

Senior election official handbook

2022 Edition



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(Victorian Electoral Commission)
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Foreword



Victorians have a proud history of actively participating in elections. During their lives, most members of our community will participate as voters at State and local government elections.

As the organisation responsible for conducting Victorian elections, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is expected to deliver high quality electoral services that are accessible to all.

This requires that these elections will be compliant with relevant laws and regulations, will be transparent, fair and equitable and conducted with integrity. Victorian electors rightly expect to be given every opportunity to vote and that their vote will be secret and dealt with appropriately. The role of the Senior election official is critical in this regard.

I am encouraged by the commitment shown to this ideal by each and every Senior election official. Through taking these responsibilities seriously, you will be contributing directly to our State's democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Warwick Gately". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

About this handbook

This information will help you to understand the VEC. You'll learn about your working conditions, rights and responsibilities, and find out about the standards and conduct we expect you to maintain.

This document sets out the role and responsibilities of Senior election officials (SEOs) and the various SEO appointments.

We hope that this handbook will assist you in your time at the VEC and will enable you to rapidly gain the knowledge you need to be successful and effective.

Further information about the VEC as an employer can be found on the VEC website vec.vic.gov.au.

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About the Victorian Electoral Commission

Stakeholders

The needs and interests of voters and the VEC's clients and partners vary according to their roles in the electoral process.

Voters

The VEC will make it as easy as possible for all sectors of the community in Victoria to enrol and vote through the identification of barriers to full participation. As a result, it will focus on addressing these barriers and creating an environment so that at every opportunity, voters are made aware of their obligations, understand what they are required to do, and are motivated to participate in Victoria's democracy (enrol and vote).

Clients

We aim to build on the delivery of fair and equitable elections by better interpreting the requirements of our clients to deliver high quality, value-for-money products and services.

Our people

The ability to contribute to the delivery of democracy is a key factor that can attract new staff to the organisation. At the same time, we aim to provide staff with the environment and opportunity to enable them to learn and thrive on a personal and professional level. This will enable VEC staff to be better placed to respond to challenges and adapt to changes both in their operating environment and outside of work.

Staff must be well supported by the organisation, systems and quality processes to provide consistent high-quality outcomes. In this way they remain motivated, informed and engaged.

The role of the VEC

The VEC is an independent agency, operating under the auspices of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, within the portfolio of the Minister for Government Services. The VEC is not subject to the direction or control of any Minister in respect of the performance of its responsibilities and functions and the exercise of its powers.

The VEC's primary responsibilities under the *Electoral Act 2002* are:

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

A basis in legislation

The VEC's operations are governed by five main pieces of legislation and their associated regulations:

Electoral Act 2002

Constitution Act 1975

Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982

Local Government Act 2020

Infringements Act 2006.

A number of other Acts impose duties on the VEC. These relate to the conduct of elections and polls (such as the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* and the *Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990*) or the provision of information (for example, the *Juries Act 2000*).

Elections

The electoral environment is shaped by legislation, which determines electoral cycles, provides a framework for the conduct of elections and creates the expectation that all eligible citizens will enrol and vote.

To effectively meet its legislative obligations the VEC must respond to a changing electoral environment and ensure the alignment of our approach with the expectations of our voters, our clients and our partners.

The activities of the VEC are largely determined by each electoral cycle. The following is a summary of the two key types of elections run by the VEC.

Parliamentary elections

- Parliamentary election terms are fixed at four-year terms (introduced by the *Constitution Amendment Act 2003*) and held on the last Saturday in November.
- All Victorian Members of Parliament (both houses) are elected for a four-year term of office.
- The Legislative Assembly (Lower House) has 88 districts (electorates) across the state.

- All districts have approximately equal numbers of voters (approximately 50,000).
- Each district has one elected member.
- The Legislative Council (Upper House) has 8 regions comprising 11 districts.
- Each region elects 5 members, giving a total of 40 members in the Legislative Council.
- The VEC appoints Election Managers to manage the election for each district and region.

Local government elections

- Local government elections are held on a four-yearly basis (according to the *Local Government Act 2020*), with election day being the fourth Saturday in October.
- Local government councillors are elected for a four-year term of office (unless they vacate office prior to the end of their term).
- There are 79 municipal councils across Victoria.
- Subdivided councils are divided into wards and have councillors elected to each ward.
- Unsubdivided councils have one election, electing multiple councillors.
- Local government elections for Melbourne City Council are governed by the *City of Melbourne Act 2001*. Melbourne City Council elections comprise two elections, one for the Leadership Team of a Lord mayor and Deputy lord mayor, the second for the election of councillors.
- The VEC appoints Election managers to manage the elections for each council.

Working for the VEC

The VEC as an employer

The VEC provides an environment in which you can have the satisfaction of knowing that your work is making a significant positive contribution to the Victorian community.

The VEC recognises that election management work brings with it considerable responsibilities and unique challenges. Therefore, we are committed to providing our senior election officials with:

- a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities
- tools and support to enable you to excel in your role
- an enjoyable and safe place to work

Your entitlements and conditions are summarised later in this section.

Organisational structure

The Electoral Commissioner, Warwick Gately AM, is the accountable officer for all of the activities of the Commission. To assist the Electoral Commissioner in carrying out his function, the VEC is divided into eight areas, known as branches. These branches are grouped under the umbrella of either the 'Electoral Functions Group' or the 'Corporate Services Group'.

