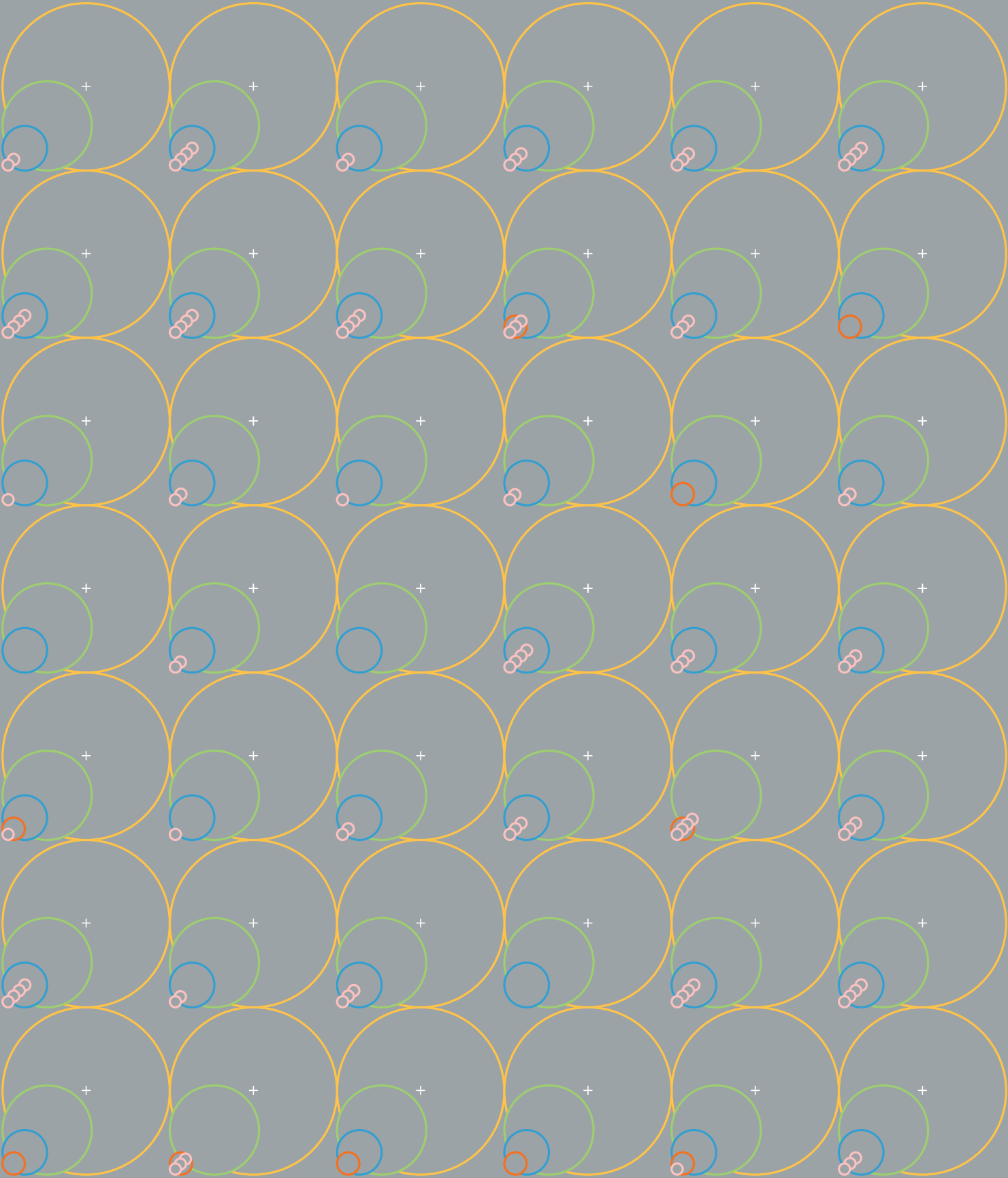


Report to Parliament

2024 local government elections

October 2025



Letter of transmittal

The Hon. Shaun Leane MLC
President of the Legislative Council
Parliament of Victoria
Parliament House
Melbourne

The Hon. Maree Edwards MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament of Victoria
Parliament House
Melbourne

Dear Presiding Officers

Pursuant to section 8(2)(b) of the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic),
I submit this report on the administration and conduct
of the Victorian local government general elections
held on 26 October 2024.

Yours sincerely



Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner
13 October 2025

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.

Note

This report is also available on the VEC's website at
vec.vic.gov.au in PDF format.

Report to Parliament
2024 local government elections

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Foreword

In October 2024, Victorians across 78 councils cast their vote for their local representatives. These were the second general elections held under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) and the first since the subsiding of the COVID-19 pandemic which overwhelmingly defined the 2020 local government elections.

The 2024 election program was a resounding success. The high level of turnout seen in 2020 was maintained, and we saw the lowest informality rate on record for Victorian local government elections. This was particularly encouraging given increases in both the number of enrolled voters and the number of candidates.

As a result of additional safeguards we put in place, we were able to detect and respond to 2 instances of election interference, and our efforts were independently confirmed in both cases. Every Victorian can be confident that their vote is safe and will not be undermined by those seeking to do wrong.

We also faced some unprecedented challenges. These elections were the most complex to date, particularly as a result of electoral structure reviews in 39 councils bringing the total number of individual elections to 466, an increase of 168 from the 2020 elections. Everyday issues became electoral issues, and we had to respond rapidly to process disruptions that occurred within the election timeline. These still emerged despite legislative changes relieving some of the pressures in the election timeline.

In response, we are committed to strengthening our approach to continuous improvement. Earlier this year we published our first *Strategic service plan* outlining major pieces of work that we plan to deliver over the coming years for Victorian elections. Building on that long-term planning and our evaluation of these elections, in this report we make 27 operational commitments looking ahead to the 2026 State election and the next local government elections in October 2028. I look forward to providing updates in future election service plans and reports on the progress of our commitments.

While we can and do make changes to our service delivery between elections to progress our strategic objectives, there are also some improvements which require legislative change. For the State Government and Parliament's consideration, in this report we make 10 key recommendations for changes which would address issues we observed at the elections.

We worked with a range of service providers, who I thank for their role in delivering these elections. In particular, Australia Post was critical to a successful statewide electoral event held entirely by post. Delivering 4.6 million ballot packs over 3 and a half weeks was no small undertaking, and the strong partnership between our organisations continues to support Victorians to actively participate in their democracy.

I also thank our local council colleagues for their diligent preparation of more than 460 individual voters' rolls, and their critical support for securing suitable election office accommodation and communicating with voters.

This was the first major electoral event of my term as Victoria's Electoral Commissioner. I was inspired and reassured by the VEC's cumulative wealth of expertise and capability, the years of detailed planning, and the commitment and enthusiasm of our election workforce. I thank the dedicated core staff of the VEC and the thousands of temporary staff who contributed their time and efforts to the successful and compliant delivery of democracy for all Victorians.

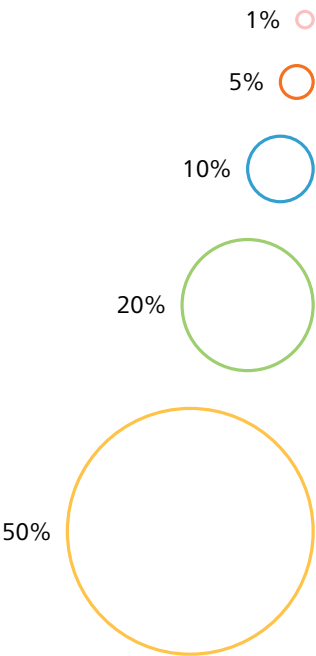


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sven Bluemmel'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large 'S' and 'B'.

Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner

Voter turnout (front cover)

Graphic representation of the voter turnout rate across each council with a contested election at the 2024 local government elections. Rings are grouped into units to visualise the turnout percentage, with each ring representing a different percentage value.



Contents

1.	Introduction	15
1.1	About us	16
1.2	About this report	16
1.3	Electoral landscape	16
1.4	Election timeline	20
1.5	Melbourne City Council elections	21
2.	Executive summary	23
2.1	Our strategic pillars and objectives	24
2.2	Initiatives	25
2.3	Recommendations	26
2.4	Commitments	27
3.	Electoral structure and ward boundary reviews	29
3.1	About electoral structure and ward boundary reviews	30
3.2	Electoral structure reviews	30
3.3	Ward boundary reviews	30
3.4	Implementation	31
4.	Election service management	33
4.1	Service planning and governance	34
4.2	Budget	35
4.3	Election rehearsal	35
4.4	Environmental resource management	36
4.5	Arrangements with councils	36
4.6	External service providers	37
4.7	Arrangements with other organisations	38

5.	Communication and engagement	39
5.1	Advertising campaign	40
5.2	Media	40
5.3	VoterAlert	41
5.4	Social media	41
5.5	Website	42
5.6	Public enquiry service	43
5.7	Feedback and complaints handling	44
5.8	Community outreach and engagement	44
6.	Venues and resourcing	47
6.1	Centralised activity sites	48
6.2	Election offices	48
6.3	IT and systems	49
6.4	Transport and logistics	50
7.	Workforce	51
7.1	Recruitment and sourcing	52
7.2	Election management teams	53
7.3	Election staff	54
7.4	Core staff	55
8.	Enrolment activities	57
8.1	Boundary recoding	58
8.2	Changes to enrolment entitlements	58
8.3	Voters' roll production	59
8.4	Roll products	62
9.	Candidates	65
9.1	Engagement and support	66
9.2	Nominations	66

9.3	Candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires	67
9.4	Melbourne City Council election candidates	69
9.5	Uncontested elections	70
9.6	Candidate retirements	71
10.	Voting period	75
10.1	Ballot material preparation	76
10.2	Voting channels	78
11.	Counting and results	83
11.1	Vote types	84
11.2	Counting	84
11.3	Scrutineers	85
11.4	Recounts	86
11.5	Results and declarations	86
12.	Compliance and integrity	89
12.1	Election integrity activities	90
12.2	Regulatory partnerships	91
12.3	VCAT matters	91
12.4	Compulsory voting	93
13.	Election findings	97
13.1	Evaluating the elections	98
13.2	Turnout	98
13.3	Participation	99
13.4	Informality	100
13.5	Stakeholder feedback	100
13.6	Customer feedback and complaints	101
13.7	Future research	105

14.	Technical recommendations	107
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Appendices	111
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Appendix 1: Details of changed structures and boundaries	112
Appendix 2: Summary of responses to recommendations from Report to Parliament on 2020 local government elections	115
Appendix 3: Key election statistics	116
Appendix 4: Election managers and election offices	144
Appendix 5: Communication products	149
Appendix 6: Sample ballot material	159
Appendix 7: Councils and VEC – key interactions timeline	163
Appendix 8: Report on evaluation of election services	166
Appendix 9: Outcomes of performance targets	196
Appendix 10: Analysis of informal votes conducted after the 2024 local government elections	199

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Electoral structure reviews	32
Recommendation 2: Future electronic voting options	37
Recommendation 3: Administration of council enrolment	61
Recommendation 4: Provision of enrolment information	63
Recommendation 5: Party affiliations of candidates	68
Recommendation 6: Confirming candidate training	73
Recommendation 7: Electronic assisted voting	79
Recommendation 8: Cut-off for postal replacement votes	82
Recommendation 9: Clear and timely resolution of election challenges	92
Recommendation 10: Technical amendments	108

List of tables

Table 1: Key changes from the Amendment Act and supporting regulations	18
Table 2: Timeline for the 2024 local government elections	20
Table 3: Timeline for the 2024 Melbourne City Council elections	22
Table 4: Public enquiry service contacts by channel	43
Table 5: Electoral education and enrolment sessions delivered to priority communities	44
Table 6: Electoral participation by priority community following a democracy ambassador session	45
Table 7: List of centralised extraction and counting activities	48
Table 8: List of uncontested elections	70
Table 9: Overview of candidate retirements	72
Table 10: Number of records excused from compulsory voting enforcement, by reason for not voting	94
Table 11: Compulsory voting enforcement statistics across local government general elections, 2016–2024	96
Table 12: Participation rate by enrolment type	100
Table 13: Submissions relating to the theme of ‘election administration and services to voters’ by subtheme	102
Table 14: Submissions relating to the theme of ‘advertising and electoral campaign material’ by subtheme	103
Table 15: Submissions relating to the theme of ‘candidates, campaigners and parties’ by subtheme	104
Table 16: Submissions relating to the theme of ‘staffing’ by subtheme	105
Table 17: Submissions relating to the theme of ‘electoral integrity’ by subtheme	105

List of figures

Figure 1: Social media highlights between Monday 16 July and Wednesday 19 November 2024	42
Figure 2: Total number of candidates at local government general elections, 2008–2024	67
Figure 3: Turnout and enrolment across local government general elections, 2008–2024	98
Figure 4: Participation across age groups over local government general elections, 2016–2024	99

Glossary

List of definitions

Term	Definition
Above-the-line	In the Melbourne City Council councillor election, voting above the line is when a voter puts a preference in a box for a group above the line on the ballot paper.
Absolute majority	More than 50% of the formal votes in an election.
Ballot pack	For local government elections, we mail each voter an envelope with all the ballot materials the voter needs. It includes: › a ballot paper › candidate statements, photographs and voting instructions › a multi-language leaflet for selected councils › a ballot paper envelope with a detachable declaration flap the voter must sign › a reply-paid envelope to post the sealed ballot paper envelope in. Ballot packs in the Melbourne City Council elections contain 2 ballot papers and a candidate booklet containing statements, photographs, indications of preferences and group voting tickets.
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.
Ballot paper envelope	The envelope the voter puts their completed ballot paper in. The envelope includes a detachable flap containing the name and address of the voter. The voter is required to sign a declaration on the flap.
Below-the-line	In the Melbourne City Council councillor election, voting below the line is when a voter preferences individual candidates in boxes below the line on the ballot paper.
Candidate	A person who has nominated to contest an election.
Centralised activity site	A central location where we conduct multiple election activities, including processing requests for replacement votes, extraction and counting.
CEO's list	The list of people who are entitled and have applied to be enrolled to vote in a council election where they are not already a state-enrolled elector. This list is maintained by the relevant council and combined with the Electoral Commissioner's List to form the certified voters' roll for an election.
Close of roll	The deadline for people to apply to be enrolled or update their enrolment for the voters' roll.
Computer count	The electronic counting of votes after ballot paper preferences are data entered into our computer count application by election officials.
Core staff	Our workforce of ongoing, fixed-term and casual VEC staff based at our head office and warehouse sites.

Term	Definition
Council	A local government authority as defined and set out in the LG Act. There are 79 councils in Victoria.
Councillor	A person who holds the office of member of a council, including the lord mayor and deputy lord mayor of Melbourne City Council.
Democracy ambassador	A community member we employ to deliver electoral information and services to priority communities.
Dis-information	False or inaccurate information that is intended to mislead or deceive.
Election	An election for a ward or unsubdivided council.
Election day	The day of an election, fixed under the LG Act. For elections held entirely by postal voting, there is no voting on election day. Election day for the 2024 local government elections was Saturday 26 October.
Election Management System	Our computerised system used by election managers to capture election data such as nominations, statements, questionnaires, and photographs. Results data is also entered directly into the Election Management System.
Election management team (EMT)	The election manager and one or more assistant election managers for a council election.
Election manager	The person appointed by the VEC to be responsible for the administration of a council election.
Election office	The location where the election manager conducts the election. There is one election office for each council's election.
Election official	A person appointed by the VEC to work at an election.
Election period	The 39-day period that starts when nominations close and ends at 6 pm on election day.
Election support officer	An experienced senior election official responsible for supporting election management teams.
Electoral Commissioner's list	The list of state-enrolled voters, supplied by the VEC for a specific council area and combined with the CEO's list to form the certified voters' roll for an election.
Electoral structure review	A review under the LG Act to determine a council's electoral structure, including councillor numbers, ward arrangements, and the placement of internal ward boundaries.
Extraction	The process of separating the declaration flap from a ballot paper envelope, removing the envelope's contents and determining if an admissible ballot paper was contained in the envelope.
Group A	Admitted envelopes received by the close of voting where a replacement vote had not also been issued to the voter.
Group B	All other admitted envelopes received before 12 noon on Friday 1 November, when the postal vote receipt period ended.

Term	Definition
Group voting ticket	A statement setting out how a group of candidates for the Melbourne City Council councillor election gives preferences to all candidates in that election. Group voting tickets apply to ballot papers marked above the line. Each group of candidates must submit a minimum of one and a maximum of 2 group voting tickets.
Grouped candidate	A candidate for the Melbourne City Council councillor election who has formed a group with one or more other candidates in the election. Groups are listed above the line on the ballot paper.
Indication of preferences	A statement setting out a candidate's preferred order of voting in the Melbourne City Council elections. Leadership team election candidates and ungrouped councillor election candidates may submit indications of preferences to be included in the postal ballot pack.
Informal vote	A ballot paper that is cast but cannot be counted because the voter's intention is not clear or the ballot paper has been completed incorrectly.
Interactive voice response (IVR)	An automated telephone system which delivered pre-recorded information to callers to our public enquiry service, and allowed them to request key forms and information without needing to speak to an operator.
Leadership team	The lord mayor and deputy lord mayor of Melbourne City Council.
Local Government Inspectorate (LGI)	LGI investigates alleged offences under the LG Act, including electoral offences. LGI's role in elections is to receive, assess and investigate offences related to electoral provisions of the LG Act. This may involve candidates, community groups and voters.
Local Government Victoria (LGV)	A division of the Victorian Department of Government Services responsible for supporting and regulating the state's local councils, advising the Minister for Local Government, and the local government sector.
Manual count	A method of vote counting most commonly used for elections with single vacancies, whereby ballot papers are physically sorted into piles based on voters' preferences and counted by election officials.
Mis-information	False or inaccurate information that is spread regardless of intent to mislead or deceive.
Nomination	The process by which a person becomes a candidate at an election.
Participation	The number of voters marked off the roll as a proportion of the number of people on the voters' roll for the election. Not to be confused with turnout.
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.
Preferential counting	The process used to elect representatives based on the most preferred candidate in an election with a single vacancy.
Proportional representation	The process used to elect representatives in proportion to their level of support in an election with multiple vacancies.
Recount	A re-examination and count of ballot papers by an election manager.
Replacement vote	A replacement vote is issued when a voter advises they have lost or spoilt their ballot material or that they did not receive a ballot pack.

Term	Definition
Retirement	The formal process by which a candidate's nomination is voided after the close of nominations if: › they wish to retire and their retirement will result in an uncontested election › the election manager gives them advice that states they are not qualified to be a councillor › they are not qualified to be a councillor and provide evidence to support this.
Scrutineer	A person appointed by a candidate to represent the candidate during electoral activities and to make sure the election is conducted according to the law.
Statutory advertisement	A public notice required by law to be published in specified media or formats, providing official information on matters such as elections, legislation, or government decisions.
Turnout	The number of votes counted in an election as a proportion of the number of people on the voters' roll for the election. Not to be confused with participation.
Uncontested election	If at the close of nominations the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies, the election is uncontested and no voting is required. An election may also become uncontested when a candidate retires from the election.
Unenrolled vote	A vote made by a person who claims to be entitled to vote but whose name cannot be found on the voters' roll.
Ungrouped candidate	A candidate for the Melbourne City Council councillor election who has not formed a group. Ungrouped candidates are only listed below the line on the ballot paper.
Unsubdivided council	A council not divided into wards.
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)	The body empowered to hear appeals against administrative decisions made by certain agencies, including the VEC. VCAT also hears disputes for local council elections under the LG Act.
Voter	A person enrolled to vote at a local government election.
Voters' roll	A list of the names and addresses of people who can vote in the election. The certified voters' roll is a merger of the CEO's list with the Electoral Commissioner's list. A voters' roll is created for each individual election.
Ward	A subdivision of a council. In subdivided councils, councillors are elected by voters in each ward.
Ward boundary review	Reviews that adjust a council's internal ward boundaries when voter numbers per councillor are forecast to fall outside the legislated $\pm 10\%$ tolerance before the next local government election.
Withdrawal	The formal process by which a candidate removes their nomination from an election before the close of nominations.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Long version
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
Amendment Act	<i>Local Government Amendment (Government and Integrity) Act 2024</i> (Vic)
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CEO	Chief executive officer
CoM Act	<i>City of Melbourne Act 2001</i> (Vic)
CoM Regulations	City of Melbourne (Electoral) Regulations 2022 (Vic)
DGS	Department of Government Services
Electoral Act	<i>Electoral Act 2002</i> (Vic)
EMT	Election management team
eSafety	Office of the eSafety Commissioner
IBAC	Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission
IT	Information technology
IVR	Interactive voice response
LG Act	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (Vic)
LG Regulations	Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2022 (Vic)
LGI	Local Government Inspectorate
LGV	Local Government Victoria
MCEC	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
OHS	Occupational health and safety
PDP Act	<i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i> (Vic)
SEO	Senior election official
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VEC	Victorian Electoral Commission
VGSO	Victorian Government Solicitor's Office
VPS	Victorian Public Service

1. Introduction

1.1 About us

The 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 – 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 and enforcing rules 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 electors
- › 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 Governor-in-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 current Electoral Commissioner and Dana Fleming is the current Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

We have a dedicated local government election program governance framework that incorporates programs, projects and activities supported by strategic planning, project management, and process mapping. We also have a long history of working in partnership with the local government sector. For example, during local government elections, we work closely with the Local Government Inspectorate (LGI), which is the regulator responsible for local government electoral offences under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (LG Act), and local councils, which manage council enrolment entitlements and primarily fund local government elections.

