-elections and countbacks.
Commercial elections	Preparation and conduct of commercial elections.
Representation reviews	Preparation and conduct of representation reviews of councils.

In the following schedules, the expenditure for 2006 has been allocated according to the election outputs described above. Except for core, only marginal expenses are costed to each output. Marginal expenses are described as the additional expenses incurred by the VEC to conduct the electoral activity.

Controlled revenue and expenses for the year ended 30 June 2006

	Core services	State elections	Council elections	Council By-elections	Commercial elections	Representation reviews
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income						
Income from State Government	12,713	1,541	9,384	19	155	0
Expenses						
Employee benefits	4,368	490	4,086	7	15	0
Depreciation and amortisation	768	1,142	0	0	0	0
Finance costs	3	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies and services	7,620	1,051	4,568	12	140	0
Equipment lease / roll merging	0	0	730	0	0	0
Total expenses	12,759	2,683	9,384	19	155	0

For the above expenditure, a comparison to the amount recouped from fees and charges remitted to consolidated revenue is as follows:

	Core services	State elections	Council elections	Council By-elections	Commercial elections	Representation reviews
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income						
Fees and charges	365	0	8,175	21	203	0
Total expenses	12,759	2,683	9,384	19	155	0
Net amount recouped from fees and charges	(12,394)	(2,683)	(1,209)	2	48	0

The above analysis shows that marginal costs are recouped from fees and charges for local government by-elections and commercial elections, but not for periodic local government elections.

Core services and the state elections are funded from State Government appropriation.

Assets

The current assets of the VEC include minor receivables, prepayments of expenditure, and inventory. Sufficient inventory is kept to enable minor elections to occur, with the balance substantially increasing during a major election. The VEC's inventory and prepayments for election venues has increased due to the preparations for the State election to be held in November 2006.

The non-current assets of the VEC include plant and equipment and computer software development for the electoral rolls and conduct of elections.

Liabilities

Except for the provisions for employee annual leave and long service leave, the current and non-current liabilities of the VEC are small. They include payables for goods and services, motor vehicle finance leases, and bank balance.

The increase in liabilities is mainly in employee provisions due to the increase in accrued annual leave for fixed-term employees who were employed to assist with the local government elections, and an increase in vehicle finance leases.

Equity

The equity of the VEC is split into contributed capital and accumulated surplus/(loss). The contributed capital represents the amount of funding contributed by the Government of Victoria for the purchase and development of VEC non-current assets. The accumulated surplus/(loss) represents the accumulated result from ordinary activities of the VEC.



Operating statement

for the financial year ended 30 June 2006

	Note	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Income			
Special appropriations	1s,2	23,812	16,995
Total Income		<u>23,812</u>	<u>16,995</u>
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense	1j,2	9,179	6,619
Supplies and services		13,330	9,606
Depreciation and amortisation expense	1i,2	1,910	2,004
Other expenses		578	736
Finance costs	2	3	2
Total Expenses		<u>25,000</u>	<u>18,967</u>
Net result from continuing operations		<u>(1,188)</u>	<u>(1,972)</u>
Net result from discontinued operations		-	-
Net result for the period	14b	<u>(1,188)</u>	<u>(1,972)</u>

The above operating statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance sheet

as at 30 June 2006

	Note	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	1h,22	1	1
Receivables	1k,5	409	293
Other assets	7	831	307
Inventories	1o,6	1,239	836
Total current assets		<u>2,480</u>	<u>1,437</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	1p,1q,8	1,584	2,011
Intangible assets	1n,9	8,768	9,910
Total non-current assets		<u>10,352</u>	<u>11,921</u>
Total assets		<u>12,832</u>	<u>13,358</u>
Current liabilities			
Bank overdraft	22	51	51
Payables	1r,10	552	388
Provisions	12	993	860
Interest bearing liabilities	1e,11	39	9
Total current liabilities		<u>1,635</u>	<u>1,308</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	12	118	102
Interest bearing liabilities	1e,11	46	51
Total non-current liabilities		<u>164</u>	<u>153</u>
Total liabilities		<u>1,799</u>	<u>1,461</u>
Net assets		<u>11,033</u>	<u>11,897</u>
Equity			
Contributed Capital	14	19,241	18,917
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	14	(8,208)	(7,020)
Total equity		<u>11,033</u>	<u>11,897</u>

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of recognised income and expense

for the financial year ended 30 June 2006

	Note	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Net income recognised directly in equity		-	-
Net result for the period		(1,188)	(1,972)
Total recognised income and expense for the period		<u>(1,188)</u>	<u>(1,972)</u>
Effects of change in accounting policy		106	-
Effects of correction of errors	24	-	182
		<u>106</u>	<u>182</u>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Cash flow statement

for the financial year ended 30 June 2006

	Note	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
<i>Receipts:</i>			
Receipts from Government		23,812	16,995
Goods and Services tax recovered from the ATO		1,494	1,054
		<u>25,306</u>	<u>18,049</u>
<i>Payments:</i>			
Capital asset charge		(130)	(144)
Payments to suppliers and employees		(25,166)	(17,888)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(3)	(2)
		<u>(25,299)</u>	<u>(18,034)</u>
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	22	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(324)	(656)
Proceeds received from sale of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		<u>(324)</u>	<u>(656)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Proceeds from capital contribution by State Government		324	656
Repayment of finance leases		(7)	5
Net cash provided by/ (used in) financing activities		<u>317</u>	<u>661</u>
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held		-	20
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		(51)	(71)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	22	<u>(51)</u>	<u>(51)</u>

The above cash flow statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Notes to the financial statements

30 June 2006

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Notes to the financial statements

for the financial year ended 30 June 2006

Note 1. Summary of accounting policies

Statement of compliance

The financial report is a general purpose financial report which has been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, Australian Accounting Standards and Urgent Issues Group Interpretations. Accounting Standards include Australian equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards ('A-IFRS').

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the Electoral Commissioner and the Chief Finance and Accounting Officer on

Basis of preparation

The financial report has been on the basis of historical cost, except for the revaluation of certain non-current assets and financial instruments. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

In the application of A-IFRS management is required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other source. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstance, the results of which form the basis of making the judgements. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Judgements made by management in the application of A-IFRS that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates with a significant risk of material adjustments in the next year are disclosed throughout the notes in the financial statements.

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

The Commission changed its accounting policies on 1 July 2005 to comply with A-IFRS. The transition to A-IFRS is accounted for in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 'First-time Adoption of Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards', with 1 July 2004 as the date of transition. An explanation of how the transition from superseded policies to A-IFRS has affected the Commission's financial position, financial performance and cash flows is discussed in Note 24.

The Commission has also elected to apply Accounting Standard AASB 2005-4 and 2005-6 'Amendments to Accounting Standards' (June 2005), even though the Standard is not required to be applied until annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2006.

The accounting policies set out below have been applied in preparing the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2006, the comparative information presented in these financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2005, and in the preparation of the opening A-IFRS balance sheet as at 1 July 2004, the VEC's date of transition, except for the accounting policies in respect of financial instruments. The Commission has not restated comparative information for financial instruments, including derivatives, as permitted under the first-time adoption transitional provisions. The accounting policies for financial instruments applicable to the comparative information and the impact of the changes in these accounting policies are discussed further in note 23.

Notes to the financial statements

Note 1. Summary of accounting policies (continued)

(a) Reporting entity

The financial statements include all the controlled activities of the Victorian Electoral Commission. The Commission has no controlled entities.

Administered resources

The Commission administers but does not control certain resources on behalf of the Victorian Government. It is accountable for the transactions involving those administered resources, but does not have the discretion to deploy the resources for achievement of the Commission's objectives. For these resources, the Commission acts only on behalf of the Victorian Government. Administered resources are accounted for using the accrual basis of accounting.

Transactions and balances relating to these administered resources are not recognised as Commission revenues, expenses, assets or liabilities within the body of the financial statements, but are disclosed in note 13.