Note that election staff sit within the Elections Branch. A Glossary of Election Personnel is provided in Appendix 2. This lists the key positions involved in the operation of an election office.

Electoral Functions Group

The Electoral Functions Group is led by the Deputy Electoral Commissioner. The following branches form part of this group:

<p>Elections branch</p>	<p>The Elections branch is responsible for overseeing the planning and conduct of State, local government and fee-for-service elections, by-elections, countbacks and polls.</p> <p>Key responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • election service agreements with Victoria’s local councils, and contracts with statutory and fee-for-service clients • developing and maintaining election procedures and instructional materials • recruiting and training the VEC’s pool of Senior election officials in preparation for appointment to election management roles • large-scale recruitment, training and support programs for the VEC’s temporary workforce of around 25,000 election appointees • services to candidates including political party registration • designing, preparing, printing and distributing election material • operating large-scale centralised operations for postal voting and computerised counts • developing and supporting election systems • establishing election office and early voting centre infrastructure • appointing election day voting centres • managing the VEC warehouse • compulsory voting enforcement.
<p>Electoral Enrolment branch</p>	<p>The Electoral Enrolment branch is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date and accurate register of electors. The Electoral Enrolment branch services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation of electoral enrolment programs • support for electoral boundary work by the Electoral Boundaries Commission • production of electoral rolls, other roll products and mapping data • provision of advice on electoral enrolment matters.

<p>Electoral Integrity and Regulation branch</p>	<p>The Electoral Integrity and Regulation branch is responsible for administering the VEC’s electoral compliance, enforcement and regulatory activities. The branch informs and supports the planning and delivery of the VEC’s electoral functions to protect and enhance the integrity of Victoria’s electoral processes.</p> <p>The branch includes the VEC’s Funding and Disclosure Unit and takes a coordinating role for disputes or litigation involving the Electoral Commissioner. The branch works closely with internal and external partners to perform these highly regulated activities.</p>
<p>Communication and Engagement branch</p>	<p>The Communication and Engagement branch comprises three distinct teams and provides a number of communication, outreach and education services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing internal and external communication services for the VEC, including administering the VEC website • developing and implementing major public awareness campaigns for electoral events across traditional and digital channels for all Victorian electors • developing stakeholder engagement programs relating to electoral participation and inclusion • providing electoral education and outreach services • providing advice on electoral legislation, electoral structures and strategic matters • providing research services and information.

Corporate Services Group

The Corporate Services Group is led by the Executive Director of Corporate Services. The following branches form part of this group:

<p>Finance and Corporate Governance branch</p>	<p>The Finance and Corporate Governance branch ensures the VEC has an effective financial management and governance environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governance and compliance, procurement and risk practices • financial management structures, systems, policies and procedures • financial planning, budgeting and reporting • payroll and invoice payments • financial operations.
<p>Information Technology branch</p>	<p>The IT branch supports the VEC's business systems and networks, ensuring a secure and resilient technology environment. Accountable for delivery of infrastructure and integrated applications for business and electoral activities, the IT branch comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations—maintaining and delivering enterprise systems. • DevOps—delivering cyber security and innovation in infrastructure and cloud computing. • Application Development—transforming services by modernising and consolidating applications. • Enterprise Architecture—designing principles and practices for strategy execution. • Quality Assurance—ensuring quality information technology products and services.
<p>Human Resources branch</p>	<p>The Human Resources branch supports the development of a workforce of skilled, accountable, collaborative people who are adaptable to change and supported to be the best.</p> <p>This is achieved through the human resources strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing meaningful work • developing responsive leadership • cultivating a positive work environment • enabling growth opportunities • supporting trusted leadership.

Your responsibilities

The VEC and its employees and appointees have certain responsibilities under legislation. To comply with legislation, you must follow the procedures described in the election manuals and handbooks that are provided to you. Specific procedures you are required to follow are dependent on the role you are assigned.

Political impartiality

Anyone employed or appointed by the VEC is required, as part of their conditions of appointment, to sign a disclosure of political activities. The VEC has an exemption under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (S.75) which allows it to discriminate against a person in relation to offering employment on the basis of that person's political belief or activity.

What this means is that staff must maintain perceived and actual political impartiality while they are working for the VEC. This includes during appointment to a position at an election and also during periods while not holding a specific role.

For local government elections SEOs may also be asked to sign a Disclosure of Neutrality form.

Governance

The VEC is the administrative agency through which the Electoral Commissioner's legislative obligations are exercised. The VEC is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices reflect good governance as well as complying with all relevant legislation. Adherence to the VEC's governance framework demonstrates accountability to stakeholders and ensures the vitality and impartiality of the electoral system, now and into the future. Staffing and work practices are determined by the *Public Administration Act 2004* and guided by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

Senior election officials

The SEO Pool

The VEC has a pool of Senior election officials (SEOs) from which the VEC offers specific election management appointments during parliamentary and local government elections. Members of the pool have successfully completed the VEC's recruitment and induction programs. They are highly trained to perform the functions of any appointment during elections.

Each state district will have one Election manager (EM) and at least one Assistant election manager (AEM) appointed to conduct the election for that district.