1.2 About this report

Victorian local government general elections are held every 4 years under the LG Act. On Saturday 26 October 2024, general elections were held for 78 of Victoria's 79 local councils.

We have prepared this publication to report on the conduct of the elections, consistent with our responsibilities under the Electoral Act.

This report provides information on our planning, delivery and evaluation of election services across our range of functions and work programs. It also provides 10 key recommendations for legislative change, complemented by 27 operational commitments for our continuous improvement of election services.

Detailed statistics about each election are provided in **Appendix 3** to this report.

1.3 Electoral landscape

Environment

The electoral landscape in Victoria is evolving. Social, political and community changes all contribute to an increasingly complex environment for open, fair, inclusive and accessible elections. Shifting political dynamics, heightened public scrutiny and the increasing influence of digital information channels present new challenges for our election delivery and regulation. This reinforces the need for transparency, adaptability, and robust administrative processes.

The electoral process remains a subject of heightened public and media scrutiny. Recent commentary on the administration of the 2024 Queensland local government elections and the 2025 WA State election underscores the growing need for election management bodies in all jurisdictions to be vigilant, proactive and suitably resourced.

Mis-information, dis-information and public scepticism of electoral processes continue to spread, including through digital information channels. We recognise the importance of understanding and responding to these evolving trends, including those relating to postal voting. For example, we worked closely with Australia Post to resolve localised disruptions to postal services, such as damage to post boxes and theft of Australia Post vehicles, and provide public reassurance of our electoral integrity measures.

Nonetheless, public trust remains high and we detected and responded to 2 instances of election interference, reinforcing our capacity to protect Victoria's democracy and prevent wrongdoing from impacting results.

We are also facing a more difficult budgetary environment. While we have continued successfully to deliver ever larger and more complex elections in an increasingly difficult environment, the cost of doing so has also increased. This places pressure on councils and on the VEC, who jointly bear the cost of local government elections.

At the elections, these pressures were exacerbated by the increased complexity of delivering 466 individual elections in response to a shift toward single-councillor ward structures across a large number of councils. This added complexity had impacts on not just election costs but on all facets of our election delivery, particularly printing and issuing ballot materials, communicating with voters, and counting votes. Combined with a growing number of eligible voters and a sustained high level of participation, as well as the reduction in service levels of Australia Post's letter mail service, it is clear that the complexity of delivering local government elections is likely to increase at future events.¹

Legal frameworks

Local government elections in Victoria are governed by the following legal frameworks, which shape our work programs, policies, procedures and processes:

- › *Constitution Act 1975* (Vic)
- › *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (LG Act)
- › Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic) (LG Regulations)
- › *City of Melbourne Act 2001* (Vic) (CoM Act)
- › City of Melbourne (Electoral) Regulations 2022 (Vic) (CoM Regulations)
- › *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (Electoral Act)
- › *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.

Changes to legislation

The *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* (Vic) (Amendment Act) introduced critical changes to the LG Act to relieve pressures on the election timeline. These changes were complemented by changes to the LG Regulations.

The Amendment Act received royal assent on Tuesday 25 June 2024, less than 2 months prior to the revised date for the close of roll. Before the Amendment Act was passed, our planning took account of both the existing and proposed election timelines. Where appropriate, we created duplicate instructional products, templates and other documentation, and mapped system change requirements in readiness for both outcomes.

¹ For more information, see Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, 'Australia Post', Media and Communications, DITRDCSA website, n.d., accessed 6 October 2025. <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/post/australia-post>

Table 1: Key changes from the Amendment Act and supporting regulations

Category	Description of change
Close of roll	The date for close of the voters' roll was extended from 57 days to 80 days before the elections. For all elections after the October 2024 general elections, including by-elections, the date for the close of roll will be 73 days before election day. The previous timelines were not viable due to the increasing scale and complexity of local government elections, particularly owing to: › changes to enrolment entitlements › population growth › a higher number of wards › a predicted increase in the number of candidates › reduction in postal services offered by Australia Post. Moving the close of roll allowed other key dates, including nomination day, the lodgement date for candidate statements and questionnaires, and the period for mailing out ballot materials, to be brought forward through amendments to the LG Regulations and updates to our mail lodgement dates.
Certification of the voters' roll	The timeframe for certifying the voters' roll was increased from 13 business days to 23 business days to ensure that the VEC and councils had time to process enrolment applications and complete roll certification processes.
Candidate statement word limit	The word limit for candidate statements was reduced from 300 words to 200 words. Equivalent amendments were made to the CoM Regulations for candidate, team and group statements. The LG Regulations previously increased the word limit from 200 to 300 words for the 2020 local government elections, acknowledging that candidates faced additional restrictions limiting their ability to campaign. The return to a 200-word limit meant we could produce smaller candidate statement leaflets and reduce printing costs for councils.
Close of candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires	Not including the Melbourne City Council elections, the deadlines for submitting candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires were brought forward one day to align with the close of nominations. This streamlined the nomination process and allowed more time for quality assurance and printing of ballot material. The timeframe for candidates to amend a rejected candidate statement was accordingly brought forward by one day to align with this change.
Mail-out period for ballot packs	The ballot pack mail-out period was extended from 3 to 4 business days, allowing us to better safeguard postal voting and mitigate risks to postal services.
Exemptions to the enforcement of compulsory voting	The list of exemptions to the enforcement of compulsory voting was expanded. Experiencing homelessness, serving a sentence of imprisonment, or otherwise being in legal custody or detention are now sufficient excuses for not voting.

Postponed elections

Moira Shire Council was dismissed by the *Local Government (Moira Shire Council) Act 2023* (Vic) and administrators were appointed until 2028. As such, an election was not held for Moira Shire Council and the next general election for the council will be held in October 2028.

Electoral structure and ward boundary reviews

Electoral structure reviews of 39 local councils took place between January 2023 and January 2024. These reviews were conducted by Electoral Representation Advisory Panels established by the Minister for Local Government to recommend revised electoral structures and ward boundaries to the Minister. The VEC provided administrative support and technical services to the panels.

Under the LG Act, many of the councils subject to a review were required to move to single-councillor ward structures. This resulted in an increase in the number of individual elections to be held across Victoria, with a total of 466 elections for wards and unsubdivided councils (compared to 298 at the 2020 elections).

This change increased the logistical complexity of the elections, requiring higher numbers of unique products and ballot materials, and a more varied counting schedule with higher potential for close margins in results.

Ward boundary reviews were conducted for a further 10 councils between January and May 2024.

More information about the electoral structure and ward boundary reviews is provided in **3. Electoral structure and ward boundary reviews**, and the details of the new structures and boundaries are provided in **Appendix 1** to this report.

1.4 Election timeline

Local government election timelines are prescribed by the LG Act and LG Regulations. General elections are held on the fourth Saturday in October every 4 years unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Table 2: Timeline for the 2024 local government elections

Activity	Date	Days until election
Close of roll Voters had until 4 pm to enrol or update their enrolment.	Wednesday 7 August 2024	80
Election offices open to the public Nominations open Voters’ rolls certified	Monday 9 September 2024	47
Close of nominations Close of candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires Candidates had until 12 noon to submit their nomination forms, candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires.	Tuesday 17 September 2024	39
Ballot draw Ballot draws took place from 10 am for contested elections.	Wednesday 18 September 2024	38
Mail-out of ballot packs and uncontested ward leaflets	Monday 7 October to Thursday 10 October 2024	19 to 16
Close of voting Voting closed at 6 pm the day before election day.	Friday 25 October 2024	1
Election day For elections held entirely by postal voting, there is no voting on election day.	Saturday 26 October 2024	0
Extended postal vote receipt period closed Returned postal votes could be admitted to the count if they were sent before the close of voting and received by the election manager before 12 noon at the end of the postal vote receipt period.	Friday 1 November 2024	-6
Election results declared² We must declare the results of an election as soon as practicable on or after election day. In our election service plan, we indicated that we would declare all results by Friday 15 November 2024.	Thursday 7 November to Thursday 14 November 2024	-12 to -19

2 Excluding the results for the Yarriambiack Shire Council elections, which were wholly uncontested and declared on Monday 28 October 2024.

1.5 Melbourne City Council elections

Unlike other Victorian councils, there are 2 elections held concurrently for Melbourne City Council at general elections:

- › an election for the lord mayor and deputy lord mayor (known collectively as the leadership team)
- › an election for the 9 councillors.

Elections for Melbourne City Council are held in accordance with the CoM Act and CoM Regulations, as well as the LG Act and LG Regulations. Key differences which apply to Melbourne City Council elections include:

- › there are unique enrolment entitlements and rules
- › the responsibility for compiling voters' rolls sits with the CEO of Melbourne City Council, not the VEC
- › candidates in the leadership team election must nominate jointly as a team, and can submit an indication of preferences for inclusion in the ballot pack
- › candidates in the councillor election can register to appear as a group with a box above the line on the ballot paper, and can submit group voting tickets. Ungrouped candidates can submit an indication of preferences
- › the timeline for submitting statements, photographs and questionnaires differs from other council elections
- › the contents of ballot packs differ from other councils, and the councillor election ballot paper is significantly larger and has a different layout to other council elections.

Table 3: Timeline for the 2024 Melbourne City Council elections

Timeline	Date	Days until election
Close of roll Voters had until 4 pm to enrol or update their enrolment.	Wednesday 7 August 2024	80
Election office open to the public Nominations open Voters' roll certified	Monday 9 September 2024	47
Close of nominations Candidates had until 12 noon to submit their nomination forms.	Tuesday 17 September 2024	39
Close of team name and group registration Teams and groups had until 12 noon to submit their request for a team name or to be grouped on the ballot paper with a group name.	Thursday 19 September 2024	37
Ballot draw The ballot draw took place at 3 pm after the close of team name and group registration.	Thursday 19 September 2024	37
Close of statements, photographs, questionnaires, group voting tickets and indications of preferences Teams, groups and ungrouped candidates had until 12 noon to submit their statements, photographs, questionnaires, group voting tickets and indications of preferences.	Monday 23 September 2024	33
Mail-out of ballot packs	Monday 7 October to Thursday 10 October 2024	19–16
Close of voting Voting closed at 6 pm the day before election day.	Friday 25 October 2024	1
Election day For elections held entirely by postal voting, there is no voting on election day.	Saturday 26 October 2024	0
Extended postal vote receipt period closed Returned postal votes could be admitted to the count if they were sent before the close of voting and received by the election manager before 12 noon at the end of the postal vote receipt period.	Friday 1 November 2024	-6
Election results declared We must declare the results of an election as soon as practicable on or after election day. In our election service plan, we indicated that we would declare all results by Friday 15 November 2024.	Friday 8 November 2024	-13

2. Executive summary

2.1 Our strategic pillars and objectives

We have moved from a 2-year planning cycle to 3, 5 and 10 year planning cycles to ensure that we are delivering the best elections for voters, candidates and staff.

Our strategic pillars, outlined in our *Strategy 2027*, form the foundation of our long-term election delivery strategy. The 10 key recommendations made in this report align with our strategic pillars:

Our strategic pillars			
 Reinforcing public trust We are trusted to deliver electoral services with integrity and high quality	 Improving the voter experience We deliver a great voter experience	 Responding to a complex environment Our processes and systems respond to a complex environment	 Prioritising staff safety and wellbeing Our people are capable, engaged and satisfied

Our pillars enable us to prioritise our activities and shape our actions and deliverables through strategic objectives.

Our initiatives and the 27 operational commitments made in this report align with our strategic objectives:

Our strategic objectives			
Accessing election information in real time We will provide trusted electoral information for Victorians	Voting options for all electors and situations We will provide service excellence enabling voters to select from a broader range of voting options	Intuitive experiences for all candidates We will ensure easy, fair, convenient and accessible processes for candidates	Safe, empowered employees We will offer a safe and equitable workplace every day

Our *Strategic service plan*, published in May 2025, summarises the major pieces of work that we plan to deliver over the coming years, including targeted commitments for continuous improvement aligned to our objectives. It provides a detailed rationale for the activities we are planning to undertake to improve our election delivery.

The plan is available on our website at vec.vic.gov.au.

2.2 Initiatives

In our service plan for the elections, we identified 5 new or enhanced initiatives which we would implement at the elections. We committed to evaluating the effectiveness, impact, and success of new initiatives.

Further information about each of these initiatives is included throughout this report. A full evaluation of each of these initiatives forms part of our evaluation of election services at **Appendix 8** to this report.

Centralisation of the public enquiry service

In support of accessing election information in real time, we established a centralised contact centre from 15 July 2024 to respond to phone and email enquiries. The primary objectives were to provide consistency in messaging, early identification of themes and trends along with the opportunity to enable election offices to focus on the administration of the election.

Evaluation of the centralisation of public enquiries confirmed voters welcomed the service, made greater use of it and responded positively to the extended operating period. Critically, it eased operational pressure on election office staff and reduced the overall cost of the service to councils.

For more information, see **5.6 Public enquiry service**.

Centralisation of the issuing of replacement votes

To improve voting options for all voters and situations, we established a team at one of our centralised activity sites responsible for issuing replacement votes from the commencement of the mail-out of ballot packs on Monday 7 October 2024. The team administered requests for replacements submitted through an online application form or by phone through the public enquiry service. This complemented the existing practice of election managers issuing replacement votes over the counter at election offices.

Our goal was to provide a consistent user experience for the issuing of replacement votes along with the ability to identify themes and trends in requests that may inform operational issues.

Despite an unexpectedly high volume of requests, we rapidly deployed additional resourcing and responded to all requests within acceptable timeframes. Our evaluation found that the centralised effort had significant cost savings to councils, added convenience for voters, and benefits for electoral integrity.

For more information, see **10.2 Voting channels**.

Improved design, tracking and handling of ballot papers

We anticipated increased complexity for the elections, particularly due to growth in enrolment as well as the widespread shift to single-councillor wards causing an increase in the number of individual elections. Due to the strict timeframe available for ballot production, and in support of providing voting options for all voters, we undertook an extensive design review of ballot materials and the processes and systems we use to produce them.

Outcomes of this review included separating the printing of ballot papers and candidate leaflets, redeveloping our automation system for generating ballot materials, and adding barcodes to ballot products to streamline and automate some quality assurance processes. We also uplifted our ballot material tracking procedure to standardise our approach to managing the movement of ballot materials.

This significantly reduced our overall paper consumption and time required for printing, and removed manual intervention from key pressure points in the production timeline. We received positive feedback from voters and did not experience any issues with ballot paper tracking during the elections.

For more information, see **10.1 Ballot material preparation**.

Improved candidate guidance and services

Ahead of the elections, to ensure intuitive experiences for all candidates, we made improvements to our online Candidate Helper tool, information sessions, suite of candidate handbooks and kits, and introduced a dedicated candidate enquiry service.

We saw an increase in the proportion of candidates using Candidate Helper, reducing manual processes, and received positive feedback and high levels of satisfaction from candidates with our support services.

For more information, see **9.1 Engagement and support**.

Specific engagement campaigns for voters affected by the change in entitlements

We conducted research with councils and voters potentially impacted by enrolment entitlement changes in advance of the elections, identified areas where councils required additional assistance from the VEC, and engaged with councils to provide communication packs and standardised information they could disseminate. This supported our objective of Victorians accessing election information in real time.

While this approach generated and promoted the goals of consistent information available to voters affected by the changes, engagement varied across councils.

For more information, see **8.2 Changes to enrolment entitlements**.

2.3 Recommendations

In this report, we make 10 key recommendations for the State Government and Parliament to consider.

These recommendations supersede the recommendations in our Report to Parliament on the 2020 local government elections. A summary of the response to those previous recommendations is provided at **Appendix 2** to this report.

The recommendations, and their alignment to our strategic pillars, are highlighted throughout the report with shaded backgrounds.

Reinforcing public trust

Provision of enrolment information

We recommend amending section 252 of the LG Act and section 11G of the CoM Act to require that candidates must provide an undertaking to the VEC that they will use the information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and will return or destroy the information within 30 days after election day (or after retiring as a candidate). See **recommendation 4** on page 63.

Party affiliations of candidates

We recommend amending the candidate questionnaires prescribed in Form 2 and Form 3 of the LG Regulations to ask candidates for their political party membership(s) in addition to the current question regarding party endorsement. See **recommendation 5** on page 68.

Clear and timely resolution of election challenges

We recommend amending Division 11 of Part 8 of the LG Act to codify expectations for VCAT to hear and determine applications made under section 311 expeditiously, and provide specific policy, procedural fairness and natural justice considerations when an applicant is seeking a recount to be conducted. We also recommend amending Division 11 of Part 8 of the LG Act to clearly establish that VCAT is hearing applications made under section 311 in its original jurisdiction. See **recommendation 9** on page 92.

Responding to a complex environment

Electoral structure reviews

We recommend increasing the current limit of 12 councillors to provide a mechanism to manage voter-to-councillor ratios in high growth areas into the future. We also recommend reintroducing regularly triggered electoral structure reviews, which will allow councillor numbers to be periodically checked and adjusted to maintain approximate equivalence among similar councils. See **recommendation 1** on page 32.

Future electronic voting options

We recommend that the State Government considers introducing legislation to set the pathway for electronic voting technologies at future local government elections. See **recommendation 2** on page 37.

Confirming candidate training

We recommend amending regulation 36 of the LG Regulations to require the register of local government candidate training to be made available to the VEC throughout the election period, and amending regulation 24 of the LG Regulations to require candidates to provide evidence of completion when nominating. See **recommendation 6** on page 73.

Technical amendments

We recommend minor and technical amendments to local government electoral legislation, supporting clarity, simplicity and alignment with state electoral legislation (where appropriate). We have provided a list of 26 technical recommendations for legislative changes to improve electoral administration. See **recommendation 10** on page 108.

Improving the voter experience

Administration of council enrolment

We recommend amending section 240(10) of the LG Act to also include notifying owner ratepayers of their eligibility to be enrolled under section 242. We also recommend that the State Government considers opportunities to streamline the administration of council enrolment applications, enrolment resignations and silent voter requests under the LG Act and LG Regulations to be processed through the VEC, and undertakes consultation with councils and local government peak bodies on the feasibility of this as a long-term arrangement. See **recommendation 3** on page 61.

Electronic assisted voting

We recommend amending the LG Regulations to establish electronic assisted voting, accessible to those voters who experience the greatest barriers to participation. At minimum, the service should mirror state election entitlements to harmonise the voter experience across elections. See **recommendation 7** on page 79.

Cut-off for postal replacement votes

We recommend amending regulation 56 of the LG Regulations to require that requests for replacement postal votes are made by 6 pm on the Wednesday before election day, and allowing for replacement votes to be issued at election offices in the subsequent days before the close of voting. See **recommendation 8** on page 82.

2.4 Commitments

This report makes 27 operational commitments for continuous improvement. They reflect targeted commitments we have made in our *Strategic service plan* for the 2028 local government elections, local government by-elections during the intervening period, and the 2026 State election for commitments which apply to both state and local government elections.

These commitments, and their alignment to our strategic objectives, are highlighted throughout this report.

Voting options for all voters and situations

For the 2026 State election, we will publish improved key performance metrics. See **commitment 1** on page 35.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will appoint democracy ambassadors as permanent roles delivering education and engagement sessions to increase electoral literacy and enrolment for priority community groups. See **commitment 3** on page 45.

For the 2026 State election, we will establish a permanent centralised activity site, allowing for long-term site management and enhancements to our centralised delivery model. See **commitment 4** on page 48.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will identify opportunities to reduce the overall transportation effort required to support election events. See **commitment 5** on page 50.

For the 2026 State election, we will deploy initiatives that provide greater visibility of the management, movement and handling of ballot material during the election cycle. See **commitment 6** on page 50.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will identify options to streamline ballot printing and mail insertion production. Initially, this will be focused on the design of election products to maximise output followed by the diversification of suppliers to reduce risks associated with limited suppliers. See **commitment 18** on page 76.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will expand the number of print suppliers we work with and develop an in-house print capability to increase our range of printing options. See **commitment 19** on page 77.

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will assess our print capability and in-house print expertise based on the outcomes and learnings from the 2026 State election and local government by-elections. See **commitment 20** on page 77.

For the 2026 State election, we will publish a full count plan at the commencement of the election and clearly communicate any changes to candidates, registered political parties and other interested stakeholders. See **commitment 21** on page 84.

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will explore scanning solutions to improve counting accuracy and speed. See **commitment 23** on page 85.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will conduct further research on the barriers preventing voter participation. See **commitment 27** on page 99.