Other trust activities on behalf of parties external to the Victorian Government

The Commission has responsibility for transactions and balances relating to trust funds on behalf of third parties external to the Victorian Government. Revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities administered on behalf of third parties are not recognised in these financial statements as they are managed on a fiduciary and custodial basis, and therefore not controlled by the Commission or the Victorian Government.

Non-current assets

All non-current assets controlled by the Commission are reported in the balance sheet. Non-current assets which the Commission administers on behalf of the Victorian Government are reported as administered resources.

(b) Objectives and funding

The Commission's objective is to provide election services to State and Local Governments, as well as conducting various commercial elections.

The Commission is funded by cash-based special appropriations for the provision of outputs. It provides on a fee for service basis election services for Local Government and Commercial elections.

(c) Outputs of the Commission

Information about expenses, revenues, other income, assets and liabilities administered by the Commission are given in the schedule of administered expenses and revenues and the schedule of administered assets and liabilities (see also Note 13).

(d) Goods and services tax

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except:

- where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the taxation authority, it is recognised as part of the acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense; or
- for receivables and payables which are recognised inclusive of GST.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included as part of receivables or payables.

Cash flows are included in the cash flow statement on a gross basis. The GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

Notes to the financial statements

(e) Interest bearing liabilities

Interest bearing liabilities are recorded initially at fair value, net of transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, interest bearing liabilities are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest bearing liability using the effective interest rate method.

(f) Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenses in the period in which they are incurred.

Borrowing costs include interest on short-term and long-term borrowings, and finance lease charges.

(g) Capital asset charge

The capital asset charge represents the opportunity cost of capital invested in the non-current physical assets used in the provision of outputs. The charge is calculated on the budgeted carrying amount of non-current physical assets (excluding Whole of Government Motor Vehicle finance leases, and intangible assets).

(h) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and cash in banks.

(i) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on property, plant and equipment. Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight line basis to write off the net cost of each asset over its expected useful life to its estimated residual value. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the period of the lease or estimated useful life, whichever is the shorter, using the straight-line method. The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period.

The following estimated useful lives are used in the calculation of depreciation:

Leased motor vehicles	3 years
Plant & equipment	2 to 10 years
Furniture & fittings	5 to 14 years
Computer equipment	2 to 3 years

(j) Employee benefits

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave, and sick leave when it is probable that settlement will be required and they are capable of being measured reliably.

Provisions made in respect of employee benefits expected to be settled within 12 months, are measured at their nominal values using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Provisions made in respect of employee benefits which are not expected to be settled within 12 months are measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made by the Commission in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

Classification of employee benefits as current and non-current liabilities

Employee benefit provisions are reported as current liabilities where VEC does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months. Consequently, the current portion of the employee benefit provision can include both short-term benefits, that are measured at nominal values, and long-term benefits, that are measured at present values.

Employee benefit provisions that are reported as non-current liabilities also include long-term benefits such as non vested long service leave (i.e. where the employee does not have a present entitlement to the benefit) that do not qualify for recognition as a current liability, and are measured at present values.

Notes to the financial statements

Note 1. Summary of accounting policies (continued)

(j) Employee benefits continued

Superannuation

Defined contribution plans

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed when incurred.

Defined benefit plans

The amount charged to the operating statement in respect of defined benefit plan superannuation represents the contributions made by the Commission to the superannuation plan in respect to the current services of current Commission staff. Superannuation contributions are made to the plans based on the relevant rules of each plan.

The Commission does not recognise any defined benefit liability in respect of the superannuation plan because the Commission has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees; its only obligation is to pay superannuation contributions as they fall due. The Department of Treasury and Finance administers and discloses the State's defined benefit liabilities in its financial report.

(k) Financial assets

VEC classifies its financial assets in the following categories: financial assets at fair value through profit or loss. Loans and receivables, held to maturity investments, and available for sale financial assets. The classification depends on the purpose for which the investments were acquired. Management determines the classification of its investments at initial recognition. VEC's financial assets are limited to cash and cash equivalents and accounts receivable.

Receivables

Trade and other receivables are recorded at amortised cost less impairment.

(l) Functional and presentation currency

The functional currency of the Commission is the Australian dollar, which has also been identified as the presentation currency of the Commission.

(m) Impairment of assets

Intangible assets with indefinite useful lives are tested annually for impairment (i.e. as to whether their carrying value exceeds their recoverable amount) and whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired. All other assets are assessed annually for indications of impairment, except for inventories.

If there is an indication of impairment, the assets concerned are tested as to whether their carrying value exceeds their recoverable amount. Where an asset's carrying value exceeds its recoverable amount, the difference is written off by a charge to the operating statement except to the extent that the write down can be debited to an asset revaluation reserve applicable to that class of asset.

The recoverable amount for most assets is measured at the higher of depreciated replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell. Recoverable amount for assets held primarily to generate net cash inflows is measured at the higher of the present value of future cash flows expected to be obtained from the asset and fair value less costs to sell. It is deemed that, in the event of the loss of an asset, the future economic benefits arising from the use of the asset will be replaced unless a specific direction to the contrary has been made.

Notes to the financial statements

(n) Intangible assets

Intangible assets represent identifiable non-monetary assets without physical substance.

Intangible assets are recognised at cost. Costs incurred subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised when it is expected that additional future economic benefits will flow to the Commission.

Costs associated with the development of computer software relating to the Election Management and Roll Management System totalling \$0.5 million or more are capitalised and amortised on a straight line basis over a twelve year (three State election periods) being the period in which the related benefits are expected to be realised. Costs associated with the acquisition or development of computer software which are less than \$0.5 million are charged as expenses in the period in which they are incurred.

The amortisation period and the amortisation method for an intangible asset with a finite useful life are reviewed at least at the end of each annual reporting period. In addition, an assessment is made at each reporting date to determine whether there are indicators that the intangible asset concerned is impaired. If so, the assets concerned are tested as to whether their carrying value exceeds their recoverable amount.

(o) Inventories

Supplies and consumables, WIP and finished goods held for distribution are valued at lower of cost and current replacement cost. Cost is based on first-in, first-out basis and includes expenditure incurred in acquiring the inventories and bringing them to their existing condition. Current replacement cost is the cost the Commission would incur to acquire the asset on the reporting date.

(p) Leased assets

Leases are classified as finance leases whenever the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Assets held under finance leases are recognised as assets of the Commission at their fair value or, if lower, at the present value of the minimum lease payments, each determined at the inception of the lease. The corresponding lease liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation.

Lease payments are apportioned between finance charges and reduction of the lease obligation so as to achieve a constant rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability. Finance charges are charged directly against income.

Finance lease assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful life of the asset.

Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term, except where another systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern in which economic benefits from the leased asset are consumed.

(q) Non-current physical assets

Plant, equipment and vehicles are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

The cost of improvements to or on leasehold properties is amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement to the Commission, whichever is the shorter. Leasehold improvements held at the reporting date are being amortised over 8 years. (2005: 8 years).

(r) Payables

Payables are recognised when the Commission becomes obliged to make future payments resulting from the purchase of goods and services.

Notes to the financial statements

Note 1. Summary of accounting policies (continued)

(s) Revenue recognition

Amounts disclosed as revenue are, where applicable, net of returns, allowances and duties and taxes. Revenue is recognised for each of the Commission's major activities as follows:

Fees and fines

As the Commission does not gain control over assets arising from fees and fines, no revenue is recognised. The Commission collects these amounts on behalf of the Crown. Accordingly, the amounts disclosed as revenues in the schedule of administered revenues and expenses (see note 13).

All other amounts of revenue which the Commission does not gain control are disclosed as administered revenue in the schedule of administered revenues and expenses (see note 13).

(t) Income

All income received by the Commission is generally required to be paid into the Consolidated Fund. Income becomes controlled by the Commission when it is appropriated from the Consolidated Fund by the Victorian Parliament and applied to the purposes defined under the relevant appropriations act.

