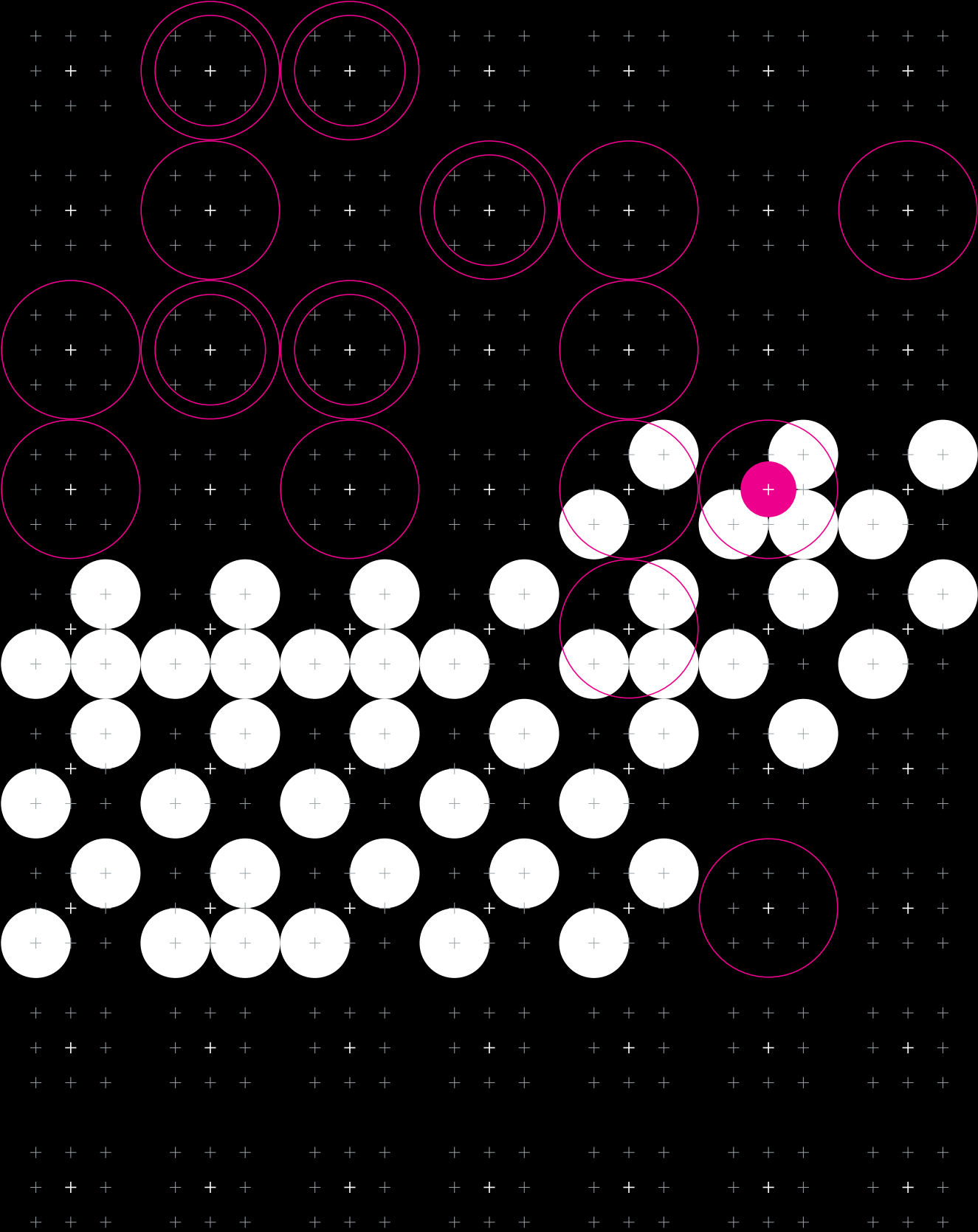


Draft service plan
2026 State election
November 2025



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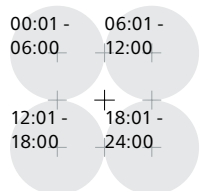
Draft service plan

2026 state election

November 2025

Milestones and activities (Front cover)

The cover is a graphic representation of the key election milestones for the 2026 state election, spotlighting the ballot paper counting activities. Magenta circles denote election milestones. Solid white circles denote counting activities, each corresponding to a 6-hour operational period within the day; below is the unit used to represent this.



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this nation, as the traditional custodians of the lands on which the VEC works and where we conduct our business.

We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present, and emerging. The VEC is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Version history

The draft version of this election service plan was prepared for publication in November 2025.

Foreword

With the 2026 Victorian state election taking place in an era of rapid change, we have had to fundamentally rethink how elections are planned and delivered in Victoria. The way we conduct elections today cannot look the same as it did 10 years ago. This service plan sets out the significant changes already underway, and those still to come, to ensure every Victorian can take part in a fair, accessible and trusted election. I encourage all stakeholders—voters, candidates, political parties, community organisations and government partners—to read this plan and share it widely, so that everyone approaches the election with clarity and confidence.

The publication of the *Strategic Service Plan* in May 2025, followed by this *Draft election service plan* in November 2025, have opened a more deliberate conversation about how elections are delivered in Victoria. The insights gained have shaped the foundations of a renewed delivery model, reflected throughout this report. How we implement this model will affect the way elections are experienced, which is precisely why they are detailed here: to ensure everyone understands what is changing, and why, well before election day.

The most visible changes surround election venues, how results are reported, and management of the Legislative Council region elections. Venues are being reshaped to better serve communities and ease pressure on staff and voters. Result timeframes will be adjusted to balance timely outcomes with accuracy and transparency. Counting changes for Legislative Council region elections aim to strengthen trust, fairness, and integrity in Upper House electoral processes. These innovations aim to respond to critical pressure points in the election timeline, reflect lessons from past elections and respond to shifting public priorities and the practical realities of election delivery.

The current electoral landscape is more complex than ever. Delivering an election now means navigating higher costs, complex supply chains, stronger competition for resources, and new pressures such as mis- and dis-information. Fiscal sustainability is a necessary component of our planning, as election delivery grows more resource-intensive and harder to scale. These are not insurmountable challenges, but they demand modernisation, adaptation and innovation from the VEC.

We are entering a new phase of election delivery. This service model is a direct response to community expectations, the growing demand for change, and the recommendations put forward by Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee. It sets the foundation for how we must evolve to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

I invite you to read this plan in full, to understand the changes ahead, and to recognise the care with which we will deliver them. Above all, I want to reaffirm my confidence in the process and in our ability to deliver an election in which Victorians can continue to place their trust.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bluemmel'.

Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner

Consultation on the draft plan

Feedback on the *Draft election service plan* for the 2026 state election closes at 5 pm on Friday 27 February 2026. We will release the final election service plan by August 2026.

Submissions of feedback can be provided to:
Assistant Commissioner, Event Strategy and Delivery
Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Email: SEProgram2026@vec.vic.gov.au

The *Draft election service plan* is also available on our website at vec.vic.gov.au/SE26serviceplan

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Glossary

List of definitions

Term	Definition
2-candidate preferred (2CP)	An indicative count conducted for statistical purposes, involving the distribution of preferences to the 2 candidates considered most likely to be in the lead after a distribution of preferences.
Above-the-line	Voting above the line is when a voter puts a preference in a box for a group above the line on a Legislative Council region election ballot paper.
Absent vote	A vote cast by an elector on election day at a voting centre that is located outside the electoral district for which they are enrolled.
Ballot draw	A randomised process conducted by election managers to determine the order candidates and groups will appear on ballot papers.
Ballot material	Official election materials, including ballot papers, declaration and postal envelopes, and group voting ticket booklets.
Ballot paper	The official paper listing the names of all the candidates contesting the election on which the voter records their preferences for each candidate in the election.
Below-the-line	Voting below the line is when a voter preferences individual candidates in boxes below the line on a Legislative Council region election ballot paper.
Bulk nominations tool	A secure online system that enables registered political parties to pre-complete their paperwork and manage multiple candidate nominations simultaneously for an election.
Campaigner	A person who canvasses for votes, including on behalf of a candidate, political party or organisation.
Candidate	A person who is nominated under section 69 of <i>the Electoral Act 2002</i> (Vic) (Electoral Act) to contest the election. For political donation disclosures and reporting under Part 12 of the Electoral Act, a candidate is: › a person who has been selected by a registered political party to be a candidate in an election; or › a person other than a member of a registered political party, who has publicly announced an intention to be a candidate in an election.
Candidate Helper	A digital tool for pre-completing nomination forms for independent candidates and the bulk nominations tool for registered political parties to nominate their endorsed candidates.
Centralised activity site (CAS)	A central location where we conduct multiple election activities, including postal vote processing, telephone assisted voting, extraction and counting.
Close of roll	The deadline for eligible electors to enrol to vote or update their enrolled details prior to an election.

Term	Definition
Close seat	A Legislative Assembly district election in which the margin between the leading candidates is small, and an indicative result cannot be identified until all votes are counted and verified.
Core staff	Our workforce of ongoing, fixed-term and casual staff based at our centrally located offices and warehouse sites.
Court of Disputed Returns	A jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Victoria that hears challenges to state election results. They have the authority to declare an election candidate as not elected, declare a candidate that did not win as elected, or declare any district or region election void.
Data integrity framework	A structured set of processes that ensure data used and published by the VEC is accurate, consistent, complete, and reliable across all reporting activities.
Declaration vote	A vote that requires a written declaration by the voter. There are several types of declaration vote, including postal votes, absent votes, provisional votes and marked-as-voted votes.
Democracy ambassador	A community member we employ to deliver electoral information and enrolment services to priority communities.
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	A statutory officer of the Victorian Electoral Commission who assists the Electoral Commissioner in the performance of their functions and may exercise delegated powers under the Electoral Act.
Dis-information	False or inaccurate information that is intended to mislead or deceive.
Distribution of preferences	If no candidate in a Legislative Assembly district election has an absolute majority of first preferences during the count, or in a Legislative Council region election, if fewer candidates obtain the quota required to be elected than the number of vacancies to be filled, a preference distribution is conducted. In a Legislative Assembly district election, the candidate with fewest votes is excluded and their votes are passed on to other candidates according to voters' preferences. This process is repeated until a candidate achieves an absolute majority. In a Legislative Council region election, the votes in surplus of the quota from the candidate or candidates declared elected are distributed or the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded and their votes are passed on to other candidates according to voters' preferences. This process is repeated until the vacancy or vacancies are filled.
District	One of 88 electorates represented by a member of the Legislative Assembly.
Early voting	Electors can vote before election day at an early voting centre.
Early voting centre (EVC)	Electors can vote before election day at an early voting centre. This includes joint EVCs which will service multiple districts, for example where the EVC is situated near a district border.
Early voting liaison officer	An election official responsible for monitoring operations at EVCs to ensure the consistent application of election procedures across venues.
EasyVote Guide	A tailored guide sent to electors before an election, providing details about when, where and how to vote, along with accessibility information and voting options.

Term	Definition
Election day	The day named as the election day on the writ for an election.
Election day voting centre (VC)	A designated venue open on election day where voters from within a district can attend to cast their votes in person.
Election Infrastructure Location Strategy	A framework guiding the location and use of election offices, VCs and hubs to support efficient and centralised election delivery.
Election casual database	A database of individuals who have expressed interest in casual temporary election roles, used to fill staffing positions as required during election periods.
Election liaison officer	An election official responsible for visiting election day VCs to monitor operations, identity and report resource needs to election managers, deliver materials where required, and ensure consistent application of election procedures across voting centres.
Election Management System	Our computerised election management system used by election managers to capture election data. Results data is also entered directly into the Election Management System.
Election management team (EMT)	The team responsible for managing election operations within a district, comprising an election manager and one or more assistant election managers.
Election manager	A senior election official appointed by the VEC to be responsible for the administration of an election for an electorate.
Election office	The location where the election manager conducts the election. There is one election office for each district.
Election official	A person appointed by the VEC to work at an election.
Election staff	Individuals employed by the VEC to deliver election activities.
Election support officer	An experienced senior election official that is responsible for supporting EMTs.
Election venue locator	An online tool that allows voters to search for and view the locations of VCs.
Elector	A person whose name appears on the Victorian register of electors.
Electoral Commissioner	A person appointed by the Governor-in-Council to be responsible for the administration of electoral law in Victoria.
Electoral Matters Committee (EMC)	A joint investigatory committee of the Victorian Parliament to conduct inquiries into the conduct of state and local government elections, referendums, and other matters relating to electoral law in Victoria.
Electoral Registrar	A VEC staff member responsible for managing enrolment services and maintaining the accuracy of the electoral roll.
Electoral roll	The list of people entitled to vote in a particular election.
Electronic roll mark-off	The process of marking a voter's name electronically off the electoral roll when they are issued ballot papers.

Term	Definition
Failed election	Under section 72 of the Electoral Act, an election fails if: › a candidate for a Legislative Assembly district election dies after noon on the final nomination day and before 6 pm on election day; or › the successful candidate for a Legislative Assembly district election dies after 6 pm on election day and before being declared elected; or › no candidate is nominated or declared elected.
First preference count	The initial count of votes in which each ballot paper is allocated to the candidate marked as the voter's first preference.
General postal voter (GPV)	A person who is automatically mailed a postal ballot pack for all elections in their area for reasons such as illness, age, remote location or being a registered overseas elector.
Group voting ticket	A statement setting out how a group in the Legislative Council region election gives preferences to all candidates in that election. Group voting tickets apply to ballot papers marked above the line.
How-to-vote card (HTVC)	Any electoral material that: › includes a representation of a ballot paper, including partial or purported partial representations of a ballot paper; or › lists the names of any or all of the candidates for an election with a number indicating an order of voting preference against the names of any or all of those candidates.
Hub	A single venue combining one to 1–4 election offices for nearby districts, allowing for streamlined and coordinated election delivery.
Hub management team	The team responsible for hub operations, consisting of a hub manager, a logistics and resourcing lead, and a staffing lead.
Independent candidate	A candidate at an election who is not endorsed by a registered political party.
Informal vote	A ballot paper that is cast but cannot be included in the count because the voter's intention is not clear or the ballot paper has been completed incorrectly.
Joint early voting centre	An EVC that issues in-district early votes for 2 or more electorates.
Joint voting centre (JVC)	A VC that issues in-district votes for 2 or more electorates on election day.
Legislative Assembly	The Lower House of the Victorian Parliament.
Legislative Council	The Upper House of the Victorian Parliament.
Labour hire staff	Workers engaged through an external labour hire agency to perform temporary roles for the VEC during election periods.
Low sensory voting	A mobile voting option where the voting centre environment is adjusted for voters who are neurodiverse.
Marked-as-voted vote	A vote issued to a person who claims not to have voted at the election despite their name being marked off the electoral roll as having already voted.

Term	Definition
Mis-information	False or inaccurate information that is spread regardless of intent to mislead or deceive.
Mobile voting	A voting centre temporarily set up at a site to assist electors to vote who may experience barriers to accessing other voting methods.
Operational command centre	A centralised location established to oversee state-wide election operations.
Ordinary vote	A vote cast by an elector on election day at a voting centre that is located in the electorate for which they are enrolled, excluding provisional and marked-as-voted votes.
Participation	The number of voters marked off the roll as a proportion of the number of people on the register of electors for the election. Not to be confused with turnout.
Personnel helpline	A phone and email support channel to assist election staff in the use of personnel systems
Postal voting	Electors can apply to have their ballot papers mailed to them. Electors are provided with an envelope to securely return their ballot papers to be included in the count.
Preference distribution	The process used to determine the successful candidate in an election when no candidate has received enough first preference votes to be elected or there are still vacancies to be filled. <i>See distribution of preferences.</i>
Preliminary scrutiny	The process of assessing postal and declaration vote envelopes to determine whether the contents can be accepted or rejected and extracted, prior to being counted.
Priority community	A community that is underrepresented in elections in terms of enrolment or turnout or overrepresented in terms of informality.
Provisional vote	A vote issued to a person who claims to be entitled to vote at an election and the name of that person is not on, or cannot be found on, the electoral roll.
Psephologist	An expert in the statistical study of elections and trends in voting.
Recheck	A routine step of all election counts, in which ballot papers that have been counted are checked again for formality, correct sorting to first preference, and correct reconciliation of totals.
Recount	A re-examination and count of all formal and/or informal ballot papers before the declaration of an election, conducted under section 120 of the Electoral Act.
Region	One of 8 electorates represented by 5 members of the Legislative Council. There are 11 districts in each region.
Registered political party (RPP)	A political party that is on the VEC's register of political parties. Registration entitles a political party to have the registered party details, including a registered logo, placed next to its candidate(s) names on Legislative Assembly district election ballot paper(s) or above the group name above the line on Legislative Council region election ballot paper(s).
Report to Parliament	A formal report tabled in the Victorian Parliament outlining the conduct and outcomes of an election.