For local government elections, an Election manager (EM) and up to three Assistant election managers (AEMs) are appointed for each election.

Selection for these roles occurs in the lead-up to each round of elections. They are not ongoing appointments, and last only until the conclusion of each election.

Not every SEO will be appointed to a management role during every election. Successful appointment will depend on your experience, availability, performance during selection and induction, and the number of other suitably qualified SEOs available in your area. SEOs not appointed to a management role may be offered other opportunities to strengthen their election knowledge.

Election support officers

A group of senior and experienced SEOs are appointed as Election support officers (ESOs) for each election. ESOs work to support field operations during an election event, overseeing the activities of election management teams and providing support and expertise.

ESOs work from either the VEC head office or based in the field to support their allocated districts or councils during the election. They spend time in each of their allocated election offices to provide support to the election management team and undertake important electoral integrity checks on behalf of the VEC.

Election management

The management of an election is an important job. When an election is called, the Electoral Commissioner will appoint election management team(s) to manage specific elections.

As an SEO, you may be called upon to be an EM, AEM, ESO or Senior election official consultant. When undertaking any of these roles you are expected:

- to perform your duties and functions in accordance with the law
- not to disclose anything you learn during the election that must not be disclosed
- to treat all staff, clients and voters respectfully in accordance with VEC values.

The EM is responsible for the establishment of the election office and the recruitment and training of office staff (see Appendix 2 for a list of staff). They are legally responsible for all activities that take place in the election as it relates to their district, region, or council.

In the case of a major issue during a parliamentary election, the EM may have to appear in the Supreme Court sitting as The Court of Disputed Returns. For local government elections, disputes about election results are heard by the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

SEOs appointed to election management teams must be mindful that the successful conduct of an election is based on integrity:

- Each aspect of the election must be capable of the closest scrutiny.
- Each aspect of the election must be seen to be transparent and ethical.
- Elections are conducted within a strict legal framework.

It is important that information provided by the election management team to office staff and members of the public during an election is correct. Election procedures are documented in detail, and it is important that these procedures are followed to ensure that the conduct of the election is consistent with these principles and instructions. Provision of incorrect information could cast doubt on the integrity and outcome of the election.

Support for election management teams

Materials and Resources

Appointed SEOs are provided with a detailed *Election Manual* and *Election Diary* which will be their main point of reference for the duration of the election. While we expect our election staff to be knowledgeable, we don't expect them to know all the answers. Don't guess. It is far better to say "I will check that and get back to you" than to give out incorrect information.

Throughout the election, communication between head office and election offices will occur significantly through EOBulletins, available via the EONetwork.

Access to a number of other useful manuals, handbooks and guides will also be provided.

People

For issues that can't be resolved by reference to the manual, EMs and AEMs can call the Help Desk based in the VEC Head Office, which will either answer your query or put you through to your Election support officer (ESO).

As an EM or AEM, you will be supervised by an ESO based at Head Office. If you have any doubt or uncertainty about procedures or legislation, you must consult your Election support officer (ESO) for guidance and resolution. Your ESO will also be your first point of contact in relation to any queries about your position.

The VEC's Personnel Helpline is available year-round to assist all election staff, including Senior election officials, with queries relating to the Election Staff Self-service portal.

SEO training program

SEO training and development activities are provided by the VEC to assist you to continually improve your performance and understanding of elections, as well as help the VEC achieve its goals. Training may involve face-to-face training sessions conducted at the VEC together with both online and paper-based home study units. SEOs are paid for participation in the training program and will require an internet connection for booking into sessions and participating in training.

Training is organised prior to an election for any SEO appointed to a role. All SEOs who accept an appointment at an election must attend training regardless of previous experience, as legislation, systems and procedures may have changed since the previous election. The training will familiarise the appointee with the procedures and systems relevant to the particular election.

Your working entitlements

Remuneration and allowances

Payment method and timeframe

Payments will be made by electronic funds transfer in fortnightly instalments. Please ensure that your banking details are up to date in your Election Staff Self-Service portal, as any incomplete or incorrect banking details will result in a delay in payment.

Any queries regarding pay issues should be directed to the Personnel Helpline.

Remuneration arrangements

There are two primary ways of paying SEOs appointed to an election management position:

Salary packages (fixed term)	During major election events, election management teams will be placed on a fixed term agreement. Salary packages for this fixed period consider the anticipated ordinary and overtime hours expected to fulfil the requirements of the role for the election period. No casual loading is applied during the appointment term and SEOs will instead accrue a small amount of annual and personal leave. Any outstanding annual leave balance will be paid pro-rata throughout the fixed term agreement.
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Casual appointments	<p>Outside the defined term of a fixed term appointment, and for all work undertaken by SEO consultants, SEOs are appointed casually, and any work undertaken will be paid at an hourly casual rate (inclusive of 25% casual loading). Timesheets must be submitted and approved for all casual work.</p> <p>The casual loading rate is to compensate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pro-rata payment in lieu of sick leave • pro-rata payment in lieu of recreation leave • out-of-hours work • the intermittent nature of employment. <p>Time and a half (x 1.5) rates apply after 8 hours of work (excluding breaks) on the one day. Double time (x 2) rates apply all day on Sundays and public holidays.</p> <p>The 25% additional loading does not apply to any hours worked as overtime.</p> <p>For activities outside the election period, including training, debriefing and voting centre reviews, the appointed casual hourly rate will apply.</p>
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Payment for training

You will be paid for completing home study modules and attending training at the VEC. Payment for the home study is based on the number of hours anticipated to be required to complete the activity, as determined by the VEC. All training hours are claimed via your electronic timesheet.