Accessing electoral information in real time

For the 2028 local government elections, we will explore options for real time, self-service reporting tools, including live data collection and dashboards for internal and external election monitoring. See **commitment 2** on page 36.

For the 2026 State election and 2028 local government elections, we will produce a standardised library of instructional products, training material and guidelines. See **commitment 10** on page 55.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will invest in our Geographic Information System software to produce higher quality maps for internal and external stakeholders and integrate geospatial capability and access to geospatial data more effectively across our operations. See **commitment 13** on page 58.

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will explore opportunities to better support councils to produce voters' rolls. See **commitment 14** on page 59.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will upgrade technology supporting our Roll Management System through a structured improvement program. See **commitment 15** on page 60.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will review our legislated data release obligations to ensure our practices remain compliant and aligned with requirements. See **commitment 16** on page 62.

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will explore options for publishing online provisional results progressively. See **commitment 25** on page 86.

For the 2026 State election, we will establish an operational command centre based on the National Incident Emergency Management System to coordinate responses to incidents during the delivery phase of an election. See **commitment 26** on page 90.

Intuitive experiences for all candidates

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will map the customer journey for candidates and identify opportunities for improvement. We will ensure clear and consistent messaging is a priority, along with ample training opportunities for all candidates. See **commitment 17** on page 66.

For the 2026 State election, we will complete enhancements to our computer count system. See **commitment 22** on page 85.

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will assess options for statistically rigorous audits of computer count data and determine the best way to report on results. See **commitment 24** on page 85.

Safe and empowered employees

For the 2026 State election and 2028 local government elections, we will review the senior election official pool strategy and consider a tiered system to support the expanding scope of our work. See **commitment 7** on page 52.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will conduct a skills gap analysis using psychometric testing and embed integrity measures to professionalise the election workforce. See **commitment 8** on page 53.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will implement the findings and recommendations from the audit of election manager training. See **commitment 9** on page 54.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will develop a continuing professional development program for our core staff to strengthen internal capability. See **commitment 11** on page 55.

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will roll out staff training of our Safe@Work psychological health and safety program, along with electronic reporting for occupational health and safety incidents and near misses. See **commitment 12** on page 56.

3. Electoral structure and ward boundary reviews

3.1 About electoral structure and ward boundary reviews

Electoral structures form the basis for voter representation and how elections are conducted.

In the lead-up to the elections, 39 of Victoria's 79 local councils had changes made to their electoral structures, and a further 10 councils had adjustments to internal ward boundaries. This was the largest program of electoral structure and ward boundary reviews ever undertaken.

The changes made to council electoral structures had flow-on effects for our election preparation and delivery. To implement the changes in time for the elections, this program of work had to be delivered in a short 15-month period. We established a team of staff dedicated to delivering the program, with support from additional teams across our organisation.

3.2 Electoral structure reviews

As a result of changes introduced by the LG Act, the electoral structures of 39 local councils were no longer compliant with legislation.

In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government established 2 Electoral Representation Advisory Panels (ERAPs) to review the electoral structures of those 39 councils, ensuring that all Victorian councils would have compliant electoral structures at the 2024 elections. This was the first time ERAPs were established and electoral structure reviews were conducted under the new requirements of the LG Act.

Public consultation for the first round of electoral structure reviews began in January 2023 and all 39 reviews were completed by late January 2024. At the end of each review, the ERAPs provided a final report to the Minister making recommendations.

For large and small rural councils, these recommendations covered the appropriate electoral structure and total number of councillors for the council. If the structure included wards, the recommendations also covered:

- › the number of councillors per ward
- › where the internal ward boundaries should be placed
- › the names of each ward.

For metropolitan, interface and regional city councils moving to single-councillor wards, these recommendations were restricted to:

- › the total number of councillors and wards
- › where the internal ward boundaries should be placed
- › the names of each ward.

Reviews were staggered and completed in 3 rounds across the 12-month period. The ERAPs submitted their final reports to the Minister as follows:

- › Round 1: May 2023
- › Round 2: August–September 2023
- › Round 3: December 2023–January 2024.

The Minister accepted all recommendations made by the ERAPs and the new electoral structures were gazetted by the Governor-in-Council on 15 February 2024.³

3.3 Ward boundary reviews

In February 2023, we identified that 10 councils were projected to have at least one ward in which the number of voters per councillor would exceed the legislated tolerance of $\pm 10\%$ compared to other wards in the council by the time of the 2024 elections. In accordance with the LG Act, we advised the Minister based on:

- › enrolment figures and enrolment trends
- › future population projections
- › legislated changes to council entitlements for council-enrolled voters.

In response to this advice, the Minister requested that we conduct ward boundary reviews for the councils before the 2024 elections. The reviews aimed to bring the number of voters per councillor for the wards of those councils within the $\pm 10\%$ tolerance in time for the elections.

3 Victoria, *Victoria Government Gazette*, No S 56, 15 February 2025, <https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2024/GG2024S056.pdf>

At the end of each ward boundary review, we provided a final report to the Minister containing recommended internal ward boundary adjustments for each council.

We could not commence ward boundary reviews until after the ERAPs completed the electoral structure reviews. We began ward boundary reviews from January 2024 and completed the reviews in April 2024. The internal ward boundary adjustments for the councils were gazetted by the Governor-in-Council on 28 May 2024.⁴

3.4 Implementation

Once the changed structures and boundaries had been confirmed, we implemented the changes across our systems. We also supported the 49 councils through their system updates to ensure all changes were applied in time for the elections. For more information, see **8.1 Boundary recoding**.

Details of the changed electoral structures and internal ward boundaries are listed in **Appendix 1** to this report.

⁴ Victoria, *Victoria Government Gazette*, No S 277, 28 May 2024, <https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2024/GG2024S277.pdf>

Responding to a complex environment

Recommendation 1: Electoral structure reviews

Current limit on councillor numbers

As the population of Victoria grows, the number of voters enrolled for Victorian state and local government elections will also grow. Population growth is unevenly distributed across the state, and it is particularly visible in urban growth corridors in Greater Melbourne and a number of regional cities, as well as intensive in-fill housing development in urban areas.

As the number of voters in a local government area increases, so does the number of voters represented by each councillor for that council. Despite these growth pressures, the LG Act sets a maximum number of councillors for councils at 12.

Following the electoral structure reviews held in 2023, Casey City Council (the most highly populated of Victoria's councils and still experiencing high growth) moved from 11 councillors to 12, the first time a council has reached the legislated limit. Even with the maximum 12 councillors for Casey City Council, they still hold the highest voter-to-councillor ratio at 21,134 voters per councillor.

Currently there are also 12 councils nearing the limit with 11 councillors. There is significant variance in voter-to-councillor ratios across these councils, ranging from 8,500 to 19,000 voters per councillor, and as population growth continues into the future it may be appropriate for some of these councils to also increase to 12 councillors. However, the limit means that increases beyond 12 councillors are not possible regardless of continuing growth.

We recommend increasing the current limit of 12 councillors to provide a mechanism to manage voter-to-councillor ratios in high growth areas into the future.

Triggers for electoral structure reviews

The mechanism for adjusting the number of councillors for a council is currently restricted. Under the LG Act, this can only be adjusted through a full electoral structure review conducted by an ERAP.

Under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) there was a legislated trigger that ensured each council (other than Melbourne City Council) had an electoral representation review at least every 12 years, however a regular trigger is not present in the new legislative framework.

Providing for regularly triggered electoral structure reviews would ensure that voter-to-councillor ratios are periodically reviewed. It would provide certainty for local councils, councillors and voters with respect to council budgeting, given councils are invoiced for the reasonable costs of electoral structure reviews. There would also be fixed opportunities for feedback on the councillor numbers and electoral structure for each council.

We recommend reintroducing regularly triggered electoral structure reviews, which will allow councillor numbers to be periodically checked and adjusted to maintain approximate equivalence among similar councils.

4. Election service management

4.1 Service planning and governance

In October 2023, we prepared and circulated a draft election service plan to councils and stakeholders for feedback during statewide consultation sessions. This plan was informed by key lessons from the 2020 elections. It detailed our work at each stage of the election timeline and clarified the actions required from councils in preparation for the elections.

In June 2024, we published the final service plan for the elections, incorporating proposed changes in anticipation of legislative change. At the time, Parliament was still considering the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Bill 2024 (Vic). As a result, we based the election service plan on the legislated timeline in place at the time, but also explained how the timeline would change if the Bill became law and the planned updates to the LG Regulations went ahead.

Guiding principles

The election service plan outlined 3 guiding principles for successful delivery of the elections.

Service excellence

To effectively meet our legislative obligations and respond to the changing electoral environment, we aligned our approach with the expectations of voters, councils, and other stakeholders. With this in mind, we aimed to:

- › deliver fair and equitable elections by providing high-quality, value-for-money electoral products and services
- › perform all tasks in accordance with electoral law and treat all participants in the process fairly
- › provide voters with convenient, high-quality services to support them in exercising their democratic rights.

Local focus for election services

We appointed an election manager for each local council election. Each election manager was responsible for managing candidates, assisting the public with in-person enquiries, and supporting vote counting in their local council area where possible.

Costs to be kept to a minimum

We agreed to keep costs to a minimum for councils, while:

- › meeting all statutory requirements

- › prioritising customer service
- › providing accurate information.

Statement of intent

Our strategic intent was to ensure that all eligible Victorians could vote at an election that was:

- › fully compliant with the law
- › transparent, fair and accurate
- › delivered with efficiency, enthusiasm and to the highest standards.

This intention aligns with our vision of all Victorians actively participating in their democracy.

To support this, we identified the following election delivery objectives:

- › complete all election preparation projects by Sunday 30 June 2024
- › maximise the number of eligible Victorians correctly enrolled by the close of roll
- › support the transition of ratepayers applying to enrol
- › increase public awareness and understanding of the election process and ensure participation methods were:
 - safe, convenient, and accessible
 - timely
 - easy to understand
 - respectful and courteous
 - confidential
- › help candidates meet nomination requirements and participate compliantly and effectively
- › provide electoral information to all stakeholders in formats that were easy to find, use, and understand, delivered through a variety of media in a timely manner
- › ensure all votes were reconciled and counted accurately and efficiently, with results published in a timely manner
- › maintain stakeholder trust and confidence in our ability to deliver impartial, transparent, accurate and efficient election results.

Performance targets

To measure the overall success of the elections and to determine whether we met our election delivery objectives, we identified key performance indicators in the election service plan.

The outcome of each of these performance targets is listed in **Appendix 9** to this report.

Voting options for all voters and situations Commitment 1

For the 2026 State election, we will publish improved key performance metrics.

Evaluation and reporting

We developed an independent evaluation framework to measure our performance in delivering the elections. The framework drew on the objectives and key performance indicators outlined in the election service plan to assess the outcomes of the local government elections. We collected data and insights to evaluate our service delivery, identify emerging trends and themes, and inform improvements for future elections.

After the elections, we undertook an in-depth evaluation to:

- › identify successes against performance measures
- › explore lessons learned
- › identify performance improvement opportunities through our continuous improvement framework.

For more information about our evaluation of election services, see **13.1 Evaluating the elections**. The full report on our evaluation is provided in **Appendix 8** to this report.

4.2 Budget

After an initial budget forecast, additional funding was provided to:

- › meet inflationary pressures
- › support a workforce remuneration review
- › accommodate an increase in the number of wards contested
- › respond to higher demand for replacement votes

- › manage increased call volumes to the public enquiry service
- › procure advanced technology to improve the security and reliability of electoral services, particularly in light of third-party supplier failures.

Expenditure occurred across the 2023–24 and 2024–25 financial years.

One of the most significant cost increases came from the issuing of replacement votes. While we had forecast higher costs compared to the 2020 elections, we did not anticipate a 93.2% increase (see **10.2 Voting channels**).

As of 30 June 2025, the cost of conducting the elections was \$66.6 million. This included \$5.48 million in expenditure in 2023–24 and \$61.12 million in 2024–25. Expenditure related to compulsory voting enforcement activities is ongoing at the time of this report.

4.3 Election rehearsal

We conducted an election rehearsal over 7 weeks from February to April 2024. The rehearsal, our first ever for local government elections, simulated multiple local councils and stakeholders and aimed to:

- › evaluate program delivery and operational models
- › identify risks
- › gauge readiness for the elections.

While the election rehearsal provided a 'safe-to-fail' environment, staff were encouraged to treat the rehearsal as a live scenario by following established processes and aiming for accuracy.

We rehearsed 89 scenarios across all work programs, and assessed performance against both qualitative and quantitative success criteria. Most scenarios were executed successfully, with only a few partially unsuccessful or unsuccessful, allowing us to identify areas for operational improvements or risk treatments.

The election rehearsal had the following benefits:

- › valuable feedback from election management teams on the testing, structure and layout of instructional products
- › positive stakeholder engagement throughout the dress rehearsal period

- › enhancements to program, project and operational plans
- › lessons learned about our internal systems, staff rostering, venue and resourcing needs, and communication between work programs.

Following evaluation and lessons learned from the rehearsal, we:

- › reviewed and updated manuals, procedures and forms for the centralised computer count process, including example calculations and clearer guidance on how to interpret system-generated reports
- › clarified roles and responsibilities in our election support officer handbook and our computer count guide
- › updated standard operating procedures to ensure landlords were asked about available amenities during the venue review process.

The rehearsal was a significant milestone for us as an organisation, emphasising practical field-centric approaches and stakeholder engagement. Overall, the rehearsal provided valuable insights and positioned us well for successful election delivery.

4.4 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 (see **2.2 Initiatives**)
- › using Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper stock for ballot papers and candidate leaflets, 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.

4.5 Arrangements with councils

We had a team of client liaison officers, each responsible for coordinating our relationships with multiple councils during the elections.

Client liaison officers provided regular updates to councils through progress reports, emails and phone calls, and met in-person with their council contacts to share key information about the election process and legislative changes.

Accessing electoral information in real time Commitment 2

For the 2028 local government elections, we will explore options for real time, self-service reporting tools, including live data collection and dashboards for internal and external election monitoring.

Councils played a critical role in the provision of CEO's lists of council-enrolled voters. We worked closely with council officers to manage changes to enrolment entitlements and ensure the data integrity of CEO's lists provided to us. For more information, see **8. Enrolment activities**.

After the elections, client liaison officers met with their council contacts to:

- › gather evaluation and feedback
- › deliver council election reports
- › discuss invoicing and remittances
- › advising on the VEC's seasons approach for scheduling by-elections during the 2024–28 council term
- › identify potential hub and venue sites for the 2026 State election and gauge whether the council could assist.

A timeline of key interactions with council contacts is outlined at **Appendix 7** to this report.

4.6 External service providers

We had multiple contracts with specialist service providers for the elections. If the scale or complexity of our operations exceed industry capacity, we can engage external providers without competitive but time-consuming procurement processes. This is permitted through our procurement policies and consistent with guidelines provided by the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance.

For the elections, we had service agreements and contracts in place for:

- › Australia Post
- › ballot paper printing services
- › call centre services
- › cartage and courier services
- › envelope production
- › information technology
- › language services (translation and interpreting)
- › mail-house services
- › media buying services
- › recruitment services.

Responding to a complex environment

Recommendation 2: Future electronic voting options

Australia's postal system is changing, and the future landscape of postal elections will look very different to how it has looked in the past. While the 2024 local government elections were successfully delivered, Australia Post's letter mail service is under increasing pressure. The Australian Government has rolled out changes to the letter mail delivery model and service levels that respond to this.⁵

The sustainability of a wholly postal model for local government elections, both logistically and from a cost perspective, cannot be guaranteed. This requires exploration of other delivery models, including electronic voting options. Such options would require a clear legislative framework to be established. This would come with opportunities and risks, as well as benefits and costs, and should be informed by meaningful and informed debate.

Further, any appropriate technology solution would require significant and long-term financial investment, and the cost of this to the VEC would need to be taken into consideration. We would also need substantial time to develop, test and implement a solution. Importantly, the legislative framework and system requirements must be established well in advance of the technology being needed, to ensure that any future system is fit-for-purpose and capable of delivering elections to the standard rightly expected by the community.

We recommend that the State Government considers introducing legislation to set the pathway for electronic voting technologies at future local government elections.

5 For more information, see Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, 'Australia Post', Media and Communications, DITRDCA website, n.d., accessed 6 October 2025. <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/post/australia-post>

4.7 Arrangements with other organisations

We had arrangements with other organisations in place to respond to any legal or regulatory issues that arose during the elections.

eSafety

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

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.

During the elections we did not identify any matters that required referral to eSafety.

Victorian Government Solicitor's Office

We arranged with the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office (VGSO) to have legal counsel on stand-by throughout the election timeline, to ensure legal matters were dealt with promptly.

The VGSO assisted the VEC in matters heard in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) (see **12.3 VCAT matters**).

Local Government Inspectorate

LGI is an independent statutory agency responsible for making sure Victorian councils follow the LG Act. It also assesses and investigates complaints about potential breaches of the LG Act and LG Regulations, including local government electoral offences.

During local government elections, we regularly receive complaints and feedback relating to alleged non-compliance with the LG Act and LG Regulations. We refer these submissions to LGI pursuant to a memorandum of understanding. We also work closely with LGI throughout the election timeline to share operational updates and intelligence.

For more information, refer to **12.2 Regulatory partnerships**.

Victoria Police

We engaged with Victoria Police before and throughout the election timeline. Interactions with Victoria Police were supported by more streamlined referral and response processes and reflect active engagement with police to build their understanding of electoral offences.

During the election timeline, we formally referred 4 matters to Victoria Police after consultation with LGI. These referrals included suspected postal vote tampering, concerns around theft of mail, and a breaking and entering incident at an election office. VEC staff also contacted police throughout the elections to seek assistance with incidents at election venues.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

We alerted VCAT in advance about the election timeline and the possibility of applications for reviews of elections under section 311 of the LG Act to ensure any applications could be heard and resolved in a timely manner.

For more information about election challenges which were heard by VCAT, see **12.3 VCAT matters**.

5. Communication and engagement

5.1 Advertising campaign

Our statewide advertising campaign had 2 phases: enrolment and voting. We used a combination of traditional and emerging media to maximise reach during both phases, including:

- › radio advertisements across metropolitan and regional networks
- › newspaper advertising in Melbourne metropolitan, regional and rural newspapers
- › static and video outdoor advertising across local councils
- › paid promotions on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and WeChat, targeting voters through audience segmentation
- › advertising on streaming platforms including Spotify and YouTube
- › search engine marketing.

The campaign reached more than 4.5 million people and achieved 45 million views across platforms.

We developed campaign graphics in-house using behavioural insights principles. The design language was simple and bold, with clear messaging focused on key action milestones.

Statutory advertising

In accordance with the LG Act, we published 4 statutory notices during the elections, each aligned to a key milestone:

- › Notice 1: close of roll
- › Notice 2: notice of election (including information about nominating as a candidate and voting options)
- › Notice 3: voting details (explaining how to vote)
- › Notice 4: declaration of results (publishing the results of the elections).

We also published a fifth optional (non-statutory) notice as a voting reminder, repeating information from the third notice about how to vote.

We published statutory notices on the Victorian Government's Public Notices website (publicnotices.vic.gov.au) with hyperlinks to our website.

Of the 78 councils holding elections, 70 opted to also have their notices published in newspapers. We published a total of 882 notices statewide across 126 Melbourne metropolitan, regional and rural newspapers.

Sample statutory advertising is provided at **Appendix 5.1** to this report.

5.2 Media

Media centre

We created a dedicated media centre for the 2024 local government elections on the VEC website, consolidating useful links, resources, and information for the media.

The media centre received 9,300 page views during the election period.

We invited representatives from broadcast, print and online media to an online media briefing on Monday 29 July 2024. The briefing outlined our planning, timelines, legislative changes and other key information for the elections. We published a recording of the briefing in the online media centre.

We created and distributed a media handbook to Victorian metropolitan and regional media outlets ahead of the election period. We also made the handbook available to download from our online media centre. The handbook provided information about the election timeline, voting, counting, advertising and key changes since the 2020 elections.

During the elections, we issued 27 statewide media releases and responded to 458 media queries through our media enquiry service.

We produced a schedule of planned statewide and council-specific media releases related to key election milestones, candidate nominations, voting and results. We also issued multiple media releases in addition to the planned releases, in response to issues during the election period. The schedule of media releases, including unplanned releases, is set out at **Appendix 5.2** to this report.

LEBA Ethnic Media translated 4 key media releases and distributed them to multicultural news publications. Across the 4 releases, we reached an average of 36 publications in 11 languages, with an approximate circulation of one million readers per release.

We also pre-recorded 3 radio releases for the elections. Each release aligned with key election milestones and was timed for optimal airplay. A total of 64 radio stations downloaded the releases for broadcast.

Radio and television interviews

VEC spokespeople conducted 63 television and radio interviews covering key stages of the elections, changes to enrolment entitlements and live issues. Topics included postal network disruptions (see **10.2 Voting channels**) and interference in the Knox City Council and Whittlesea City Council elections (see **12.3 VCAT matters**).