Term	Definition
Restricted area	The area established under section 110J(6) of the Electoral Act that allows early and postal vote extraction and sorting to take place prior to the close of voting to ensure the security and secrecy of the process.
Scrutineer	A person appointed by a candidate to represent the candidate during electoral activities and make sure the election is conducted according to the law.
Secondment program	A program that enables employees from the Victorian Public Service to be temporarily assigned to senior election official (SEO) roles within the VEC to supplement workforce capacity.
Senior election official (SEO)	An election official with advanced training to manage electoral operations.
Strategic service plan	A document summarising the major pieces of work the VEC plans to deliver over a 3- and 5-year planning cycle.
Telephone assisted voting (TAV)	A secure voting facility provided by the VEC for electors prescribed by the regulations to use this service. Use of this service involves casting a secret vote over a telephone service.
Turnout	The number of votes counted in an election as a proportion of the number of people on the register of electors for the election. Not to be confused with participation.
Venue footprint	The planned number, type and distribution of election venues used to deliver an election across all districts and regions.
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)	The body empowered to hear appeals against administrative decisions made by certain agencies, including the VEC.
Vote exchange	A process that involves all early votes that were cast outside of their district being sorted, reconciled and packaged for dispatch to the CAS.
VoterAlert	An opt-in service that sends enrolment and voting reminders to enrolled voters via email and SMS.
Voting centre	A venue appointed by the VEC for voting at an election as an EVC, a mobile voting centre, or an election day VC.
Voting centre manager	An election official responsible for overseeing the operation of a VC on election day.
Writ	An order by the Governor or Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to the Electoral Commissioner that an election be held. The writ specifies key election dates.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Long version
2CP	2-candidate preferred
2PP	2-party preferred
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AEM	Assistant election manager
AFTVN	Apparent failure to vote
ATL	Above-the-line
BTL	Below-the-line
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CAS	Centralised Activity Site
ECANZ	Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand
Electoral Act	<i>Electoral Act 2002</i> (Vic)
EMC	Electoral Matters Committee
eSafety	Office of the eSafety Commissioner
EVC	Early voting centre
HMT	Hub management team
HTVC	How-to-vote card
OHS	Occupational health and safety
PES	Public enquiry service
RPP	Registered political party
SEO	Senior election official
TAV	Telephone assisted voting
VC	Voting centre
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VEC	Victorian Electoral Commission
VPS	Victorian Public Service

1. Introduction

1.1 About us

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is an independent and impartial statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (Electoral Act). We conduct fair, efficient and impartial elections in accordance with the law.

Building a stronger future for Victorian democracy is our purpose, and we are committed to delivering a trusted democratic process through excellence and impartiality. Our vision of all Victorians actively participating in their democracy drives everything we do.

Our responsibilities include:

- › conducting parliamentary elections, by-elections and referendums
- › conducting local government elections, by-elections and countbacks conducting certain statutory elections and polls
- › considering and reporting to the Minister responsible on issues affecting the conduct of parliamentary elections, including administrative issues requiring legislative remedy
- › regulating obligations under the Electoral Act
- › preparing electoral rolls for parliamentary elections, voters' rolls for local government elections, jury lists, and providing enrolment information to members of Parliament and registered political parties
- › ensuring the enrolment of eligible voters
- › administering and regulating Victoria's political funding and donation laws
- › contributing to public understanding and awareness of elections and electoral matters through information and education programs
- › conducting and promoting research into electoral matters that are in the public interest
- › providing administrative and technical support to state electoral boundary reviews and local government electoral structure reviews, and leading local government ward boundary reviews
- › reporting to Parliament on our activities.

The head of the VEC is the Electoral Commissioner, who is appointed by the governing council for a 10-year term. The Electoral Commissioner is independent of the government of the day, reporting directly to Parliament. Sven Bluemmel is the appointed Electoral Commissioner and Dana Fleming is the appointed Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

1.2 About this election service plan

An event the size of a state election requires significant planning, thorough preparation and coordinated delivery. The voting experience of each voter must be positive, while the role we play in providing that opportunity should remain largely unseen.

This election service plan is a keystone document that outlines the planning and preparation for the 2026 state election. It informs all stakeholders of the measures in place to achieve a successful outcome and a high standard of service for voters.

This plan also provides election participants with guidance on how the 2026 state election will be delivered and highlights key changes to our regulatory and electoral operations they can expect from the 2022 state election. This includes the many employees, appointees, candidates, registered political parties (RPPs), contractors, and service providers on whom we rely. Their understanding of the election, and their role within it, is essential to delivering a successful event and a positive voting experience for every voter.

1.3 Guiding principles

We will conduct the 2026 state election based on established and accepted principles.

We will:

- › follow state electoral law, and apply it impartially and equitably with all participants in the process treated fairly and justly
- › perform all tasks in a non-partisan and politically neutral manner to the highest standard of accuracy
- › work to provide every voter with a quality and convenient service in which to exercise their democratic rights.

1.4 Statement of intent

Victorians who are eligible to vote will do so at an election that is:

- › fully compliant with the law
- › transparent

- › fair and accurate
- › delivered with efficiency, enthusiasm and to the highest standards.

This intent aligns with our commitment to deliver a trusted democratic process through excellence and impartiality. It provides the foundation for all election plans and projects and guides our decision-making, actions and allocation of resources.

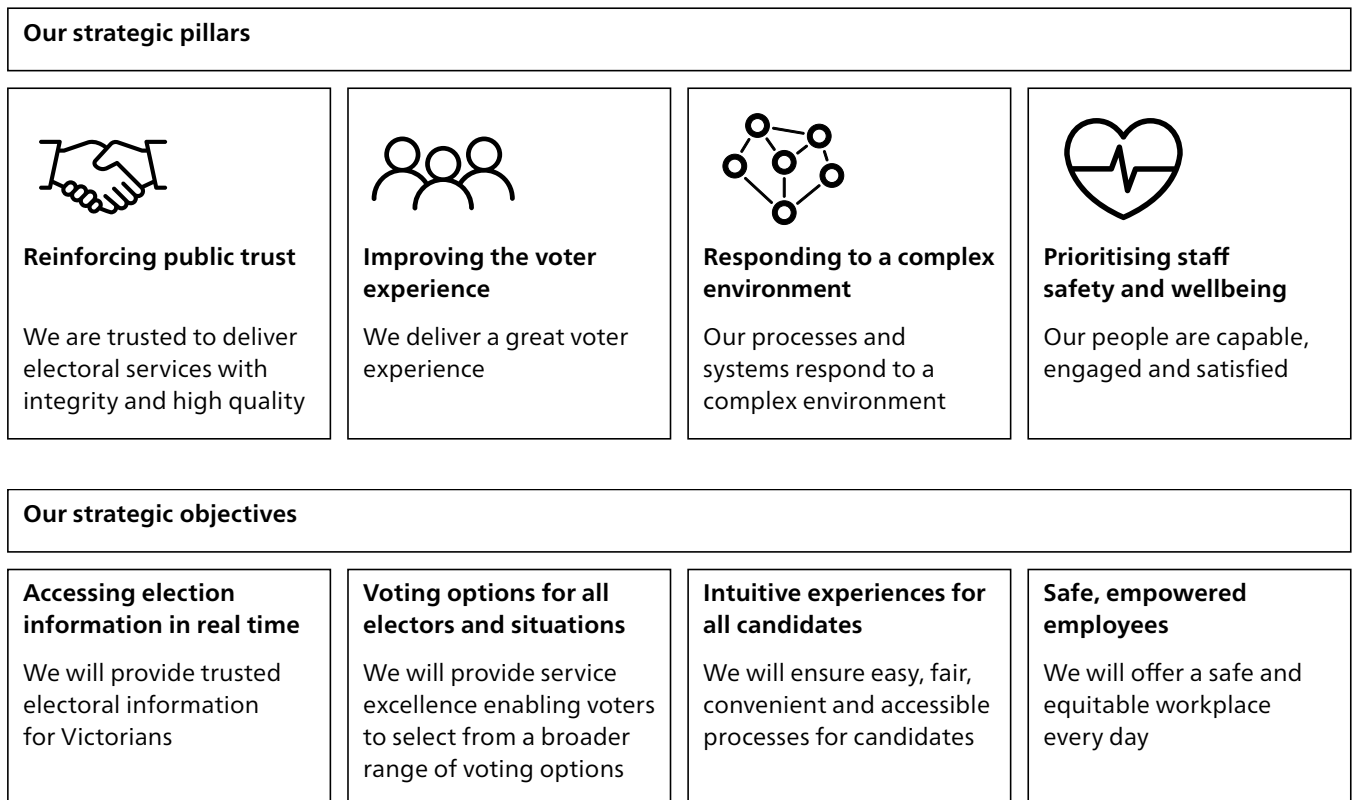
Our longer-term planning is outlined in our *Strategic service plan*, published in May 2025. The strategic commitments in that plan ensure our services continue to evolve to meet the needs of all voters across Victoria. Our strategic pillars, established by our *Strategy 2027*, form the foundation of our long-term election delivery strategy. Our pillars enable us to prioritise our activities and shape our actions and deliverables.

To operationalise these commitments, we will:

- › complete all election preparation projects by 30 September 2026
- › ensure that as many eligible Victorians as possible are correctly enrolled by the close of roll date

- › increase public awareness and knowledge of the election process and ensure the various participation methods are:
 - safe, convenient, and easy to access
 - timely to their requirements
 - easy to understand
 - respectful and courteous
 - confidential
- › assist candidates, RPPs and other participants to meet nomination requirements and participate compliantly and effectively in the election
- › provide electoral information to all stakeholders in a format that is easy to find, use, and understand, and is deliverable through a variety of media in a timely manner
- › ensure all votes cast are reconciled and counted accurately and efficiently, with results available in a timely manner
- › maintain stakeholder confidence and trust in the VEC's capacity to deliver impartial, transparent, accurate and efficient election results.

Figure 1: Our strategic pillars and objectives



1.5 Legal frameworks

Victoria has 2 Houses of Parliament. The Legislative Assembly, or 'Lower House', comprises 88 seats, with each of the 88 electoral districts represented by one member for a 4-year term. The Legislative Council, or 'Upper House', comprises 40 seats, with 8 regions represented by 5 members each for a 4-year term. Each of the 8 regions comprises 11 districts.

The 2026 state election will be held on Saturday 28 November 2026.

We are responsible for the conduct of all Victorian state general elections, supplementary elections and by-elections. Our state election operations are governed by the following Acts, regulations and frameworks, which shape our work programs, policies, procedures and processes:

- › *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (Electoral Act)
- › Electoral Regulations 2022 (Vic)
- › *Constitution Act 1975* (Vic)
- › *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982* (Vic)
- › *Infringements Act 2006* (Vic)
- › *Fines Reform Act 2014* (Vic)
- › *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- › *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
- › Australian Signals Directorate 'Essential Eight' (ASD8) cybersecurity framework

All procedures and processes we implement during a state election consider each piece of legislation and implement prescribed rules accordingly.

1.6 Privacy

We are bound by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic), as well as other laws that impose obligations on how we handle personal, sensitive and health information.

Our privacy policy explains how we collect, use, and disclose personal information. It enables us to collect the information necessary for our services and functions, while upholding each individual's right to privacy.

All privacy enquiries and concerns should be directed to our privacy officer by email at privacy@vec.vic.gov.au. For more information on how we manage privacy, visit vec.vic.gov.au/privacy.

1.7 Occupational health and safety

Pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic), we have a duty to protect the health and safety of electoral participants while they are at a VEC site or its surrounds.

We must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, and ensure that business activities conducted on our premises do not place electoral participants at risk. Accordingly, some sites and their surrounds where we establish election venues may have additional risk controls in place beyond the standard operational measures required under the Electoral Act.

At any VEC site with additional controls in place, we will clearly communicate these measures to both our staff and the public upon entry.

1.8 Election timeline

The timeline for a state election is set out in the Electoral Act. Barring exceptional circumstances, state elections are held every 4 years on the last Saturday in November.

A state election commences with the issue of the writs 25 days before election day. The writs for a state election must be returned no later than 21 days after election day. The total timeframe to conduct a state election is therefore 46 days.

Given this short period, planning and preparation must commence well in advance. The lead time for preparing a state election is 18 months, with all major projects to be completed by 30 September 2026, ahead of the issue of the writs.

The timeline for the 2026 state election, based on the writs being issued on Tuesday 3 November 2026, is provided on the following page. A summary of key milestones during our election preparation is included in **Appendix 1**.

Figure 2: 2026 Victorian state election timeline

Activity	Date	Days until election
Final day for lodgement of applications to register a political party.	Friday 31 July	120
Final day for lodgement of applications to change the name or logo of an RPP.		
Issue of writs 6 pm. Election offices open to public.	Tuesday 3 November Melbourne Cup Day	25
Nominations open First day for submission of postal vote applications	Wednesday 4 November	24
Election offices open until 8 pm. Close of rolls at 8 pm.	Tuesday 10 November	18
Close of RPP nominations at 12 noon. Close of group registration 12 noon.	Thursday 12 November	16
Close of independent nominations with Election Manager at 12 noon. Ballot draw to follow.	Friday 13 November	15
Close of group voting ticket lodgements at 12 noon.	Sunday 15 November	13
HTVC registration open 9 am.	Monday 16 November	12
Mobile voting commences from 9 am. Low sensory voting (mobile voting) commences 10 am – 4 pm.	Tuesday 17 November	11
TAV & early voting commences 9 am – 8 pm.	Wednesday 18 November	10
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm.	Thursday 19 November	9
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm. Close of submission of HTVCs to Commission for registration at 12 noon.	Friday 20 November	8
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm.	Saturday 21 November	7
Early voting centres closed.	Sunday 22 November	6
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm. Close of HTVC correction period at 12 noon.	Monday 23 November	5
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm.	Tuesday 24 November	4
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm. Close of submission of postal vote applications at 6 pm.	Wednesday 25 November	3
Early voting open 9 am – 8 pm.	Thursday 26 November	2

Activity	Date	Days until election
Close of early voting at 6 pm.	Friday 27 November	1
Election day. Election day voting open 8 am – 6 pm.	Saturday 28 November	0
Last day votes can be admitted to count by 6 pm.	Friday 4 December	-6
Return of writs. Writs returned on or before this day.	Saturday 19 December	-21

RPPs = registered political parties; HTVC = how-to-vote cards; TAV = telephone-assisted voting

2. Initiatives – what is new?

We adopt a process of continuous improvement to refine our operating model and supporting frameworks. This ensures our operational needs remain legislatively compliant and aligned with our strategic outcomes.

This work incorporates recommendations made by Parliament’s Electoral Matters Committee (EMC) in its report on the conduct of the 2022 state election, as well as findings from our own performance evaluation and outcomes. We will outline the progress against these recommendations in **Appendix 2** of the final service plan.

Since the 2022 state election, we have delivered 4 successful state by-elections. These by-elections have provided opportunities to further refine our operating model through controlled, small-scale initiatives that can be expanded to a state election.

We have identified 3 key initiatives for implementation at the 2026 state election.

2.1 Static hours for early voting

In the 2023 and 2025 district by-elections, we implemented an initiative to address a critical risk to delivering elections in alignment with our imposed timelines: printing ballot papers in readiness for early voting. This aligned with our strategic outcome of responding to a complex environment.

This initiative addressed one aspect of recommendation 1 of our Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election, which called for a review and modernisation of the Electoral Act. We tested the initiative by delaying the commencement of early voting to the Wednesday in the first week of the early voting period.

The primary goal was to ease a key pressure point in the election timeline by extending the time available to print, produce and deliver ballot papers to all voting locations. This timeframe increased from 67 hours (including only 5 business hours) to 115 hours. We were also able to assess the impact of 2 fewer early voting days in the by-elections when compared with recent similar electoral events.

Our evaluation found that the delayed EVC opening had no significant impact on voter turnout during early voting and voters made strong use of the available days. Consistent early voting hours each day provided greater clarity and convenience for voters. Additionally, the extra preparation time ahead of early voting centre operations significantly eased logistical pressures and helped to ensure a smoother delivery of services.

For the 2026 state election, EVCs will commence from the first Wednesday in the early voting period. All EVCs will have static opening hours of 9 am to 8 pm each day, except Sunday 22 November (closed) and Friday 27 November (9 am to 6 pm).

2.2 Expansion of electronic roll mark-off

In February 2025, we produced a supplementary report on lessons learned from ballot paper shortages at the 2022 state election. A key lesson highlighted in that report was the importance of real-time, centralised oversight of ballot paper consumption at early and election day voting centres. Reliance on staff communication, best estimate forecasts and maintain ballot paper stock in surplus of the total number of votes taken at the 2022 state election proved insufficient. Real-time monitoring, supported by agile print responses, is our preferred approach to minimising the risk of future ballot paper shortages.