Additional payments for attending training

The VEC will pay a travel allowance to all training attendees.

Lunch, tea, coffee, and light snacks will be provided on all training days, factoring in any dietary requirements.

Where SEOs are required to stay overnight to complete the training program, the VEC will arrange and pay for accommodation.

The VEC pays a meal allowance to cover an evening meal and breakfast on the days where accommodation is provided. An additional meal allowance can be claimed by SEOs who would not arrive home until after 8.00 pm on the final day of training due to distance.

Superannuation

The VEC will make superannuation contributions on behalf of eligible SEOs for ordinary hours worked, as required by the terms and conditions of the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992*. SEOs will be offered their choice of fund and contributions will be paid into the fund nominated in the Election Staff Self-Service Portal.

To select a self-managed fund, you must complete the *Superannuation standard choice* form from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) website and email it along with any required documents to electionpayroll@vec.vic.gov.au.

Salary sacrifice

The VEC has determined that SEOs can request superannuation salary sacrifice arrangements in line with the following general guidelines:

- Salary sacrifice is not available for SEO pool selection training as participants are not yet SEOs.
- The request to salary sacrifice must be in advance—that is, you cannot ask to sacrifice salary that has already been earned.

It is essential that individuals seek independent financial advice before requesting salary sacrifice arrangements from the VEC. The VEC requires that you sign a declaration on form *Additional Superannuation Request* (see below) that independent financial advice has been received prior to implementing any salary sacrifice arrangements.

The VEC cannot and will not provide any advice to individuals regarding their personal financial circumstances and the possible effects of salary sacrificing on those arrangements. Advice from the VEC is limited to the effect on the individual's gross and net salary.

To request superannuation salary sacrifice, you must complete the *Additional Superannuation Request* form and email it to electionpayroll@vec.vic.gov.au no later than 4 weeks before you wish the scheme to commence. As per legislative requirements, you are not eligible for salary sacrifice if you are over 75 years of age.

Hours of work

Where an SEO is placed on a fixed term appointment their salary package will be calculated based on the projected hours required to perform the role. A breakdown of the expected hours will be outlined in the *staffing profile* provided with the appointment letter.

Some additional or offset hours may be required outside ordinary hours of work. Compensation for expected additional or offset hours will be included in the salary package.

Safe working practices, including management of fatigue, are in place to support wellbeing through the fixed term appointment. Election support officers (ESOs) will monitor hours worked by election management teams and will arrange support where necessary.

Meals and breaks

You will not be required to work more than 5 hours continuously without a rest or meal break (unpaid) of at least 30 minutes. If you require more regular breaks for medical or religious reasons, please discuss this with your supervising manager to agree on alternative arrangements.

Phone allowance

In cases where SEOs are required to use their own phone for work purposes, a phone allowance can be claimed via your electronic timesheet with approval from your ESO.

Use of private motor vehicles

As an SEO there may be situations where you will be required to use your private motor vehicle in connection with your appointment. If it is required, your appointing manager or ESO will discuss this with you.

Where this is necessary, a mileage allowance will be paid at the current rate per kilometre after submitting a claim via electronic timesheet or paper form.

You may claim any mileage in excess of 30 kilometres for commuting to your usual places of work during the election period. In such cases, only kilometres in excess of 30 kilometres (each way) may be claimed.

Outside the election period, where you are required to use your private motor vehicle to undertake activities that are not based at your usual places of work, e.g. office acquisition, voting centre review, office setup, office deinstallation, election debrief, you can claim the total number of kilometres travelled each way.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is registered for use on the open road, roadworthy and free of defects, insured by a motor vehicle policy, and free of any modification that may invalidate the insurance at all times you use your vehicle for VEC purposes. Use of a private motor vehicle requires the owner to accept costs incurred resulting from accident or damage.

The VEC will not be liable for toll fees, transport infringements or fines, or parking costs.

General conditions

Centrelink information

If you receive a Centrelink payment, you must advise Centrelink about your income and changes to your (or, in some circumstances, your partner's) work status. This includes any income from your work as an SEO with the VEC.

Dress code

Election management teams work in an environment that is visible to voters, candidates, and the media. As a representative of the VEC, you are expected to be dressed in no less than smart casual.

Employment opportunities with VEC and the VPS

Employment opportunities within the VEC can be accessed through the VEC website (vec.vic.gov.au).

Alternatively, careers.vic.gov.au is the job advertising site for the Victorian Public Service (VPS). There are no restrictions on who can apply for a job advertised.

National Police Check

The VEC must have in place a system of controls to ensure fit and proper persons are appointed to SEO roles. National Police Checks are one of the controls that form part of that system. Your appointment to an SEO role is subject to and conditional upon the return of a satisfactory National Police Check. By accepting an offer of appointment, you consent for the VEC to conduct this check.

Working with Children Check

The VEC is a 'Child Safe' organisation committed to the health, wellbeing and safety of children and young people. This commitment is taken seriously, and employees are expected to be cognisant of, and act consistently with, the VEC's expectations with regard to child safe principles and behaviours.