We also engaged our democracy ambassadors to conduct in-language interviews on SBS Radio about enrolling and voting.

Media coverage

The topics which drove elections coverage mentioning the VEC included:

- › voting, enrolment and nomination information (54%)
- › results (26%)
- › candidate stories (11%)
- › electoral integrity (8%)
- › current council leadership (1%).

Nearly half (41%) of all media coverage involving the VEC came directly from our proactive media approach, which included media statements and interviews with our spokespeople. There was also strong interest in issues which emerged during the elections, again including tampering with post boxes and election interference.

Negative coverage involving the VEC accounted for just 5% of total media mentions. Criticism focused on election rules and processes, including single-councillor wards, uncontested electorates, enrolment entitlements, and candidates' disclosure of party affiliations. There was also coverage of queues for replacement votes at election offices on the final day of voting.

5.3 VoterAlert

VoterAlert is our free election event reminder service. Voters who are on the state electoral roll can sign up to receive notifications about election events in their area by SMS, email or both.

We delivered 3 statewide VoterAlert campaigns for the elections:

- › Close of roll: reminding voters to enrol or update their enrolment before the roll closed.

- › Ballot pack mail-out: telling voters their ballot pack was on the way, and what to do if it didn't arrive.
- › Last week to vote: reminding voters to return their ballot packs on time.

There were also several campaigns delivered to targeted audiences, including:

- › Postal address audit: a notice to voters whose postal address was different from their enrolled address, to confirm where ballot packs would be sent
- › No election: a notice to voters in Moira Shire Council, advising that no election would be held
- › Missed entitlements: a notice to voters who updated their enrolment after the close of roll, explaining how they would be able to vote
- › Uncontested elections: a notice to voters in uncontested elections advising that they would not be required to vote (see also **10.1 Ballot material preparation**)
- › Local issues: notices to voters about issues specific to their council or ward.

Across all campaigns, we sent more than 11.7 million VoterAlert SMS messages and emails to approximately 2.8 million voters.

VoterAlert advisories we sent throughout the elections are provided at **Appendix 5.3** to this report.

5.4 Social media

In addition to sponsored social media posts (see **5.1 Advertising campaign**), we rolled out a schedule of organic posts on X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn to promote engagement with the elections and disseminate key information.

We also published shorter versions on social media alongside other short-form video content. Seven explainer Instagram reels reached a combined 11,912 views.

Figure 1: Social media highlights between Monday 16 July and Wednesday 19 November 2024

X (formerly Twitter)	› 141 posts › 315 new followers › 242 reposts › 273 likes › 172 post replies
	
Facebook	› 70 posts › 445 new followers › 4,452 reactions, comments and shares
	
Instagram	› 66 posts › 338 new followers › 86,299 post reach › 2,649 likes, comments, saves and shares › 78 Instagram stories published
	
YouTube	› 10 English-language videos and 32 in-language videos › 112 subscribers gained › 85 video shares We produced 7 long-form explainer videos presented by our staff, which we published on our YouTube channel. Video topics included: › understanding your ballot pack › what happens after you vote › the voting process. The 7 videos gathered 2,533 views.
	
LinkedIn	› 56 posts › 287 new followers › 1,431 reactions, comments, shares
	

5.5 Website

Our website was in ‘election mode’ from Monday 1 July to Sunday 17 November 2024. It served as the central, authoritative source of accurate information for voters, candidates, and the media. We updated content at each election milestone and all external communications (print and digital) linked back to the website to ensure consistency and reduce conflicting information.

Web content

Due to the changes in enrolment entitlements for these elections, enrolment was a major focus of our web content. A dedicated page featured tailored content and examples for different voter categories. We refreshed the homepage, council election hub and local council profile pages to promote upcoming deadlines and direct voters to enrolment resources.

We provided high-quality, task-oriented information to help voters, such as how to complete ballot papers or vote while away. We also regularly published candidate details, statements and questionnaires during the nomination period. Prospective candidates had access to comprehensive information, including digital handbooks and links to Candidate Helper.

There were 3 key applications available via our website which supported voters:

- › **Check my enrolment**
Over 424,000 enrolment checks were successfully performed via our ‘Check my enrolment’ portal between 1 July and 17 November 2024. Most checks (61.73%) were in the 3 weeks preceding the close of roll (Wednesday 17 July to Wednesday 7 August 2024), with another smaller peak (25.51%) in the 3 weeks before the elections (Friday 4 to Friday 25 October 2024).
- › **Election venue locator**
The ‘Election venue locator’ tool (formerly called ‘Voting centre locator’) was active from Monday 9 September to 6 pm on Friday 25 October 2024. During this period, 179,096 users accessed the locator at maps.vec.vic.gov.au/elections. Of those, 78.1% were on a mobile phone.

› Online replacement vote application form

We added an online form to the website to support the centralised issuing of replacement postal votes. This streamlined the processing of requests and allowed us to monitor possible operational issues. We received 130,234 requests for replacement votes via the online replacement vote application form and saw a 190% increase in the total number of replacement votes from the 2020 elections.

We published election results to our website as soon as they were confirmed in our Election Management System. Before results were available for each council, we displayed an 'earliest published results' date for candidates, media and the public. For more information, see **11.5 Results and declarations**.

Web traffic and engagement

Between 1 July and 17 November 2024, our website had more than 2.1 million users. This represents an increase of more than 40% from the 1.5 million users recorded during the same period in the 2020 elections.

Two-thirds (66.5%) of visits were via mobile phones, 30.7% from desktops or laptops, and 2.8% from tablets or other smart devices. Mobile traffic rose by 10 percentage points from the 2020 elections, when 56.8% of visits were from mobile phones.

Organic search engines, such as Google, were the top traffic source, accounting for 48.31% of visits, down from 56.49% at the 2020 elections. This decrease reflects the success of diversifying campaign channels to reach voters directly.

Direct traffic grew to 22.95% (from 14.27% at the 2020 elections), highlighting the impact of advertising, media and public awareness campaigns. Email campaigns, such as VoterAlert, generated 12.44% of visits, while paid digital ads accounted for 6.3%.

5.6 Public enquiry service

We established a public enquiry service as a centralised contact centre handling public enquiries between 15 July and 1 November 2024. Centralising the service ensured consistent responses, enabled early identification of themes and trends, and freed the capacity of election office staff to focus on administration of the elections.

The public enquiry service received 227,118 phone and email contacts during the elections. A breakdown of contacts by channel is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Public enquiry service contacts by channel

Contact type	Count
Calls	215,360
Calls answered	53,349
Calls absorbed through the IVR	161,249
Abandoned calls	762
Emails	11,758
Total contacts	227,118

Broadly, enrolment and voting were the 2 main themes across phone and email contacts. Of the 37,642 contacts relating to voting, 75% (28,261) concerned ballot packs, including enquiries from voters who had not received their ballot packs in the mail. There were 25,380 contacts relating to enrolment, approximately 49% (12,541) of which were about checking and verifying enrolment details.

We also received 13,935 enquiries clarifying the rules for voters who were outside Victoria during the elections.

We sent 1,490 letters to customers as a result of their phone or email enquiries.

Our interactive voice response (IVR) system delivered pre-recorded information to callers during and outside the operating hours of the public enquiry service. It achieved a 74.87% call absorption rate, resolving most enquiries without the need for operator assistance.

The IVR also allowed voters to request key forms and information via text message without speaking to an operator, resulting in a total of 67,126 messages being sent. The main topics were requesting a replacement vote (55%) and locating election offices (18%).

The public enquiry service achieved an average customer satisfaction score of 97.51%, supported by strong contact resolution metrics: 99% of calls were resolved at first contact and 100% of emails received a response within 24 hours.

The average call handling time was 7 minutes and 15 seconds, largely due to the complexity of enrolment enquiries during a local government election, where different enrolment entitlements apply to council- and state-enrolled voters.

As call volumes rose sharply in the 3 weeks before election day, we established a temporary call centre at our centralised activity site at Sandown Park to assist with a backlog of call-backs. The backlog was resolved within 48 hours. We later added a call-back function to the IVR to minimise customer wait times during peak demand.

5.7 Feedback and complaints handling

A team of 9 staff handled all feedback and complaints related to the elections. We received submissions via 3 channels: webforms on the VEC website, email, and post. Most customers (72%) used the webforms to contact us, 28% contacted us by email, and less than 1% by post.

Between 27 July and 15 November 2024, we received 1,581 feedback and complaint submissions, which was a 25% decrease from the 2,087 received during the 2020 elections.

We aimed to provide an initial response within 5 working days and achieved this in 95% of cases.

We referred feedback and complaints about non-compliance with the LG Act or LG Regulations to the LGI pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (see **12.2 Regulatory partnerships**).

For a breakdown of the themes discussed in the feedback and complaints received during the elections, see **13.6 Customer feedback and complaints**.

5.8 Community outreach and engagement

We delivered an extensive community outreach and engagement program across Victoria to engage electors, educate them about their democracy and promote active participation. The program focused on 6 priority communities traditionally under-represented in the electoral process:

- › culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- › people with disability
- › young people
- › people without a home

- › people in prison
- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To maximise our ability to reach these groups, we identified 14 priority areas across Victoria for targeted electoral education outreach. Using data from the 2020 elections, we pinpointed local government areas with the highest informality rates and the lowest voter turnout. We then overlaid socio-demographic data and socio-economic indexes for areas from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

We worked with service providers, community leaders and organisations supporting the priority communities to help recruit democracy ambassadors, coordinate outreach sessions, and distribute information to support electoral participation. We updated our Easy English voting guide for the elections and distributed it to community services and education settings across Victoria.

Democracy ambassador program

Our democracy ambassador program delivers electoral information and enrolment outreach sessions to our priority communities across Victoria. Democracy ambassadors are recruited based on their lived experience or in-depth understanding of at least one of the priority communities.

We trained and onboarded 22 community members as democracy ambassadors for the elections. They delivered 238 peer-to-peer electoral education and enrolment sessions to over 10,000 community members.

Table 5: Electoral education and enrolment sessions delivered to priority communities

Priority group	Number of sessions (%)	Number of participants (%)
CALD communities	114 (48%)	4,732 (46%)
People with disability	48 (20%)	1,859 (18%)
Young people	36 (15%)	2,481 (24%)
People without a home	18 (8%)	372 (4%)
People in prison	11 (5%)	487 (5%)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	11 (5%)	259 (3%)
Total	238	10,190

Voting options for all voters and situations

Commitment 3

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will appoint democracy ambassadors as permanent roles delivering education and engagement sessions to increase electoral literacy and enrolment for priority community groups.

After attending a democracy ambassador session:

- › 99% of participants could correctly identify how to vote, compared to 79% before attending their session
- › 86% of participants understood that they could vote with the assistance of a support person, compared to 43% before their session
- › 95% of participants reported that they felt confident filling out a ballot paper correctly, compared to 45% before their session.

A total of 459 people from priority communities enrolled to vote at an outreach session and 401 (87.36%) voted. Table 6 contains a breakdown of participation by priority community.

Table 6: Electoral participation by priority community following a democracy ambassador session

Priority group	Enrolled	Voted	Participation (%)
CALD communities	199	135	67.84%
People without a home	159	135	84.91%
People in prison	56	47	83.93%
People with disability	34	31	91.18%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	7	5	71.43%
Young people	4	4	100%
Total	459	401	87.36%

Be Heard community newsletter

Be Heard is our electronic direct mail newsletter for sharing updates with priority community networks. During the elections, we sent 2 editions of the newsletter to support workers and organisations connected to these communities.

These campaigns achieved:

- › 3,457 combined subscribers
- › 1,078 email opens
- › 115 click-throughs.

Interpreting services

We engaged the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service's Language Loop to provide telephone interpreting for voters whose first language is not English. We promoted direct lines for 20 languages other than English and a general line for all other languages.

In-language video project

We produced and distributed 32 videos in 10 languages other than English, covering topics such as how to enrol, how to vote and how to respond to an 'Apparent failure to vote' notice.

At previous elections, languages were chosen based on the number of speakers in Victoria. For the first time, we expanded the selection process to take into account additional factors including levels of English literacy, reach across countries and ethnic groups, and numbers of new arrivals to Australia. Our aim was to ensure that the videos would have the greatest impact for communities with the highest need for in-language electoral information.

The languages for the videos were:

- › Assyrian Neo-Aramaic
- › Burmese
- › Cantonese
- › Dari
- › Hazaragi
- › Khmer
- › Mandarin
- › Modern Standard Arabic

- › Turkish
- › Vietnamese.

We also produced Auslan videos explaining how to vote and how to respond to an 'Apparent failure to vote' notice.

Outreach and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

We developed video and radio advertisements to raise awareness in Aboriginal communities about responding to an 'Apparent failure to vote' notice.

Services for voters who are blind or have low vision

We partnered with Vision Australia to provide election information in accessible formats to 8,605 registered clients. Formats included DAISY/compact disc/audio, braille, large print, and e-text. Vision Australia also promoted the information via its newsletter and social media channels.

The communication, sent the week of Monday 15 July 2024, included information on:

- › our opt-in program for braille and large print ballot papers
- › how to enrol
- › how to stand as a candidate
- › other key election topics.

For more information, see **10.1 Ballot material preparation**.

6. Venues and resourcing

6.1 Centralised activity sites

We established centralised activity sites at Sandown Park from 30 September to 21 November 2024 and at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) from 23 October to 11 November 2024.

Sandown Park housed our centralised processing centre and replacement vote application processing team, as well as computer counting activities. We utilised MCEC to carry out a range of extraction and counting activities.

Voting options for all voters and situations
Commitment 4

For the 2026 State election, we will establish a permanent centralised activity site, allowing for long-term site management and enhancements to our centralised delivery model.

Table 7: List of centralised extraction and counting activities

Election	Activity	Location
Bayside City Council	Computer Count	Sandown Park
Borough of Queenscliffe Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Brimbank City Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Casey City Council	Extraction	MCEC
	Computer Count	MCEC
Darebin City Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Greater Geelong City Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Hume City Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Kingston City Council	Computer Count	Sandown Park
Melbourne City Council	Extraction	MCEC
	Computer Count	MCEC

Election	Activity	Location
Melton City Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Moonee Valley City Council	Extraction	MCEC
Nillumbik City Council	Extraction	MCEC
Whittlesea City Council	Computer Count	MCEC
Wyndham City Council	Computer Count	MCEC

We had a dedicated scrutineer management team at both sites to oversee registration and access for scrutineers. An election staff team was also stationed onsite to support the large number of election officials, including data entry officers, many of whom were engaged through a labour hire agency at short notice to support counting activities.

6.2 Election offices

We established an election office in each local council area. We carried out a comprehensive audit of potential sites to ensure they met required standards in:

- › security – the venue must be secure and have a separate lockable storage space for ballot material
- › location – the venue must be within council boundaries and should be convenient for the public
- › budget – leasing costs must be within reasonable budget
- › accessibility – the venue should have wheelchair access and suitable accessible parking
- › occupational health and safety (OHS) – the venue size and layout must be suitable for operational needs.

We first worked with councils to identify suitable premises owned or operated by councils. Where these were not available, we leased commercial space.

Commercial property availability remained a challenge during the elections. Reduced supply and reluctance by owners to enter short-term leases affected the number and quality of available properties. To address this, we engaged a commercial property partner to identify unlisted properties and worked with councils and community organisations to locate additional venues.

Our assessments identified 47 suitable council-provided premises, and commercial leased premises were used for the other 31 election offices. Eight offices required additional accommodation to support extraction and counting.

We worked with councils and landlords to improve accessibility where possible. A list of all election offices and their accessibility ratings is provided at **Appendix 4** to this report.

We required access to election offices from late July 2024 to deliver necessary furniture and materials, install and establish network connectivity, and commission computers in time for the opening on Monday 9 September 2024.

We began collecting materials and equipment from election offices as soon as possible after results were declared. The final collection took place on Monday 2 December 2024.

Break-in at Ballarat City Council election office

Overnight on 9 October 2024, intruders broke into the Ballarat City Council election office and forced their way entry into a locked area storing valuable items. A small amount of petty cash and a box containing 1,350 unmarked ballot papers for the Ballarat City Council elections were taken from the premises.

Upon discovery, the election manager immediately reported the incident to local police. We repaired the damage and introduced additional security measures, including increased security patrols, door checks and window checks.

On 10 October 2024, we issued a media release assuring Ballarat City Council voters that the theft posed no risk to electoral integrity. The unmarked ballot papers could not be used to vote; only ballot papers returned in completed ballot paper envelopes were counted. We also engaged directly with our council contacts at Ballarat City Council and candidates in the elections.

6.3 IT and systems

Technology is a key component of our election delivery. We work to ensure that our systems and processes are secure, accessible across Victoria, and highly reliable.

During the elections, we deployed an extensive statewide encrypted computer network, connecting 80 sites to our centralised information technology (IT) facilities. We rolled out approximately 1,000 additional PCs and laptop computers, as well as mobile and fixed telephony, to support approximately 7,500 staff across the state. High-speed encrypted satellite services were used in a small number of locations with limited telecommunications coverage.

Service improvements

Voters and candidates expect easy-to-use, reliable and secure online services. In preparation for the elections, we undertook a range of projects focusing on voter experience, including upgrading our website platform, replacing legacy technologies, and progressing technology upgrades to enhance management of the electoral roll.

One of our most significant projects was Candidate Helper, a digital tool developed to support candidates to prepare their nomination forms and associated collateral. The tool offered step-by-step guidance for completing nomination forms, candidate statements and questionnaires, while checking formatting and word count to reduce errors. With features like save-and-resume and a drag-and-drop tool for uploading compliant photographs, the tool significantly streamlined the nomination process and reduced wait times at election offices. For more information, see **9.1 Engagement and support**.

Cybersecurity

Our security program is based on strong governance and policy, threat prevention, issue identification, regular monitoring for attempted attacks, early detection of incidents, and 24/7 responsiveness.

We had extensive protective measures in place to safeguard electoral systems and data:

- › ahead of the elections, we tested our systems under load and conducted internal and external security reviews
- › we engaged additional resources to manage the frequent probing of our network which peaked in excess of 26,000 per day
- › we assigned cyber and information security training to all field roles with access to information technology, and to all centralised roles due to last more than a week, with mandatory annual cyber awareness refresher training for our core staff
- › we have continued to strengthen our cybersecurity under the Australian Signals Directorate 'Essential Eight' (ASD8) maturity model and deployed a range of other best-in-class security technologies, such as protection from distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks.

6.4 Transport and logistics

We undertook extensive planning, stakeholder engagement and coordination to transport election materials across Victoria to primary election venues, additional election support sites, and third-party suppliers.

This planning ensured our sites were adequately resourced to:

- › perform their operations
- › avoid unnecessary movements
- › provide additional support when changes in requirements occurred.

The scale of our operations was significant. We moved 4,628 pallets of election materials using 475 trucks. Across 870 movements, they travelled a combined 110,263 kilometres.

Activities included refining schedules, optimising routes, and grouping movements across sites. These efficiencies form part of our ongoing improvements to logistics processes and procedures for future electoral events.

Voting options for all voters and situations

Commitment 5

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will identify opportunities to reduce the overall transportation effort required to support election events.

We also uplifted our ballot material tracking procedure and offsite standard operating procedures, which ensure all transport vehicles and locations use a standardised approach when handling ballot materials. This provided enhanced internal visibility and transparency of secure transport and storage, and we are continuing to refine these procedures to boost our visibility of ballot materials.

Voting options for all voters and situations

Commitment 6

For the 2026 State election, we will deploy initiatives that provide greater visibility of the management, movement and handling of ballot material during the election cycle.

7. Workforce

7.1 Recruitment and sourcing

Our elections workforce is broadly comprised of 3 categories of staff:

- › senior election officials (SEOs) performing election management or centralised support roles
- › temporary election staff performing specific roles at election venues
- › our core staff, located at our head office and warehouse sites.

To fill these roles and ensure we had the capacity and capability to deliver the elections, we undertook significant recruitment and sourcing efforts ahead of the elections. Most of this activity focused on recruiting SEOs and election staff, although the headcount of our core staff also increases for election events, requiring higher levels of recruitment through our ordinary corporate channels.

Recruiting senior election officials

To fill SEO roles (election managers, assistant election managers, and election support officers) we maintain an SEO pool of prospective staff with specific skills, training and experience. We recruit SEOs to this pool through a rigorous selection process to ensure they have the required skills and experience.

Ahead of the elections, we increased the number of people recruited to the pool to ensure sufficient availability across the state. For these elections, our SEO pool comprised 353 people, from which we filled 183 election management team (EMT) roles. We also appointed members of the SEO pool as SEO reserves when they did not have an immediate appointment to an EMT or election support officer role.

We continue to face challenges in recruiting SEOs, as prospective staff must be willing to commit to a short-term, full-time role months in advance. This precludes many people seeking ongoing employment. As EMT roles are localised, we aim to recruit across all geographical areas of Victoria. Some areas remain difficult to staff locally, so we appointed 16 individuals from the SEO pool to outposted EMT roles in areas of need, where those individuals were prepared to travel.