Accordingly, for the 2026 state election we are investing in deploying electronic roll mark-off to more issuing points on election day. All EVCs will be equipped to deploy electronic roll mark-off, and for the first time all EVCs will become election day voting centres (VCs). We will also select a further number of election day-only VCs to deploy additional electronic roll mark-off.

2.3 Enhanced venue and resource management

For the 2022 state election, we adopted an Election Infrastructure Location Strategy to support the strategic direction for election infrastructure. We have refined the guiding principles as follows:

1. Election offices remain the centre for the administrative oversight of the delivery of the election, and where possible these will be contained in logistical hubs servicing multiple districts
2. EVCs will take the majority of votes and should be located in areas of high vote traffic to maximize accessibility for voters. These will be expanded to include joint EVCs that issue in-district early votes for 2 or more electorates
3. Election day VCs will be reduced where practical to do so, reflecting an overall reduction in election day voting at these VCs due to the growing popularity of early voting
4. A centralised activity site will be established to optimise our centralised delivery model, including vote exchange and counting activities.

2.4 Campaigner registration

At the 2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections, we implemented a trial of campaigner registration in response to our duty of care obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic) to provide a safe environment at election venues.

Our occupational health and safety obligations apply to all venues we control or manage, and the immediate surrounding area. Our obligations to protect health and safety extend to all persons attending a venue for a purpose connected with our use of the venue. These obligations occur regardless of our role regulating activities outside voting centres or reports of poor behaviour by campaigners at some locations at recent elections.

At the by-elections, we notified registered political parties and candidates that campaigners outside voting centres would be asked to complete a paper registration form, including their name and emergency contact details.

We have adopted this approach into our operating model for the 2026 state election, with refinements following evaluation of the by-election trial, and will expand the process of campaigner registration to all early and election day voting centres. Any person campaigning outside a voting centre will be encouraged to complete an online registration form, confirming how long and which venue they intend to visit.

Noting that Parliament’s Electoral Matters Committee is, at the time of preparing this draft service plan, conducting an inquiry into the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections, these plans are subject to the operational feasibility of any recommendations made as a result of that inquiry.

In addition to the above initiatives, we have changed the way we deliver a significant number of activities over the breadth of the 2026 state election delivery model. In the final election service plan, **Appendix 3** will provide an update on the operational commitments we have incorporated into this election.

3. Election service agreement and management

What's new?

We have published a *Strategic service plan* which summarises the major pieces of work that we plan to deliver, including targeted commitments.

We are implementing a data integrity framework to improve the consistency of reports we publish.

3.1 Cost management

Our cost management strategy for the 2026 state election enables timely and accurate forecasting across the election program, embedding probity, accountability and transparency in all costs incurred in delivering the election. We will include details of these costs in our Report to Parliament following the election.

3.2 External service providers

Many aspects of a state election require the engagement of external service providers. Contracting these providers allows our staff to focus on election-specific responsibilities, while ensuring Victorians receive high-quality election services supported by modern technology and systems.

For the 2026 state election, we will have service agreements and contracts in place for a range of specialist services, including:

- › Australia Post
- › ballot paper printing services
- › call centre services
- › cardboard furniture and voting centre equipment
- › cartage and courier services
- › election advertising
- › election staff online training
- › election staffing and labour hire
- › envelope production
- › information technology

- › language services (translation and interpreting)
- › mail house services
- › network security testing and cyber-security augmentation
- › site security assessment.

3.3 Arrangements with other organisations

We will ensure that arrangements are in place to respond to any legal or regulatory issues during the election as set out below.

Office of the eSafety Commissioner

We will notify and engage with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) prior to the election to share information on concerns, emerging risks, relevant trends, intelligence, and legislative changes. We refer matters to eSafety for assistance in removing seriously harmful online material in the election context. This may include cyber abuse targeting Australian adults, or content that promotes, incites, or instructs in matters of crime or violence through online channels.

A joint referral protocol is in place between Australian members of the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand (ECANZ) and eSafety to streamline the referral process.

Legal services

We will engage external legal services as required, and we will brief legal counsel to be available throughout the election timeline to ensure that legal matters are addressed promptly.

Victoria Police

We work closely with Victoria Police before and throughout the election timeline. Victoria Police assist election managers and election officials in removing any person who obstructs or disturbs voting and respond to incidents involving aggression or violence. We support Victoria Police to prepare for the election and provide information and resources to enable them to appropriately respond when called to attend a VEC location.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

We will work with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to support the timely determination of applications to review the VEC's decisions on political party registration matters and applications to register how-to-vote cards.

Supreme Court

Under section 176 of the Electoral Act, the VEC or a candidate may seek an injunction to prevent a person from committing any offence relating to elections. Injunctions sought at any point near or during the election timeline must be prioritised. We will work with the Supreme Court to ensure any such applications are dealt with swiftly and heard without delay.

The Court of Disputed Returns is also established in the Supreme Court (see **11.3 Legal matters**).

3.4 Environmental resource management

We are committed to managing resources across all operations to reduce our environmental impact and continuously improve our methods to achieve this. Our sustainable practices across the delivery of the elections included:

- › redesigning ballot materials to help reduce production waste
- › using Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper stock for ballot papers, with most printed on 100% recycled paper stock made from post-consumer waste pulp
- › planning transport of election materials with a focus on environment sustainability
- › collecting and recycling all cardboard furniture to reduce landfill waste and support the circular economy.

3.5 Evaluation of election services

After the 2026 state election, we will conduct an in-depth evaluation to assess performance against established measures, capture lessons learned and identify opportunities for improvement through our continuous improvement framework. A new evaluation framework, summarised in **Appendix 4**, will guide this process.

As part of the evaluation, we will collect and analyse a broad range of data during and after the election. This will include program and project data, as well as feedback from internal and external stakeholders, election participants and our advisory groups. The evaluation will also measure the success and impact of the strategic initiatives adopted at the 2026 state election.

We will engage an independent research company to assess stakeholder satisfaction with the delivery of election services. This research will include a selection of voters, candidates and RPPs, and will measure satisfaction with the services we provided.

Measuring performance

To measure the overall success of the election and to determine whether our election delivery objectives have been met, a number of key performance indicators have been developed. We will collect data and evidence throughout the election period, with results summarised in our Report to Parliament after the election.

Refer to **Appendix 4** for performance measures that have been aligned to our election delivery strategy (2023–2027) and evaluation framework.

Informal ballot paper analysis

We will conduct analysis of informal ballot papers following the election and report on the findings of this analysis in our Report to Parliament. The aim of the research is to detail and measure the incidence of various types of informal voting, and to contribute to ongoing research on this subject.

3.6 Post-election reporting

Under section 8(2)(b) of the Electoral Act, we must report to Parliament within 12 months of the conduct of each election on the administration of that election. For the 2026 state election, we will table our report no later than November 2027.

The report will provide information about each area of electoral administration outlined in this service plan. It will also include:

- › selected detailed statistics
- › recommendations for legislative change
- › acquittal and progress against past recommendations and commitments from our reports to Parliament and *Strategic service plan*
- › progress against recommendations made by Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee
- › findings regarding participation, informality, stakeholder satisfaction and customer feedback
- › evaluation and analysis of our election services, including reporting against key performance indicators
- › information about key issues and events which occur during the election.

4. Communication and engagement

What's new?

We are rolling out a new advertising campaign along with targeted campaigns to under-represented voter cohorts.

We are providing an EasyVote guide to every household in Victoria.

We are improving our website's accessibility and usability.

4.1 Communication campaign

Advertising campaign

Our state election advertising campaign will drive broad public awareness about participating in the 2026 state election. The campaign will focus on communicating accessible enrolment and voting options for all Victorian voters. We will also run targeted campaigns for:

- › culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- › young people
- › directly enrolled voters
- › interstate and overseas voters.

Further targeted campaigns will address digital literacy and navigating mis- and dis-information, election staff recruitment, and promoting our free VoterAlert reminder service.

We will develop the campaign to:

- › meet statutory requirements
- › increase voter awareness of their rights and obligations
- › maximise voter turnout
- › minimise informal voting.

We will send all households with enrolled voters an EasyVote Guide by post, providing access to information about when, where, and how to vote.

Mis- and dis-information

To combat electoral mis- and dis-information campaigns, we will promote digital literacy and encourage a critical approach to the consumption of election information and third-party advertising.

This will involve:

- › maintaining our existing mis-information register and updating it as needed during the election period
- › addressing electoral mis- and dis-information on social media in accordance with social media protocols
- › promoting our electoral mis-information webpage which has advice, tips and resources for critically consuming information.

These initiatives are designed to address mis- and dis-information relating to electoral processes only. They do not extend to political discourse or claims made as part of campaigning.

4.2 Media

Media briefing

We will invite media representatives to attend a media briefing in September 2026. The session will provide an overview of the election timeline and key activities, as well as information on our advertising, awareness campaigns and outreach activities.

Prior to the election timeline, we will provide media guidance and election resources on the media section of our website.

In October 2026, we will also invite leading psephologists to attend a briefing that provides an overview of the counting period.

Media centre

We will create a dedicated media centre on our website for journalists covering the election. This will compile useful resources, links, images, B-roll footage and information for the media.

Media releases

Our proactive media campaign will provide journalists and media outlets across Victoria, including CALD media, with key election information. This will include enrolment, nomination and voting information, key dates, facts and figures, VEC initiatives, and results publication timelines. We will also promote election day filming opportunities, the calculation of Legislative Council region election results and other attendance opportunities through media advisories.

Spokespeople

VEC spokespeople, including the Electoral Commissioner and Deputy Electoral Commissioner, will be available for interviews on key election activities throughout the election period. They will also provide statements in response to electoral issues within our remit. The role of our spokespeople is to ensure the public receives clear, consistent and factual information from a trusted and authoritative source.

4.3 VoterAlert

We offer an electronic notification service, VoterAlert, by email and SMS. Enrolled voters who subscribe to VoterAlert receive enrolment and voting reminders. We will run an advertising campaign in 2026 targeting voters who are not currently registered for the service. Currently, approximately 66% of enrolled voters are registered for VoterAlert.

We will send voters registered for VoterAlert who have turned 70 years old by September 2026 an electronic notification inviting them to register as a general postal voter ahead of the election.

We will send VoterAlerts to directly enrolled voters to increase participation in this under-represented cohort.

We will send all subscribed voters timely reminders about key election milestones, such as the close of roll deadline, along with essential information on when, where and how to vote.

4.4 Social media

We will use social media platforms to convey key electoral information and reinforce our role as an authoritative and trusted source of truth for election-related enquiries. This will include proactively promoting key messages about the election. We will ensure content is accessible and inclusive, focusing on plain English and providing alternative text on images and captioning on videos.

We will respond in a timely and accurate manner to queries received from the public. For more information, see **4.6 Public enquiry service**.

We will also monitor social media for emerging issues and respond as necessary.

4.5 Website

We will position the VEC website as the source of truth for all election information. We will feature comprehensive election information on our website and updated at each phase of the election. Information will include:

- › enrolment options and instructions

- › how to apply to work at the election
- › how to nominate and submit how-to-vote cards and group voting tickets
- › early, postal and telephone-assisted voting options
- › details of how, when, and where to vote on election day
- › lists of candidates and their contact information
- › registered how-to-vote cards and group voting tickets
- › voting options for voters who are away from their address (such as interstate or overseas)
- › how the votes will be counted
- › a mis-information register to collate and debunk any incorrect or misleading election information
- › election results
- › translated election content (specific languages to be confirmed).

We will provide a series of explanatory videos to assist users with common election questions.

We will publish election results on our website progressively. These results will include:

- › first preference results
- › 2-candidate preferred (2CP) predictions and results
- › recheck results
- › preference distribution results, where no candidate achieves an absolute majority or if fewer candidates obtain the quota required to be elected than the number of vacancies to be filled
- › full preference distribution results for all manual Legislative Assembly district election counts
- › recount results (if any recounts are conducted)
- › the names of elected candidates.

From 6 pm on election day, our website will enter live results mode. During this period, primary count information for first preference results, including first preference results by voting centre, will update regularly. A Legislative Assembly district elections results summary will also display indicative results based on 2-candidate preferred counts.

We will continue to update results after election day as absent votes are processed, postal votes arrive before the close of the postal vote receipt period, and we complete rechecks and preference distributions. Further detail relevant to the matters outlined above, along with Legislative Assembly district election count plans, will be provided in the final service plan.

Election venue locator

Our election venue locator is an interactive map that lets voters search an address or locality. The map will show the nearest:

- › voting centres
- › early voting centres
- › hub locations.

The map will display key detail, including:

- › the venue address
- › opening dates and hours
- › venue facilities including wheelchair accessibility, and
- › peak periods of operation.

We will make the election venue locator available on our website, compatible with most mobile phones.

Information for overseas electors

We will provide information about the election to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for publication on the Smartraveller website. This will include a link to our online information about voting options while overseas.

4.6 Public enquiry service

We will operate a centralised contact centre known as the public enquiry service, from Monday 14 September 2026 that will respond to telephone, email and social media enquiries. This will ensure consistent messaging, support us to identify themes and trends early and respond accordingly, and allow local election management teams to focus on election administration.

The public enquiry service will introduce 2 real-time interactive tools to improve service and accessibility:

- › **Webchat** allows members of the public to engage in real-time text-based conversations with trained customer service officers via our website. This channel will provide a convenient and immediate way for users to get assistance.

- › **Chatbot** will be rule-based, not AI-driven. We will design it to provide answers to simple queries, with escalation points to phone operators for complex queries.

The call centre will operate from Monday 14 September to Friday 11 December 2026, with opening hours from 8:30 am to 5 pm, except on the following dates:

Date	Operation Hours
Tuesday 3 November	Closed due to public holiday
Tuesday 10 November (close of roll)	8:30 am to 8 pm
Tuesday 17 November to Saturday 21 November and Monday 23 November to Thursday 26 November (mobile and early voting)	8:30 am to 8 pm
Friday 27 November (final day of early voting)	8:30 am to 6 pm
Saturday 28 November (election day)	8 am to 6 pm

Outside the call centre hours of operation, a recorded service will be available to provide helpful information on common queries surrounding enrolment and voting.

Following the completion of the voting period the public enquiry service will be engaged to support compulsory voting enforcement activities. These hours of operation will be confirmed in the final election service plan.

Multi-language telephone interpreting service

We will operate a telephone multi-language information service throughout the election period. It will feature in-language pre-recorded election content at the outset, with the option for voters to request an interpreter if required.

We provide 20 dedicated language lines for 20 high need language groups in Victoria, but the service can support up to 100 different languages (see **Appendix 5**).

Mailboxes

Individuals who prefer to engage with us online will have access to a wide range of information through our website. If this does not resolve their enquiry, they can email info@vec.vic.gov.au for a response. Our public enquiry service will respond to emails we receive.

4.7 Customer feedback and complaints

Complaints management is an important component of election delivery. A dedicated team will manage feedback and complaints from the public received in writing by one of 3 channels:

- › online submission form
- › email
- › post.

Complaints alleging a breach of the law should include any available evidence. We will forward complaints lodged at hubs to our head office for review and appropriate action.

Customer confidentiality is protected. Our customer feedback policy and customer service charter are available on our website at vec.vic.gov.au/complaints.

4.8 Public engagement

We provide education and engagement services year-round to support enrolment and voting across Victoria's diverse communities. Our education and engagement programs also form part of our priority community education and engagement plans, which include election-specific activities.

We continue to work closely with a broad range of community stakeholders to ensure programs are relevant, appropriate and informed by community needs and expectations. We distribute our *Be Heard* newsletter to more than 2,000 stakeholders and liaise with members of the following advisory groups:

- › Electoral Access Advisory Group, representing disability support agencies and individuals with lived experience
- › Prisons and Without a Home Advisory Group, representing people experiencing homelessness or incarceration
- › Aboriginal Advisory Group
- › Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Advisory Group
- › Young People Advisory Group.

These groups are directly involved in the design of our electoral education and engagement initiatives, and each action plan is published on our website for transparency.

Democracy ambassador program

Following the success of our 2024 local government election democracy ambassador program, which reached more than 10,000 participants, we will again focus the program on under-represented communities. A team of peer educators will be trained and supported to deliver electoral information and enrolment outreach in areas identified as having lower levels of participation and higher rates of informal voting.

Youth enrolment and voting

A key focus of our advertising campaign for the election will be the enrolment and participation of young voters. Our campaign will use digital and social media platforms to reach first-time voters and those directly enrolled.