(u) Revaluations of non-current assets

The Commission controls plant and equipment, furniture and fittings, motor vehicles, computer development and leasehold improvements which are measured at cost, and are not subject to revaluation.

(v) Rounding of amounts

Amounts in the financial report have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.

(w) Comparative information - financial instruments

The Commission has elected not to restate comparative information for financial instruments within the scope of AASB 132 "Financial Instruments: Disclosure and Presentation" and AASB 139 "Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement", as permitted on the first time adoption of A-IFRS.

The accounting policies applied to accounting for financial instruments in the current financial year are detailed in notes 1e, 1h, 1k and 1r. The following accounting policies were applied to accounting for financial instruments in the comparative financial year:

(a) Payables

Payables represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Commission prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

(b) Interest bearing liabilities

Finance leases are carried at the present value of minimum lease payments using the interest rate implicit in the lease.

(c) Receivables

All debtors are recognised at the amounts receivable as they are due for settlement at no more than 30 days from the date of recognition.

Collectibility of debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. A provision for doubtful debts is raised when some doubt as to collection exists.

Notes to the financial statements

Effect of changing the accounting policies for financial instruments

There is no material effect on the balance sheet from changes in the accounting policies for financial instruments.

(x) Change of accounting policies

As noted in note 3, the Commission as a result of discovering an error in respect of certain category of inventory, reviewed its accounting policies in respect of those inventories. It changed its accounting policy to expense the items on acquisition rather than to capitalise the amount in the financial statements and then to expense when consumed.

The effect of the change was to expense \$106,108 worth of inventory during the year.

The Commission is unable to quantify the future effect of this change in accounting policy because estimating it is impracticable.

Notes to the financial statements

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
2. Net result from operations		
Income		
(a) Income from Government		
Special appropriations	23,812	16,995
(b) Other income		
Other	-	-
	<u>23,812</u>	<u>16,995</u>
Expenses		
(a) Employee benefits expense		
Post employment benefits - defined contribution plans	627	474
Termination benefits	-	145
Other employee benefits	8,552	6,000
	<u>9,179</u>	<u>6,619</u>
(b) Depreciation and amortisation		
Depreciation of non-current assets	768	832
Amortisation of non-current assets	1,142	1,172
	<u>1,910</u>	<u>2,004</u>
(c) Finance costs		
Other finance costs	3	2
	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
(d) Other expenses		
Inventory:		
Write down of inventory to net realisable value:	-	-
Operating lease rental expenses:		
Minimum lease payments	578	736
	<u>578</u>	<u>736</u>

Notes to the financial statements

3. Correction of errors

An adjustment has been made to reflect appropriations which were previously recognised as income instead of capital contribution. The error had the affect of overstating revenue and retained earnings in 2002 and 2003 as listed below.

	\$'000
Year ended 30 June 2002	232
Year ended 30 June 2003	9224
	<hr/> 9456 <hr/>

The error has been corrected by restating each of the affected financial statement line items as described above. Refer to note 24 for further details.

Due to administrative errors, it was identified during the 2005/06 financial year that inventory was overstated by \$182,000 due to the failure to write off items which had been used. The error had the effect of overstating inventory at 30 June 2005 by \$182,000 and understating expenses by the same amount for the year ended 30 June 2005.

The error has been corrected by restating each of the affected financial statement line items as described above. Refer to note 24 for further details.

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Victorian Auditor General's Office		
Audit or review of the financial report	14	15
	<hr/> 14 <hr/>	<hr/> 15 <hr/>

4. Remuneration of auditors

5. Receivables

Current

Amounts owing from Victorian Government		
GST Receivable	238	108
Other receivables	171	185
	<hr/> 409 <hr/>	<hr/> 293 <hr/>

6. Inventories

Supplies and consumables held for distribution		
At cost	1,239	836
	<hr/> 1,239 <hr/>	<hr/> 836 <hr/>

Notes to the financial statements

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
7. Other assets		
Current		
Prepayments	831	307
	<u>831</u>	<u>307</u>
8. Property, plant and equipment		
Plant & equipment		
At Cost	4,469	4,452
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(3,307)	(2,758)
	<u>1,162</u>	<u>1,694</u>
Plant and equipment under finance lease (at cost)	98	63
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(13)	(4)
	<u>85</u>	<u>59</u>
Total plant and equipment	<u>1,247</u>	<u>1,753</u>
Furniture & fittings		
At Cost	214	201
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(138)	(136)
	<u>76</u>	<u>65</u>
Leasehold Improvements		
Leasehold Improvements - at cost	233	224
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(65)	(31)
	<u>168</u>	<u>193</u>
Work in Progress		
Leasehold Improvements	93	-
	<u>93</u>	<u>-</u>
Total buildings	<u>261</u>	<u>193</u>
Total property, plant and equipment	<u>1,584</u>	<u>2,011</u>

Notes to the financial statements

8. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

	Plant & equipment \$'000	Furniture and fittings \$'000	Leasehold improvements \$'000	Work in Progress \$'000	Plant & equipment under finance lease \$'000	Total \$'000
Carrying amount						
Balance at 1 July 2004	1,772	53	30	328	28	2,211
Additions	629	13	3	-	35	680
Transfers	78	46	186	(310)	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	(18)	-	(18)
Depreciation/amortisation expense (note 2)	(785)	(47)	(26)	-	(4)	(862)
Balance at 1 July 2005	1,694	65	193	-	59	2,011
Additions	194	26	9	93	63	385
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	(21)	-	-	-	(23)	(44)
Depreciation/amortisation expense (note 2)	(705)	(15)	(34)	-	(14)	(768)
Balance at 30 June 2006	1,162	76	168	93	85	1,584

Notes to the financial statements

9. Intangible assets

	Capitalised software
Gross carrying amount	
Balance at 1 July 2004	13,684
Additions from internal developments	-
Impairment losses charged to net result	-
Balance at 1 July 2005	<u>13,684</u>
Additions from internal developments	-
Impairment losses charged to net result	-
Balance at 30 June 2006	<u>13,684</u>
Accumulated amortisation	
Balance at 1 July 2004	(2,632)
Amortisation expense	(1,142)
Impairment losses charged to net result	
Balance at 1 July 2005	(3,774)
Amortisation expense	(1,142)
Impairment losses charged to net result	-
Balance at 30 June 2006	<u>(4,916)</u>
Net book value	
As at 30 June 2005	<u>9,910</u>
As at 30 June 2006	<u>8,768</u>

Amortisation expense is included in the line item 'depreciation and amortisation expense' in the operating statement.

Significant intangible assets

The Commission has capitalised software development expenditure for the development of its election management and electoral rolls development.

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
10. Payables		
Current		
Employee benefits	282	230
Supplies and services	270	158
Other	-	-
	<u>552</u>	<u>388</u>

The average credit period is 30 days. No interest is charged / payable on payables.

Notes to the financial statements

11. Interest bearing liabilities

Current

Finance lease liabilities (refer note 17)	39	9
	<u>39</u>	<u>9</u>

Non-current

Finance lease liabilities (refer note 17)	46	51
	<u>46</u>	<u>51</u>
	<u>85</u>	<u>60</u>

12. Provisions

Current (refer note 1 (j))

Annual leave		
- short term benefits at nominal value	515	420
Long service leave		
- long term benefits at present value	478	440
	<u>993</u>	<u>860</u>

Non-current (refer note 1(j))

Long service leave	118	102
	<u>118</u>	<u>102</u>

12A. Employee Entitlements

Current

All annual leave and LSL entitlements representing 7+ years of continuous service		
- Short-term employee benefits, that fall due within 12 months after the end of the period measured at nominal value	35	30
- Other long-term employee benefits that do not fall due within 12 months after the end of the period measured at present value	443	410
	<u>478</u>	<u>440</u>

Non-current

LSL representing less than 7 years of continuous service measured at present value	118	102
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Notes to the financial statements

13. Administered items

In addition to the specific Commission operations which are included in the balance sheet, operating statement and cash flow statement, the Commission administers or manages activities on behalf of the State and Councils. The transactions relating to these activities are reported as administered items in this note.