To address these challenges at future elections, we are looking to a tiered approach of purpose-specific roles within the SEO pool to enable more targeted recruitment supported by particular skill sets and training programs.

Safe and empowered employees Commitment 7

For the 2026 State election and 2028 local government elections, we will review the senior election official pool strategy and consider a tiered system to support the expanding scope of our work in both state and local government elections.

For this election we also trialled a Victorian Public Service (VPS) secondment program to further increase the number of people available for SEO positions. Secondments were only available to VPS staff living in specific areas. As a result of this initiative, we appointed one VPS secondee to work as a regional assistant election manager. We are reviewing this program to determine if it will be a viable approach for securing staff at future events.

Recruiting temporary election staff

Recruitment for temporary election staff roles involved a simple registration process through our election casual database. These roles are tasked with specific short-term activities and include office assistants, count team leaders and data entry officers.

Our election casual database contains approximately 85,000 people registered to work at elections across Victoria. Not all registrants were available or interested in working at the 2024 elections, and our past experience shows that it can be difficult to secure enough staff from our database within reasonable proximity to election venues. This issue is particularly relevant when we need high volumes of staff at specific venues for short periods.

To mitigate these challenges we worked with 3 labour hire agencies to supply additional surge staff for short-term appointments in our centralised activity sites. This arrangement enabled us to provide large numbers of staff for very short-term appointments and to source data entry officers for computer counting activities in regional areas.

Across the 3 agencies, 452 staff were supplied for 545 roles, covering a total of 3,292 shifts.

Responding to operational issues

Operational issues, including delays inserting ballot materials into envelopes, longer than expected wait times for callers to our public enquiry service, and higher than expected volumes of requests for replacement votes required us to deploy urgent staffing solutions. We scaled up resourcing through labour hire agencies and used established systems to rapidly mobilise our database of election casuals.

We also deployed 64 staff members of our core workforce to support ballot material insertion, including providing team leaders for centralised activities and dispatching a contingent of staff to Sydney to support ballot material production operations. This was made possible by improvements to our workforce resilience (see **7.4 Core staff** for more information).

Pre-employment screening

Impartiality

We require potential staff to answer a series of questions about prior political activities. We can lawfully refuse employment on the basis of 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, were required to complete a disclosure of political activities. All disclosures were assessed individually, with some being grounds for automatic exclusion (such as being a candidate for election in the past 10 years or a member of a political party in the past 5 years), and others being assessed on a case-by-case basis (such as social media activity and membership of advocacy groups).

We received positive disclosures from 74 offers for employment, which resulted in 22 people being excluded from working at the elections.

Skills suitability

SEOs underwent a rigorous selection process to confirm they had the required skills for these complex roles.

Safe and empowered employees Commitment 8

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will conduct a skills gap analysis using psychometric testing and embed integrity measures to professionalise the election workforce.

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

Pre-existing illness or injury

We asked all prospective election staff to disclose pre-existing injuries, diseases or conditions that may affect their ability to safely perform the duties of

the role. In cases where a disclosure was made and reasonable adjustments could not be implemented to ensure the person's safety, we were unable to proceed with that appointment. This did not preclude the person from being considered for other roles where safety adjustments were not required or could be easily accommodated.

Security

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

All prospective staff we directly appointed were required to disclose any serious criminal convictions as part of the appointment process. We assessed all positive disclosures to determine if the person was suitable to work with us.

7.2 Election management teams

Each council election had a dedicated EMT, made up of one election manager and one or 2 assistant election managers. Staff for these roles were selected from our SEO pool. In total we appointed 78 election managers and 105 assistant election managers. The list of election managers is provided at **Appendix 4** to this report.

We also engaged several fully trained reserve SEOs who could step in if a member of an EMT could not continue in their role. There were 5 changes to EMTs during the elections.

To build future capability and keep our SEO pool actively involved in the elections, we placed 27 members of the pool in supporting roles in election offices, either as an extra member of an EMT or an office assistant.

Support for election management teams

During the election period, each EMT was supported by one of 11 election support officers based at our head office. Election support officers are experienced and highly competent SEOs who provide EMTs with procedural guidance and advice.

Election support officers acted as escalation points for election offices and as conduits between EMTs and head office teams. They also played a critical role in ensuring that each election was delivered according to legislative requirements and timelines by carrying out integrity checks (see **12.1 Election integrity activities**). They visited election offices at least twice during the elections to provide in-person support and conduct staff wellbeing and electoral integrity checks.

We also established a Help Desk for EMTs based at our head office to provide telephone and email support from mid-August until Friday 15 November 2024. The Help Desk:

- › performed quality assurance checks of computer infrastructure before each election office opened
- › logged all calls and directed queries to election support officers or another relevant centralised team
- › provided support for election systems, including resolving technical issues which arose in the field.

Several members of our Help Desk team were fully trained SEOs who had not been appointed to EMT roles. Engaging these staff was a valuable opportunity to further their election experience and expertise, and build capability for future events.

Election manager training and work instructions

EMTs participated in a comprehensive, blended election manager training program in preparation for the elections. The program combined 3 days of in-person training sessions with approximately 19 hours of mandatory online learning (completed beforehand) and live webinars.

The online learning component provided a review of EMT responsibilities and a foundational level of knowledge about election processes. This formed the basis for our face-to-face training sessions, which offered hands-on experience in completing these processes through a series of real-world scenarios. To maximise realism, we conducted the training in partial election office set-ups, with coaches who were experienced SEOs supporting the teams.

We also provided a series of topic-specific webinars during the election delivery period to support ongoing learning and provide just-in-time guidance.

We engaged our internal audit partner Grant Thornton to review the election manager training. The audit's overall assessment found that training products and delivery met the objectives and were adequate, and noted that the approach taken was effective.

The audit assessed the program's content, delivery and structure, with the following results:

- › training program and materials were rated *adequate*
- › method of delivery and timing was rated *adequate*
- › attendee experience and engagement were rated *adequate*
- › scalability of the training was rated *as meeting objectives, but requiring improvements*.

Based on these findings, the auditors recommended steps to ensure this training method could be scaled for large electoral events requiring more election management staff. They advised a focus on increasing the availability of qualified facilitators and coaches, as well as strengthening logistical coordination.

We are developing our training program for the 2026 State election, incorporating the findings and recommendations from the audit to ensure the program is scalable, high quality and fit for purpose in supporting EMT readiness at scale.

Safe and empowered employees Commitment 9

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will implement the findings and recommendations from the audit of election manager training.

To ensure suitable clarity and consistency in work instructions, we provided each EMT with:

- › a comprehensive election manual including work instructions for operational areas they were responsible for
- › additional work instruction documents for specific activities, such as detailed guides and task sheets
- › an election diary that outlined key tasks to complete on each day of the elections.

7.3 Election staff

We are committed to being an equal opportunity employer and employ a diverse range of people to fill election roles.

There were approximately 4,193 election casual roles filled by our temporary election workforce. This included 3,648 roles filled by 2,819 people from our election casual database, and 545 roles filled by 452 staff supplied by labour hire agencies.

Staff appointed to election staff roles came from a range of backgrounds and included:

- › people who were fluent in commonly spoken languages for the area
- › people with disabilities
- › Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- › people under 25.

Support, training and work instructions for election staff

We established a Personnel Helpline providing phone and email support to people wishing to register for election work. The Personnel Helpline was operated by staff from our head office and responded to questions about role offers, conditions of appointment (including appointment eligibility requirements), technical issues using the online staffing system, and pay-related queries.

The training and work instructions we provided to election staff varied based on the requirements of each role. We took into account the skills and knowledge required to perform each role, as well as the duration of engagement, to determine the level of training and instruction needed.

Depending on the role, we provided election staff with a combination of:

- › written work instruction products (manuals, guides and task sheets)
- › compliance training delivered via our online learning management system
- › technical role training delivered via our online learning management system
- › on-the-job briefings
- › face-to-face training.

Accessing electoral information in real time Commitment 10

For the 2026 State election and 2028 local government elections, we will produce a standardised library of instructional products, training material and guidelines.

7.4 Core staff

Our core workforce of ongoing, fixed-term and casual staff based at our head office and warehouse sites are critical to the delivery of all election events. This includes staff working directly in election service delivery roles, as well as those in business-as-usual and corporate functions that support organisational resilience and enable the successful delivery of elections.

Our core headcount surges during election events as we recruit fixed-term election delivery roles. We undertook significant work in the lead up to the elections to ensure capacity and capability in our core teams.

Building capability and expertise

We continue to invest in the capability and expertise of our core workforce. For these elections, we strengthened internal leadership and contingency planning by creating a deputy level of program leadership within our election program governance framework. This supported business continuity during planned and unplanned absences of senior staff, and built awareness and election program management experience across our work areas.

We also leveraged the significant electoral knowledge and commitment within our core workforce to respond to operational challenges. In response to delays with ballot paper insertion activities, we deployed 64 staff from head office to support operations at ballot production sites. This rapid mobilisation helped resolve the challenges and allowed staff to take on activity leadership roles at short notice.

Safe and empowered employees Commitment 11

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will develop a continuing professional development program for our core staff to strengthen internal capability.

Workforce planning

Ahead of the elections, we made significant progress in strategic workforce planning, laying the groundwork for a more scalable approach ahead of the 2026 State election.

Our initial focus was on workforce management initiatives, including roster forecasting, shift limits, overtime rules and fatigue controls. Our new workforce planning policy provided a compliance framework to support safe and efficient staffing during electoral events.

Looking ahead, we are shifting focus from operational compliance to strategic workforce forecasting and gap analysis. This includes redesigning work structures to enable more proactive resource planning and reduce reliance on subject matter experts. This is reflective of our commitment to maturing our workforce planning capability.

Health, safety and wellbeing

We have undertaken a continuous improvement path for health, safety and wellbeing, with increased focus and investment of resources over the past 2 years. For these elections, we implemented and tested several initiatives that also provided a greater understanding of priority areas for the 2026 State election.

We introduced a Safe@Work strategy to strengthen reporting and data collection for hazards and incidents. Staff could submit reports through a standardised electronic form, enabling more comprehensive identification of occupational health and safety hazards, risks and wellbeing trends. It also allowed timely follow-up with affected staff to ensure their ongoing wellbeing.

In response to increased exposure to psychosocial risks and concerning trends we have observed at recent elections, we also developed a harm minimisation framework. This was supported by mandatory training for people leaders and an accessible electronic reporting tool for harmful interactions. The main psychosocial hazard reported related to occupational violence and aggression, both in person and through written or online communications.

We also delivered a program of wellbeing initiatives for core staff aimed at ensuring they felt safe and supported during periods of peak activity, boosting morale, strengthening organisational culture, and recognising the significant contributions staff made to the successful delivery of the elections.

Safe and empowered employees

Commitment 12

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will roll out staff training of our Safe@Work psychological health and safety program, along with electronic reporting for occupational health and safety incidents and near misses.

8. Enrolment activities

8.1 Boundary recoding

When a local council's electoral structure or internal ward boundaries change, we have to update our electronic Roll Management System and Election Management System to reflect the new arrangements. Through boundary recoding, we can reassign voters to the correct electorate based on the changed structures and boundaries, ensuring the voters' roll is accurate and complete.

There were changes to 49 councils ahead of the 2024 elections. For more information, see **3. Electoral structure and boundary reviews**. While these changes did not take effect until the close of roll for the elections, they had significant impacts on planning and system readiness. All changes had to be implemented in VEC systems and council rates systems ahead of the close of roll to allow for a smooth roll production process.

We undertook boundary recoding in our systems in May 2024. This was carefully timed to ensure that voters' rolls based on the previous structures could still be produced for any by-elections held before the general elections, while allowing enough time after recoding to complete roll production and election preparation activities. As a result of this timing, accurate ward coding was in place for both the primary and close of roll stages of roll production.

We also supported all 49 councils with changed structures or boundaries to update their own systems, so that the changes could be implemented in time for their roll production activities for the elections.

Our current Geographic Information System software is outdated and relies on manual workarounds. We have identified improvements for future elections that will allow us to implement new spatial technology and better integrate it with our other systems.

Accessing electoral information in real time Commitment 13

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will invest in our Geographic Information System software to produce higher quality maps for internal and external stakeholders and integrate geospatial capability and access to geospatial data more effectively across our operations.

8.2 Changes to enrolment entitlements

Entitlement support

Recognising the need for clear guidance on new enrolment entitlements under the LG Act, we launched a project in 2023 to help councils understand these changes.

This work included updates to our systems and procedures to ensure voters' rolls were accurate and council-enrolled voters were aware of compulsory voting obligations.

We worked closely with the local government sector to support a consistent approach across councils. This included presentations at Revenue Management Association conferences in March 2023, September 2023, and March 2024. These conferences were attended by council officers responsible for preparing CEO's list extracts.

We developed standardised templates to support council enrolment processes. These included forms for:

- › council enrolment application
- › resignation of council enrolment
- › revocation of council enrolment
- › silent voter requests.

We also encouraged councils to create online application forms for administering council enrolment.

System and communication support

In September 2023, we engaged with council rates system software providers to ensure their systems were updated to support:

- › accurate processing of council enrolments
- › correct formatting of CEO's lists for each stage of roll production.

In October 2023, we distributed communication packs to councils. These included:

- › enrolment and entitlement frequently asked questions (FAQs) for council websites
- › artwork for enrolment entitlement flyers to include in mail-outs
- › one-page enrolment entitlement placemats for quick reference by council staff.

Guidance note

In collaboration with Local Government Victoria (LGV), we developed a guidance note to help councils prepare voters' rolls for the elections. The note clarified business rules and production timelines to ensure legislative compliance and outlined council enrolment responsibilities.

The guidance note was first published on the LGV website in August 2023. It did not apply to Melbourne City Council elections.

8.3 Voters' roll production

Preliminary stage

The preliminary stage of roll production began in January 2024, and involved combining the Electoral Commissioner's list with each council's CEO's list. We are responsible for the production of voters' rolls for all council elections except Melbourne City Council elections, which is administered by the CEO of Melbourne City Council under the CoM Act.

The Electoral Commissioner's list contains state-enrolled voters who are enrolled at an address within the relevant local council area. The Electoral Commissioner's list is captured from the Victorian register of electors, which we maintain under a joint roll arrangement with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). Enrolment updates to the Commonwealth electoral roll for Victoria kept by the AEC will, in most circumstances, be promptly applied to the register of electors.

All councils (except Melbourne City Council) were requested to submit a CEO's list to us in January 2024. Each list included:

- › details of all ratepayers enrolled in the previous general election
- › people eligible to apply for council enrolment
- › geographical ward information, where relevant.

The CEO's list includes council-enrolled voters, such as non-resident owners or corporate representatives with rateable land in the municipality. For the 2024 elections:

- › 75 councils (of the 77 where the VEC was responsible for preparing the voters' roll) included only those voters whose enrolment applications had been approved by the council
- › Casey City Council and Whittlesea City Council, which did not hold elections in 2020, were required to include non-resident owners with an existing entitlement from 2016. These voters did not need to reapply.

We then merged each CEO's list with the Electoral Commissioner's list of state-enrolled voters, and removed duplicate records in accordance with the LG Act. We also supported Melbourne City Council officers to prepare the CEO's list in accordance with the CoM Act.

The preliminary CEO's lists submitted by councils contained a total of 769,618 ratepayer records. After we refined the data, 630,393 eligible records remained.

We used the refined rolls to generate mailing lists for each council, organised by entitlement category. We provided these to councils by April 2024, along with letter templates and standardised enrolment application forms. Councils could use these materials to notify ratepayers about changes to their entitlements and to invite them to apply to enrol or re-enrol for the 2024 election.

We encouraged councils to complete their mail-out by Friday 31 May and contact new ratepayers added after the mailing lists were created. All councils confirmed to us that they completed their mail-out by the deadline.

In our preliminary stage for Melbourne City Council's voters' roll, we focused on data quality and provided feedback on council-enrolled records. This included reports identifying deceased electors and voters whose details matched those of state-enrolled voters.

Accessing electoral information in real time Commitment 14

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will explore opportunities to better support councils to produce voters' rolls.

Primary stage

The primary stage of roll production ran from June to July 2024. Councils were required to:

- › update their systems to meet new data-format requirements
- › remove voters with entitlements under the previous legislation
- › apply updated ward information where boundary changes had occurred.

We encouraged councils to submit a trial CEO's list before their official submission to confirm that the required changes had been made. Over 85% of councils participated in the trial process to verify the accuracy of their records. We reviewed these trial lists to confirm that councils applied the correct updates and that their systems were ready for the elections.

The primary CEO's lists submitted contained 115,307 records. We removed 2,453 duplicates, most of which matched state-enrolled voters in the same local council area and already enrolled for the elections.

After the primary stage, the total number of council-enrolled voters was 112,854. This represented 2.4% of the 4,607,968 voters enrolled across all elections.

Close of roll stage

In 2024, the LG Act was amended to bring the close of roll forward to 80 days before election day, a shift from 57 days before election day under the previous legislative framework. As such, the close of roll occurred on Wednesday 7 August at 4 pm. All councils (except Melbourne City Council) submitted their final CEO's lists to us by Friday 9 August in accordance with our request.

We cross-checked changes made since the primary stage against the Electoral Commissioner's list and conducted data integrity checks to ensure the final voters' rolls were accurate and compliant.

After the close of roll, the number of council-enrolled voters increased to 118,791, representing 2.6% of the 4,613,421 voters enrolled across all elections.

Accessing electoral information in real time

Commitment 15

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will upgrade technology supporting our Roll Management System through a structured improvement program.

Redirection of ballot material

We processed a total of 5,193 requests from voters to have their ballot pack redirected. We received 4,148 of these before the initial mail-out of ballot packs, allowing us to apply the request to the initial ballot pack sent to those voters. We processed the remaining 1,045 requests as requests for replacement votes.

Improving the voter experience

Recommendation 3: Administration of council enrolment

Communicating eligibility to apply for owner ratepayers

Following the changes to the enrolment entitlements for ratepayers through the LG Act, there is an obligation for councils to write to occupier ratepayers and corporations alerting them to their eligibility to apply to be enrolled under sections 244 and 245 of the LG Act, respectively. This provision, at section 240(10), does not also extend to owner ratepayers under section 242, even though this is the most common category of council enrolment.

As a result, new owner ratepayers that have purchased a property since the last election will not automatically be notified of their eligibility to enrol. Unlike occupier ratepayers and corporate voting representatives, enrolments for owner ratepayers do not expire. However, the omission of this category from being notified by the council risks leaving this entitlement category under-subscribed for future elections, as they are no longer automatically enrolled under the LG Act when they are not already enrolled for the rateable property as state enrolled voters.

We recommend amending section 240(10) of the LG Act to also include notifying owner ratepayers of their eligibility to be enrolled under section 242.

Streamlining the receipt and processing of council enrolment applications

The compilation of voters' rolls for local government elections is a complex undertaking for councils and the VEC. Each council currently maintains a list of council-enrolled voters, which is integrated with the VEC's list of state-enrolled voters to produce the voters' roll for each election. These lists are integrated over multiple iterations beginning approximately 9 months before election day, and there are specific provisions in the LG Act to allow the exchange of information for quality assurance purposes.⁶

The recent legislative changes to council enrolment entitlements removed automatic enrolment for non-resident owners and shifted them within the owner ratepayer category, which is now by application. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of council-enrolled voters on voters' rolls across all local councils.

There is an opportunity to remove a significant administrative burden on councils, simplify voters' roll processes and, importantly, align voters' experiences between state and local government elections. Subject to consultation with councils and local government peak bodies, it may be feasible to streamline the receipt and processing of enrolment applications, enrolment resignations and silent voter requests to be administered by the VEC on an ongoing basis. While councils would still maintain rates records and systems, we could undertake the exchange of information to verify each enrolment application with the relevant council during the preparation of voters' rolls.

A streamlined approach would allow for voters' roll data to be managed in a consistent format and administered by the VEC as an ongoing roll maintenance activity. This would resolve quality concerns caused by extracting and merging data drawn from disparate rates systems, and relieve individual councils of the need to maintain a suite of enrolment forms for ad hoc processing in between elections.

Importantly, this arrangement could only be operationalised for council-enrolment processes under the LG Act. Enrolment for Melbourne City Council elections under the CoM Act is more complex, and still includes automatic enrolment as well as deeming provisions for voting representatives of corporations. These provisions would need to continue to be administered by Melbourne City Council, and we will continue to partner closely with council officers for the production of voters' rolls for Melbourne City Council elections.

We recommend that the State Government considers opportunities to streamline the administration of council enrolment applications, enrolment resignations and silent voter requests under the LG Act and LG Regulations to be processed through the VEC, and undertakes consultation with councils and local government peak bodies on the feasibility of this as a long-term arrangement.

⁶ See regulation 15 of the LG Regulations.

8.4 Roll products

Certified voters' rolls

We prepared certified voters' rolls for 77 of the 78 councils holding elections. The voters' rolls were certified by the VEC's electoral registrar on Monday 9 September, which allowed for candidate nominations to proceed as we could confirm that they were nominating in a council in which they were enrolled. The CEO of Melbourne City Council certified the voters' roll for the Melbourne City Council elections as registrar.