Our democracy ambassador program will deliver outreach sessions to year 11 and 12 students to support enrolment and provide information for first-time voters. We will also offer sessions at universities, TAFE institutes and youth events.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

We will create in-language video products with important election information alongside other translated resources. We will distribute these via social media, online and encourage our community partners to share the videos throughout priority communities.

Services for those experiencing homelessness

We will provide face-to-face outreach enrolment sessions prior to the close of roll to homelessness and crisis accommodation services. Sector staff in partner organisations will also receive education sessions.

We will create and distribute promotional and educational resources, including easy-read material and sector-specific advertising, through community partnerships. Mobile voting teams will attend partner organisations during the early voting period.

Engagement of people in prison

We will roll out a prison education program in the months leading up to the election, supported by resources such as prison-specific information and easy-read guides. We will provide face-to-face enrolment sessions prior to the close of roll, and mobile voting teams will attend partner organisations during the early voting period.

Engaging Aboriginal communities

We will deliver face-to-face outreach sessions to provide electoral information and enrolment support for Aboriginal communities. We will develop culturally appropriate promotional resources and distribute these online and through our community partners. We will also offer mobile voting at community organisations during the early voting period.

Inclusion of people with disabilities

Our services for people living with disability will include braille ballot papers and peer-to-peer electoral education sessions. With these activities we aim to further enhance the support provided to people with disabilities to enrol and vote. We will work with peak bodies and community partners to provide targeted resources and ensure that appropriate information is distributed across their networks.

We will deliver education sessions to sector staff in strategic organisations to facilitate the distribution of information and support to clients and participants.

We will create video and print resources to support community members to enrol and vote. This will include:

- › supporting resources such as access guides and social stories
- › video resources targeted at carers/support workers
- › Auslan video resources
- › promotional material.

Statewide electoral information sessions

For the first time, assistant election managers (AEMs) will deliver electoral information sessions to community groups across Victoria. These will be promoted to mainstream community groups across all 88 districts with an aim of providing over 300 outreach sessions. This service will operate out of our election hubs with AEMs travelling to meet with groups in existing community settings.

5. Venue and resources

What's new?

We will establish 31 hubs that will consolidate the operations of the 88 previous standalone election offices for the 2022 state election. Each hub will service between 1–4 local district election offices, using regional Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) locations where possible and delivering key electoral services allowing for improved access to resources and operational agility.

We will increase the number of early voting centres (EVCs) from 155 at the 2022 state election to approximately 220, of which 100 will be set up as joint EVCs.

Unlike the 2022 state election, all EVCs will be converted to election day voting centres (VCs) to provide a consistent voter experience.

We will reduce the number of election day VCs by approximately 50 sites on the basis of the projected increase in early voting.

We have leased a long-term centralised activity site (CAS) close to the Melbourne CBD which has been developed with accessibility for all stakeholders and operational efficiency in mind.

5.1 Voting venues

Venue footprint

For the 2026 state election, we will expand the functions of hubs for operational and resourcing benefits to continually improve on the election infrastructure location strategy employed in previous elections. These hubs will host all resourcing and counting processes that were previously managed in election offices, which will provide greater efficiency and coordination.

Our planning for this election has also been informed by a comprehensive program of historical, numerical and spatial research to guide our estimates and the placement of voting centres.

The principles for the 2026 state election venue footprint are:

1. Election offices will remain the centre for administrative oversight of election delivery in each district. Election offices will be co-located in hubs (between 1 and 4 districts per hub) to improve access to resources and shared operational and support services. We anticipate 31 hubs for the 2026 state election, subject to market availability.

2. Research and estimates have indicated that EVCs will process the majority of votes at the election and should be located in areas of high voter traffic to maximise accessibility for voters. We are planning for a total of approximately 220 EVCs, of which approximately 100 will be set up as joint EVCs.

3. We will review the locations and number of election day VCs and will maintain staffing at appropriate levels to ensure efficiency and a positive voter experience. Our voting centre footprint is expected to be similar to the 2022 state election, being approximately 1,750 VCs. These numbers will be confirmed pending vote estimates and availability of venues.

4. In all instances, EVCs will convert to election day VCs.

This approach delivers several benefits, including:

- › increasing the number of EVCs to support the forecasted growth in early voting rates
- › reducing wait times for voters
- › strengthening scrutiny and control of counting activities
- › improving compliance, oversight and consistency by centralising and consolidating core election activities within hubs
- › increasing efficiencies by co-locating teams and activities that were previously spread across separate sites, reducing pressure on election staff
- › providing greater support for election staff.

Between late 2025 and early 2026, we will review all VCs and EVCs. Where possible, we will prioritise venues used at previous state and federal elections that were geographically well located within each district. We will work closely with the Department of Education and other government agencies to secure these sites.

We audit all election venues for accessibility. We are committed to ensuring that each district has at least one fully accessible VC or EVC to provide maximum access for voters. Accessibility ratings for all venues will be included in the election venue locator, our EasyVote guide, and published in print media.

Voting equipment

We will deliver furniture and equipment to each voting centre during the 3 weeks before election day. This will include customised cardboard equipment such as voting screens, directional signage, ballot boxes and recycling bins.

Voting centres will also be provided with one or more devices to allow voters' names to be marked directly off the electronic roll. We will select these venues based on the projected number of absent and declaration votes, informed by historic figures and local knowledge.

Joint voting centres

Some EVCs and election day VCs will operate as joint voting centres due to their proximity to electoral boundaries. Joint voting centres help reduce declaration voting, which is more time-consuming for voters and requires longer processing and counting after election day. We will publish information about joint voting centre locations with details of other voting centres.

5.2 Hubs

We will establish field-based hubs to manage election operations across Victoria.

We expect to set up 31 hubs that each support between 1 and 4 districts. Hubs will be equipped with facilities for election managers to meet with candidates and their representatives and will offer a counter service for members of the public. Similar to past elections, these facilities will be known as election offices. In addition to providing election office facilities for local electorates, hubs will be established as count venues for Legislative Assembly district elections and will host many other key activities required to deliver the 2026 state election.

We will select the most geographically suitable facilities as hubs to ensure districts are supported from accessible locations. Where it is not possible to establish a hub within one of its serviced districts due to property availability, we will locate it nearby to provide accessible services for candidates, voters and staff. Wherever possible we will locate each hub within its region boundaries.

We apply a rigorous process to determine the suitability of each venue. Properties are selected to meet accessibility, safety and security standards. We will clearly identify all hubs with signage and complete security measures such as lock changes where required.

To ensure appropriate venues can be secured and fitted out, we will negotiate leases of up to 18 months. This timeframe will allow IT systems, telecommunications and utilities to be established well in advance of the election.

Each hub will be equipped with the furniture, technology, stationery and materials required to conduct the election. Hub set up will occur ahead of each election office (located within the hub) opening to the public from Tuesday 3 November 2026.

Election offices will use our Election Management System, an IT application developed specifically to support election delivery. The system contains details of each district and region, and nominations and results are entered directly into the application. The electoral roll is also accessible electronically and used to record voters marked off the roll. The Election Management System further supports the production of artwork for ballot papers and other election products, and publishes information directly onto our website.

Public office hours

Election offices, located within hubs, will be open to the public from Tuesday 3 November until Saturday 28 November 2026. Election office opening hours will be standardised across the state, operating from 9 am to 5 pm on weekdays. Extended hours will apply on:

- › Tuesday 10 November (close of roll), when offices will close at 8 pm
- › Saturday 28 November (election day), when offices will close at 6 pm.

Standardised opening hours ensure consistent messaging to voters through the advertising and communication campaign.

The standard hours of operation for election offices will be as follows:

Date	Operating Hours
Weekdays	9 am to 5 pm
Tuesday 3 November to Friday 27 November	
Tuesday 10 November (close of roll)	9 am to 8 pm
Saturday 28 November	8 am to 6 pm
Election day (public enquiries only)	

A similar standardised approach has been adopted for early voting centres during their period of operation. Early voting centre operating hours are detailed in **2.1 Static hours for early voting** and **9. Voting period**.

5.3 Centralised activity site

We will operate a centralised activity site (CAS) close to the Melbourne CBD. The site houses multiple key features, including the:

- › centralised computer count centre
- › centralised processing centre
- › telephone-assisted voting (TAV) centre
- › vote exchange.

The CAS will be the largest site in use during the election period, employing up to 1,800 workers a day and handling more than 4.5 million ballot papers.

The CAS footprint will span 2 buildings with a total area of more than 16,000 m². For staff operations, we will partner with 4 labour hire agencies and engage more than 4,000 staff throughout the election period.

At peak operations, the CAS may run multiple shifts covering 24 hours. A dedicated team will coordinate site management services for centralised activities, including logistics, resources, staff wellbeing and traffic management. We will also oversee site access for RPPs, candidates and scrutineers.

We will also centrally coordinate network access and install and maintain more than 600 computers and 50 printers across the site to support the full range of election activities.

Enhancements will also improve accessibility, streamline reconciliation, embed training environments and provide integrated reporting tools while ensuring a seamless experience for both field and core staff. These improvements allow CAS to host the IT help desk surge service that will provide real-time support throughout the voting period. This will strengthen operational integrity and directly support the broader rollout of electronic roll mark-off across a significant number of voting centres for the election.

5.4 Transport and logistics

We will ensure the secure, timely, and efficient movement of election materials and resources across our network of sites for the election. We will design and implement transport schedules that meet operational requirements, comply with our Chain of Responsibility policy and provide confidence that every delivery is undertaken safely and effectively.

A core focus of this work will be the traceability, location, and custody of ballot materials. From the point of printing through to delivery at hubs, EVCs and election day VCs, we will maintain oversight of where ballot papers are, who is responsible for them and how they are being transported and stored. This commitment to safe custody and secure handling is fundamental to protecting electoral integrity and upholding public trust in the electoral process.

To deliver on these commitments, we will:

- › establish a transport network that provides adequate resourcing to meet the demands of all election venues over the election cycle, taking into account the wider venue footprint
- › implement transport schedules that are efficient, reliable and aligned with operational timelines, ensuring venues can commence and continue operations without disruption
- › build contingency transport capacity into all planning, enabling us to respond quickly to unplanned delivery needs and ad hoc requests from venues
- › strengthen our collaboration with internal stakeholders and external suppliers to ensure services are delivered to the highest standards of safety, accountability, and efficiency.

Through this approach, we will provide end-to-end assurance over the custody and movement of election materials, while maintaining the flexibility required to respond to the dynamic needs of a statewide electoral event.

6. Workforce

What's new?

We are expanding and diversifying our senior election official (SEO) pool from 300 people to over 600 people and our election casual database will be refreshed to ensure only active expressions of interest are retained.

6.1 Recruitment and sourcing

We source our election workforce through a combination of:

- › our database of SEOs and prospective election casual staff
- › VEC core staff
- › labour hire staff.

We will appoint the election workforce from our established staffing pools, which include 4 categories of staff:

- › election management teams (EMTs), responsible for the management of election processes within a particular district
- › hub management teams (HMTs), performing enabling functions across hub and site management, logistics and resourcing and staffing
- › temporary election staff performing specific roles at various election venues
- › core staff located at our various head office and centralised activity sites.

Recruiting election management teams

To fill EMT roles, including election managers and assistant election managers, we maintain an SEO pool. SEOs are recruited through a rigorous process to ensure they have the skills and experience required.

Ahead of the election, we are seeking to significantly expand the number of SEOs to support the new hub operating model and ensure we have sufficient availability and contingency for leadership roles across the state. Recruitment has historically been challenging due to the short-term nature and geographic spread of the roles, as well as the proximity of recruitment to the event itself.

In response, we are conducting a full review of our process for recruiting SEOs to improve efficiency and ensure we can meet pool targets. SEO recruitment campaigns will be undertaken in stages, with the first 2 SEO recruitment campaigns having commenced in March and September 2025. This staged approach allows us to incorporate enhancements from phase to phase as a direct response to our review of the process. The final campaign in 2026 will focus on districts with a shortfall of SEOs to fill required EMT and reserve positions.

Our recruitment campaigns are designed to diversify our workforce with members of CALD communities and younger voters. The campaigns are developed using insights provided by our Research and Community Engagement teams to ensure that our messaging is culturally relevant and resonates with CALD communities. These insights inform the creative direction across all channels and guide our media strategy. Media placements are strategically targeted in multilingual print and radio outlets, as well as digital platforms popular within CALD communities. English-language ads are used for these media placements to demonstrate that the role requires SEOs to have a necessary level of English proficiency.

Our creative and media strategy is further refined using research to identify priority language groups and geographic areas for outreach. Language targeting on Meta platforms (Facebook and Instagram) plays a key role in our paid social media approach, helping to ensure our messaging reaches the right audiences in the right places.

For this election, we will also assess the need to run the Victorian Public Service (VPS) secondment program to further increase the number of people available for SEO positions following the completion of the second recruitment campaign conducted in September 2025. As an additional contingency, we will explore secondment programs with other electoral commissions to ensure EMT positions are filled heading into the election.

Recruiting hub management teams

Each HMT will include EMTs for the serviced districts as well as enabling function leads across hub management, site coordination, staffing, logistics and resourcing. These roles are critical to the new hub operating model and will require strong leadership, coordination and operational delivery skills.

To support this model, we are establishing a dedicated enabling functions recruitment stream and developing 3 new talent pools for site coordination, staffing, and logistics and resourcing. These will be separate from the existing SEO pool as each new talent pool will have tailored role profiles and selection criteria. Recruitment will focus on candidates with experience in high-volume operations, team leadership and logistical coordination.

However, we will continue to source hub management roles from the SEO pool where appropriate due to their alignment with election management skills.

We are adopting a staged recruitment approach to ensure sufficient staffing across all hubs, focusing on priority districts where staffing has historically been difficult or demand is anticipated to be high. Barriers include the short-term nature of roles and challenges in securing early commitments, particularly in regional areas.

To address these challenges, we have introduced a new recruitment framework for enabling functions, including revised role profiles, streamlined screening processes and enhanced candidate engagement. The first campaign for HMT recruitment ran in October 2025, with further campaigns scheduled for early 2026, supported by targeted outreach and advertising.

As a contingency, we will assess expanding the VPS secondment program to cover enabling function leads. We will also explore secondment arrangements with other electoral commissions.

Recruiting temporary election staff

Temporary election staff register via a simple process on our website and become part of the election casual database. This pool is used to recruit staff for a wide range of roles in VCs, EVCs, mobile voting teams, and centralised activities at the CAS and our head office locations.

Our election casual database currently consists of around 85,000 people. However, past experience suggests that availability and skills data can be outdated or unreliable. From late 2025, we will conduct a communication campaign to update data and capture additional details for our election casual database to support more effective recruitment. This campaign will update election casual database figures and identify whether targeted recruitment is required before the election.

Labour hire staff

Labour hire staff are engaged primarily to support high-volume activities at the CAS, including counting and telephone-assisted voting. We will fill leadership roles for these activities from the election casual database to ensure consistency, experience and operational oversight. Labour hire agencies may also be engaged as a contingency to support field positions.

All labour hire staff are subject to the same pre-employment screening as other temporary staff, including criminal history checks and disclosure of political activities.

Victorian Public Service

Through an established working relationship with the Victorian Public Service Commission we will engage with government departments to provide secondment opportunities to support critical roles during the election.

Pre-employment screening

Impartiality

We require potential staff to answer a series of questions about prior political activities. We can lawfully refuse employment based on political activity. There are 6 mandatory questions covering past political campaigns, political party membership and other general public activities supporting or opposing policy positions.

All staff, whether appointed directly by the VEC or supplied by labour hire agencies, will be required to complete a disclosure of political activities. All disclosures will be assessed individually, with some being grounds for automatic exclusion, and others being assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Skills suitability

SEO and HMT applicants undergo a rigorous selection process to confirm they have the required skills for these complex roles.

We also conduct basic screening checks when considering people from our election casual database for appointment to election staff roles. This includes reviewing ratings or prior performance in election roles as well as phone screening.

Security

We require staff appointed to work in SEO roles to complete:

- › a Working with Children Check
- › a conflict of interest statement regarding foreign interference and security
- › a National Police Check.

We also require National Police Checks for staff supplied by labour hire agencies and other specific categories of staff.

Pre-existing illness or injury

We ask all prospective election staff to disclose any pre-existing injuries, diseases or conditions that may affect their ability to safely perform the duties of the role. In cases where a disclosure is made and reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented to

ensure the person's safety, we are unable to proceed with that role appointment. This does not preclude the person from being considered for other roles where safety adjustments are not required or could be easily accommodated.

All prospective staff we directly appoint are required to disclose any serious criminal convictions as part of the appointment process. We assess all positive disclosures to determine if the person is suitable to work with us.