Administered transactions give rise to incomes, expenses, assets and liabilities and are determined on an accrual basis. Administered revenues include taxes, fees and fines and candidate deposits. Administered liabilities include expenses incurred but yet to be paid. Administered assets include incomes earned but yet to be collected.

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
	State		Councils	
Administered income				
Fees	8,812	5,655	-	-
Fines	0	6	2,864	1,398
Candidates deposits	-	-	321	218
Total	8,812	5,661	3,185	1,616
Administered expenses				
Fees	9,193	5,206	-	-
Fines	-	-	2,879	1,117
Candidates deposits	-	-	321	220
Total	9,193	5,206	3,200	1,337
Revenue less expenses	-381	455	-15	279
Administered assets				
Bank	25	29	268	282
Receivables	632	957	-	-
Total	657	986	268	282
Administered liabilities				
Candidates deposits	-	-	2	1
Compulsory voting fines	-	-	266	281
Payables	239	186	-	-
Total	239	186	268	282

Notes to the financial statements

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
14. Equity and movements in equity		
(a) Contributions by owners		
Balance at beginning of the year	18,917	18,261
Capital contribution during the year by Victorian State Government	324	656
Balance at end of financial year	<u>19,241</u>	<u>18,917</u>
(b) Accumulated Surplus / (Deficit)		
Balance at beginning of the year	(7,020)	(5,048)
Net result for the reporting period	(1,188)	(1,972)
Balance at end of financial year	<u>(8,208)</u>	<u>(7,020)</u>

15. Commitments for expenditure

(a) Lease commitments

Finance lease liabilities and non-cancellable operating lease commitments are disclosed in note 17 to the financial statements.

(b) Expenditure commitments

Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure

Not longer than one year

Longer than one year and not longer than 5 years

Longer than 5 years

1,801 1,765

5,194 7,023

- -

6,995 8,788

16. Contingent liabilities and contingent assets

Details and estimates of contingent liabilities are as follows:

- -

- -

A contingent liability exists for legal action in relation to Electoral Act decisions and offences. However, as at 30 June 2006, there is no reliable estimate of the liability. There were no contingent assets as at 30 June 2006.

Notes to the financial statements

17. Leases

Disclosure for lessees-finance leases

Leasing arrangements

Finance leases relate to motor vehicles leased through the Department of Justice. The Commission has options to purchase the vehicles for a nominal amount at the conclusion of the lease agreements.

Finance lease liabilities

	Minimum future lease payments		Present value of minimum future lease payments	
	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Not longer than 1 year	43	12	39	9
Longer than 1 year and not longer than 5 years	48	53	46	51
Longer than 5 years	-	-	-	-
Minimum lease payments	91	65	85	60
Less: Future finance charges	6	5	-	-
Present value of minimum lease payments	85	60	85	60
Included in the financial statements as:				
Current interest bearing liabilities	39	9	39	9
Non-current interest bearing liabilities	46	51	46	51
	85	60	85	60

Minimum future lease payments includes the aggregate of all lease payments and any guaranteed residual.

Disclosure for lessees-operating leases

Leasing arrangements

Operating leases relate to office and warehouse accommodation, and certain plant and equipment and office equipment. Leases of office, warehouse, and plant and equipment generally provide the Commission with a right of renewal at which time all terms are renegotiated.

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
Non-cancellable operating leases		
Not longer than 1 year	1,032	835
Longer than 1 year and not longer than 5 years	3,164	3,323
Longer than 5 years	-	441
	4,196	4,599

Notes to the financial statements

18. Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names

The persons who held the positions of Accountable Officer in the Commission are as follows:

Electoral Commissioner Mr Steven Tully 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006

Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with the management of the Commission during the reporting period was in the range:

\$210,000 - \$219,999 (\$200,000 - \$209,999 in 2005)

19. Remuneration of executives

The number of executive officers, other than Responsible Persons, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the first two columns in the table below in the relevant income bands. The base remuneration of executive officers is shown in the third and fourth columns. Base remuneration is exclusive of bonus payments, long-service leave payments, redundancy payments and retirement benefits.

A number of executive officers retired, or resigned in the past year. This had an impact on total remuneration figures due to the inclusion of annual leave and long-service leave payments.

	Total Remuneration		Base Remuneration	
	2006	2005	2006	2005
\$50,000 to \$59,999	-	1	-	-
\$90,000 to \$99,999	1	-	-	-
\$140,000 to \$149,999	-	-	1	1
\$170,000 to \$179,999	-	1	-	-
Total numbers	1	2	1	2
Total amount	90	232	140	246

20. Ex-gratia payments

The Commission made no ex-gratia payments during the reporting period. (2005 – Nil)

21. Subsequent events

To the best of the Commissions' knowledge, there have been no events occurring after the reporting date which relate to or may have a material financial effect on the Commission's statements.

Notes to the financial statements

22. Notes to cash flow statement

	2006 \$'000	2005 \$'000
(a) Reconciliation of cash		
For the purposes of the Cash Flow Statement, cash includes cash on hand and in banks net of outstanding bank overdrafts. Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the Cash Flow Statement is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet as follows:		
Cash at bank and on hand	1	1
Bank overdraft	(51)	(51)
	<u>(50)</u>	<u>(50)</u>
Due to the State of Victoria's funding arrangements, government departments generally do not hold a large cash reserve in their bank accounts. Cash received by the Commission from the generation of revenue is generally paid into the State's bank account, known as the Public Account. Similarly, any Commission expenditure, including those in the form of cheques drawn by the Commission for the payment of goods and services to its suppliers and creditors are made via the Public Account. The process is such that, the Public Account would remit to the Commission the cash required for the amount drawn on the cheques. This remittance by the Public Account occurs upon the presentation of the cheques by the Commission's suppliers or creditors.		
The above funding arrangements often result in the Commission having a notional shortfall in cash at bank required for payment of un-presented cheques at the reporting date.		
At 30 June 2006, cash at bank include the amount of a notional shortfall for the payment of un-presented cheques of \$51,000 (2005 - \$51,000)		
(b) Reconciliation of net result for the period to net cash flows from operating activities		
Net result for the reporting period	(1,188)	(1,972)
Depreciation and amortisation of non current assets	1,910	2,004
(Gain)/loss on sale of non-current assets	22	1
Correction of error	-	182
Adjustment to controlled receivables	-	19
Changes in net assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in assets:		
Current receivables	(115)	(248)
Current inventories	(403)	(84)
Other current assets	(532)	(120)
Increase/(decrease) in liabilities:		
Current payables	164	108
Current provisions	101	125
Non-current provisions	48	-
	<u>1,195</u>	<u>1,987</u>
Net cash from operating activities	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>

Notes to the financial statements

23. Financial instruments

(a) Financial risk management objectives

The Commission does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments.

(b) Significant accounting policies

Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument are disclosed in note 1 to the financial statements.

(c) Significant terms and conditions

(i) Cash: the carrying amount approximates fair value because of their short-term to maturity.

(ii) Receivables and payables: the carrying amount approximates fair value because of their short-term to maturity.