SEOs may be required to obtain and maintain a Working with Children Check. This will be dependent on the nature of the appointed role and any requirements of the election venues involved.

Occupational health and safety

Safety is everyone's responsibility at the VEC including SEOs.

The VEC is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment which is safe and without risk to the health of its appointees, employees, clients, contractors and visitors.

This commitment also extends to ensuring that the work of the VEC does not place the Victorian community at risk of injury, illness, disease or any form of property damage. Workplace health and safety management principles are integral to the everyday business of our workplace.

SEOs will be provided with procedures and guidance in how to ensure occupational health and safety is managed within the workplace.

If you discover a health and safety hazard, take remedial action immediately if it is safe to do so (follow the relevant Appendix of the *Election Manual* when it becomes available), and report it to your ESO.

COVID-19 vaccination requirements

The VEC has implemented a *COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements Policy* to ensure a safe workplace for all appointees, employees, clients, contractors and visitors. VEC staff, including SEOs, are required to provide evidence of up-to-date vaccination status or a valid medical exemption, prior to attending a workplace outside of home.

SEOs must also comply with any lawful direction relating to COVID-19 workplace obligations.

Other payments

The VEC does not pay parking fees or child-care costs.

Pre-existing illness, injury, or medical condition

As an equal opportunity employer, the VEC is committed to supporting staff with pre-existing illnesses, injuries or medical conditions. You are not required or permitted to undertake activities that you are not physically capable of performing.

If you have a pre-existing illness, injury or medical condition, the VEC will consider making reasonable modifications to the environment to enable you to conduct your job tasks in a way that is safe for you and others working with you. The VEC will also make reasonable adjustments to your duties and take appropriate action to ensure these duties are conducted in a manner that maintains the health and safety of all its employees and appointees.

Please note that in accordance with the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*, you are required to disclose all pre-existing diseases, illnesses or injuries that you reasonably believe could be accelerated, aggravated, exacerbated or caused to recur or deteriorate by undertaking the activities described in the duty statement for your role. There is an opportunity to disclose any conditions when accepting your appointment.

Privacy

The VEC collects personal information to fulfil its statutory functions under the *Electoral Act 2002* and for administrative purposes.

When collecting personal information, the VEC will take reasonable steps to advise you what information is being sought, for what purpose, whether any law requires the collection of the information and the main consequences, if any, of not providing the information. The VEC handles all personal information it receives in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*. For more information, view the VEC's *Privacy Policy* at [Privacy at the VEC](http://vec.vic.gov.au/PrivacyAtTheVEC.html) (vec.vic.gov.au/PrivacyAtTheVEC.html).

Termination

Appointment to an election role may be revoked or suspended at any time under section 41 of the *Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984*.

In accordance with your contract, you can terminate your appointment by providing one day's notice in writing to your appointing manager. That is, to the end of that working day.

Code of Conduct

Any person working for the VEC, including every election casual and official, must uphold a high degree of integrity in their conduct during their employment. The professional conduct of elections maintains the public's trust and confidence in Victoria's electoral processes.

Although SEO appointments to election management roles are not Victorian Public Service (VPS) appointments, the VEC does require that all election management staff abide by the Victorian Public Sector Commission's *Code of Conduct for Employees of Special Bodies*. A summary of the Code of Conduct is detailed below, and the full version is available electronically via the Victorian Public Sector Commission's website (vpsc.vic.gov.au).

General behaviour

As an SEO, you must:

- carry out your duties in accordance with VEC procedures and instructions
- treat everyone equally, fairly, consistently and with respect, regardless of a person's age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, or religion
- act with openness, honesty, and integrity
- promote confidence in electoral procedures and processes
- promote inclusiveness and diversity in employment
- provide timely and responsive service
- be accessible and available
- demonstrate high standards of communication, interpersonal skills, demeanour, punctuality, and diligence.

Confidentiality

As an SEO, you must:

- honour the confidentiality of information available to you as part of your duties consistent with the VEC's *Privacy Policy*
- not make any unauthorised audio, video or photographic recording inside any VEC-operated venue
- only access information necessary for the successful completion of your duties and only when access to that information is authorised.

Impartiality

As an SEO, you must:

- not associate with political parties, candidates or lobby groups, other than as required through the performance of your duties
- refrain from commenting on political matters
- disclose all interests that may impact on your impartiality and inform the VEC if circumstances relating to your impartiality have changed
- decline gifts or hospitality offered in the performance of your duties.

Social media

As an SEO, you must:

- consider the consequence of any comment you post to social media if it becomes available to a global audience before posting the comment
- exercise extreme care when participating in social media discussions so as to not explicitly or implicitly suggest an official position of the VEC
- ensure anything you publish online, including comments and posts made on social media, are in accordance with the *VPS Code of Conduct* and *VEC Social Media Policy*.

Performance evaluations

SEOs appointed to election roles are required to complete a performance evaluation at the end of the election.

You will receive a list of Key Results Areas that apply to your role. These include key performance indicators. At the conclusion of the election, you will be required to complete a self-assessment of your performance in each of the Key Result Areas.