6.2 Election management teams

We will appoint an election manager for each of the 88 districts. District election managers are responsible for all activities within their election office and voting venues for that district, including:

- › managing staff
- › handling in-person enquiries
- › processing independent candidate nominations and applications to register a how-to-vote card
- › overseeing counting activities
- › declaring results
- › overseeing the decommissioning of election offices.

We will appoint one or more assistant election managers to support each election manager. Together the election manager and assistant election managers will form the election management team (EMT) for that district.

We will appoint an optimum number of staff and provide training to ensure efficient conduct of the election. This includes staff working in hubs, EVCs and election day VCs.

Support for field teams

Election support officers

We will appoint a specialist team of election support officers to act as line managers for election managers. They are the primary point of contact between election managers, the operational command centre, and head office teams.

Election support officers' role in supporting election managers covers all aspects of their performance, including:

- › providing direction on election procedures
- › managing operational issues relating to venues, materials, staffing, RPPs, candidates and the public

- › offering guidance and coaching on planning and preparation for each phase of the election.

Although support will primarily be provided remotely from our head office, election support officers will also meet their assigned election managers face-to-face several times during the election period.

Election liaison officers

Each district will appoint at least one liaison officer to visit EVCs during the early voting period, and at least 2 liaison officers to visit VCs on election day.

The role of liaison officers is to:

- › alert election managers to any voting centres requiring additional resources and deliver them where appropriate
- › ensure election procedures are applied consistently across centres.

Help Desk

We will establish a Help Desk to provide frontline support to hubs, election offices and voting centres. The Help Desk will triage support calls to ensure they are resolved efficiently or referred to the appropriate specialist.

The Help Desk will:

- › provide direct support with using our Election Management System
- › refer IT infrastructure queries to our IT support team
- › refer questions on election procedures, operations or staffing to election support officers
- › conduct quality assurance checks of election office IT infrastructure prior to opening.

A dedicated Help Desk team will also provide active support for the use of electronic roll mark-off in the field. This team will scale capacity to meet the expected increase in calls during early voting and on election day.

6.3 Hub management teams

Each hub will bring together between one and 4 election offices in a single location. To support this model, we have developed a new staffing structure, including enabling function roles to coordinate staffing, logistics and resourcing across all districts within the hub.

Each hub management team (HMT) consists of:

- › the EMTs for each serviced electorate
- › a hub manager
- › a logistics and resourcing lead
- › a staffing lead.

Both the number of EMTs and the size of the enabling function teams will scale in line with the number of districts in the hub. Each hub will have a hub manager, who holds overall responsibility for hub operations. The HMT works collectively to deliver the election, with enabling function roles supporting both hub-wide activities and local district delivery.

6.4 Election staff

Hub staffing teams will appoint and manage temporary election staff to work in hubs and the election offices that will be established within hubs, as well as voting centres and count venues to ensure the efficient conduct of each election.

Staffing teams will be provided with instructions and tools to recruit a diverse workforce, including:

- › people across the adult age range
- › people who speak a range of languages
- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We will also appoint temporary staff to conduct election activities at the CAS and our centralised office locations. This will include personnel sourced through staffing agencies engaged under contracts with us.

We will appoint approximately 27,500 roles for the election. While most are appointed to voting centres for election day only, more than 6,000 election staff will be engaged to work at CAS locations, hubs, and EVCs. Approximately 2,500 of those staff will be engaged at the CAS, of which 90% will be via agency labour hire. We will continue to use election casuals in all remaining roles, pulling directly from our election casual database.

The online registration system for prospective election officials is available on our website.

Staffing teams will appoint the optimum number of staff for each election venue to ensure a smooth voting experience during the early voting period and on election day and to complete all required election venue tasks.

Personnel helpline

We will establish a personnel helpline to provide phone and email support to election staff in the use of personnel systems. The helpline will assist staff to:

- › complete their online registration to be available for appointment (for potential new staff)
- › access and navigate the self-service portal to update contact details, enter banking, tax and superannuation details, access pay advices and accept offers of appointment
- › complete timesheets
- › resolve pay-related queries.

The personnel helpline will also assess disclosures of political activity made by election staff and labour hire staff to determine whether they are suitable for employment.

The service will operate during standard office hours and extend its hours where necessary to provide adequate support. The service does not provide technical support for the conduct of roles, as this will be delivered by relevant supervisors.

6.5 VEC core staff

Our core workforce of ongoing, fixed term and casual staff based at our head office are critical to the delivery of election events. This includes staff working directly within the election program structure to deliver key outcomes, as well as corporate staff who support organisational resilience and enable successful election delivery.

Our headcount increases significantly during election periods as we recruit fixed-term delivery staff. Ahead of the election we have introduced structural changes to establish a dedicated surge recruitment team within our election program. This will ensure we have the capacity to respond quickly to recruitment demands and maintain a capable and skilled workforce.

Core staff appointed to election roles will complete a structured online state election onboarding program, followed by a dedicated training pathway for their role. Training will combine online and in-person sessions depending on role complexity. This approach will continue to deepen electoral expertise within our core workforce.

6.6 Training and instructions

The training and work instructions provided for election staff will vary according to the requirements of each role. The skills and knowledge required, along with the duration of engagement, will determine the level of training and instruction delivered.

We will base all training on detailed instructional products developed to support each election role.

In addition, all staff will receive compliance training, either delivered through our online learning portal or verbally at the start of their first shift if there is insufficient time to complete training online. This training will confirm the core expectations of election staff in relation to:

- › impartiality throughout the election
- › maintaining a safe, secure and inclusive workplace
- › maintaining electoral integrity
- › awareness of foreign interference.

Election management teams and hub management teams

Election managers and assistant election managers will complete a blended learning program that combines online and face-to-face training, supported by just-in-time reminder materials and detailed work instructions. We will apply a similar approach for members of HMTs, including hub managers and functional leads.

Online training will provide foundational knowledge of the election processes relevant to each role. This will form the basis for role-specific face-to-face sessions, which will give participants hands-on experience in completing processes through real-life scenarios in a partial election office or hub set-up.

Written work instructions provided to each role will include manuals, guides and task sheets tailored to specific responsibilities.

Election staff

We will develop dedicated training pathways for different election roles. Roles with short duration or low complexity will receive a briefing at the start of the first shift. Supervisory roles such as early voting centre managers, mobile voting team leaders and voting centre managers will complete a blended program of online and face-to-face training.

Online training support

To support election staff with any issues accessing or completing required online training, we will establish an online training helpline. The service will provide phone and email support on weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm and will commence in August 2026.

7. Enrolment activities

What's new?

We are updating our practices regarding our legislated roll data release obligations to candidates and parties.

The Victorian register of electors contains the names and addresses of all Victorians enrolled to vote. Electoral rolls are then generated to provide a point-in-time list of eligible voters for a specific election.

The VEC and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) share responsibility for maintaining enrolment in Victoria under a joint roll management arrangement. Both the VEC and the AEC have programs in place to assist people to enrol and update their enrolment details. Additionally, enrolment applications processed by the AEC are provided to us at least weekly, to ensure currency of the Victorian register of electors.

7.1 Pre-election roll products

Under the Electoral Act, we provide RPPs and members of Parliament with copies of the register of electors on an ongoing basis. We will produce the final monthly roll products based on enrolment at the close of business on Thursday 17 September 2026. We will distribute the final monthly roll products on Wednesday 23 September 2026. This will allow RPPs to check that endorsed candidates are correctly enrolled.

7.2 Enrolment eligibility checks

Nominations open from 9 am on Wednesday 4 November 2026, the day following the issue of the writs. We will check that nominating candidates are enrolled on the Victorian register of electors and that their nominators (where applicable) are enrolled in the electorate in which the candidate is nominating.

We will also conduct enrolment eligibility checks on provisional votes cast at the election, where individuals who cannot be found on the electoral roll can submit an enrolment application with their vote. Provisional votes are only admitted to the count if the enrolment application is found to be valid.

7.3 Close of roll

The roll for the election closes at 8 pm on Tuesday 10 November (7 days after the issue of the writs). All election offices and AEC divisional offices will remain open until 8 pm on Tuesday 10 November.

We work closely with the AEC to ensure that enrolment data received by the close of the roll is processed by the AEC within 24 hours. Once this processing is completed, the electoral roll for the 2026 state election will be generated from the register of electors as at the close of roll, and the Electoral Registrar will certify that the roll is ready for the generation of electoral roll products.

Voters enrolling or updating their details in the weeks following the close of roll will be contacted where possible and advised of any voting options relevant to their circumstances.

7.4 Electoral roll products

Roll product generation for the election will commence after the electoral roll is certified, to allow printing of scannable and reference rolls and the production of other roll products.

Copies of the electoral roll will be generated and provided to RPPs and candidates upon request. Candidates are only eligible to receive the electoral roll for the electorate in which they have nominated.

Candidates and RPPs can only use roll data for limited purposes. We will remind recipients of their legislative obligations and the significant penalties for the misuse of roll data. Telephone and email details are not provided to any person as part of election roll products.

We will contact candidates directly to remind them of their obligations to dispose of roll data following the election.

8. Candidates and parties

What's new?

We will update our bulk nominations application for registered political parties (RPPs).

We are providing additional campaigner support, through a dedicated campaigner handbook and a campaigner registration initiative that reflects our ongoing commitment to OHS and positive voting experiences.

We will implement a suite of new and updated resources for candidates, political parties and other political participants to support their understanding of critical timelines and responsibilities.

We will provide candidate bulletins and RPP circulars in an upgraded and more consistent format.

Our positive engagement with candidates and RPPs is critical for the success of the 2026 state election.

During the lead into the election timeline, we anticipate a surge in applications for registration by new political parties and several changes to existing information on the register of political parties. This means that the final number of political parties registered in time for the election will not be fixed until much closer to the date the writs are issued.

We will provide updated information and support to political parties applying for registration, currently registered political parties, and prospective independent candidates throughout the months leading into the election timeline. This includes early and more regular information sessions for prospective candidates, as well as clearer contact points, escalation pathways and service levels for raising and addressing concerns or issues.

8.1 Political party registration

RPPs can obtain political funding, access enrolment information and have their party name and logo appear on ballot papers next to the names of their endorsed candidates.

Political parties intending to apply for registration must submit their application using the suite of documents provided in the appendices of the *Registration of political parties handbook* available on our website. The final date to lodge an application for registration before the election under the Electoral Act is 31 July 2026.

When we receive a valid application, we will invite the nominated registered officer and party secretary to attend an information session outlining the registration process in detail.

To be successfully registered, a political party must demonstrate to our satisfaction, and in accordance with established processes, that it has 500 members who are:

- › on the register of electors
- › members of the political party in line with the party's rules
- › not members of another party which is already registered or applying for registration

We test this eligibility independently by directly contacting individuals on the member list submitted by the party as part of its application. We provide clear instructions to these individuals to ensure they understand their obligations in the registration process.

To maintain transparency, we will communicate milestones and provide updates during the registration process through:

- › publishing notices in the *Victoria Government Gazette*
- › publishing media releases and dedicated political party registration content on our website
- › periodic correspondence with applicants.

In addition to existing email channels, we will maintain a phone line to assist applicants and individuals with registration-related matters.

Our decisions to grant or refuse applications for registration are reviewable under the Electoral Act. We will work with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to ensure the timely determination of any applications for review, allowing adequate time to consider the Electoral Commissioner's decision.

We will invite political parties that are successfully registered to attend an information session, where we will communicate ongoing obligations and provide information on election processes including nominating candidates and registering how-to-vote cards.

8.2 Candidate engagement and support

We will produce information videos on key topics for candidates and make these available on demand. The videos will explain the nomination process and outline the procedures and rules relevant to candidates. We will publish updated candidate and scrutineer handbooks, as well as a new campaigner handbook. These will contain

critical information for candidates and RPPs, and their campaigners and scrutineers. We will also provide all forms required to participate in the election.

All candidate information will be available on our website and from election managers by request.

We will provide regular updates to candidates and RPPs during key points in the election timeline, including voting centre and election office details. We will make data relating to postal voting available upon request.

Candidate and RPP information sessions

Online information sessions for candidates and RPPs will take place regularly in the lead up to the election. These information sessions will commence earlier in the election year and cover key timelines and procedures relevant to candidates. Content will be repeated in multiple sessions, and participants will be able to ask questions.

Our candidate handbook will be updated to include reporting pathways for candidates to raise concerns or issues, and our direct engagement with RPPs during the months before the election will provide head office contact points for them to escalate issues.

Candidate enquiries and support

We will operate a candidate help desk from our head office in advance of the election so that prospective candidates can direct enquiries and receive assistance with their nominations before election offices open. This will include support with using Candidate Helper, our digital tool for pre-completing nomination forms for independent candidates, and the bulk nominations tool for RPPs to nominate their endorsed candidates.

From the opening of election offices on Tuesday 3 November 2026, election managers will manage all direct enquiries from candidates within their district.

Candidate handbooks will be available online and from election offices. We strongly encourage prospective candidates to use Candidate Helper and our website for election information.

8.3 Nominations

Nominations will open on Wednesday 4 November and close at:

- › 12 noon on Thursday 12 November 2026 for RPP-endorsed candidates
- › 12 noon on Friday 13 November 2026 for independent candidates

Nominations of endorsed candidates from RPPs must be lodged at our head office and include a nomination deposit of \$350 for each endorsed candidate. We will provide a computer application for RPPs to complete pre-formatted nomination forms. RPPs can forward the forms to pre-selected candidates for signature before lodging the hard copy forms at our head office.

Election managers will receive and record nominations from independent candidates, including the \$350 nomination deposit. Independent candidates nominating for a Legislative Council region election may lodge their nomination with the election manager for any of the districts in that region. Independent candidates will be able to pre-fill their nomination form online using Candidate Helper, accessible from our website. Completed forms must then be lodged in hard copy, with the nomination deposit, in person with the election manager.

Nomination information captured electronically will be uploaded into our Election Management System and checked against the signed hard copy forms. We strongly encourage the use of Candidate Helper as it enables independent candidates to step through each part of the nomination process. This expedites the nomination appointment process, as election managers can retrieve data via a unique identifier on the nomination form rather than entering the nomination form data manually.

We strongly encourage candidates to confirm their eligibility to nominate before the close of the roll. As part of the nomination process, we will check each candidate's enrolment against the certified electoral roll.

Each day during the nomination period, election managers will publish a list of all nominations received for the electorate in a prominent position in the election office. Details of candidates that have completed the full quality assurance process, including public contact details, will be published on our website twice daily.

Ballot draws

District election managers will conduct a ballot draw to determine the order of candidates' names on the Legislative Assembly district election ballot papers as soon as practicable after the close of independent candidate nominations on Friday 13 November. Ballot draws are anticipated to commence from 1 pm on Friday 13 November. Within each region, one district election manager will be responsible for conducting the ballot draw for the Legislative Council region election (see **Appendix 6** for the list of districts responsible).

We will conduct ballot draws electronically, with the order of names on each ballot paper determined by a single random draw. For each Legislative Council region election, there will be 3 ballot draws:

1. to determine the order of groups
2. to determine the order of candidates within a group where this has not been specified by the group
3. to determine the order of any ungrouped candidates.

Our electronic ballot draw application has been independently audited to ensure the results are random. We have also published the software component that generates the random ballot order and the audit report for the ballot draw software on our website. The use of an electronic draw provides significant efficiencies by reducing the risk and time associated with manual data entry of ballot draw results. This minimises delays between conducting the draws and dispatching ballot paper files to the printer. The electronic process also enables us to publish the final list of candidates, in ballot paper order, on our website shortly after the draw is completed.

8.4 Group registration and group voting tickets

In each Legislative Council region election, the following groups may submit a request that their names be grouped together on the ballot paper with a box above the line:

- › 2 or more independent candidates
- › an RPP who has endorsed 2 or more candidates in that region election, or
- › 2 or more RPPs who have endorsed candidates in that region election and wish to form a composite group.

After the ballot draw, each group may lodge up to 3 group voting tickets and must lodge at least one group voting ticket. A group voting ticket sets out an order of preferences for all candidates in the region election.

Candidates are required to submit all applications for group registration and group voting tickets to our head office, not to a local election manager. Staff will be available at our head office to accept and process these applications.

Group registration will close at 12 noon on Thursday 12 November. Groups must lodge their group voting tickets by 12 noon on Sunday 15 November.

If a group does not lodge a group voting ticket, we will not print a box above the line on the ballot paper. Penalties apply to groups that do not lodge a group voting ticket.

8.5 How-to-vote cards

For a how-to-vote card (HTVC) to be distributed within 400 metres of a voting centre on election day, or to be carried by mobile voting teams, it must be registered by the VEC. RPPs must lodge their HTVC applications directly with our head office. Independent candidates and other applicants must lodge their HTVC applications with local election managers, who will forward these to our head office for registration.