(d) Interest Rate Risk

The following table details the Commission's exposure to interest rate risk as at 30 June 2006:

	Weighted average effective interest rate	Variable interest rate	Less than 1 year	1~2 years	2~3 years	3~4 years	4+ years	Non- interest bearing	Total
2006	%	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial Assets									
Cash and cash equivalents	n/a	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Trade and other receivables	n/a	-	-	-	-	-	-	409	409
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	410	410
Financial Liabilities									
Bank overdraft	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	51
Payables	n/a	-	-	-	-	-	-	552	552
Finance lease liabilities	6.3	-	39	46	-	-	-	-	85
Total	-	-	39	46	-	-	-	603	688

Notes to the financial statements

23. Financial instruments (continued)

(d) Interest Rate Risk (continued)

The following table details the Commission's exposure to interest rate risk as at 30 June 2005:

	Weighted average effective interest rate	Floating interest rate	Less than 1 year	1~2 years	2~3 years	3~4 years	4+ years	Non- interest bearing	Total
2005	%	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial Assets									
Cash and cash equivalents	n/a	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Trade and other receivables	n/a	-	-	-	-	-	-	293	293
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	294	294
Financial Liabilities									
Bank overdraft	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	51
Payables	n/a	-	-	-	-	-	-	388	388
Finance lease liabilities	6.3	-	9	51	-	-	-	-	60
Total	-	-	9	51	-	-	-	439	499

(d) Credit risk

Credit risk refers to the risk that a counterparty will default on its contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Commission. The Commission has adopted a policy of only dealing with creditworthy counterparties and obtaining sufficient collateral where appropriate, as a means of mitigating the risk of financial loss from defaults. The Commission measures credit risk on a fair value basis.

The Commission does not have any significant credit risk exposure to any single counterparty or any group of counterparties having similar characteristics. The credit risk on liquid funds and derivative financial instruments is limited because the counterparties are banks with high credit-ratings assigned by international credit-rating agencies.

The carrying amount of financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the Commission's maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral obtained.

Notes to the financial statements

(e) Fair value

Management considers that the carrying amount of financial assets and liabilities recorded in the financial statements approximates their fair values (2005: net fair values)

The net fair value of cash and cash equivalents and non interest bearing monetary financial assets and financial liabilities of the Commission approximates their carrying amounts.

The aggregate net fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities, both recognised and unrecognised at balance date are:

Financial Instruments	2006		2005	
	Carrying Amount	Net Fair Value \$'000	Carrying Amount \$'000	Net Fair Value \$'000
On-balance sheet				
Financial Assets				
Cash & cash equivalents	1	1	1	1
Receivables	408	408	293	293
Total	409	409	294	294
Financial Liabilities				
Bank overdraft	51	51	51	51
Payables	552	552	388	388
Interest bearing liabilities	85	85	65	65
Total	688	688	504	504
Off-balance sheet				
Financial Assets				
Cash & cash equivalents	293	293	311	311
Receivables	632	632	957	957
Total	925	925	1,268	1,268
Financial Liabilities				
Candidates Deposits	2	2	1	1
Compulsory voting fines	266	266	281	281
Accounts Payable	239	239	186	186
Total	507	507	468	468

Net fair value is exclusive of costs which would be incurred on realisation of an asset, and inclusive of costs which would be incurred on settlement of a liability.

Notes to the financial statements

24. Impacts of adopting Australian equivalents to International Financial Reporting standards

The Commission changed its accounting policies, other than its accounting policies for financial instruments, on 1 July 2004 to comply with A-IFRS. The transition to A-IFRS is accounted for in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1 'First-time Adoption of Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards', with 1 July 2004 as the date of transition. The Commission changed its accounting policies for financial instruments effective from 1 July 2005 with no effect on transition as the Commission's financial instruments were limited to cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable and payable and overdraft.

An explanation of how the transition from superseded policies to A-IFRS has affected the Commission's financial position, financial performance and cash flows is set out in the following tables and the notes that accompany the tables.

Effect of A-IFRS on the balance sheet as at 1 July 2004

	Superseded policies*	Effect of transition to A-IFRS	A-IFRS
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	-	2
Bonds	8	-	8
Receivables	45	-	45
Other assets	178	-	178
Inventories	934	-	934
Total current assets	1,167	-	1,167
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2,211	-	2,211
Intangible assets	11,052	-	11,052
Total non-current assets	13,263	-	13,263
Total assets	14,430	-	14,430
Current liabilities			
Bank overdraft	71	-	71
Payables	280	-	280
Provisions	372	401	773
Interest bearing liabilities	3	-	3
Total current liabilities	726	401	1,127
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	465	(401)	64
Interest bearing liabilities	26	-	26
Total non-current liabilities	491	(401)	90
Total liabilities	1,217	-	1,217
Net assets	13,213	-	13,213
Equity			
Contributed Capital	8,805	9,456	18,261
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	4,408	(9,456)	(5,048)
Total equity	13,213	-	13,213

Notes to the financial statements

Effect of A-IFRS on the operating statement for the financial year ended 30 June 2005

	Superseded policies*	Effect of transition to A-IFRS	A-IFRS
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income			
Special appropriations	16,995	-	16,995
Other income	-	-	-
Total Income	<u>16,995</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,995</u>
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense	6,619	-	6,619
Supplies and services	9,409	182	9,591
Depreciation and amortisation expense	2,004	-	2,004
Other expenses	751	-	751
Finance costs	2	-	2
Correction of error	9,456	(9,456)	-
Total Expenses	<u>28,241</u>	<u>(9,274)</u>	<u>18,967</u>
Net result from continuing operations	<u>(11,246)</u>	<u>9,274</u>	<u>(1,972)</u>
Net result from discontinued operations	-	-	-
Net result for the period	<u>(11,246)</u>	<u>9,274</u>	<u>(1,972)</u>

* Reported financial results for the year ended 30 June 2005

Notes to the financial statements

Effect of A-IFRS on the balance sheet as at 30 June 2005

	Superseded policies*	Effect of transition to A-IFRS	A-IFRS
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	1	-	1
Bonds	-	-	-
Receivables	293	-	293
Other assets	307	-	307
Inventories	1,018	(182)	836
Total current assets	1,619	(182)	1,437
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2,011	-	2,011
Intangible assets	9,910	-	9,910
Total non-current assets	11,921	-	11,921
Total assets	13,540	(182)	13,358
Current liabilities			
Bank overdraft	51	-	51
Payables	388	-	388
Provisions	474	386	860
Interest bearing liabilities	9	-	9
Total current liabilities	922	386	1,308
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	488	(386)	102
Interest bearing liabilities	51	-	51
Total non-current liabilities	539	(386)	153
Total liabilities	1,461	-	1,461
Net assets	12,079	(182)	11,897
Equity			
Contributed Capital	18,917	-	18,917
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	(6,838)	(182)	(7,020)
Total equity	12,079	(182)	11,897

Notes to the financial statements

* Reported financial position for the financial year ended 30 June 2005

Notes to the financial statements

Effect of A-IFRS on the cash flow statement for the financial year ended 30 June 2005

There are no material differences between the cash flow statement presented under A-IFRS and the statement of cash flows presented under superseded policies.

Notes to income and equity

1 Revenue

Under superseded policies, the Commission recognised appropriations from Government as revenue. Under A-IFRS appropriations are classified as income. Accordingly, appropriations from Government have been reclassified in the operating statement from revenue to income.

In addition, any gain or loss on disposal of plant and equipment was recognised by the Commission on a 'gross' basis by recognising as revenues and expenses, the proceeds from sale, and the carrying amount of the plant and equipment disposed. Under A-IFRS, the gain or loss on disposal is recognised on a 'net' basis, and is classified as income, rather than revenue. Accordingly, the 'gross' amounts have been adjusted out of the operating statement for A-IFRS reporting purposes.