Your self-assessments will be submitted to your manager - for AEMs, the manager will be the EM; for EMs the manager will be the ESO. Your manager will review the self-assessment and rate your performance. These ratings are moderated prior to being finalised. Conversations regarding your performance should be ongoing throughout the election period so that you have a clear understanding of the performance expectations for your role.

Accessing more information

Policies and guidelines

The VEC has a range of policies and guidelines to ensure staff understand both their entitlements and responsibilities. Policies, guidelines, and procedures also provide SEOs with guidance regarding people management.

Once appointed to an election role you will be provided with a list of VEC policies and guidelines. You will be provided with direction about those policies and guidelines you will need to familiarise yourself with in preparation for your role. You will be alerted to those you will not need to read in advance of your role but should be aware of in case a need arises.

Below is a selection of policy and guideline documents and information available -note this is not an exhaustive list.

Misconduct Policy and Procedure

Code of Conduct Policy

Complaint and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure

Email and Internet Usage Policy

Financial Code of Practice

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy and Guidelines

Harassment, Discrimination, Workplace Bullying and Anti-Violence Policy

Information and Cybersecurity Awareness Policy

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Privacy Policy

Protected Disclosure Policy

Social Media Policy

If you wish to access detailed information regarding VEC policies, procedures and guidelines prior to appointment, you may do so by contacting Human Resources on (03) 8620 1100 and requesting a copy of the relevant policy. Any questions or queries relating to VEC policies and procedures should be directed to this number.

Election management teams will have access to all policies via EONetwork during their appointment.

Further information

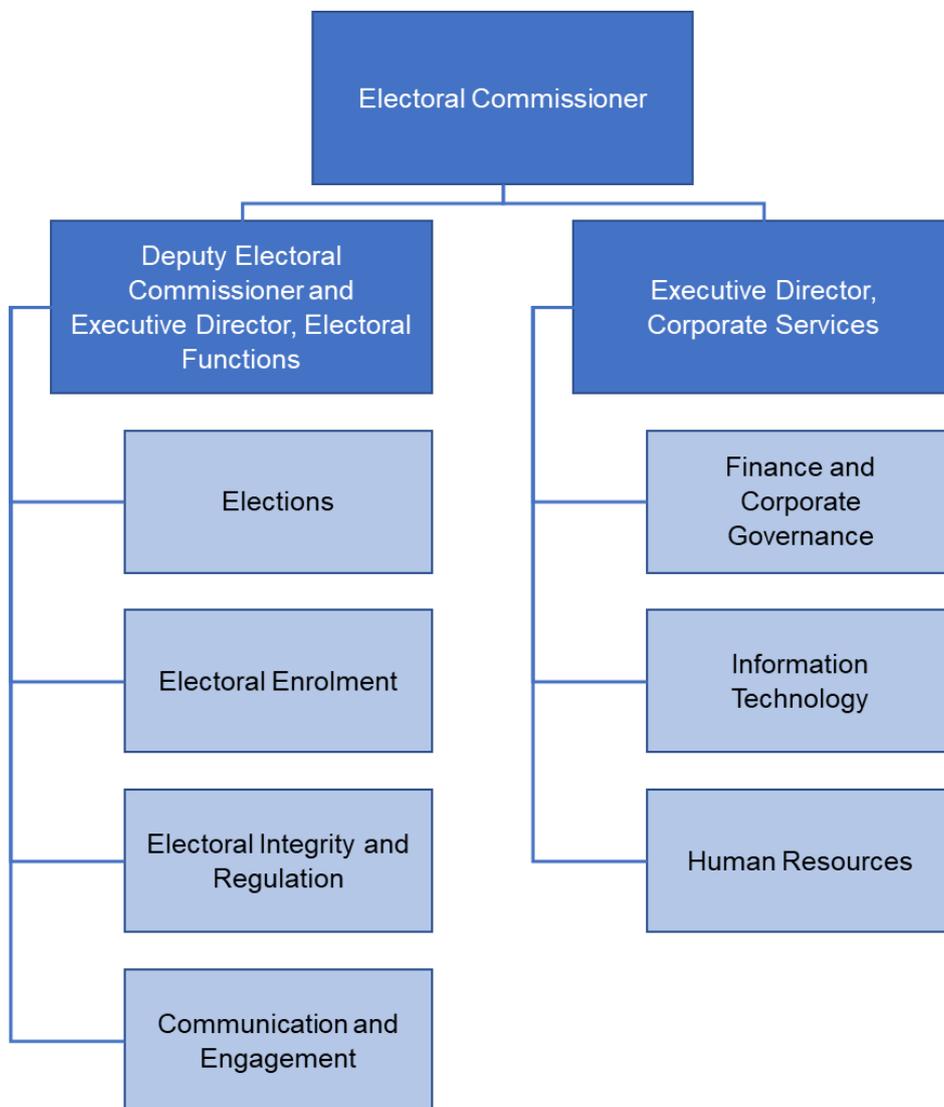
The VEC website (vec.vic.gov.au) is a source of information about the VEC and electoral processes. You can obtain information from current and previous election events that will help you understand the electoral environment.

Contact

For any questions regarding your membership in the SEO pool please email seoqueries@vec.vic.gov.au.