The submission period for HTVC registration will open on Monday 16 November and close at 12 noon on Friday 20 November. Applicants will be required to submit an electronic copy of each card, as well as 2 hard copies. Providing electronic copies will enable us to publish all registered cards on our website promptly.

Detailed information on HTVC registration requirements will be included in the candidate handbooks. The registration requirements have been updated to reflect decisions by VCAT during the 2022 state election.

8.6 Campaigner support

We will increase the support we provide for campaigners for this election. This will include:

- › publishing more information on our website about campaigning at voting centres
- › publishing a campaigner handbook
- › introducing campaigner registration at voting centres.

Any person campaigning outside a voting centre, including EVCs and election day VCs, will be asked to register their emergency contact details with us. This forms part of our risk management approach to keep voters, campaigners, and our staff safe while attending VEC-managed venues and aligns with our occupational health and safety obligations.

The new campaigner handbook will add to our existing suite of handbooks, and will focus on giving campaigners easy access to information relevant to:

- › campaigning outside voting centres
- › the campaigner registration process
- › identifying and reporting concerns or issues.

The campaigner handbook will also link to the scrutineer handbook with specific information to support individuals campaigning outside voting centres on election day who are also registering as scrutineers at the close of voting.

8.7 Political funding

The VEC administers 3 funding streams in accordance with the Electoral Act:

- › Administrative expenditure funding
- › Policy development funding
- › Public funding

Administrative expenditure funding may be claimed by independent elected members as well as RPPs that have representation in Parliament (capped at up to 45 MPs). Administrative expenditure funding is re-calculated based on the scheduled general election period, and adjustments to payments will be made to eligible recipients based on election results. Administrative expenditure funding can be used to cover the costs involved with running an office; the funding stream must not be used for political expenditure or electoral expenditure.

Policy development funding is available to RPPs that are not eligible for administrative expenditure funding and did not receive public funding within the previous calendar year. Policy development funding is calculated based on the number of first preference votes an eligible RPP receives at the previous general election, and an RPP may claim the greater of \$1.24 per first preference vote or \$31,050 (2025–26 rates). Policy development funding is intended to be used by recipients to develop their campaign policies for future elections.

Public funding may be claimed by independent candidates and eligible RPPs to cover political expenditure and electoral expenditure they incur in relation to the election.

To be eligible for public funding, independent candidates and RPPs with endorsed candidates must achieve at least 4% of first preference votes in the elections they contest or be elected. Candidates and RPPs must then lodge an audited statement of expenditure detailing claimable costs for the election within 20 weeks of election day.

After we declare the election results, we will calculate the maximum entitlement amount of public funding based on the number of first preference votes received by eligible independent candidates and RPPs with endorsed candidates. We will reconcile this amount against the audited statement of expenditure to determine the actual public funding to be paid. The timing of payments will depend on when we receive the audited statement.

We adjust public funding amounts for inflation on 1 July each year. For the 2025–26 financial year, the maximum funding entitlement is:

- › \$7.46 for each first preference vote received by an eligible Legislative Assembly district election candidate
- › \$3.72 for each first preference vote received by an eligible Legislative Council region election candidate.

We will communicate entitlement obligations and payment amounts to eligible candidates and RPPs after the election.

8.8 Political donations

Donation disclosure

The Electoral Act requires donors and recipients to disclose political donations that meet or exceed the disclosure threshold (\$1,240 for the 2025–26 financial year).

A donor must be an Australian citizen, an Australian resident, or a company with an Australian Business Number. Recipients must confirm any donation above the threshold that they have received from an authorised donor.

Donors and recipients must make their disclosures in our system within 21 days of the donation via the VEC Disclosures portal on our website. Recipients also have a legal obligation to notify donors of their requirement to disclose donations.

Failure to properly disclose a political donation is an offence under the Electoral Act.

Prohibited donation activity

Anonymous political donations above the disclosure threshold (\$1,240 for the 2025–26 financial year) and political donations from foreign sources are banned.

The Electoral Act also places a general cap on political donations that a single donor can give to any one recipient across a 4-year election period (the period between state general elections). For the 2025–26 financial year, the general cap for the 2022–26 election period is \$4,970.

Any political donations that exceed the general cap, including aggregated donations, are prohibited. While a small contribution (\$61 or less for the 2025–26 financial year) does not count towards the general cap, donors cannot use small contributions to avoid donation disclosure and reporting obligations.

Compliance and enforcement

Our dedicated Electoral Compliance team uses a range of intelligence and investigation techniques to monitor and enforce compliance in line with Victoria's donation disclosure and reporting laws. This includes analysis and reconciliation of annual returns provided by reporting entities, complaints and tip-offs, and ongoing monitoring of donation activity within the VEC Disclosures portal. We routinely work with a range of integrity and law enforcement agencies and actively partner with other agencies to exchange intelligence and share information.

9. Voting period

What's new?

We will print Legislative Assembly district election ballot papers and Legislative Council region election ballot papers as 2 separate ballot papers.

We are undertaking a ballot material redesign including redesigning the postal declaration envelope, redesigning the provisional, absent and early postal vote forms and envelopes, and applying enhanced security features to ballot papers.

EVCs will open from Wednesday 18 November 2026 and be available every day before election day (except the Sunday before election day).

EVC operating hours will be expanded and consistent, operating static opening hours from 9 am to 8 pm each day, except Sunday 22 November (closed) and Friday 27 November (9 am to 6 pm).

We will return to providing in-person voting services at interstate and overseas locations.

We will expand the use of electronic roll mark-off on election day across Victoria, with a target of marking approximately 70% of voters off the electoral roll electronically.

We plan to increase our mobile voting locations from 322 to approximately 900.

We will provide one low sensory voting site in each district across Victoria.

The preparation and printing of ballot material for state elections is a large and complex task. Our staff will supervise all stages of the preparation and printing of ballot material and roll products. We will devote considerable time to recruiting and training quality assurance staff to oversee the process to ensure integrity, compliance, and accuracy.

Similarly, preparing our voting services to accommodate changing voting trends has been a major focus ahead of the 2026 state election. Optimising the availability and accessibility of voting options continues to be at the forefront of our service delivery model. EVCs must be resourced and appropriately staffed to efficiently take the majority of votes. Busy voting centres must be responsive to ensure voters can cast their vote quickly and with the assistance they require. Voters that are eligible to vote by post, in interstate and overseas locations, or with

the assistance of mobile voting centres and telephone-assisted voting services must be supported to do so.

9.1 Ballot material

Ballot material generation and quality assurance

We will generate artwork for ballot papers and group voting ticket booklets using our automation tool. This tool selects from a range of pre-defined artwork templates and populates them with the relevant candidate and group voting ticket information drawn directly from our Election Management System database.

After we complete an extensive quality assurance process, we will securely transmit print-ready artwork files to our ballot material print providers for production.

Ballot paper types

Various ballot paper formats and sets are provided to support the specific needs of different voting methods, including early, out-of-district, interstate and overseas, ordinary and postal.

Unlike previous state elections, for the 2026 state election, Legislative Assembly district election ballot papers and Legislative Council region election ballot papers will be printed as 2 separate ballot papers. Issuing officers will provide both ballot papers when issuing to voters.

In line with the Electoral Act, ballot papers will include RPP logos where registered. Logos will appear next to the names of endorsed candidates on Legislative Assembly district election ballot papers and above the line for RPP groups on Legislative Council region election ballot papers. Each district and region election ballot paper pair will be colour coded to assist with sorting.

Following the adoption in the 2024 local government elections, postal ballot pack items will now contain generic barcodes that identify the product type and district election for quality assurance purposes during the mail insertion process, ensuring that each ballot pack is complete and accurate. To prepare postal ballot packs for general postal voters and voters who have applied for a postal vote, our mail house will directly print the voters' mailing and entitlement addresses and barcodes on ballot paper declaration envelopes and assemble ballot packs in readiness for lodgement.

Braille ballot papers

We work closely with Vision Australia and Blind Citizens Australia to identify and contact voters who use their services and require election information in accessible formats. We will provide election information in email, audio, DAISY, and braille formats.

During September and October 2026, voters who are blind or have low vision can register to receive braille ballot material. Vision Australia and Blind Citizens Australia will undertake an initial mail-out to ensure all Victorian voters who are blind or have low vision receive accessible information for the election.

We cannot provide large-print ballot material for the election due to production timeline constraints.

Group voting ticket booklets

We will provide sets of 8 group voting ticket booklets (one booklet per region) to election managers for use in election offices, early voting centres, mobile voting teams and in each election day voting centre. Each booklet will contain all the group voting tickets registered by each group.

9.2 Ballot material tracking and security

Physical security and integrity are critical aspects of our election design. We strictly control election materials at all stages. Interfering with ballot material is a serious offence under the Electoral Act.

Our ballot material management policy is being updated and will include improvements to our systems, procedures and to ballot paper tracking and security. This will further improve transparency in the management of ballot materials throughout the election. We will monitor select indicators to provide visibility and enable timely responses to operational issues.

These indicators include:

- › the anticipated versus actual consumption rate of printed ballot papers
- › the movement and reconciliation activities associated with the distribution of ballot papers
- › the counting and return of ballot papers relevant to each activity.

We will also require third-party suppliers to report against these indicators during the election to alert us of any operational issues in real time.

9.3 Voting channels

Early voting

Voters can vote before election day at any early voting centre (EVC) across the state.

Early voting will be available from Wednesday 18 November to Friday 27 November in each district. We will establish at least one EVC in every district for the election, with most districts having 2 EVCs. In districts where we

expect a high number of early votes, we will establish 3 or more EVCs. Where venues are located near district boundaries, we may combine neighbouring districts to create a joint EVC.

We will ensure EVCs are well located within each district and accessible to the public. We intend to increase the number of EVCs for the 2026 state election compared with 2022. All EVCs will also operate as voting centres on election day to provide a consistent voter experience.

Early voting will commence from Wednesday 18 November and be available every day except Sunday to Friday 27 November. Voting hours will be 9 am to 8 pm (except on the Friday before election day, when early voting will close at 6 pm) to provide consistent voting options for community members who cannot vote during standard business hours.

We will provide staff at EVCs with electronic roll mark-off facilities. These will provide early voting officials access to the electoral roll (as at the close of roll).

Election day voting

Election day voting centres (VCs) will operate between 8 am and 6 pm on Saturday 28 November 2026.

We will appoint a voting centre manager to oversee each VC. Voting centre managers will be trained in the strict requirements for operating VCs on election day. This includes adhering to opening and closing times, following prescribed procedures, and ensuring the correct display of signage outside VCs.

Staff at most election day VCs will use electronic roll mark-off facilities, giving election officials access to the electoral roll as at the close of roll. This represents a significant expansion of electronic roll mark-off, which at previous elections was limited to early and specialist voting services.

Additional voting centre services

We will provide the following at each EVC and election day VC and, where practicable, also at mobile voting centres.

Queue management

We will manage queues inside and outside EVCs and election day VCs to ensure voters can move quickly through the process and that voters who require assistance receive appropriate support.

At busy venues, we will assign staff as queue controllers with the primary responsibility of managing queues during peak periods. Queue controllers will also act as a point of contact for questions and assistance and will direct voters to the correct district issuing point or to the declaration issuing point if they are voting outside their district.

Queue controllers will ensure that any voter in the queue at the close of voting is able to cast their vote, and that no further persons join the queue after 6 pm.

Multi-language instructions

Voting instructions in a minimum of 20 languages, including English, will be pre-printed on voting compartments at voting centres.

A list of the languages included is provided in **Appendix 5**.

Group voting tickets

We will provide large posters for each venue alerting and directing voters to the voting centre manager, who will have group voting ticket booklets for each region on display and available for inspection.

Accessibility aids and tools

Numerous tools and aids will be provided to assist voters. These include:

- › large magnifying sheets at each voting centre
- › maxi pencils to allow some voters (e.g. those with arthritis) to more easily grip the pencil
- › assisted hearing devices at EVCs
- › wheelchair or desktop voting compartments.

It is our intent to provide an accessible experience for all voters to enable them to cast their vote.

Postal voting

Voters may apply for a postal vote from the issue of the writs until 6 pm on Wednesday 25 November 2026. Voters can apply online, and do not need to sign or have the application witnessed. Instead, they must successfully answer a verification question when completing the application.

Hard copy application forms will be available from Australia Post offices, our head office, and election offices from Wednesday 4 November 2026. We can also mail postal vote applications to voters on request through our public enquiry service. In special circumstances, voters may receive emailed ballot material.

Voters registered as general postal voters for state elections will automatically have their ballot material posted to them as soon as it becomes available after the close of nominations.

Central processing centre

We will establish a central processing centre at our centralised activity site. The central processing centre will be responsible for processing postal vote applications, dispatching postal ballot material to voters, and processing returned postal votes.

It is an offence for RPPs, or any other person, to distribute postal vote applications to voters. Only the VEC is authorised to provide postal vote applications, including at Australia Post outlets.

For voters unable to access postal voting facilities (for example, those travelling interstate or overseas or in remote locations without a fixed postal address) we will continue to provide an email ballot material solution. Eligible voters may apply online for a postal vote and, after indicating they cannot reliably receive mail, select the email option. We will send ballot material to their nominated email address using a secure email dispatch service.

Completed ballot papers must be printed and returned by post, as we are unable to accept electronically returned ballot papers.

We can accept postal votes received in the mail up until Friday 4 December 2026.

Interstate, overseas and Antarctic voting

We will establish early voting facilities at interstate and overseas locations. We will continue to work with interstate electoral commissions and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to determine the early voting services to be provided. The number of locations is yet to be confirmed.

We will publish details of all appointed locations for the election on the election venue locator via our website from Friday 13 November 2026.

We will also continue to work with staff from the Australian Antarctic Program to ensure Victorian electors employed in, or travelling to or from, the Australian Antarctic Territory during the election are able to vote.

Mobile voting

We may appoint aged care facilities, homelessness support agencies, Aboriginal community locations, and other specialist institutions such as prisons as mobile voting centres for the election.

If applicable, our mobile voting teams will visit these locations from Tuesday 17 November to Friday 27 November 2026 to enable voters who cannot attend an EVC or election day VC to cast their vote. To reduce risk, we will encourage electors at these venues to apply for a postal vote or to use telephone-assisted voting if eligible (for electors who are blind, have low vision, or have a motor impairment).

Election managers will contact eligible facilities in their district during late October 2026 to establish a visitation schedule. Our centralised team may also contact other eligible facilities such as Corrections Victoria to ensure the service provided responds to stakeholder considerations. We will advise RPPs and candidates of mobile voting itineraries.

Low sensory voting

We have been progressively trialling low sensory voting to provide a more inclusive environment for neurodivergent voters and voters responsible for caring for people that are neurodiverse. This initiative aligns with our strategic outcome of improving the voter experience and responds to recommendations we made in our Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election.

Our first trial took place during the 2023 Warrandyte District by-election, where we set aside a dedicated morning at an EVC. Campaigners were asked not to attend, with the goal of creating a quieter, lower-stimulus environment. We conducted a second trial during the 2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections, operating a separate low sensory mobile voting site in each district before the start of early voting. In Prahran District, campaigners did not attend; however in Werribee District campaigners did attend, which reduced the intended effectiveness of the low sensory environment.

Across all trials, we found that current restrictions on campaigning near voting centres are inadequate to guarantee a low sensory experience. We identified a need for legislative change to properly support this initiative.

For the 2026 state election, we will expand the model by aiming to establish at least one low sensory voting site in every district. These sites will operate on Tuesday 17 November from 10 am to 4 pm to provide voters the opportunity to vote in a quieter, more accessible environment, serviced by our mobile voting teams. We will select venues through a rigorous process, with a strong focus on accessibility and maintaining a low-stimulus environment.

Telephone-assisted voting

We will provide telephone-assisted voting (TAV) services to electors who are unable to vote without assistance because they are blind, have low vision, or have a motor impairment. We will expand eligibility to include electors subject to a declared emergency should this apply during the election.

Voting using the TAV service involves 2 discrete call centres: the first to register eligible electors for the service, and the second to capture and record their vote on a physical ballot paper.

At no point during the second call is the elector asked to disclose their identity, which preserves the secrecy of each elector's vote. To provide further integrity to the service, an observer accompanies the operator for the second call to ensure the vote is cast in accordance with the elector's instructions.

The service will operate from 9 am on Wednesday 18 November and follow the same days and hours of operation as EVCs. The service will also operate from 8 am until 6 pm on election day. Voters who are still in the phone queue at 6 pm on election day will be allowed to complete their vote, as if they were physically at a voting centre.

10. Counting and results

What's new?

We will conduct a 2CP count following recheck, in addition to 2CP counts conducted on election weekend following primary counts.

All Legislative Council election ballot papers will be brought to our centralised activity site (CAS) for counting. All Legislative Council region election ballot papers will be data entered.