2 Correction of errors made under previous AGAAP

a) Overstatement of revenue and understatement of contributed capital

As noted in note 3, revenue was overstated in 2002 and 2003 by \$232,000 and \$9.224 million respectively. The error had the effect of understating contributed capital by \$232,000 in 2002 and \$9.456 million by the end of 2003. Under previous AGAAP, the errors were corrected in the period they were discovered (being 2004/05) as noted above. Under AIFRS, the 2004 transitional balance sheet has been adjusted to reflect the correction of the error. The effect of the correction is:

i) At 1 July 2004

Accumulated surplus and contributed capital were restated to adjust for the cumulative effect of the errors at 1 July 2004.

ii) At 30 June 2005

The is no effect on the Commission.

iii) For the year ended 30 June 2005

The effect of correcting the errors was to reduce the total 2005 expense by \$9.456 million as errors are required to be made retrospectively.

b) Overstatement of inventory

As stated in Note 4, due to administrative errors, it was identified during the 2005/06 financial year that inventory was overstated by \$182,000 due to failure to write off items which had been used. The error had the effect of overstating inventory at 30 June 2005 by \$182,000 and understating expenses by the same amount for the year ended 30 June 2005. Under previous AGAAP, the error would have been corrected in 2005/06. Under AIFRS, the comparatives have been adjusted to reflect the correction of the error. The effect of the correction is:

i) At 1 July 2004

There was no effect on the Commission.

ii) At 30 June 2005

Inventory was reduced by \$182,000 and retained earning reduced by the same amount.

iii) For the year ended 30 June 2005

The effect of correcting the errors was to increase 2005 expense by \$182,000.

Electoral Commissioner and chief finance and accounting officer's declaration

3 *Employee entitlements*

Disclosure in accordance with AASB 101 and AASB 119, requires that unconditional vested Long Service Leave representing 7+ years of continuous service is disclosed as a current liability even though the Commission does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months as it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

i) At 1 July 2004

Current provisions were increased by \$401,000, and non-current provisions decreased by \$401,000

ii) At 30 June 2005

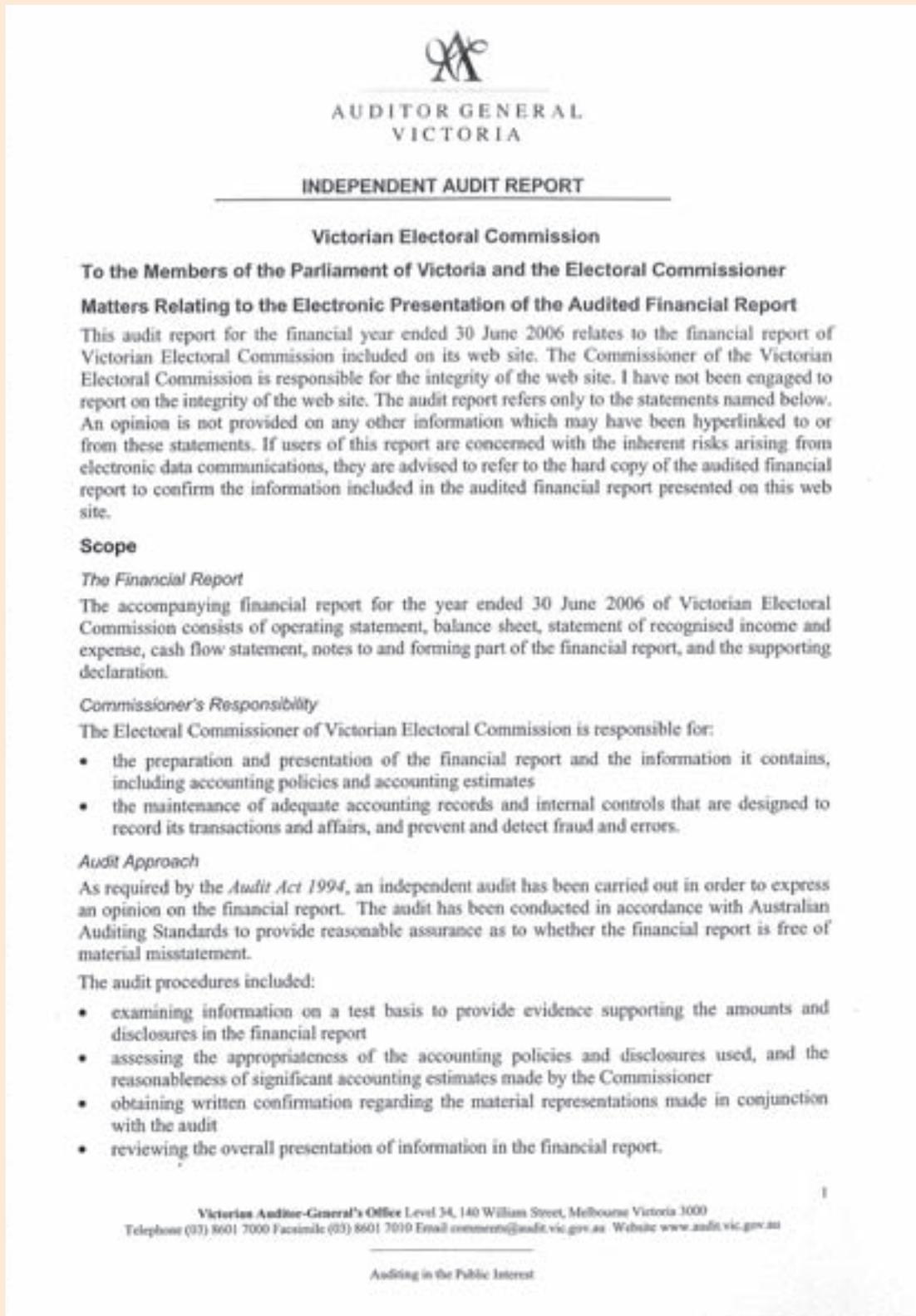
Current provisions were increased by \$386,000, and non-current provisions decreased by \$386,000



iii) For the year ended 30 June 2005

There was no effect on the Commission.

Auditor Generals Report





AUDITOR GENERAL
VICTORIA

Independent Audit Report (continued)

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether the financial report is presented in all material respects fairly in accordance with Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and the financial reporting requirements of the *Financial Management Act 1994*, so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the Commission's financial position, and its financial performance and cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Independence

The Auditor-General's independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. The Auditor-General is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which his powers and responsibilities are to be exercised. The Auditor-General and his staff and delegates comply with all applicable independence requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and the financial reporting requirements of the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the financial position of Victorian Electoral Commission as at 30 June 2006 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

MELBOURNE
16 August 2006



JW CAMERON
Auditor-General

2

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Auditing in the Public Interest

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Legislation governing the work of the Electoral Commissioner and the Victorian Electoral Commission

Constitution Act 1975

Electoral Act 2002

Legislation imposing certain duties on the Electoral Commissioner

Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990

City of Melbourne Act 2001

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982

Essential Services Act 1958

Health Services Act 1988

Juries Act 2000

Legal Profession Act 2004

Liquor Control Reform Act 1998

Local Government Act 1989

Senate Elections Act 1958

Shop Trading Reform Act 1996

Vital State Projects Act 1976

Relevant regulations

Agricultural Industry Development (Polls) Regulations 2001

City of Melbourne (Elections) Regulations 2001

Electoral Regulations 2002

Health Services (Community Health Centre Elections) Regulations 2001

Legal Profession (Board Election) Regulations 2006

Liquor Control Reform Regulations 1999

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2005

Shop Trading Reform (Polls) Regulations 1996

Victorian Institute of Teaching (Elections) Regulations 2002

Appendix 2 - Recent publications

Electoral Enrolment Information: collection and disclosure practices ^

Every vote will shape Victoria; a guide to enrolling and voting in Victoria^

Fast Facts. Voting in Victoria Z card™ format^

Improving access to the Victorian electoral system – A Disability Action Plan 2005-2007

Making voting secret – Victoria's introduction of a new method of voting that has spread around the world. By John Hirst*

Selections – Victorian Electoral Commission Newsletter, Number 10 April 2005^

Victorian Electoral Commission Annual Report 2004-2005*^

Victorian Electoral Commission: Corporate Plan 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2007^

Voting in Victoria State Government elections – An Easy English summary of Your voice, Your future^

Your Voice, Your Future^

Your vote will shape Victoria's new Upper House^

Your opinion counts – young people and voting 3rd edition^

*Available from Information Victoria, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000