Following certification of the voters' rolls, there were 302 amendments consisting of 292 deletions and 10 additions. This effort included the voters' roll for the Melbourne City Council elections.

General mail-out files

For each election, we produced 4 general mail-out files aligning with the 4 days over which we were required to mail the ballot packs. These files were used to start producing ballot packs. The files included all ballot redirections that we processed before roll certification. Fewer than 0.2% of records had overseas addresses.

Candidate roll products

Candidates were able to request a copy of the voters' roll for the electorate they had nominated in.

To improve this process, we introduced a standardised form that candidates were requested to complete. The form included a declaration that:

- › the roll data would only be used for campaign purposes
- › any copies of the roll would be destroyed within 30 days after election day, in accordance with legislative requirements.

Once a correctly completed roll request form was submitted and signed, we provided candidates with a secure download through our data exchange portal.

We processed 834 candidate requests for roll copies. More than 90% were processed within one business day of the close of nominations. Of those who received a copy, 675 candidates downloaded the roll.

After election day, we emailed all candidates who had received a roll copy to remind them of their obligation to delete the data. A total of 315 candidates responded to confirm deletion.

Accessing electoral information in real time Commitment 16

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will review our legislated data release obligations to ensure our practices remain compliant and aligned with requirements.

Roll lookup services

We introduced a new roll lookup service for members of the public to check their enrolment in person at our head office during business hours.

Additionally, the 'Check my enrolment' portal on our website allowed over 424,000 enrolment checks between Monday 1 July and Sunday 17 November. For more information, see **5.5 Website**.

Reinforcing public trust

Recommendation 4: Provision of enrolment information

Across Victorian elections, we continue to observe concern among voters about the privacy of their enrolment information. We are required to provide voters' rolls to candidates in local government elections. Political participants' use of this information during election campaigns is eroding the community's trust and undermining our ability to handle their personal information consistent with our obligations under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) (PDP Act).

In our Report to Parliament on the 2022 State election, we recommended changes to the Electoral Act to strengthen the regulatory framework for provision of enrolment information in the state election context. Similar concerns apply to local government elections, and harmonisation between the Electoral Act and the LG Act would provide significant opportunities for streamlining processes and restoring the community's trust.

At the 2024 local government elections, 834 candidates requested a copy of the voters' roll. Of these candidates, 675 downloaded the voters' roll, however only 315 responded to confirm deletion when we prompted them after election day.

There is a variance between the way in which voters' rolls must be treated by candidates as opposed to other recipients. Under section 253 of the LG Act, the VEC must receive an undertaking from other recipients that they will only use the information for appropriate purposes and that they will return or destroy the information after using it. There is no equivalent undertaking required of candidates. There is also no requirement for candidates not to copy the voters' roll or give it to any other person or organisation, as applies for other recipients.

Strengthened protections should also apply to voters' rolls under the CoM Act. For consistency with the provision of all other enrolment information, responsibility for providing voters' rolls for Melbourne City Council elections should sit with the VEC. This would also be addressed by actioning **technical recommendation 22** of this report (see **14. Technical recommendations**).

At the same time, there have been changes to the ways electoral participants access information and new technologies now available that remove the need for candidates (and registered political parties and MPs in the state context) to 'request' roll products under the relevant Acts. Changes to modernise provisions across electoral legislation would allow for self-service capability, and would support us to better harmonise strengthened privacy and data protection measures for roll products.

We recommend amending section 252 of the LG Act and section 11G of the CoM Act to require that candidates must provide an undertaking to the VEC that they will use the information in accordance with the PDP Act and will return or destroy the information within 30 days after election day (or after retiring as a candidate).

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9. Candidates

9.1 Engagement and support

Candidate enquiry service

We operated a dedicated candidate helpline and email address, available to prospective candidates. Before the nomination period for the elections, we allocated 4 dedicated staff to the phone helpline and email inbox to respond to enquiries.

Our candidate enquiry service received 694 helpline queries and responded to 178 email queries up until election day.

Candidate self-service information

From July 2024, we provided resources to help candidates access information about nominating and other election processes. This included a major uplift of our candidate and scrutineer handbooks to ensure they were useful, easily understood, and aligned with changes to legislation.

We published a candidate kit containing candidate and scrutineer handbooks, forms and other resources on our website as well as making hard copies available at election offices. We provided tailored handbooks and kits for candidates in the Melbourne City Council elections.

In August 2024, we published a suite of videos about becoming a candidate, campaigning, scrutineers, and the changes to legislation on our YouTube channel and website. We promoted these videos through our various social media channels.

Candidate information sessions

Each election manager delivered in-person candidate information sessions in their local council area before nominations opened. We held one session in each council area, and gave councils the option for us to hold additional sessions if desired.

Candidate Helper

Our online Candidate Helper portal went live on our website on 20 August 2024. Candidate Helper guided candidates in completing their nomination, statement and questionnaire forms online before printing and lodging them in person with the election manager.

When candidates used Candidate Helper to prepare their nomination forms, it allowed our Election Management System to be automatically populated with their nomination information when they lodged their nomination form with the election manager. This significantly reduced manual processing requirements and wait times during nomination appointments.

Candidate bulletins

Each election manager provided candidates in their election with regular email bulletins during the election timeline. In these bulletins, we provided comprehensive information on key election activities, as well as reminders about upcoming deadlines. Candidate bulletins provided a streamlined and standardised approach to candidate communications, with room for tailored local content to be added where necessary.

Intuitive experiences for all candidates

Commitment 17

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will map the customer journey for candidates and identify opportunities for improvement. We will ensure clear and consistent messaging is a priority, along with ample training opportunities for all candidates.

9.2 Nominations

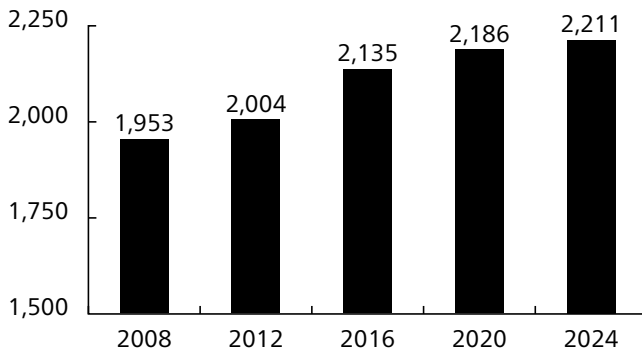
Nominations opened at 9 am on Monday 9 September and closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September. Candidates were required to lodge their nomination forms in person at election offices.

These elections recorded the highest number of candidates for Victorian local government elections. By the close of nominations, we had received a total of 2,244 nominations for 646 vacancies across the 466 individual elections, an increase from 2,186 nominations for 622 vacancies across 298 individual elections at the 2020 elections. The final number of active nominations was 2,211, as 13 candidates withdrew before the close of nominations and 20 were retired after the close of nominations (see **9.6 Candidate retirements**).⁷

The total number of candidates at local government elections continues to grow, and this is a trend we are observing across state elections as well.

⁷ Candidates for the Melbourne City Council leadership team election have been counted as individual nominations for the purposes of counting the total number of candidates, but they must nominate in a pair and are treated as a pair throughout the election.

Figure 2: Total number of candidates at local government general elections, 2008–2024



Of those nominations received, 2,102 (93.68%) candidates completed their nomination form using Candidate Helper, an increase from 87.92% in 2020. We had a team at our head office quality assuring nominations as they were processed at election offices. The increased use of Candidate Helper streamlined this manual quality assurance process by reducing opportunity for defects or errors.

Excluding the Melbourne City Council councillor election (which has a different voting system), the East Gippsland Shire Council election had the highest number of candidates in a single election, with 23 active nominations. The Wyndham City Council elections received the most nominations across all wards, with 92 active nominations across 11 wards. The Bayside City Council, Dendy Ward election was the most contested single-councillor ward, with 20 active nominations.

Election managers conducted ballot draws to determine the order of candidates' names on ballot papers from 10 am on Wednesday 18 September 2024. We completed all ballot draws using our computerised ballot draw application.

The nomination fee, prescribed by the LG Regulations, was \$250 per candidate. Candidates were required to pay the fee to the election manager during their nomination appointment in order for their nomination to be processed. Under the current LG Regulations, we can only accept payment of the nomination fee by cash or bank cheque. Eight candidates paid their nomination fee by bank cheque.

Candidates could also submit a form requesting access to the voters' roll for their election. We processed 834 candidate requests for copies of the voters' roll after the close of nominations. For more information, see **8.4 Roll products**.

9.3 Candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires

Candidates could submit a written statement and recent photograph to be printed in the candidate leaflet included in ballot packs. We also published candidate statements and photographs on our website.

The word limit for candidate statements was 200 words, reduced from 300 words in the 2020 elections. This change to the LG Regulations returned the word limit to its previous settings after it had been temporarily increased in 2020 to acknowledge the limitations of campaigning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The deadline for candidates to submit statements and photographs was the same as the close of nominations, 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September.⁸

We advised candidates that we would publish candidate statements exactly as they were submitted, with no corrections to grammar or spelling. Our head office team quality assured and checked candidate statements against legislative requirements (such as the need for claims of endorsement to be authenticated by a representative of the organisation endorsing the candidate). We completed the quality assurance and checking of all candidate statements within legislative timelines as well as in time for our publication and printing deadlines.

While these rigorous quality assurance processes were effective, a system issue caused a printing error in one candidate statement for a candidate in the Port Phillip City Council, South Melbourne Ward election. This was not identified until after ballot packs had been mailed out and was a result of a special character that our system did not recognise. We spoke with the candidate and agreed to use our VoterAlert service to provide a correction directly to voters in the affected ward. See **Appendix 5.3** to this report.

Candidates could submit their candidate statement and photograph using Candidate Helper, allowing them to ensure their statement met formatting requirements and to crop their photograph to the correct dimensions for inclusion in the candidate leaflet. 2,074 candidates (96% of total nominations received) submitted their candidate statement using Candidate Helper.⁹

⁸ Not including the Melbourne City Council elections.

⁹ This figure does not include candidates in the Melbourne City Council elections, as teams and groups submit joint statements.

Reinforcing public trust

Recommendation 5: Party affiliations of candidates

We reiterate our observation raised in our Report to Parliament on the 2020 local government elections that political parties are playing an increasingly overt role in local government elections, and we have observed increasing community concern about the lack of transparency with candidates' party affiliations.

The candidate questionnaire currently includes the prescribed question: 'Are you endorsed by a registered political party? If yes, provide the name of the registered political party.' However, providing an answer to this question is not compulsory, and transparency is reduced to only formal endorsements made by registered political parties.

At the 2024 elections, only 283 candidates answered 'yes' to the existing question, and 123 candidates across the elections did not provide a response to this question at all. The other 1,838 candidates who nominated answered 'no' to the question. This is inconsistent with our observations about the increasing role of political parties in local government elections, and we note that many voters do not distinguish between a candidate's membership of a political party and the formal pre-selection and endorsement practices adopted by some political parties.

In contrast, for NSW local government elections, registered political parties are more overtly involved and endorsed candidates nominated by parties appear on ballot papers alongside the relevant party name. While Victoria does not adopt this approach, and political parties do not have an express role to endorse candidates under the LG Act, it does highlight a conflicting approach that leads to community concern and confusion in Victoria.

It is increasingly clear that the community's appetite is for greater transparency about political party affiliations beyond formal endorsement. For example, party membership is an accepted indicator of candidates' political engagement and motivations, even when parties do not routinely pre-select and endorse candidates for local government elections.

To resolve this and ensure ongoing utility of the candidate questionnaire, it would be appropriate to add a new prescribed question prompting candidates to share their membership of any political parties.

We recommend amending the candidate questionnaires prescribed in Form 2 and Form 3 of the LG Regulations to ask candidates for their political party membership(s) in addition to the current question regarding party endorsement.

All candidates submitted a statement, though we were required to reject one candidate's statement as it did not comply with the legislative requirements. The candidate did not submit an amended statement within the legislated timeline and we were required to include a note in the candidate leaflet for that election that the candidate did not submit a statement.

Candidates could also submit answers to a questionnaire containing prescribed questions about their experience and training applicable to the role of councillor, and whether they were endorsed by a registered political party. Each question in the questionnaire was optional to complete. The deadline for candidates to submit responses to the candidate questionnaire was also 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September.¹⁰

We published completed questionnaires on our website, and the candidate leaflet mailed to voters included instructions for how to access candidates' answers to the questionnaire (as they were not printed in the leaflet).

A total of 2,125 candidates (94.7% of total nominations received) submitted responses to the questionnaire, and there were 119 candidates who did not submit responses.¹¹

9.4 Melbourne City Council election candidates

Nominations

As with other elections, all candidates for the Melbourne City Council elections were required to nominate in person at the election office. Candidates for the councillor election submitted individual nominations, regardless of whether they were intending to form a group.

Candidates for the leadership team election nominated jointly as a team of 2, with one candidate nominating for Lord Mayor and the other for Deputy Lord Mayor. Teams in the leadership team election paid a joint nomination fee of \$250 in total.

At the close of nominations, there were 58 nominations for the councillor election and 11 joint nominations for the leadership team election (constituting 22 individual candidates). By comparison, at the 2020 elections 59 candidates nominated for the councillor election and 9 teams nominated for the leadership team election.

Team name and group registration

Before the close of nominations, teams in the leadership election could request a team name to appear on the ballot paper alongside their names. All 11 teams submitted and registered a team name before the deadline.

Two or more candidates in the councillor election could request to have their names appear together on the ballot paper with a group name. Group registration closed at 12 noon on Thursday 19 September, 2 days after the close of nominations. At the close of group registration, 16 groups had been registered and 5 candidates were ungrouped.

Statements, photographs and questionnaires

Teams and groups could submit a joint statement, as well as a recent photograph of each candidate in the team or group, for inclusion in the candidate leaflet included in ballot packs. Ungrouped candidates in the councillor election could submit a candidate statement and photograph. We also published statements and photographs on our website.

All candidates in the elections could submit individual responses to the candidate questionnaire.

The deadline for statements, photographs and questionnaires in the Melbourne City Council elections was 12 noon on Monday 23 September, 6 days after the close of nominations and differing from the timeline in other elections.

Group voting tickets and indications of preferences

Groups in the councillor election were required to lodge at least one and up to 2 group voting tickets in order to have a box printed above the line on the ballot paper. Group voting tickets set out how the group wished to direct preferences for above-the-line votes for the group, and were printed in the candidate booklet included in the ballot pack.

The deadline to submit group voting tickets was 12 noon on Monday 23 September. One group, the Victorian Socialists, did not submit a group voting ticket before the deadline and as such did not have a box printed above the line on the ballot paper. A small number of early votes had been issued with a box above the line for all groups.

Teams in the leadership team election and ungrouped candidates in the councillor election could submit an indication of preferences for inclusion in the candidate

¹⁰ Not including the Melbourne City Council elections.

¹¹ This figure includes candidates in the Melbourne City Council elections, as candidates submit individual responses regardless of whether they are part of a team or group.

booklet mailed in ballot packs. Indications of preferences showed voters how the team or candidate preferred for them to complete their ballot paper.

The deadline to submit indications of preferences was 12 noon on Monday 23 September. All teams in the leadership team election and 3 of the 5 ungrouped candidates in the councillor election submitted indications of preferences before the deadline.

9.5 Uncontested elections

If the number of candidates in an election at the close of nominations is equal to the number of vacancies, the election is uncontested and the candidates are elected unopposed.

Across the 78 councils, a total of 42 individual elections in 20 councils were uncontested. The Yarriambiack Shire Council elections were entirely uncontested. A list of uncontested elections is provided at Table 8.

At the beginning of the mail-out period on Monday 7 October, we mailed a leaflet to voters in uncontested wards advising them that they were not required to vote in the election. For more information, see **10.1 Ballot material preparation**.

Table 8: List of uncontested elections

Council	Ward	Vacancies
Banyule City Council	Beale Ward	1
Buloke Shire Council	Mallee Ward	2
Cardinia Shire Council	Pakenham Hills Ward	1
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Maryborough West Ward	1
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Tullaroop Ward	1
Corangamite Shire Council	Cooriemungle Ward	1
Corangamite Shire Council	Gnotuk Ward	1
Corangamite Shire Council	Lake Elingamite Ward	1

Council	Ward	Vacancies
Corangamite Shire Council	Lake Keilambete Ward	1
Corangamite Shire Council	Leura Ward	1
Corangamite Shire Council	Mt Elephant Ward	1
Greater Bendigo City Council	Epsom Ward	1
Greater Dandenong City Council	Noble Park Ward	1
Greater Shepparton City Council	Midland Ward	1
Greater Shepparton City Council	Poplar Ward	1
Hindmarsh Shire Council	West Ward	2
Horsham Rural City Council	Kalimna Ward	1
Horsham Rural City Council	Wyn Wyn Ward	1
Latrobe City Council	Newborough Ward	1
Loddon Shire Council	Boort Ward	1
Loddon Shire Council	Terrick Ward	1
Loddon Shire Council	Wedderburn Ward	1
Manningham City Council	Tullamore Ward	1
Manningham City Council	Yarra Ward	1
Mildura Rural City Council	Karadoc Ward	1
Mildura Rural City Council	Sunset Country Ward	1
Monash City Council	Gallaghers Ward	1
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Barkers Creek Ward	1

Council	Ward	Vacancies
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Forest Creek Ward	1
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Loddon River Ward	1
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Moonlight Creek Ward	1
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Tarrengower Ward	1
Wangaratta Rural City Council	King River Ward	1
Wangaratta Rural City Council	Warby Ward	1
Warrnambool City Council	Botanic Ward	1
Warrnambool City Council	Russells Creek Ward	1
Warrnambool City Council	Wollaston Ward	1
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	Chirside Ward	1
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	Ryrie Ward	1
Yarriambiack Shire Council	Dunmunkle Ward	2
Yarriambiack Shire Council	Hopetoun Ward	2
Yarriambiack Shire Council	Warrackna-beal Ward	2

If, after considering their response, we remain satisfied the candidate is not entitled, they must be retired from the election.

We published a statutory notice of each candidate's retirement and made all reasonable efforts to remove their name from the ballot paper. If their name could not be removed, any votes cast for the candidate were redistributed to other candidates according to voters' preferences during counting, as outlined in the LG Regulations.

At the elections, 20 candidates were retired due to being ineligible to nominate. In each case, we were satisfied the relevant candidate had not been entitled to nominate.

Of these, 4 were retired before ballot papers were printed, and their names did not appear on the ballot papers. The remaining 16 candidates were retired after ballot papers had been printed, and we were not able to remove their names.

An overview of these retirements, including whether each candidate was retired in time for their name to be removed from ballot papers, is provided at Table 9.

We provided additional training to election managers in elections where a retired candidate's name appeared on ballot papers. We also provided scrutineers with a dedicated ballot paper formality guide explaining the vote counting process and formality rules for elections with a retired or deceased candidate.

The majority of the retirements were a result of the Department of Government Services (DGS) and Local Government Victoria (LGV) crosschecking our list of candidates with the register of local government candidate training that DGS and LGV administer. This process identified that 16 candidates did not complete their mandatory training as declared in their nominations.

9.6 Candidate retirements

After the close of nominations and before election day, a candidate may retire (or be retired by the VEC) under the LG Regulations. A candidate can only request to retire if it will result in an uncontested election or if they are not qualified to be a councillor.

If we believe a candidate was not entitled to nominate, we must formally query their qualification and invite them to provide written reasons why they are entitled.

Table 9: Overview of candidate retirements

Council	Ward	Candidate name	Before/ after printing	Date of retirement
Banyule City Council	Griffin Ward	Matt Perkins	Before	Friday 20 September
Darebin City Council	South Central Ward	Simone White	After	Thursday 26 September
East Gippsland Shire Council	Unsubdivided	Matt Stephenson	After	Monday 30 September
Frankston City Council	Elisabeth Murdoch Ward	Renee Jackson	After	Thursday 26 September
Frankston City Council	Yamala Ward	Ben Frawley	After	Thursday 26 September
Greater Geelong City Council	You Yangs Ward	David Greenwood	After	Thursday 26 September
Hobsons Bay City Council	Laverton Ward	Paula Morgan	After	Thursday 26 September
Hume City Council	Bababi Marning Ward	Mohamad Abbouche	After	Thursday 26 September
Hume City Council	Mount Ridley Ward	Anand Sharma	Before	Wednesday 18 September
Manningham City Council	Westerfolds Ward	Tegan Dunne	After	Thursday 26 September
Maroondah City Council	Bungalook Ward	Wendy Rowles	After	Thursday 26 September
Merri-bek City Council	Box Forest Ward	Mohamad Elmustapha	After	Friday 4 October
Merri-bek City Council	Brunswick West Ward	Romeo Delorenzis	After	Friday 4 October
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Briars Ward	Bill Daish	After	Thursday 26 September
Moyne Shire Council	Unsubdivided	Kim Kelly	After	Wednesday 2 October
Nillumbik Shire Council	Bunjil Ward	Bill Penrose	After	Thursday 26 September
Swan Hill Rural City Council	Unsubdivided	Deon Lever	After	Wednesday 2 October
Whitehorse City Council	Eley Ward	Darren Ludowyke	Before	Friday 20 September
Wyndham City Council	Werribee Park Ward	Ashok Sherwal	Before	Friday 20 September
Yarra City Council	Melba Ward	Christine Maynard	After	Thursday 26 September

Responding to a complex environment

Recommendation 6: Confirming candidate training

At the 2024 elections, 20 candidates were retired due to not being eligible to nominate.