We will complete full preference distributions for all Legislative Assembly district elections.

This section provides an overview of the counting period for the election. Draft count schedules for Legislative Assembly district elections and Legislative Council region elections will be included in the final election service plan.

10.1 Counting

Counting methods

In state elections, we use different methods to determine results in Legislative Assembly district elections and Legislative Council region elections.

Preferential counting (Legislative Assembly district elections)

We use preferential counting in each district election, where one member is elected to the Legislative Assembly. To win, a candidate must secure more than 50% of all formal votes (an *absolute majority*).

In all district elections, ballot papers will undergo the following manual counts:

- › primary first preference count
- › primary 2-candidate preferred (2CP) count (election weekend counts only)
- › recheck first preference count
- › recheck 2CP count (all counts)
- › full preference distribution

In some district elections, we may conduct a computerised preference distribution instead of a manual one. In these cases, after we complete a manual recheck,

we will data enter all ballot papers into our computer count application, which will calculate the election result. The final election service plan will confirm whether we intend to use computer counting in Legislative Assembly district elections at the 2026 state election.

Proportional representation counts (region elections)

We use proportional representation counting in each region election, where 5 members are elected to the Legislative Council. To be elected, candidates must receive a proportion of formal votes known as a *quota*.

We calculate the quota by dividing the total number of formal ballot papers by 1 more than the number of candidates to be elected and then adding 1 to the result.

$$\left(\frac{\text{Number of formal votes}}{\text{Number of vacancies} + 1} \right) + 1 = \text{Quota}$$

Ballot papers in region elections will undergo the following counts:

- › primary first preference count (manual count)
- › recheck via data entry: two rounds of data entry for both above-the-line (ATL) and below-the-line (BTL) votes.

We will calculate the result in each region election after both rounds of ATL and BTL data entry are completed, and after group voting tickets have been loaded for the total ATL votes for each group.

We will conduct all region election counting activities centrally at the CAS, except for region primary counts which will be undertaken in most election day VCs.

Early sorting and postal vote extraction

The Electoral Act allows us to sort early votes and extract postal votes on election day between 8 am and 6 pm. These activities must occur in restricted areas under strict controls.

We will establish restricted areas at each hub for the sorting of early votes. During the voting period and after the close of voting, ballot boxes from EVCs will be progressively transferred to their local hub. Sorting of early votes will commence from 8 am on election day.

At the CAS, we will establish a restricted area for the extraction and sorting of postal votes from all 88 districts, starting at 8 am on election day. Before extraction, postal votes must undergo preliminary scrutiny to determine whether they are admitted or rejected. This preliminary scrutiny of postal votes will commence

on the Monday before election day. We will admit postal votes to early extraction that are received by close of business on Thursday 26 November 2026 and accepted through preliminary scrutiny by close of business Friday 27 November 2026. Eligible postal votes received after this date will be counted from Monday 30 November 2026.

Scrutineers and staff will not be permitted to bring recording devices into restricted areas at any election venue. Each venue will provide check-in facilities to store prohibited devices. We will provide any additional information for candidates and registered political parties before these activities begin.

Counting on election day

After the close of voting at 6 pm on election day, ordinary votes issued in election day VCs will be counted in those VCs. Counting will commence as soon as voting has completed (including all voters who were in line at 6 pm), issuing points have been reconciled and count areas have been set up. As a result, counting will rarely commence immediately at 6 pm.

Most VCs will conduct 3 counts as follows:

1. First preference (primary) count – district
2. 2-candidate preferred (2CP) count – district
3. First preference (primary) count – region¹

The first preference count for the Legislative Assembly district election involves sorting ballot papers by first preference for each candidate, or as informal, and then tallying the number of votes per candidate and the total number of informal votes.

The 2CP count is a statistical count in which ballot papers are sorted to the 2 candidates considered most likely to be in the lead after the full distribution of preferences. We will determine each district election's 2CP pairing prior to election day. The purpose of the 2CP count is to provide an early indication of the election result and information for candidates, RPPs and analysts. A 2CP count does not determine the final election outcome.

For the first preference count for Legislative Council region elections, VC staff will record first preference votes for the region by group (above-the-line and below-the-line) or by ungrouped candidate (below-the-line only). The total number of informal ballot papers will also be tallied.

In VCs where the first preference count of Legislative Council region votes will not be completed on the night, VC staff will reconcile their Legislative Council election votes and transfer them to the CAS. First preference counts for these votes will then be conducted at the CAS before data entry begins. VC staff will reconcile Legislative Council region election ballot papers and transfer them to the CAS. Primary counts of these votes will then be conducted at the CAS before data entry begins.

Counting of postal votes that were extracted in the restricted area from 8 am on election day will commence at 6 pm on election night at the CAS (first preference and 2CP).

Counting of own-district early votes (first preference and 2CP) will commence in hubs after 6 pm on election day. This will include early votes taken in EVCs, mobile voting centres and joint EVCs. The introduction of joint EVCs will allow a higher number of district votes to be counted within their home district, improving the efficiency of the count. Over 200,000 Legislative Assembly district election votes are expected to be counted sooner as a result of this change. Districts where high volumes of early votes will prevent all counts from being completed on election night will be identified during count planning activities and have their counts scheduled to occur over election night and on Sunday 29 November 2026.

Vote exchange

Early votes taken for other districts in EVCs and mobile voting centres will be included in the vote exchange, which is currently estimated to take place from Sunday 29 November to Tuesday 1 December 2026. The vote exchange process involves all early votes that were cast outside of their district being sorted, reconciled and packaged for dispatch to the CAS, where they will be reconciled on receipt. Counting of early votes from the vote exchange is expected to commence from Wednesday 2 December 2026 at the CAS.

The exception from this process will be early votes taken for districts within the same hub as the dispatching district, and that were marked off in real time using our electronic roll mark-off application. These votes will be exchanged locally and are expected to be counted from Monday 30 November 2026.

Absent votes taken in VCs on election day for other districts will also be included in the vote exchange, with counting expected to commence from Thursday 3 December 2026.

We will confirm the dates of all vote exchange activities in the final election service plan.

¹ VCs that are identified as being unlikely to complete all 3 counts before 11 pm will not complete the first preference (primary) count of region votes on the night.

Provisional vote checking

Checking of provisional voters' entitlement to be enrolled will take place during the week after election day. Before each provisional vote can be admitted to extraction and counting, we must confirm the voter's enrolment entitlement.

Applications from provisional votes taken in EVCs and election day VCs will be sent to the CAS via the vote exchange. Provisional votes for Legislative Assembly district elections we identify as close seats under our close seat management protocol will be checked as a priority.

We will conduct a thorough enrolment entitlement check for each provisional vote. This will include:

- › searching the enrolment register to confirm the voter has not previously been removed on the grounds of ineligibility
- › confirming citizenship or British subject status, where applicable
- › verifying that the address for which enrolment is claimed is valid for enrolment purposes.

As a result of these checks, each vote will either be admitted to the count or excluded. Admitted votes will be extracted and counted, and the enrolment register will be updated from provisional votes where required.

Counting after election day (Legislative Assembly district elections)

District election rechecks of votes counted on election weekend

All Legislative Assembly district election votes that had primary and 2CP counts on election night (or the next day) will be rechecked after election day. For this election, we will complete another 2CP count of these votes following the recheck, ensuring that final 2CP figures reflect the recheck count instead of the primary count.

Further counting

All remaining Legislative Assembly district election votes that were not counted on election weekend will be counted across a 9-day period commencing on Monday 30 November, with counts conducted in the following order:

- › primary
- › recheck
- › 2CP.

This includes counts for:

- › all remaining postal votes received prior to the legislated deadline for receiving postal votes (6 pm on Friday 4 December 2026), which will be counted at the CAS
- › all votes moved through the vote exchange, including any provisional and marked-as-voted votes. These will be counted at the CAS except for early votes exchanged locally within hubs, which will be counted in their local hub
- › all votes received from interstate and overseas venues, including any provisional and marked-as-voted votes, which will be counted at the CAS
- › all votes cast through telephone-assisted voting, which will be counted at the CAS.

Preliminary scrutiny of declaration votes

All postal votes returned from Friday 27 November 2026 until the legislated cut-off for us to receive postal votes (6 pm on Friday 4 December 2026) will undergo preliminary scrutiny activities at the CAS. Admitted votes will be extracted and then counted at the CAS.

Any early, absent or marked-as-voted declaration envelopes sent to the CAS in the vote exchange will also undergo preliminary scrutiny to determine whether they can be admitted and sent to extraction and counting. Any votes returned from interstate and overseas venues will also undergo the same process.

Corrected district 2CP counts

We will monitor the results of the 2CP counts on election night. Where the candidates selected for a district election's 2CP count appear incorrect, a corrected 2CP count may take place during the week following election day. We will not adjust any incorrect 2CPs on election night. Minor variations may be observed between the statistical 2CP results and recheck results.

District election close seats

We will monitor results on election night and throughout the counting period to identify any district elections considered close. We consider a count to be a close seat where no successful candidate can be clearly identified on first-preference or 2CP counts, or where the final margin is expected to be small. Counting activities for close seats will be actively managed and supported by head office staff. We always prioritise accuracy and integrity over speed. We will communicate any changes to count plans to the relevant candidates and RPPs.

District election preference distributions

We will conduct a full preference distribution in every district election. This involves excluding the candidate with the fewest votes and transferring each of their ballot papers to the remaining candidates in the order of the voters' next highest preferences. The process continues until only 2 candidates remain.

Where a candidate receives an absolute majority (more than 50%) of first preference votes, the distribution will still be completed. However, in accordance with the Electoral Act, this can only be for information purposes, will occur after the declaration of the result and will not form the official results of the election.

Preference distributions will commence once rechecks of all first preference counts have been completed. They are expected to begin on Thursday 10 December 2026.

Counting after election day (Legislative Council region elections)

Legislative Council region election counts

All Legislative Council region election votes cast in election day VCs, EVCs and mobile voting centres will be transferred to the CAS.

Votes cast in EVCs and mobile voting centres, as well as election day voting centres where Legislative Council region election counts were not completed on election night will then undergo a primary count at the CAS.

The primary count of the following Legislative Council region election votes will also be completed at the CAS:

- › postal votes
- › votes transferred through the vote exchange
- › votes from interstate and overseas venues
- › votes cast through telephone-assisted voting.

During the counting period, we will publish the details of preference distributions as they are completed.

Following primary counts, all Legislative Council region election votes will be batched and sent to data entry where above-the-line and below-the-line votes will be data entered into our computer count application twice. The total number of informal votes for each parcel of votes will also be entered into our computer count application. Data entry is expected to commence on Sunday 29 November 2026.

Following the completion of data entry of all above-the-line and below-the-line votes, group voting tickets will be loaded into the computer count application for above-the-line votes for each group in each region election.

Calculation of region election results

The calculation of results for each Legislative Council region election will take place at the CAS. The date and time will be advised to candidates and parties and is expected to take place on Wednesday 16 or Thursday 17 December 2026.

Recounts

Once a provisional result has been obtained but before the successful candidate or candidates have been declared in a district or region election, the election manager may conduct a recount of some or all of the ballot papers. A recount may occur:

- › at the election manager's discretion following approval from the VEC
- › at the request of a candidate, specifying reasons, and the VEC agrees to the request
- › if the election manager is directed by the VEC to conduct one.

We will monitor the outcome of each election and work with election managers to determine if a recount should take place. If a recount is required, we will provide at least 4 hours' notice to candidates and RPPs relevant to that recount.

Legislative Assembly district election 2-party preferred counts

We intend to continue the practice of preparing two-party-preferred (2PP) statistics. The purpose of the 2PP count is to show how the vote is divided between the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal Party/ The Nationals in each district, and for the state as a whole, taking into account the preferences of voters who gave higher preferences to other RPPs and independent candidates.

We will conduct 2PP counts, where required, once all counting in each district election is completed. The final service plan will confirm the timing of any 2PP counts, including details on when statewide 2PP data will be published on our website.

Count communications

We will publish high-level count timelines for district and region elections in the final service plan. We will also publish an updated version of the high-level count timeline at the commencement of the election.

Following the close of nominations, and once count planning is finalised, we will provide candidates and RPPs with the following count plans in the week before election day:

- › election day VC count plan (statewide)
- › early vote sort and count plan for counting activities in each district
- › centralised preliminary scrutiny, vote exchange and extraction plan (for activities happening at the CAS)
- › centralised Legislative Assembly district election count plan (for counts occurring at the CAS)
- › centralised Legislative Council region election count plan (for counts occurring at the CAS).

In these plans, we will list activity dates, start times and the number of election officials involved in the activity.

We will communicate any changes to these plans to candidates and RPPs as and when required.

Publication of election results

We will publish progressive results for each district and region election on our website as they become available. On election night, first preference results from smaller VCs are expected to be available from approximately 6:30 pm, with many VCs expected to report first preference results by 9 pm.

Results will include information on candidates, RPP endorsement (where applicable) and voting location. Each set of results will be presented in ballot paper position order and will show:

- › the total number of first preference votes received by each candidate for Legislative Assembly district elections
- › the total number of votes for groups in Legislative Council region elections (above-the-line and first preference below-the-line)
- › the total number of first preference votes for ungrouped candidates for Legislative Council region elections.

Results will also be aggregated to show statewide trends for the Legislative Assembly district elections and Legislative Council region elections.

We will publish the names of successful candidates once the counting is complete. Following the formal declaration of results, successful candidates will be updated to display as elected members.

Availability of election results for media

We will provide downloadable result data files for the election in a form that can be readily used by the media. The final election service plan will outline whether any changes to the data files, as well as the data published on our website, will be made for the election.

Election night trial

We will conduct an election night trial on the evening of Wednesday 25 November 2026. The media will be invited to participate to test data feeds. All election managers will enter test data into our Election Management System to ensure communication and technology systems are performing correctly for the transmission of results to our website and the media.

The test data will be entered against the actual candidates for the election. All test data will be deleted from the database and website at the completion of the trial. Media representatives with registered access can only use the test data for the purposes of the trial.

10.2 Scrutineers

Candidates are not permitted to attend the preliminary scrutiny, extraction or counting of votes. Instead, they may appoint scrutineers to attend these and other observable activities and represent their interests.

Candidates must complete an *Appointment and declaration of scrutineer* form for each scrutineer at each election venue they intend to visit. If a scrutineer acts on behalf of multiple candidates at a single venue, they must hold an appointment form for each candidate at that venue.

The number of scrutineers that may attend an activity is limited by the scrutineer quota. This means the number of scrutineers attending on behalf of each candidate must not exceed the number of election officials engaged in the activity.

We will publish a comprehensive revised scrutineer handbook outlining the roles and responsibilities of scrutineers as well as detailed information about counting activities. We will provide this handbook to candidates and RPPs and it will also be available on our website.

It is the responsibility of candidates and RPPs to ensure their scrutineers are appropriately briefed before undertaking any duties, including being informed of scheduled dates, times and locations of observable activities, and the number of election officials involved.

Our staff will also brief scrutineers on their rights and responsibilities when they arrive at an election venue. Before an activity begins, or when a scrutineer arrives during an activity, staff will provide an activity briefing.

We will establish a centralised scrutineer sign-in area at the CAS, supported by breakout spaces and amenities. We will provide further information for scrutineers to candidates and RPPs before activities commence at each election venue.

All other candidates' nomination deposits will be forfeited to the Treasury (consolidated fund).

10.3 Declaration of results

Election managers are required to publicly declare the election results and announce the names of the successful candidates. Candidates and RPPs will be advised of the date, time and location of the declaration so that they may attend.

Declarations for Legislative Assembly district elections will take place at hubs. Where a Legislative Assembly district election candidate receives an absolute majority (more than 50%) of first preference votes, declarations are expected to occur from Wednesday 9 December 2026. Where a preference distribution is required to determine the successful candidate, declarations are expected to occur from Friday 11 December 2026.

Legislative Council region election results will be declared by a nominated region election manager at the CAS.

All elections must be declared before the return of the writs. The latest possible date for a declaration is Friday 18 December 2026.

Refund of nomination deposits

Candidates who receive 4% or more of the formal first preference votes in their electorate, or who are elected, will have their nomination deposit refunded within 6 to 8 weeks after the declaration of the election. This includes all candidates in a group that receives more than 4% of formal first preference votes in a Legislative Council region election.

We will refund nomination deposits for independent candidates directly to the candidate, and for candidates endorsed by a RPP, directly to the RPP. Refunds will be made by direct credit into a nominated bank account.

We will also refund nomination deposits if a candidate retires or dies before the close of nominations, or if they are a candidate in a failed election.

11. Compliance and integrity

What's new?

We will have election compliance officers in every hub to increase local support for regulating voting and counting locations.