^Available on-line at www.vec.vic.gov.au

Appendix 3 - District and Province enrolments as at 30 June 2006

Enrolment as at 30 Jun 06				Enrolment as at 30 Jun 06			
Electorate	Members	Electors	Deviation	Electorate	Members	Electors	Deviation
Ballarat East District	1	37,238	-1.41%	Broadmeadows District	1	37,007	-2.02%
Ballarat West District	1	40,809	+8.05%	Pascoe Vale District	1	38,173	+1.07%
Macedon District	1	42,054	+11.34%	Thomastown District	1	37,118	-1.73%
Melton District	1	38,041	+0.72%	Yuroke District	1	40,779	+7.97%
Ballarat Province		158,142	+4.68%	Melbourne North Province		153,077	+1.32%
Benalla District	1	35,686	-5.52%	Altona District	1	40,516	+7.27%
Evelyn District	1	37,547	-0.59%	Footscray District	1	37,288	-1.28%
Seymour District	1	37,685	-0.23%	Tarneit District	1	41,122	+8.87%
Yan Yean District	1	39,859	+5.53%	Williamstown District	1	37,088	-1.81%
Central Highlands Province		150,777	-0.20%	Melbourne West Province		156,014	+3.27%
Carrum District	1	39,571	+4.77%	Albert Park District	1	42,825	+13.38%
Cranbourne District	1	39,701	+5.11%	Caulfield District	1	36,323	-3.83%
Frankston District	1	35,282	-6.59%	Malvern District	1	36,974	-2.11%
Lyndhurst District	1	36,363	-3.73%	Prahran District	1	37,649	-0.32%
Chelsea Province		150,917	-0.11%	Monash Province		153,771	+1.78%
Derrimut District	1	35,668	-5.57%	Benambra District	1	35,227	-6.73%
Keilor District	1	44,981	+19.09%	Murray Valley District	1	36,339	-3.79%
Kororoit District	1	38,024	+0.67%	Rodney District	1	35,548	-5.88%
Niddrie District	1	36,050	-4.55%	Shepparton District	1	36,011	-4.66%
Doutta Galla Province		154,723	+2.41%	North Eastern Province		143,125	-5.26%
Box Hill District	1	37,647	-0.33%	Bendigo East District	1	37,344	-1.13%
Burwood District	1	37,901	+0.35%	Bendigo West District	1	39,168	+3.70%
Hawthorn District	1	37,547	-0.59%	Mildura District	1	36,141	-4.31%
Kew District	1	35,876	-5.01%	Swan Hill District	1	33,740	-10.67%
East Yarra Province		148,971	-1.39%	North Western Province		146,393	-3.10%
Dandenong District	1	34,598	-8.40%	Bayswater District	1	36,328	-3.82%
Gembrook District	1	37,968	+0.52%	Kilsyth District	1	38,049	+0.74%
Narre Warren North District	1	36,898	-2.31%	Monbulk District	1	36,130	-4.34%
Narre Warren South District	1	44,817	+18.66%	Warrandyte District	1	39,375	+4.25%
Eumemmerring Province		154,281	+2.12%	Silvan Province		149,882	-0.79%
Bellarine District	1	40,256	+6.58%	Bulleen District	1	34,580	-8.45%
Geelong District	1	38,771	+2.65%	Doncaster District	1	35,394	-6.29%
Lara District	1	40,050	+6.04%	Eltham District	1	38,147	+1.00%
South Barwon District	1	42,102	+11.47%	Ivanhoe District	1	37,177	-1.57%
Geelong Province		161,179	+6.69%	Templestowe Province		145,298	-3.83%
Gippsland East District	1	38,810	+2.75%	Clayton District	1	33,710	-10.75%
Gippsland South District	1	36,960	-2.14%	Mount Waverley District	1	36,495	-3.38%
Morwell District	1	36,422	-3.57%	Mulgrave District	1	33,965	-10.07%
Narracan District	1	38,437	+1.77%	Oakleigh District	1	34,312	-9.16%
Gippsland Province		150,629	-0.30%	Waverley Province		138,482	-8.34%
Bentleigh District	1	37,039	-1.94%	Lowan District	1	38,240	+1.24%
Brighton District	1	36,622	-3.04%	Polwarth District	1	40,116	+6.21%
Mordialloc District	1	39,126	+3.59%	Ripon District	1	36,278	-3.95%
Sandringham District	1	36,072	-4.50%	South-West Coast District	1	40,816	+8.06%
Higinbotham Province		148,859	-1.47%	Western Province		155,450	+2.89%
Bundoora District	1	35,213	-6.77%	Bass District	1	38,866	+2.90%
Mill Park District	1	38,505	+1.95%	Hastings District	1	39,585	+4.81%
Northcote District	1	37,952	+0.48%	Mornington District	1	36,387	-3.66%
Preston District	1	37,634	-0.36%	Nepean District	1	36,299	-3.89%
Jika Jika Province		149,304	-1.17%	Western Port Province		151,137	+0.04%
Ferntree Gully District	1	40,662	+7.66%	Totals	88	3,323,719	
Forest Hill District	1	36,618	-3.05%	District Average		37,770	
Mitcham District	1	36,041	-4.58%	Province Average		151,078	
Scoresby District	1	37,997	+0.60%				
Koonung Province		151,318	+0.16%				
Brunswick District	1	38,872	+2.92%				
Essendon District	1	37,333	-1.16%				
Melbourne District	1	37,748	-0.06%				
Richmond District	1	38,037	+0.71%				
Melbourne Province		151,990	+0.60%				

Appendices

Appendix 4 - Victorian registered political parties as at 30 June 2006

Political Party	Registered Officer
Australian Democrats (Victorian Division)	Mr R Stone Registered Officer G1 Eastbourne House 62 Wellington Parade East Melbourne VIC 3002
Australian Labor Party—Victorian Branch	Mr Stephen Newnham State Secretary 360 King Street West Melbourne VIC 3003
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	Mr K Cook Registered Officer PO Box 9 Doveton VIC 3177
Citizens Electoral Council (Victorian Division)	Ms Gabrielle Marie Peut Registered Officer PO Box 376 Coburg VIC 3058
Country Alliance	Mr Russell William Bate PO Box 107 Jamieson VIC 3723
Democratic Labor Party (DLP) of Australia	Mr J V Mulholland Registered Officer PO Box 8118 Monash University Clayton VIC 3168
Liberal Party of Australia—Victorian Division	Mr Julian Sheezel State Director 104 Exhibition Street Melbourne VIC 3000
National Party of Australia—Victoria	Mr Luke O'Sullivan State Director Level 7 24 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000
Socialist Alliance (Victoria)	Mr Jody Betzien Registered Officer PO Box 12427 A'Beckett Street VIC 8006
The Australian Greens—Victoria	Mr Gurmeet Sekhon Registered Officer GPO Box 4589 Melbourne VIC 3001

Appendix 5 - Outcomes of applications to the Municipal Electoral Tribunal

Council	Details	Status
Moreland (2004) North West Ward	The application included a number of allegations in regard to the distribution of how-to-vote cards, prevention of candidate helpers canvassing for votes, denial of a request for a recount, making a declaration of the result not in accordance with the Act, discrepancies between the results on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th, and ballot papers being incorrectly determined as informal.	A directions hearing was held on 1 March 2005. The Tribunal ordered the inspection of informal ballot papers which took place on 7 June 2005. Hearing held 8 - 10 August 2005. Matter dismissed on 22 August. Applicant appealed for review of decision by VCAT. Application withdrawn on 18 April 2006
Hobsons Bay (2004) Altona North Ward	It was alleged that a successful candidate's election material contained deceptive and misleading statements in breach of section 55(5) of the Act.	A directions hearing was held on 1 March 2005. A further directions hearing was scheduled for 14 July 2005 and the matter listed for hearing on 24 August 2005. Matter dismissed on 4 October 2005.
Banyule (2005) Hawdon Ward	Improper use of electoral data by candidate. How-to-vote not authorised by real person. Misleading how-to-vote cards. Unauthorised use of Australia Post barcodes by candidate.	Application withdrawn prior to directions hearing.
Brimbank (2005) Grasslands Ward	Failure of Returning Officer to deal with breaches of s.55A, s.57 and s.59 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> . Returning Officer allowed distribution of misleading and deceptive material within 400 metres of polling places.	Hearing set for 31 May 2006. Adjourned until 17 July 2006.
Greater Dandenong (2005) Noble Park Ward	Candidate did not follow through on preference deal. Distribution of a misleading how-to-vote card.	Hearing held 8 May 2006. Applicant given 14 days to consider amendment of application. Hearing adjourned to date to be fixed.
Hume (2005) Jacksons Creek Ward	Candidate distributed false and defamatory election material	Hearing held 22 May 2006. VEC removed as party to application. Matter dismissed on Monday 19 June 2006.
Kingston (2005) Como Ward	Failure of Returning Officer to conduct a recount.	Hearing held 5 and 6 April 2006. Order made for recount to be conducted. VEC conducted recount on 6 May 2006 – confirmed elected candidate.