Appendix 1: Organisational chart – VEC branches

Effective from July 2022



Appendix 2: Glossary of electoral personnel

Assistant election manager (AEM)	<p>A Senior election official appointed by the Electoral commissioner to assist in the conduct of an election and supervise office staff. The Assistant election manager reports directly to the Election manager.</p>
Assistant voting centre manager (AVCM)	<p>A person appointed by the Election manager to assist a Voting centre manager to manage the conduct of the election at a voting centre with four or more issuing points.</p>
Candidate	<p>A person who is nominated under relevant legislation to stand for election to the Parliament or to a council.</p>
Chief executive officer (CEO)	<p>The person appointed by a council to be its Chief executive officer or any person acting in that position.</p>
Client liaison officer (CLO)	<p>A member of staff employed by the VEC to liaise with councils to ensure the conduct of the election is in accordance with the terms of the Electoral Service Agreement with each council. CLOs are led by the Client liaison manager.</p>
Counting officer	<p>A person appointed to undertake counting activities at an election.</p>
Declaration issuing officer (DIO)	<p>A person appointed by the Election manager to be responsible for issuing declaration votes to voters who are unable to be found on the roll or are outside their enrolled district/ward.</p>
Deputy electoral commissioner (DEC)	<p>A person appointed by the Governor-in-council to perform all functions, powers and duties delegated by the Electoral Commissioner. During the absence of the Electoral Commissioner, or if that office becomes vacant, the Deputy Electoral Commissioner shall act in that office.</p>

Early voting centre manager (EVCM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to manage the conduct of the election at an early voting centre.
Early voting centre officer (EVCO)	A person accountable for the issuing of ballot papers and the recording of voters on the roll at an early voting centre.
Election liaison officer (ELO)	A person appointed by the Election manager to visit and support Voting centre managers at a number of specific voting centres within a district or ward on election day.
Election manager (EM)	A Senior election official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election for a district at a State election or a council at a local government election. The Election manager is the front-line manager for that election and reports to the Election support officer.
Ordinary issuing officer	A person appointed by the Election manager to assist the Voting centre manager with the conduct of the election at a voting centre.
Election support officer (ESO)	An experienced Senior election official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to support and manage election management teams in the conduct of elections from a head office base.
Electoral commissioner (EC)	A person appointed by the Governor-in-Council to be responsible for the administration of electoral law in Victoria. The Electoral Commissioner is the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Electoral Commission with the power to appoint Election managers and other integral roles. The EC's responsibilities include the maintenance of the electoral roll and the conduct of all Parliamentary and municipal elections.
Help desk operator	Trained operators who respond to enquiries from election offices and assist or refer the issue to specific support staff. Calls regarding procedural matters are forwarded to Election support officers.

Mobile voting manager (MVM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to manage the conduct of the election at one or more mobile early voting centres.
Mobile voting officer (MVO)	A person accountable for the issuing of ballot papers and the marking of the roll at a mobile early voting centre.
Office assistant (OA)	A person appointed by the Election manager to provide administrative support during the election period including activities such as recruitment of staff.
Scrutineer	A person appointed by a candidate to represent the candidate's interests and observe election activities to satisfy the candidate that the election was conducted strictly in accordance with the legislation.
Senior election official (SEO)	A trained election official who may be appointed to a management role in the conduct of elections, as outlined in this handbook.
Senior election official (SEO) consultant	A Senior election official position reporting to a project or program manager based at the VEC head office, or to an Election manager in an election office to support key election activities. SEO Consultants also form part of a reserve strategy that will be implemented if any appointed Election manager or Assistant election manager becomes unavailable during the lead up to or throughout the election period.
Team leader	An authorised person who directs the activities of a team to obtain the results of an election.
Voting centre manager (VCM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to manage the conduct of the election at a voting centre.

Appendix 3: Duty statements

Election manager

The election manager reports to the election support officer. The election manager is responsible for managing all aspects of the election for which they are appointed.

The election manager will conduct the election in an impartial, efficient and professional manner and will demonstrate by example excellent customer service practice and VEC values. (Note: LG = Local Government, P = Postal, A = Attendance in the duties listed below).

Key accountabilities:

- Undertake training as required by the VEC.
- Acquire suitable accommodation for the temporary election office and arrange connection of utilities.
- Receive delivery of resources and set-up office in readiness for operation.
- Supervise the connection of telecommunication services.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the election office.
- Communicate all relevant issues to the election support officer.
- Appoint, train and supervise election staff. Conduct on-the-job training for office staff, including use of the Election Management System (EMS) and Personnel system. Train key early voting staff, voting centre staff (A) and counting team leaders.
- Organise and supervise the telephone enquiry service (LG).
- Ensure that all election details and results are accurately recorded in EMS.
- Ensure all electronic timesheets entered into the Personnel system are approved within the current pay period.
- Conduct candidate information session/s (LG).
- Interview candidates and process their nominations and candidate statements (LG - P) or how-to-vote cards (A).
- Conduct the draw for candidates' position on the ballot paper, which is a public event.
- Ensure that any voters/electors with special needs are being identified and assisted appropriately.
- Ensure that the layout and set-up of the public area allows optimal access for all voters/electors, including voters/electors with special needs.