Of the retirements, 16 occurred after ballot papers had been printed, and we were not able to remove their names from the ballot papers for those elections. This required additional training for election managers and a dedicated ballot paper formality guide for scrutineers, as the vote counting process and formality rules are more complex when a retired candidate appears on the ballot papers. We also observed concern from voters about how to vote properly and ensure their vote was not informal.

The candidate retirement process imposes a significant administrative burden and could be prevented at the point of nomination rather than discovered later in the election timeline.

We were also required to investigate a further 11 candidates who initially could not be matched to the register of candidate training and were ultimately found to be eligible upon investigation. This required a coordinated effort by LGV and their software provider, as well as uncertainty for the candidates while their eligibility was under review. This process imposed a significant administrative burden and time pressure to resolve matters as soon as possible to ensure certainty in the elections.

There is an opportunity to prevent inadvertent failure to meet the mandatory candidate training requirements and unnecessary eligibility investigations by providing the VEC with ongoing, real-time access to the register of local government candidate training. Currently we can only request information from the register by making a written request to DGS.

Real-time access would allow confirmation of a candidate's completion of the training at the time they nominate, preferably supported by evidence provided by the candidate at their nomination appointment such as a completion certificate or verification code generated by LGV's candidate training system. If a candidate was not on the register of local government candidate training, we could reject their nomination rather than verifying their completion and retiring them at a later date. This would also, in most cases, provide the candidate with the opportunity to complete the mandatory training before the nomination period closes.

We recommend amending regulation 36 of the LG Regulations to require the register of local government candidate training to be made available to the VEC throughout the election period, and amending regulation 24 of the LG Regulations to require candidates to provide evidence of completion when nominating.

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10. Voting period

10.1 Ballot material preparation

We anticipated that the increased complexity of the elections, driven by growth in the number of candidates, voters and individual elections, would place significant pressure on ballot material production within the available timeframe.

In response, we conducted an extensive design review of all local government election ballot materials, including the systems and processes we use to produce them. We assessed our products and processes holistically to identify issues and opportunities relating to product usability, production efficiency and process improvement.

Our quality assurance teams oversaw all production activities to ensure efficiency, quality and security throughout the process.

Voting options for all voters and situations Commitment 18

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will identify options to streamline ballot printing and mail insertion production. Initially, this will be focused on the design of election products to maximise output followed by the diversification of suppliers to reduce risks associated with limited suppliers.

Design of ballot materials

As a result of our review of ballot materials, we made changes to the design of ballot papers, candidate leaflets and other materials in ballot packs. We:

- › separated the ballot paper and candidate leaflet, simplifying the products and allowing us to start printing earlier
- › consolidated the range of products where legislation and user needs allowed, reducing time and resource use
- › altered the colour compositions used to identify wards, reducing printing costs
- › streamlined branding elements
- › simplified visual and written instructions using a highly legible font for small print, and adjusted typography to support navigation and readability
- › redesigned the product formats to maximise sheet usage, reducing paper waste and printing time.

Despite continual growth in voter numbers, these changes led to:

- › 43% less overall paper usage than the 2020 elections (equivalent to approximately 1.1 million A1 sheets)
- › 65% less third-party printing time than the 2020 elections (from more than 7 days to less than 3 days)
- › stabilised outsourced production costs and ongoing savings from in-house production
- › reduced volumes of raw materials and finished goods, lowering our transport needs and environmental impact.

Generation of ballot material artwork

We redeveloped the automation system we use to generate ballot materials to make our processing of artwork and design changes more efficient. This removed the need for manual intervention, and allowed us to start quality assurance shortly after ballot draws had been conducted on Wednesday 18 September and Thursday 19 September 2024. This further reduced our overall delivery timeframe.

Following the ballot draws, we generated and quality assured artwork for ballot papers and candidate leaflets in preparation for printing. We generated and quality assured the ballot material for the Melbourne City Council elections on Tuesday 24 September. This variable artwork encompassed 466 individual elections across 78 councils, resulting in a combined total of 1,305 items including standard ballot papers, candidate leaflets and uncontested leaflets, and accessible braille and large print formats.

As a new initiative, we included barcodes on all ward- and council-specific items in ballot packs. These were readable by barcode scanners fitted to the mail insertion machines at our contracted mail house, enabling us to deploy an automated quality assurance process preventing misprints and duplications by comparing against voter details.

We completed quality assurance for most ballot papers and candidate statements within 8 hours. We securely transferred the first files to our contracted print site by 1:40 pm on 18 September.

Printing of ballot materials

We conducted printing, packaging and the dispatch of materials between 18 September and 21 September, followed closely by Melbourne City Council election materials on 24 September due to the differing timeline. We securely transported materials to our contracted mail house for distribution. The improvements to our design

and production planning for ballot materials reduced the total production time from 7 days and 2 hours at the 2020 elections to only 2 days and 20 hours in 2024.

Voting options for all voters and situations **Commitment 19**

Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will expand the number of print suppliers we work with and develop an in-house print capability to increase our range of printing options.

In total, we produced a total of 5,706,850 ballot papers, including spare ballot papers for the mail insertion process and replacement votes.

Voting options for all voters and situations **Commitment 20**

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will assess our print capability and in-house print expertise based on the outcomes and learnings from the 2026 State election and local government by-elections.

Insertion of ballot materials into envelopes

We began printing voters' details and barcodes on postal ballot paper envelopes for all elections on 11 September, after the voters' roll was certified and we had data files available.

Once the ballot materials were received, our contracted mail house assembled the ballot packs and lodged them with Australia Post in 4 streams, aligned with the prescribed lodgement dates for the mail-out between 7 and 10 October.

We started the insertion of postal ballot packs on 20 September once we had delivered the printed ballot papers and candidate statements to the mail house.

Sample ballot materials are provided at **Appendix 6** to this report.

Ballot pack contents

Each ballot pack included:

- › ballot paper envelope
- › ballot paper
- › candidate information leaflet

- › how to vote multi-language leaflet (if applicable)
- › reply paid envelope.

Each Melbourne City Council election ballot pack included:

- › ballot paper envelope
- › leadership team election ballot paper
- › councillor election ballot paper
- › candidate information booklet (including how to vote multi-language instructions)
- › reply paid envelope.

In the multi-language how to vote leaflet, we provided full voting instructions in 20 languages, along with a phone number and directions in an additional 35 languages to assist voters in accessing interpreter support. We included this leaflet in all ballot packs for metropolitan council elections, while regional and rural councils could opt in to include the leaflet in their ballot packs for their elections as part of their electoral service agreement with the VEC.

Uncontested leaflets

We sent a leaflet to voters in uncontested elections advising them that the election was uncontested and that they were not required to vote. Each leaflet listed the names of the candidates who had nominated and would be declared elected.

We produced and mailed a total of 178,354 uncontested leaflets. These were designed to minimise confusion for voters who may otherwise have expected to receive a ballot pack.

Braille and large print ballot material

We made braille and large print ballot material available to voters who are blind or have low vision and had registered for these products by 5 pm on 17 September 2024. We contacted all voters who had previously used the braille or large print service to offer the service again.

The special format ballot packs included:

- › the ballot paper (or 2 ballot papers for voters in the Melbourne City Council elections)
- › a ballot paper envelope
- › voting instructions in braille or large print.

Voters registered to receive braille or large print ballot papers also received a large print copy of the candidate leaflet and a reply-paid Australia Post Express Post satchel.

In lieu of a braille candidate leaflet, voters who registered to receive braille ballot papers also received braille instructions for accessing candidate statements online in a screen-reader friendly format. All braille materials were produced by Vision Australia to ensure accessibility.

In total, we received and processed requests for 37 braille ballot packs and 208 large-print ballot packs. Nine of these requests were for elections that ended up being uncontested, and we sent those voters a braille version of the uncontested leaflet.

Insertion delays and mitigation measures

During the insertion process, we experienced significant delays in the process at our contracted mail house. These delays were caused by a combination of operational and technical issues, including the limited number of available machines, calibration problems, and outright machine failures, severely reducing our insertion rates.

Despite significant testing, transitions between insertion jobs also took longer than expected due to delays and a reduced staffing profile. Our direct approach was to increase our onsite presence to boost reporting and oversight of the mail house operations. This identified further operational issues that were managed through the control of materials management, quality assurance and general reporting.

In response, we implemented a series of contingency actions, including:

- › redirecting some ballot materials to an alternative supplier for insertion, and making use of the alternative supplier's available interstate capability
- › manually inserting ballot packs for the Stonnington City Council elections at our own warehouse facility
- › activating mechanical swing-arm machines to supplement the insertion rate
- › reviewing and adjusting camera reconciliation processes to reduce downtime
- › increasing staffing levels through additional shift coverage (see **7.1 Recruitment and sourcing**).

We worked closely with our contracted mail house, the alternative supplier and our manual insertion teams to monitor throughput and update the insertion schedule. By 5 October, the schedule was back on track, and we met the legislated mail-out timeline in full. We acknowledge the efforts of both our contracted and contingency suppliers, as well as our manual insertion teams, for their extended efforts in response to this issue.

10.2 Voting channels

All local government elections in Victoria are currently held by postal voting.¹²

Early postal voting

Voters could request an early postal ballot pack in person at election offices before the mail-out, if they gave reasons for the request. Election managers assessed requests and issued early votes over the counter at the election office.

We processed early vote requests from the completion of ballot draws on Wednesday 18 September until the start of the mail-out on Monday 7 October. Due to this timing, some early voters did not have had access to printed copies of candidate statements or photographs.

A total of 5,131 early postal votes were issued by election managers across all elections.

Distribution of postal ballot packs

Australia Post played a critical role in the postal voting process, under contract to deliver and return approximately 4.6 million ballot packs over a 3-and-a-half-week period. Despite workforce constraints, high parcel volumes and some community scepticism, Australia Post met its mail delivery obligations, as evidenced in part by the high election participation rate.

We began planning for the elections with Australia Post in late 2023 and developed a joint project plan. During peak periods, we held daily meetings attended by senior staff from both organisations.

Redirections

Voters could apply to have their ballot packs redirected to an address other than their enrolled address. We could accept applications up to the day the voters' rolls were certified (Thursday 19 September 2024).

We received a total of 5,193 ballot pack redirection requests, with 4,148 of those received in time to be applied to the general mail-out and the remaining 1,045 able to be treated as replacement votes.

General mail-out

We mailed 4,434,755 ballot packs in the mail-out between Monday 7 October and Thursday 10 October. We did not mail ballot packs to voters who died between the close of roll and the generation of the mail-out data files.

12 Victoria, *Victoria Government Gazette*, No S 242, 18 May 2020, <https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2020/GG2020S242.pdf>

In accordance with the LG Regulations, we did not mail or deliver more than 35% of ballot packs on any single day during the general mail-out period. We lodged all ballot packs with Australia Post under the priority paid delivery service for letter mail.

We worked closely with Australia Post during the mail-out period to confirm that ballot packs had been delivered to voters. Australia Post confirmed all ballot packs had been delivered by Tuesday 15 October.

Issues in the postal network

On Monday 21 October, Australia Post advised us that a collection vehicle that may have contained mail for the VEC was stolen in the Monash City Council area. In response, we urged voters who had posted their ballot packs at 9 affected post boxes in the collection area in Mount Waverley and Oakleigh areas to request replacement votes. Australia Post and Victoria Police investigated the incident, and the missing mail was located and 33 ballot paper envelopes for the Monash City Council elections were returned to us. There was no evidence of tampering with the ballot paper envelopes. Any replacement votes returned by affected voters were assessed under standard procedures to ensure that only one vote per voter was admitted.

Separately on Monday 21 October, Australia Post advised us of a fire in a post box in Kelliher Avenue, Wodonga. Australia Post retrieved all contents and all mail items addressed to the VEC were returned to the election office. Undamaged envelopes were processed normally. We attempted to contact 19 voters in the Wodonga City Council elections whose ballot paper envelopes were damaged to offer replacement votes. To support this effort we sent a mobile team to the region to attend voters' residences and offer replacements to ensure they would be returned in time for counting. Australia Post and Victoria Police investigated the incident.

On Wednesday 30 October, a member of the public reported a vandalised street post box at the corner of Stewart Street and Murray Road, Ormond. Australia Post investigated and found two reply-paid envelopes for the Port Phillip City Council, Balaclava Ward election and 31 reply-paid envelopes for the Glen Eira City Council, Wattle Grove Ward election inside. These envelopes were delivered to the respective election offices and included in the group B extraction and count, subject to declaration scrutiny.

Improving the voter experience

Recommendation 7: Electronic assisted voting

Currently, electronic assisted voting is not legislatively provided for at local government elections. Electronic assisted voting has been successfully delivered and embraced by eligible classes of voters for multiple State elections through our telephone assisted voting (TAV) service.

We have received regular feedback from our Electoral Access Advisory Group of their desire to see TAV extended to local government elections, harmonising the voter experience. Importantly, TAV is scalable, maintains the secrecy of the ballot, and relies only on telephony infrastructure.

At State elections, TAV is currently available to electors who are blind or have low vision, electors living with a motor impairment, and electors determined to be impacted by a declared emergency. Harmonisation of the voting methods for these cohorts across types of elections will improve the voter experience by removing voter confusion, and remove barriers to participation in local government elections that are not present at State elections.¹³

We have also previously recommended expanding the eligible classes of electors for TAV at State elections to those voters who experience the greatest barriers to participation,¹⁴ including:

- › interstate or overseas electors
- › electors who are unwell, infirm or caring for someone
- › electors experiencing homelessness or family or domestic violence
- › neurodivergent electors
- › Australian Antarctic Territory electors.¹⁵

13 In recommendation 10.4 (p. 360) of its Report on Victoria's laws on political finance and electronic assisted voting, the Electoral Review Expert Panel observed that it is desirable to harmonise the provision of telephone assisted voting between elections under the Electoral Act and the LG Act.

14 Recommendation 6 of our Report to Parliament on the 2022 State election and Narracan District supplementary election (p. 65).

15 In Volume 2, recommendation 22 (p. 98) of its Report on the conduct of the 2022 Victorian state election, Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee recommended expanding eligibility for electronic assisted voting at state elections to include Australian Antarctic Territory electors.

We continue to recommend that TAV should be available to these classes of voters at all elections to facilitate their participation, and recommend that if electronic assisted voting is introduced in local government elections, eligibility should be extended to these classes, beyond just harmonisation with current State election classes. See also **recommendation 2** for allowing the development of future electronic voting options.

We recommend amending the LG Regulations to establish electronic assisted voting, accessible to those voters who experience the greatest barriers to participation. At minimum, the service should mirror state election entitlements to harmonise the voter experience across elections.

Unenrolled and replacement votes

Unenrolled votes

We offered prospective voters an unenrolled vote if they could not be found on the voters' roll. We received 575 requests for unenrolled votes across all elections.

We assessed each request for an unenrolled vote and, if the voter had a valid entitlement to be enrolled on the voters' roll, we admitted their vote to the count. In total, 84 voters had an unenrolled vote admitted to the count.

Replacement votes

For the first time in a local government election, we implemented a completely centralised service for processing requests for replacement votes.

Voters could submit requests through an online form or by phone to our public enquiry service. In previous elections, all replacement votes were requested by phone or over-the-counter through local election offices.

We processed requests and prepared and distributed ballot packs from our centralised activity site at Sandown Park. Each evening during the voting period, an Australia Post courier collected processed requests and delivered them to Australia Post's Dandenong Letter Centre for onward delivery. This reduced the turnaround time for mail delivery by more than 2 days for non-metropolitan council elections.

By the close of voting, the centralised replacement vote team had processed 168,824 replacement votes. This was a 190% increase from the 2020 elections, where 87,781 replacement vote requests were actioned across election offices. This increase was likely due to a combination of factors, including:

- › the earlier close of roll date
- › more voters moving address between the close of roll and mail-out
- › the additional ease of being able to apply for a replacement vote using our online form.

This unexpected increase put some pressure on our ability to process all replacement vote requests within acceptable timeframes and required us to rapidly deploy additional staff. Nonetheless, we processed and mailed all replacement vote requests within acceptable timeframes.

Return of ballot packs

Returned mail was delivered from Australia Post distribution centres to each election office. Our service agreement with Australia Post required returned ballot packs to be sorted by ward before they were delivered to election managers, providing significant efficiencies at election offices.

Voters could also hand-deliver their completed vote by placing their ballot paper envelope in a ballot box at the election office for their election. Voting closed at 6 pm on Friday 25 October. By the close of voting, 3,108,687 ballot paper envelopes had been returned across all elections.

During the voting period, 78,918 uncompleted ballot packs were returned to election offices by Australia Post as return-to-sender mail. In most cases, this was likely due to the voter no longer residing at the address.

Under the LG Regulations, election managers could admit postal votes received before 12 noon on Friday 1 November if the vote had been completed before the close of voting. During this extended period, an additional 595,343 ballot paper envelopes were returned, which was an 18% decrease during the extended receipt period compared to 721,636 at the 2020 elections.

In total, we admitted 3,704,030 ballot paper envelopes to the extraction phase across all elections.

We did not admit ballot paper envelopes without a signed declaration by the voter or an authorised person, or unenrolled votes from people without a valid enrolment entitlement. We set a total of 74,139 envelopes aside which were not admitted to extraction based on these criteria.

When we received completed ballot paper envelopes from voters who had been issued an early or replacement vote, we held these aside until the close of the postal vote receipt period. This allowed us to identify when the same voter had returned more than one ballot paper envelope.

In these circumstances, we assessed the declaration envelopes to identify whether to admit or reject one or all of the returned votes in accordance with the LG Regulations:

- › when more than one ballot paper envelope was received, both with matching signatures and dated before the close of voting, we admitted the envelope with the earliest declaration date and rejected the other envelope
- › when more than one ballot paper envelope was received but only one declaration was signed and dated before the close of voting, we admitted that envelope and rejected the other envelope

- › when more than one ballot paper envelope was received but with differing signatures, we rejected all of the returned envelopes for that voter.

As an additional integrity measure, we also had a centralised team auditing samples of voter signatures on returned ballot paper envelopes.

All election offices used secure storage zones with controlled access for handling ballot materials. Election managers followed detailed work instructions and conducted daily reconciliations to track ballot papers printed, received, issued, returned, and spoilt.

Postal ballot envelopes not posted in the return envelope

Each postal ballot pack included a reply-paid envelope specific to the council or ward election. However, voters sometimes mailed completed ballot paper envelopes without placing them in the reply-paid envelope. These would normally not be delivered.

To address this, we arranged with Australia Post to forward all such envelopes to our centralised activity site for sorting and redirection to the relevant election office.

We received 35,368 postal ballot envelopes mailed without their reply-paid envelope.

Votes received too late to be counted

A total of 11,217 votes were received after the close of the extended postal vote receipt period and too late to be admitted to the count. With the permanent decline of postal networks in Australia and overseas, the successful use of postal voting methods is having an unintended consequence of reducing enfranchisement across a number of cohorts, specifically overseas voters. Until alternative voting methods are allowed in legislation, we predict a steady decline in these areas.

Improving the voter experience

Recommendation 8: Cut-off for postal replacement votes

Requests for replacement postal votes must be accepted up until the close of voting, despite the logistical impossibility in the last few days of voting of ballot papers reaching voters in time to be completed and returned by the close of voting. Accordingly, this is wasted effort and cost which ultimately is on-charged to councils. Specifically, the cost of Australia Post Express Post envelopes for replacement votes in the final week of the postal voting period was \$387,681.

This logistical limitation is acknowledged at State elections by setting a legislative cut-off for postal vote applications to be received by 6 pm on the Wednesday before election day. However, this is offset by having other available voting options during the period between the postal application cut-off and the close of voting, namely attendance voting.

Mirroring the State election cut-off of 6 pm on the Wednesday before election day and continuing to issue over-the-counter replacement votes in person at election offices up until the close of voting will align the voter experience, improve participation and deliver cost savings to councils.

We recommend amending regulation 56 of the LG Regulations to require that requests for replacement postal votes are made by 6 pm on the Wednesday before election day, and allowing for replacement votes to be issued at election offices in the subsequent days before the close of voting.

11. Counting and results

11.1 Vote types

Under current legislation, the only vote type for local government elections is postal votes. There were a total of 3,612,556 votes counted across the elections.¹⁶

11.2 Counting

We extracted and counted ballot papers in 2 stages:

- › **group A** comprised admitted ballot paper envelopes received before the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 25 October 2024, excluding where the voter had been issued a replacement vote
- › **group B** comprised all other admitted ballot paper envelopes received before the close of the postal vote receipt period at 12 pm on Friday 1 November 2024.