Appendices

Appendix 5 - Outcomes of applications to the Municipal Electoral Tribunal continued

Council	Details	Status
Maribyrnong 2005) Ironbark	Candidate distributed misleading election material. Tampering with ballot box. Objection to candidate claiming to be Mayor after 6:00 am on election day.	Application withdrawn prior to directions hearing. Applicant advised at directions hearing that he wished to proceed with his application. Awaiting Magistrate's ruling on whether there is valid application before the Tribunal
Maribyrnong (2005) Saltwater Ward	How-to-vote card distributors at two voting centres were deceived by unknown persons to take a break.	Hearing set down for 18 April 2006. Application withdrawn on 10 April 2006.
Moonee Valley (2005) McCracken	Failure of VEC to distribute voter notice in accordance with Regulation 43.	Hearing scheduled for 23 - 25 May 2006. Adjourned to 12-14 July 2006.
Whitehorse (2005) Morack	Candidate distributed misleading election material. Dummy candidates. Candidate using council resources during election.	Hearing held 20 April 2006. Magistrate adjourned to a date to be fixed for mention. Applicant wrote to the tribunal after the hearing concerning some other issues not raised in her amended application. Matter dismissed on Wednesday 28 June 2006.
Whitehorse (2005) Springfield	Voters insufficiently informed of change to counting system. Dummy candidates. Misleading statements made by candidates.	Hearing 3 May 2006. Application withdrawn at hearing.

Appendix 6 - Pecuniary interest declaration

The Electoral Commissioner, Mr Steve Tully, and the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Ms Liz Williams have completed declarations of pecuniary interests.

Appendix 7 - Consultants engaged: 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006

Consultancy engagements over \$100,000

Nil

Consultancy engagements under \$100,000

Four

Total \$39,392.48

Appendix 8 - Freedom of Information: Part 2 Statement

Decision-making powers

Decision-making powers and other powers affecting members of the public are found in the legislation administered by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), particularly the *Electoral Act 2002*.

Categories of documents

Description of record-keeping system

The VEC maintains its registry on Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000. Registry files group material according to subject areas. Each file relates to a separate subject. The subject may be very broad, such as the general file on an election, or it may be an individual transaction with an external party, an Election Manager, or within the VEC. Files contain correspondence and internal documents in chronological order.

Electoral Boundaries Commission files are maintained on Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000, in a separate system from the VEC registry.

Other records

An up-to-date list of the names and addresses of electors is available for inspection at the VEC without charge.

A register of political parties is available for public inspection.

FOI arrangements

Requests for access

Requests for access to VEC records are dealt with by the Office's FOI Manager:

Ms Sue Lang
FOI Manager
Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne Vic. 3000
Tel: 03 9299 0520

Applicants can request to inspect a document, to obtain a copy, or both to see it and obtain a copy. Also, other forms of access can be granted depending on the nature of the request and the type of document, for example producing a printed document containing information held on computer equipment.

Requests should be made in writing, and should be accompanied by a \$21.50 application fee.

Publications available for sale from Information Victoria or the VEC are not available under FOI.

Identification of documents

FOI requests should be as specific as possible to enable the VEC to identify documents. Where the terms of a request are vague, the VEC will attempt to assist applicants to identify the documents sought.

Response to requests

Once the VEC has received sufficient information to identify the document requested, you will be notified in writing within 45 days as to whether the document is available.

Sometimes the VEC cannot grant full access to documents. The classes of documents that are exempt from release are detailed in Part IV of the Act. It is the responsibility of the FOI Manager to identify any such documents and to set out in writing, the reasons for their exempt status. Applicants will be advised, as required under the Act, of the ability to seek an internal review of any decision to claim an exemption for any document(s), or part of any document(s).

Charges under the Act

In summary, charges for access to documents as set out in the Freedom of Information (Access Charges) Regulations 1993 are:

application fee: \$21.50;

search fees: where the VEC has to identify and locate the documents—maximum of \$20.00 per hour;

supervision fees: where a document is inspected at the VEC by the applicant under the supervision of an officer—\$5.00 per 15 minutes;

photocopy fees: 20 cents per A4 page, non-coloured photocopy;

other fees: the actual costs incurred by the VEC in producing a copy can be charged, for example a microfiche of a file, or the retrieval of information from a computer file; and

deposits: where charges will be substantial, a deposit of \$25.00 may be requested before the VEC will grant access.

Some or all of these charges will be waived if the applicant cannot afford to pay, and in certain other circumstances.

Glossary

- Ballot**
A method of secret voting.
- By-election**
A by-election is an election in a single electoral to fill a casual vacancy caused by the departure of sitting Member of Parliament or Local Government councillor before the term expires.
- Candidate**
A candidate is an eligible elector who nominates for election.
- Compulsory enrolment**
All Australian citizens 18 years and over are required by law to enrol.
- Compulsory voting**
All enrolled electors must vote at State and Local elections (except for those over 70 and non-resident voters).
- Contested election**
A contested election is an election where more than one candidate is represented.
- Councillor**
An elected member of a municipality.
- District**
One of the 88 Legislative Assembly electorates.
- Election**
The choosing of representatives by the voters.
- Election Date**
The date voters cast their votes.
- Elector**
A person whose name appears on the register of electors and who is entitled to vote in elections.
- Electoral Commissioner**
The statutory officer appointed by the Governor-in-Council with responsibility for the proper conduct of Parliamentary, local and statutory elections.
- Electoral enrolment register**
The VEC's database of all Victorian electors.
- Electoral Roll**
A list of names of all the people who are entitled to vote in an election.
- Enrolment**
The placement of one's name and address on the register of electors. A person cannot vote at an election unless they are enrolled.
- Informal voting**
A ballot paper that is either left blank or is incorrectly marked. These ballot papers are excluded from the count and therefore do not contribute to the election of a candidate.
- Legislative Assembly (Lower House)**
One of the two houses in State Parliament. There are 88 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), one from each district. The party or coalition of parties that wins majority support in this House forms the Government.
- Legislative Council (Upper House)**
One of the two houses of State Parliament. It is often called the 'house of review' as this is one of its major functions. There are 44 Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs), two from each Province within Victoria.
- Preferential voting**
A vote for all candidates in order of preference. If no candidate has an absolute majority or first preference votes, preferences are distributed until one candidate has an absolute majority.
- Proportional representation**
A system of voting designed to elect representatives in proportion to the amount of support each has in the electorate.
- Province**
One of the 22 Legislative Council electorates. Each province contains four electoral districts.
- Redivision**
The redrawing of electoral boundaries to ensure that there are, as near as possible, equal numbers of voters in each electorate within Victoria.
- Senior Election Officials**
A trained electoral official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election. The Election Manager for an election is the front-line manager for that election.
- Voter participation**
The percentage of enrolled electors who voted.
- Voting centre**
A place at which electors can vote in an election. There are three types in State elections:
- Early voting centres;
 - Mobile voting centres; and
 - Election day voting centres

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Victorian Electoral Commission

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Melbourne 3000

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