We are expanding the use of digital integrity checklists at hubs, our centralised activity site, and central head office locations.

We will communicate regulatory priorities and provide education, guidance and support to candidates and RPPs about electoral laws earlier and more frequently throughout the lead up to the election timeline.

Online submission forms will be deployed to non-voters at the apparent failure to vote notice stage.

It is critical for compliance and integrity principles to be embedded throughout our election operations and election service delivery. Since the 2022 state election, we have established regulatory objectives to more clearly articulate our regulatory role under the Electoral Act:

1. **Active participation:** we administer electoral enrolment, candidate nominations, party registration and compulsory voting to enable active participation in elections.
2. **Transparent political finance:** we administer political finance obligations to promote accountability, equity and transparency in Victorian state elections.
3. **Trust in elections:** we enforce the rules that apply to electoral advertising, campaigning, and voting to deliver free, fair and safe elections.

To help us deliver on these objectives, we will identify and communicate regulatory priorities for the 2026 calendar year, including specific priorities for the election. Our regulatory programs are underpinned by our constructive compliance approach: promoting compliance with electoral laws and acting on non-compliance in proportion to the level of harm.

Our regulatory objectives sit alongside our electoral integrity framework to provide a cohesive approach to our internal compliance, external compliance and integrity assurance activities. More information about our regulatory objectives and electoral integrity framework is available on our website at vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/how-we-regulate.

11.1 Election integrity activities

The planning, delivery, and evaluation of the election program focuses on robust integrity and decision-making measures at all levels of our organisation. These measures will focus on election office and centralised activity compliance, as well as specific activities vital for election result integrity.

Electoral integrity support

We will again deploy our regulatory advice and incidents desk model, first implemented at the 2022 state election, to provide prompt and reliable advice to staff on regulatory or legislative queries, and to manage requests or allegations requiring additional expertise or integrity support.

For the election, the regulatory advice and incidents desk will support the operational command centre, including dedicated escalation pathways for incidents and major issues, and linking with the regulatory compliance staffing profile.

We will again deploy our digital integrity checklist, which provides real-time oversight of compliance with legislative requirements. Previously limited to election offices, the checklist will now cover compliance with legislated processes and timelines at hubs, as well as activities that have been centralised such as communication with candidates.

Determinations and directions

Section 9(3) of the Electoral Act allows for us to make determinations regarding the performance of our responsibilities and exercise of our powers. Directions may also be issued on enrolment processes, elections and election procedures.

We are reviewing our published determinations and will issue updated versions ahead of the election. We will also review areas requiring additional clarification and may issue new determinations addressing these matters.

At the 2022 state election, we issued directions to regulate behaviour outside 2 early voting centres after interventions by VEC staff and police proved insufficient in response to multiple complaints about voter access. In the absence of legislative change to limit campaigner activity at voting centres, we may again issue directions at the 2026 state election in response to poor behaviour.

Count integrity

We will establish a team to conduct numerical integrity checks on the following Legislative Assembly district election counts:

- › primary first preference
- › recheck first preference
- › preference distributions.

We will also conduct a number of checks on the Legislative Council region elections.

11.2 Regulatory compliance

We are responsible for investigating offences under the Electoral Act, including offences committed at a VC or in connection with an election.

We adopt a constructive compliance approach, providing participants with resources to understand and meet their obligations. Where necessary, we will use enforcement tools under the Electoral Act to ensure compliance and may refer matters to other agencies, including Victoria Police.

For the 2026 state election, we will deploy officers from hubs in response to allegations of non-compliance or to remind participants of their responsibilities. Voters have the right to:

- › vote free of interference or intimidation
- › see campaign material that is authorised and not misleading or deceptive
- › know that campaigner conduct at voting centres is regulated
- › cast a vote that is secret and secure.

We may institute legal proceedings against any person committing an offence under the Electoral Act.

11.3 Legal matters

Court of Disputed Returns

Election results or the validity of an election can only be challenged by petitioning the Court of Disputed Returns. For Victorian state elections, the Supreme Court is the Court of Disputed Returns.

A petition must be filed with the Prothonotary of the Supreme Court within 40 days after the return of the writs. The writs must be returned by Saturday 19 December 2026. We will calculate and publish the date by which a petition must be filed after the writs are returned.

An election can be disputed by a candidate, a person who was entitled to vote at the election, or the VEC.

11.4 Storage and disposal of ballot papers

We manage the security and storage of ballot material in accordance with section 122 of the Electoral Act and associated regulations. All parcels are to be kept safely, including until any proceedings in the Court of Disputed Returns are complete.

After the declaration of election results, election managers will package all ballot papers and other materials used in the election in sealed security boxes. Each box will be clearly labelled with its contents, the district or region (if applicable) and the election date. Staff will register the material in our electronic document and records management system before returning it to our warehouse for secure storage.

The disposal of ballot material is governed by retention and disposal authorities issued by the Public Record Office Victoria and standards issued by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.

A certified copy of the electoral roll is kept permanently, first by us and later transferred to the Public Record Office Victoria as a state archive.

11.5 Compulsory voting enforcement

Within 6 months of election day, we are required by Section 163 of the Electoral Act, to send a notice by post to each voter who appears not to have voted, asking why they did not vote. The non-voter enforcement process will commence in January 2027.

The process has 5 stages managed by the VEC, and a final stage administered by Fines Victoria.

During each stage we will provide statistics on:

- › the number of apparent failure-to-vote notices issued
- › the number of apparent non-voters who replied, paid the fine, were excused, were not excused, or failed to reply
- › the number of infringement referrals made to Fines Victoria.

The Electoral Act also permits the prosecution of non-voters who fail to respond satisfactorily during the process.

We have systems in place to manage compulsory voting enforcement through to prosecution. Voting is compulsory for all enrolled electors unless they meet certain criteria for why they could not vote or have a valid and sufficient excuse.

Pre-processing

Stage 1 – pre-excuse

We will commence the formation of a non-voter notice for the 2026 state election in early 2027. Voting centre information reports detailing reasons for non-voting and excuses recorded by our Public Enquiry Service will be investigated to qualify individuals as pre-excused from voting.

Roll scanning

Stage 2 – compilation of the non-voter list

We will prepare the list of non-voters in accordance with the Electoral Regulations 2022 (Vic). This includes the exclusion of any non-voters who are automatically exempt from compulsory voting or have been pre-excused.

Enforcement

Stage 3 – Apparent failure to vote notice

We will prepare and send an apparent failure to vote notice (AFTVN) to those who appear to have failed to vote in the election and are not automatically exempt. We intend to dispatch these notices in early March 2027.

Stage 4 – Infringement notice

Under the *Infringements Act 2006* (Vic), we will send infringement notices to apparent non-voters whose excuse is not accepted, or who did not respond to the AFTVN. A penalty applies. Non-voters must either pay the penalty in full by the due date or seek a payment plan.

During this stage, non-voters may request a review of the infringement. If an internal review results in withdrawal, a withdrawal letter will be issued. Non-voters may also elect to have their matter heard directly in the Magistrates' Court.

Stage 5 – Penalty reminder notice

We will prepare and send a penalty reminder notice to those apparent non-voters who, at the conclusion of the infringement notice stage have not paid the penalty for failing to vote. The original penalty plus a penalty

reminder notice fee applies to this notice. Non-voters continue to have the same review and hearing options available as at the infringement notice stage.

A withdrawal of infringement letter must be mailed to each non-voter in this category where an internal review results in the withdrawal of the infringement.

During the penalty reminder stage non-voters may elect to have their matter heard directly in the Magistrates' Court.

Lodgement with Magistrates' Court and Fines Victoria

We will commence proceedings against any non-voter who elected to have their matter heard in the Magistrates' Court. We will also collate outstanding infringements and prepare a final court file for lodgement with Fines Victoria.

Prosecution of non-voters through the Court and Fines Victoria requires significant time and resources. Matters may extend into subsequent years.

Receipt of penalties

We will receive and record all payments made during compulsory voting enforcement. At the conclusion of the program, all penalty payments collected for the election will be transferred to consolidated revenue.

11.6 Redivision of electoral boundaries

No electoral structure reviews were undertaken in this period.

11.7 System security

We continue to strengthen our cyber security posture by aligning with the Australian Signals Directorate Essential Eight (ASD8) maturity model and deploying best-in-class technologies, including protection against Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks and real-time vulnerability scanning and mitigation.

Ongoing and significant investment in cyber and information security has placed us in a strong position to safeguard electoral information and systems. This program has spanned multiple phases and included extensive in-house and external testing and assurance.

Key advancements include the implementation of modern identity and access management solutions, supported by specialist engineering expertise to enhance network security.

Our approach is designed to deliver leading cyber and information security measures, underpinned by a high base level of assurance that is further elevated during critical periods.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key milestones and activities in election preparation

The below table summarises key milestones and activities in our election delivery.

Milestone/activity	Start date	End date
First round SEO recruitment campaign	1 March 2025	5 September 2025
EMT appointments provisionally mapped to electorates and verbally accepted	8 September 2025	28 November 2025
Second round SEO recruitment campaign	8 September 2025	3 April 2026
Preliminary communication campaign to election casual database to update personal details and availability	27 October 2025	31 December 2025
Candidate information sessions	3 March 2026	1 October 2026
Final communication campaign to election casual database to update personal details and availability	1 August 2026	30 October 2026
Hub lease period	1 August 2026	31 January 2027
EMT and HMT online training	10 August 2026	4 September 2026
Hub resource delivery and election office set-up	10 August 2026	25 September 2026
Final election service plan completed	3 August 2026	31 August 2026
EMT and HMT face to face training	7 September 2026	16 October 2026
Public enquiry service operational	14 September 2026	11 December 2026
Enrolment advertising	1 October 2026	9 November 2026
Election managers in offices	26 October 2026	11 December 2026
Commercial EVC lease period	31 October 2026	11 December 2026
CAS operational	3 November 2026	19 December 2026
Community EVC lease period	6 November 2026	6 December 2026

Appendix 2: VEC responses to Electoral Matters Committee recommendations

In November 2024, we published our response to Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee's report on its inquiry into the conduct of the 2022 state election. In that response, we indicated which of the Electoral Matters Committee's recommendations that we:

- › support
- › support in part
- › support in principle
- › note
- › do not support
- › consider not applicable to us.

We also indicated the budget impact of each recommendation and noted that we would need to carefully consider committing funding to new activities as they will require increasing our appropriation or reprioritising existing budgeted activities.

The final service plan will include a summary of the progress of each of the Electoral Matters Committee's recommendations, including how recommendations we supported (including in part or in principle) will or will not be operationalised at the 2026 state election.

Appendix 3: Progress on operational commitments from *Strategic service plan* and Report to Parliament on 2022 state election

In our Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election, we made 16 commitments for immediate areas to improve operations at future elections.

We also made a number of targeted commitments in our *Strategic service plan* to deliver at the 2026 state election.

The final service plan will include a summary of the progress of each of these operational commitments, including how they will be implemented at the 2026 state election.

Appendix 4: Evaluation framework

For the 2026 state election we will adopt a new framework for the evaluation of elections. We developed this framework to:

- › provide an overarching architecture to inform evaluative activity in election delivery at the VEC
- › ensure objectivity and accuracy in how we conduct evaluation
- › ensure consistency and common understanding about what and how to evaluate, and the types of data required, and
- › function as a potential blueprint for other business areas, and as an external - facing document.

The framework comprises key evaluation questions (KEQs) and a program logic. The strategic initiatives adopted for the 2026 state election and performance measures will also be incorporated as part of the evaluation framework.

Key evaluation questions (KEQs)

The KEQs cover key priorities or areas of interest for the VEC and guide data collection to ensure evidence is generated in support of service improvements. Each KEQ is broken into more focused or specific questions (lines of enquiry) to aid in this process. The following KEQs guide the evaluation of the state election services.

- › **KEQ 1 'Efficiency':** To what extent has the VEC demonstrated efficiency in the delivery of the 2026 state election?
- › **KEQ 2 'Effectiveness':** To what extent have planned objectives and outcomes of the 2026 state election been achieved?
- › **KEQ 3 'Future Considerations':** To what extent are the VEC's operations able to deliver the intended outcomes into the future?

Program Logic

The program logic provides a structured approach to the monitoring and assessment of success and impact across a range of service deliverables. The intended outcomes of particular election services are mapped back to activities and outputs, detailing the logical steps involved in planning and delivery. Various indicators have been identified as part of the logic to allow progress towards specific outcomes to be measured over the immediate-, medium- and long-term.

The program logic is structured around 4 key strategic areas: staff (wellbeing), voters, processes and systems, and trust.

Strategic initiatives

We will evaluate the strategic initiatives adopted for the 2026 state election as part of the evaluation framework.

Performance measures

We are currently reviewing performance indicators for the 2026 state election to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, taking into account change and improvement to VEC voting and other services since the 2022 state election and the trialling of new initiatives at recent by-elections.

The process for updating and developing appropriate performance measures for the 2026 state election is informed by changes in the electoral landscape, improvements to VEC voting and other support services, commitments to meeting various Electoral Matters Committee recommendations and maturation of our evaluation framework. As such, a range of new performance indicators are being developed to cover the following areas:

- › staff training and support
- › voting footprint
- › electronic roll mark-off
- › counting and count accuracy
- › public enquiry service
- › media presence and impact
- › candidate and RPP services.

At the same time, consistency with indicators used at previous elections will be maintained, with some refinements made to better monitor, assess and report on our performance in delivering the 2026 state election. Overall, the number and scope of performance indicators planned for use in this election is expected to increase.

All performance indicators are being developed in alignment with our *Strategy 2027*.

Appendix 5: Community languages

We currently provide translated information and operates interpreter telephone lines in the community languages listed below (plus one for 'all other languages').

Language	Telephone
Arabic	9209 0100
Assyrian	9209 0160
Burmese	9209 0161
Cantonese	9209 0101
Croatian	9209 0102
Dari	9209 0193
Dinka	9209 0119
Farsi/Persian	9209 0195
Greek	9209 0103
Hazaragi	9209 0162
Italian	9209 0104
Khmer	9209 0192
Korean	9209 0194
Macedonian	9209 0105
Mandarin	9209 0106
Nepali	9209 0163
Thai	9209 0164
Turkish	9209 0110
Urdu	9209 0165
Vietnamese	9209 0111
All other non-English languages	9209 0112

Appendix 6: List of districts and regions

* Indicates district responsible for the ballot draw for that region

Region	District	
Eastern Victoria	› Bass	› Mornington
	› Evelyn	› Morwell *
	› Gippsland East	› Narracan
	› Gippsland South	› Nepean
	› Hastings	› Pakenham
	› Monbulk	
North-Eastern Metropolitan	› Bayswater	› Glen Waverley
	› Box Hill	› Ivanhoe
	› Bulleen	› Mill Park
	› Bundoora	› Ringwood *
	› Croydon	› Warrandyte
	› Eltham	
Northern Metropolitan	› Broadmeadows	› Northcote
	› Brunswick	› Pascoe Vale
	› Essendon	› Preston
	› Greenvale	› Richmond
	› Kalkallo	› Thomastown
	› Melbourne *	
Northern Victoria	› Benambra	› Mildura
	› Bendigo East	› Murray Plains
	› Bendigo West	› Ovens Valley
	› Eildon	› Shepparton *
	› Euroa	› Yan Yean
	› Macedon	

Region	District	
South-Eastern Metropolitan	› Berwick	› Mordialloc
	› Carrum	› Mulgrave
	› Clarinda	› Narre Warren North
	› Cranbourne	› Narre Warren South
	› Dandenong *	› Rowville
	› Frankston	
Southern Metropolitan	› Albert Park	› Kew
	› Ashwood	› Malvern
	› Bentleigh	› Oakleigh
	› Brighton	› Prahran
	› Caulfield	› Sandringham
	› Hawthorn *	
Western Metropolitan	› Footscray	› Sunbury
	› Kororoit	› Sydenham
	› Laverton	› Tarneit
	› Niddrie	› Werribee
	› Point Cook	› Williamstown
	› St Albans *	
Western Victoria	› Bellarine	› Polwarth
	› Eureka	› Ripon
	› Geelong *	› South Barwon
	› Lara	› South-West Coast
	› Lowan	› Wendouree
	› Melton	

Appendix 7: Proposed Legislative Assembly district election count timeline

The final service plan will include a high-level Legislative Assembly district election count timeline for the 2026 state election.

Appendix 8: Proposed Legislative Council region election count timeline

The final service plan will include a high-level
Legislative Council region election count timeline
for the 2026 state election.

Appendix 9: Summary of responses to recommendations from the 2022 Report to Parliament

In our Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election, we made 12 key recommendations and 18 technical recommendations for legislative change. There has not yet been any legislative change addressing these recommendations.

The final service plan will include a summary of the progress of each of these recommendations.

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