- Supervise the preparation and conduct of early voting (if required).
- Deal with enquiries from candidates, the local media and the public.
- Ensure the security of ballot material at all times.
- Organise and conduct the processing of returned postal ballot material (LG).
- Complete all required election documentation progressively.
- Plan for election weekend.
- Brief and supervise scrutineers.
- Supervise counting of ballot papers and a distribution of preferences, if required.
- Supervise the scrutiny of declaration votes (LG).
- Supervise the preparation and dispatch of ballot papers to a computer count venue, if required.
- Formally declare the results of the election.
- Ensure that all assessments for election staff are complete and entered in the personnel system.
- Supervise the packing of furniture, equipment, and materials for the return to the Victorian Electoral Commission (or ballot materials to Council – LG).
- Arrange the disconnection of utilities, if required.
- Other duties as directed.

Postal elections (local government only)

- Supervise the issue of replacement ballot material.
- Manage the opening of ballot paper envelopes and extraction/counting of ballot papers.

Attendance elections (local government and parliamentary)

- Undertake venue accessibility audit of all voting centres.
- Confirm the hire of schools/buildings to be used as voting centres.
- Assist with the selection and establishment of early voting centres appointed.
- Manage the processing of postal vote applications (LG).
- Supervise the allocation and distribution of resources to voting centres.
- Plan for election day in the office (including the receipt of results and materials from voting centres).

- Manage extraction and count of postal ballot papers, early votes, and declaration votes (LG).

Full State elections only

- Participate in pre-election trials.
- Conduct the draw for the region if required to do so.
- Arrange mobile voting and employ and train mobile voting staff.
- Supervise the preparation and dispatch of voting materials for other election offices.

Assistant election manager

The assistant election manager reports to the election manager.

The duties of the assistant election manager are to assist the election manager in the managing of all aspects of the election/s for which they are appointed and to take responsibility for the administration of specific tasks as directed by the election manager. (Note: LG= Local Government, P = Postal, A=Attendance in the duties listed below).

Key accountabilities:

- Undertake training as required by the VEC.
- Receive delivery of resources and set-up office in readiness for operation.
- Assist with the supervision of the day-to-day operations of the election office.
- Supervise the work of a team of office assistants.
- Assist with the recruitment and training of election staff. Conduct on-the-job training for office staff, including use of the Election Management System (EMS) and Personnel system. Train key early voting staff, voting centre staff (A) and counting team leaders.
- Deal with public enquiries and supervise the telephone enquiry service.
- Supervise the entry of timesheets for election casual staff into the Personnel system.
- Assist with the conduct of the draw for candidates' position on the ballot paper, which is a public event.
- Ensure that all staff are dealing with voters/electors in a fair, friendly and helpful manner.
- Ensure that any voters/electors with special needs are being identified and assisted appropriately.
- Ensure that the layout and set-up of the public area allows optimal access for all voters/electors, including voters/electors with special needs.
- Assist with the preparation and conduct of early voting (if required).
- Ensure the security of ballot material at all times.
- Supervise the checking and processing of returned postal ballot material (LG).
- Assist with the planning for election weekend.
- Ensure all election results are recorded accurately in EMS.

- Assist with counting of ballot papers and a distribution of preferences, if required.
- Assist with the scrutiny of declaration votes (LG).
- Assist with preparation and dispatch of ballot papers to a computer count venue if required.
- Ensure that all assessments for election staff are complete and entered in the personnel system.
- Assist with the completion of election returns/documentation.
- Supervise the packing of furniture, equipment and materials for the return to the Victorian Electoral Commission (or ballot materials to Council - LG).
- Other duties, as directed by the election manager.

Postal elections (local government only)

- Supervise the issue of replacement ballot material.
- Supervise the opening of ballot paper envelopes and extraction/counting of ballot papers.

Attendance elections (local government and parliamentary)

- Assist with undertaking venue accessibility audit of all voting centres.
- Assist with the hire of schools/buildings to be used as voting centres.
- Assist with the selection and establishment of early voting centres appointed for your electorate(s).
- Supervise the processing of postal vote applications (LG).
- Supervise the allocation and distribution of resources to voting centres.
- Assist with the receipt of results from voting centres.
- Supervise the receipt of voting centre materials on election night.
- Assist with the extraction and count of postal ballot papers, early votes, and declaration votes (LG).

Full State elections only

- Participate in pre-election trials.
- Assist with the draw for the region, if required.
- Supervise the preparation and conduct of mobile voting.
- Assist with the preparation and dispatch of voting materials for other election offices.

Senior election official consultant

The SEO consultant is a Senior election official position reporting to a project or program manager based at the VEC head office, or to an Election manager in an election office. The SEO consultant may be involved in voting centre reviews, election office acquisitions, reviewing debriefing documents, reviewing manuals and online training, and assisting with recruitment and training.

During major election events, SEO consultants may form part of a reserve strategy that will be implemented if any appointed Election manager or Assistant election manager becomes unavailable during the lead up to or throughout the election period.

The SEO consultant must conduct their duties in an efficient, impartial and professional manner.

Level 1 key accountabilities, as delegated:

- perform voting centre reviews and/or election office acquisitions
- perform project or program tasks and activities
- participate in selection and induction training
- any other duties, as directed.

Level 2 key accountabilities, as delegated:

- provide opinions, advice and expertise from an experienced SEO perspective
- apply legislation, rules, procedures, and processes applicable to a project or program
- recruit, train and supervise project officers on project or program tasks and activities
- contribute to the drafting, review and establishment of procedures and processes
- any other duties, as directed.