We used 2 different counting systems, depending on the electoral structure:

- › **preferential counting** for subdivided councils with single-councillor wards and the Melbourne City Council leadership team election
- › **proportional representation counting** for subdivided councils with multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided council elections, including the Melbourne City Council councillor election.

We used manual and computer counting. Most preferential counts were conducted manually, but we used computer counting for some preferential counts where there were high numbers of candidates or large volumes of ballot papers to be counted. We conducted all proportional representation counts by computer to ensure effective and efficient counting.

We communicated regularly with candidates in relation to the count program to ensure they could organise for scrutineers to attend count activities and indicate when they could expect results. We sent initial details of our count plan for each election through candidate bulletins on 23 October 2024. Candidate bulletins distributed during the count timeline provided confirmation and updated details of our group B count plans, preference distributions, and declarations.

If we needed to make changes to count plans, election managers alerted candidates at least one day before the relevant count activity took place. We distributed

provisional results to candidates once they were known, as well as publishing them on our website.

Before the counting period began, we also published detailed information on our website about how votes are counted in local government elections. This included a video recording of our computer count information session, our 'Availability of results' guide and a 'Counting arrangements' booklet.

Voting options for all voters and situations **Commitment 21**

For the 2026 State election, we will publish a full count plan at the commencement of the election and clearly communicate any changes to candidates, registered political parties and other interested stakeholders.

Extraction of ballot papers

Before we could count ballot papers, we had to remove them from their ballot paper envelopes. This involved removing the declaration flaps, opening the envelopes, extracting the ballot papers from the envelopes, and determining how many ballot papers would proceed to the count.

During extraction, we disallowed ballot papers in envelopes with an issue, such as more than one ballot paper or ballot papers for the wrong election. Disallowed ballot papers were not admitted to the count.

Manual counting

Of the 424 contested elections, we counted 270 manually. Most of these counts took place in the election office for each council. A small number of manual counts were conducted at our centralised activity sites because election offices did not have the required space (see **6.1 Centralised activity sites** for more information).

We sorted formal ballot papers according to the first preference votes for each candidate before counting them. We separated apparently informal ballot papers and set them aside for checking.

We commenced first preference counts for group A on Monday 28 October 2024, and all were completed by Friday 1 November. We commenced group B first preference counts from Wednesday 6 November and completed these counts between Wednesday 6 November and Friday 8 November.

¹⁶ As each voter in Melbourne City Council is required to cast 2 votes, one for each election, this figure only includes votes counted in the councillor election and not the leadership team election.

If no candidate had achieved an absolute majority (more than 50%) of first preference votes in an election after the group A and group B counts were completed, we progressed to a preference distribution. Preference distributions took place between 6 and 12 November 2024.

Computer counting

Of the 424 contested elections, we counted 105 single-councillor ward elections and 49 multi-councillor ward and unsubdivided council elections by computer. We conducted most computer counts at our centralised activity sites, but for 47 multi-councillor ward and unsubdivided council elections in regional areas, we conducted computer counts at election offices.

We entered preferences from all formal ballot papers into our computer counting software, which calculated the distribution of preferences using preferential counting for single-councillor ward elections and proportional representation counting for multi-councillor ward and unsubdivided council elections. We separated apparently informal ballot papers and set them aside for checking.

We are looking to enhance our computer count processes at future elections by conducting two rounds of data entry to validate the preferences captured from each ballot paper. This will provide additional certainty in election results to candidates and voters.

Intuitive experiences for all candidates
Commitment 22

For the 2026 State election, we will complete enhancements to our computer count system.

We commenced data entry for group A ballot papers on Monday 28 October 2024, and all were completed by Friday 1 November. We commenced group B data entry from Wednesday 6 November and completed these counts between Thursday 7 November and Saturday 9 November.

Voting options for all voters and situations
Commitment 23

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will explore scanning solutions to improve counting accuracy and speed.

During the computer count process, we audited random batches of ballot papers entered by data entry operators. The audit process was an integral part of our standard quality assurance procedures and was conducted both for research purposes and to monitor the performance

of data entry actions. When we identified a data entry error, we were able to take remedial actions including correcting any data errors in the computer counting software and further assessment of particular data entry operators for accuracy and speed.

Intuitive experiences for all candidates
Commitment 24

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will assess options for statistically rigorous audits of computer count data and determine the best way to report on results.

11.3 Scrutineers

Candidates are not permitted to enter election venues during extraction and counting activities, but can appoint scrutineers to observe all activities involved in ballot paper and envelope processing on their behalf, represent their interests and make formal challenges where applicable. Scrutineers help ensure that elections are being conducted in a fair, impartial and transparent manner.

For each activity, candidates were entitled to appoint one scrutineer per election official involved in the activity. To appoint scrutineers, candidates completed and signed hard copy forms and submitted them to the election manager. All scrutineers then had to sign the declaration of their eligibility and legal requirements on the form in the presence of an election official. We also required scrutineers to agree to our conditions of entry, which we displayed on a poster at election venues.

We briefed scrutineers on their responsibilities and the processes they were appointed to observe and challenge at each election venue. Election managers instructed scrutineers on when and how they could challenge activities during ballot paper formality assessment and counting. We instructed scrutineers to notify the election manager if they disagreed with an election official's decision on ballot paper formality or counting. Election managers were responsible for reviewing challenges and making a final decision.

We gave copies of our scrutineer handbook to candidates ahead of the elections and published it on our website. The handbook contained information about what to expect in the counting process, the activities that scrutineers could observe and challenge, and a guide to ballot paper formality. We provided scrutineers for Melbourne City Council elections with a handbook containing information specific to the counting processes and ballot paper formality rules for those elections.

In response to the unprecedented number of candidate retirements after ballot papers had been printed, we produced a supplementary ballot paper formality guide explaining how we would apply the formality rules to ballot papers listing retired or deceased candidates. We provided this guide to scrutineers for the 16 elections affected.

11.4 Recounts

At any time before an election result is declared, candidates could request a recount by setting out the reasons for their request in writing. The election manager and our head office staff assessed each request to decide whether it should be granted.

We could also initiate a recount before a result was declared if margins in the provisional results for an election were close or critical, or if there had been a procedural issue in the original count which may have impacted the outcome of the election.

During the elections, we received 51 recount requests from candidates. Of these, 6 were granted. Separately, we initiated 8 recounts ourselves. Four of these were for elections where candidates had also submitted requests, but our action to initiate a recount preceded the candidate's request. In total, 14 recounts were conducted.

In total, we conducted 14 recounts across the elections between 8 November and 13 November 2024. Of these, 4 were full manual recounts and 10 were full computer recounts. We conducted recounts for the following elections:

- › Borough of Queenscliffe Council
- › Campaspe Shire Council
- › Casey City Council, Akoonah Ward
- › Casey City Council, River Gum Ward
- › Darebin City Council, South West Ward
- › Greater Geelong City Council, Charlemont Ward
- › Greater Geelong City Council, Connewarre Ward
- › Greater Geelong City Council, Deakin Ward
- › Hume City Council, Jacksons Hill Ward
- › Latrobe City Council, Yallourn Ward
- › Maribyrnong City Council, Burndap Ward

- › Moonee Valley City Council, Canning Ward
- › Whitehorse City Council, Sparks Ward
- › Whittlesea City Council, Lalor Ward.

We conducted recounts at the same venue as the original count where possible. If the original venue was no longer available, we identified a suitable alternative location for the recount.

After the declaration of results for the Knox City Council, Dobson Ward election, a candidate applied to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a recount of the election on the basis that there were counting anomalies observed by scrutineers. We agreed to the request, and conducted the recount at our head office on 9 December 2024. The result of the recount did not change the outcome of the election. For more information, see **12.3 VCAT matters**.

11.5 Results and declarations

We began publishing progressive results on our website from 6 November 2024, and provisional first preference results for all councils were available by 9 November.

Feedback from the public and our stakeholders indicated that they would have liked to see more progressive results published earlier during the count, and some reported that they relied on unofficial updates from scrutineers pending publication.

Constraints in our Election Management System and website functionality currently prevent us from publishing progressive results online for local government elections. To help manage expectations about when provisional results were likely to be available, we provided an 'earliest published results' date for each council election on our website.

We are considering improvements which will allow us to publish results online sooner, ensuring a single source of truth.

Accessing electoral information in real time
Commitment 25

Ahead of the 2028 local government elections, we will explore options for publishing online provisional results progressively.

We declared the successful candidates in the Yarriambiack Shire Council election, which was wholly uncontested, on 28 October 2024 – the Monday immediately after election day. We conducted the declarations for all other council elections, including all other uncontested elections, following the completion of counting activities from 7 November.

All elections were declared by 14 November, including those 14 elections that had recounts, and we updated our website to reflect the elected candidates. This met our commitment in our election service plan to complete all declarations by 15 November. All candidates declared elected are listed in **Appendix 3** to this report.

Candidates declared elected or who received more than 4% of the first preference votes in their election were entitled to a refund of their nomination fee. Grouped candidates for the Melbourne City Council councillor election were entitled to a refund if they were elected, or if the group they were in received at least 4% of the first preference vote.

On 17 December 2024, following the declaration of results, we mailed a banking reference to eligible candidates who had requested an electronic funds transfer (EFT) refund. We mailed cheques to eligible candidates who did not request their refund via EFT.

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12. Compliance and integrity

12.1 Election integrity activities

Electoral integrity support

Our head office collaborated with election offices to oversee compliance activities. At the 2022 State election, we deployed a digital election office integrity checklist, providing real-time, centralised oversight of the fulfilment of legislative requirements in election offices. Following the success of that model, we deployed a local government election version of the checklist, replacing a previously paper-based checklist and aligning it with critical legislated requirements.

We once again implemented the regulatory advice and incidents desk model, first introduced at the 2022 State election. This was the first local government general election at which we operated this service, which had 2 main purposes:

- › providing prompt and reliable advice to our staff on regulatory or legislative queries, or where requests or allegations required additional subject matter expertise or integrity support.
- › coordinating head office responses to regulatory matters, including candidate eligibility, postal voting integrity, and incidents in the field.

The regulatory advice and incidents desk addressed a total of 334 cases across the election timeline.

Accessing electoral information in real time Commitment 26

For the 2026 State election, we will establish an operational command centre based on the National Incident Emergency Management System to coordinate responses to incidents during the delivery phase of an election.

Safeguarding postal voting

To improve our identification of and response to postal voting fraud or interference, we established a safeguarding postal voting project for the elections.

This project monitored for indicators of postal voting fraud or interference in the data, information, reporting and observations we routinely produce and receive during election activities. Our centralised and proactive monitoring and analysis across multiple sources enabled detection and rapid response to potential fraud or interference, or assurance where identified anomalies were explainable.

As a result of this monitoring, we identified fraudulent activity in the Knox City Council, Baird Ward and Whittlesea City Council, Lalor Ward elections. We were required to declare the results of these elections before making an application to VCAT for a review of the validity of the elections. In both matters, VCAT found that there was actual and attempted interference in the elections and declared the Whittlesea City Council, Lalor Ward election void. For more information, see **12.3 VCAT matters**.

We also referred both matters to Victoria Police and LGL.

In several other elections, we received reports through our customer feedback and complaints process of candidates applying pressure to voters while door knocking in neighbourhoods. We took immediate action in response to these allegations and issued candidate bulletins to all candidates in relevant electorates reminding them about acceptable election conduct and alerting them to the list of offences that exist in the LG Act to safeguard electoral processes.

Count integrity

A count integrity team at our head office conducted numerical integrity assessments for counts across all elections. This involved checks of the extraction and results data entered into our Election Management System throughout the count period.

Count integrity officers monitored count progress, results data, and numerical reconciliation for:

- › group A and B first preference counts
- › preference distributions
- › recounts (if applicable).

The team assessed results data for each council or ward election against set tolerances, including the number of ballot papers expected to be counted against the number of papers actually counted (including informal votes).

We have a very low tolerance for errors in counting activities. If variations exceeded our set tolerance, then senior staff, election support officers and the election management team investigated the issue as needed. We were able to reconcile all counts completed across the elections well within our accepted tolerance. Overall, no concerning numerical reconciliation issues were detected.

Count integrity officers also completed assessments on each provisional result to confirm if there were any close or critical margins in the count, and whether a recount should be conducted (see **11.4 Recounts**).

12.2 Regulatory partnerships

Local Government Inspectorate (LGI)

LGI is the regulator responsible for investigating alleged non-compliance with the LG Act and LG Regulations, including electoral offences. During local government elections, we receive complaints and feedback that fall within LGI's remit.

We refer complaints and feedback to LGI pursuant to a memorandum of understanding. In preparation for the elections, we renewed this memorandum of understanding to formalise roles and responsibilities and establish clear escalation processes. We also co-developed a revised referral process streamlining the transfer of complaint and feedback data, which reduced administrative workload for both agencies and minimised delays.

The memorandum of understanding was underpinned by a dedicated compliance group with representatives from both agencies. The group met at key points in the election timeline to oversee the implementation of the revised referral process and share operational updates.

We liaised regularly with LGI about active complaints and investigations, referred 340 matters to LGI for investigation, and exchanged information and intelligence in response to other matters. We also seconded two VEC investigators to LGI to assist with the higher workload during the elections. We continue to assist with matters relating to ongoing LGI investigations as they arise.

Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC)

We met regularly with IBAC in connection with the elections to ensure streamlined referral processes between our agencies. This was particularly important given IBAC's responsibility for public interest disclosures in Victoria. Sometimes we are the first point of contact for allegations of corrupt or improper conduct by local government candidates in their capacity as elected councillors.

12.3 VCAT matters

VCAT hears disputes on the validity of local government elections. Under section 311 of the LG Act, the following persons can apply to VCAT for a review of an election within 14 days after a result is declared:

- › a candidate in the election
- › the VEC
- › 10 persons who were entitled to vote at the election.

Once an application is made, VCAT has broad powers to resolve the matters in dispute, including to:

- › uphold or dismiss an application
- › find a councillor was not duly elected, or a candidate duly elected
- › declare an election void and require a new election.

VCAT received 5 applications to review the results in 5 separate elections. Two applications were made by individual candidates, one application was made by a group of at least 10 voters, and 2 applications were made by the VEC.

Knox City Council, Dobson Ward election

Candidate Anthony Holland applied to VCAT for a recount of the Knox City Council, Dobson Ward election on the basis that there were counting anomalies observed by scrutineers. We agreed to conduct a recount, which took place at our head office on 9 December 2024. All candidates from the Dobson Ward election were notified of the recount and invited to appoint scrutineers.

The result of the recount did not change the outcome of the election and, on 11 December 2024, VCAT dismissed Mr Holland's application and ordered the results of the recount to be the official results for the Dobson Ward election.

Reinforcing public trust

Recommendation 9: Clear and timely resolution of election challenges

Recent challenges to outcomes of local government elections, such as to the 2020 Moreland City Council (now Merri-bek City Council), North-West Ward election and the 2024 Brimbank City Council, Grasslands Ward, Knox City Council, Baird Ward, Knox City Council, Dobson Ward, Latrobe City Council, Yallourn Ward and Whittlesea City Council, Lalor Ward elections, show that it is necessary to clarify the legislative framework underpinning VCAT's jurisdiction, powers, and guiding factors when inquiring into the validity of local government elections.

Procedural fairness and natural justice must be preserved in election challenges while also ensuring certainty and confidence in election results. While the right to challenge an election outcome is an important protection, challenges that call into doubt the integrity of election results must be dealt with swiftly to ensure that the public's trust is not damaged and to remove doubt about whether council decisions are being made improperly.

In 2025, VCAT dismissed 2 applications seeking recounts in elections where it found there were no grounds for a recount to be held. The certainty of these election outcomes could not be confirmed until the matters were resolved by VCAT. At future elections this could be streamlined by providing guiding principles in the LG Act such as a close result not being sufficient reason in and of itself to justify a recount, particularly if one has already been conducted before the declaration of results.

It is also appropriate to review the overlapping and interacting jurisdictions of VCAT under the LG Act and the *Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998* (Vic), and ensure applications under section 311 of the LG Act are heard in VCAT's original jurisdiction.

We recommend that Division 11 of Part 8 of the LG Act is amended to codify expectations for VCAT to hear and determine applications made under section 311 expeditiously, and provide specific policy, procedural fairness and natural justice considerations when an applicant is seeking a recount to be conducted.

We recommend that Division 11 of Part 8 of the LG Act is amended to clearly establish that VCAT is hearing applications made under section 311 in its original jurisdiction.

Brimbank City Council, Grasslands Ward election

Candidate Phung Hoa Lu applied to VCAT disputing the validity of the Brimbank City Council, Grasslands Ward election. The initial basis for Mr Lu's application was unclear and VCAT sought to clarify this through directions hearings. Mr Lu did not appear at the directions hearing on 22 January 2025 when VCAT accepted our submission that the matter was appropriate for an alternative resolution pathway.

A compulsory conference was set for 12 March 2025 and we provided Mr Lu and VCAT with a position paper for use at the compulsory conference. On 10 March 2025, Mr Lu sought leave to withdraw his application, which was officially withdrawn by VCAT on 12 March 2025 and the compulsory conference was cancelled.

Latrobe City Council, Yallourn Ward election

On 27 November 2024, an application was made to VCAT disputing the validity of the Latrobe City Council, Yallourn Ward election by a group of 11 people who did not have standing to make the application. The group were given leave by VCAT to be replaced by a group of 13 applicants who were voters in the election.

The basis of the application was the close result for the Yallourn Ward election and because the successful candidate changed between the initial count and the recount which we had already conducted before declaring the result. The applicants sought a further recount.

On 11 April 2025, VCAT agreed with our submission that the certainty of election results is critical and that a recount should only be conducted if it would correct an identified error or invalidity in the counting process. VCAT dismissed the application.

Whittlesea City Council, Lalor Ward election

We applied to VCAT for a review of the Whittlesea City Council, Lalor Ward election after our electoral integrity monitoring detected a number of fraudulently completed ballot paper envelopes returned in the election. Given the limited time for making an application to VCAT, the application needed to be made while investigative efforts continued.

All 3 candidates for the Lalor Ward election were listed as respondents in the application and were able to participate in the matter as it progressed. The application was initially heard for directions on 22 November 2024 before VCAT Deputy President Proctor.

At a further directions hearing before VCAT Vice President Judge English on 6 February 2025 we submitted that our evidence showed there was evidence of fraud that could have affected the election result and that the election should be declared void. One respondent

indicated they would oppose our submissions that the Lalor Ward election result should be declared void.

A substantive hearing was held on 14 April 2025 before Judge English. A VEC executive appeared as a witness to speak to our evidence and was cross-examined in relation to the status of the criminal investigation, the security of postal voting and the cost to council if a by-election was to be required. Submissions for the respondent who had previously indicated that they would oppose our submissions on the appropriate remedy spoke to their position at the substantive hearing. The respondent did not dispute the evidence of fraudulent voting but submitted that the outcome of the election should stand.

On 8 May 2025, VCAT found that given the small margin of 39 votes in the election, it was probable that a majority of voters may have been prevented from electing the candidate they preferred. VCAT declared that there was attempted and actual interference with the Lalor Ward election and declared the election void. An extraordinary vacancy was created in Lalor Ward from 8 May 2025, and we conducted a by-election on 2 August 2025.

Knox City Council, Baird Ward election

We applied to VCAT for a review of the Knox City Council, Baird Ward election after our electoral integrity monitoring detected a number of fraudulently completed ballot paper envelopes returned in the election. Given the limited time for making an application to VCAT, the application needed to be made while investigative efforts continued.

All 5 candidates for the Lalor Ward election were listed as respondents in the application and most respondents actively participated in the matter as it progressed. The application was initially heard for directions on 22 November 2024 before VCAT Deputy President Proctor.

At a further directions hearing before VCAT Vice President Judge English on 6 February 2025, we submitted that VCAT could conduct a preliminary review of the application and determine the matter without a further hearing, as our evidence showed that there was evidence of fraud but not to the extent that it would have impacted the outcome of the election. The respondents present at the hearing confirmed they did not intend to bring their own evidence and generally adopted the VEC's submissions.

On 5 June 2025, VCAT declared that there was attempted and actual interference with the election and that the interference did not affect the result of the election.

12.4 Compulsory voting

The 2024 elections were the first time it was compulsory for everyone on the voters' roll to vote. Despite having a similar voting participation rate to the 2020 elections, the inclusion of council-enrolled voters and an increase in the total number of voters on the voters' roll led to us issuing a higher volume of apparent failure to vote notices compared to 2020.

Pre-processing

Pre-excuse stage

After the elections, we prepared a list of non-voters in each council. Before dispatching apparent failure to vote notices, we undertook a preliminary process to exclude non-voters who are exempt from voting, such as people who had submitted an overseas notification form.

Between December 2024 and January 2025, we processed ballot paper envelopes received after the close of vote receipt period, postal ballot packs returned to sender and voter excuses recorded during the elections. This led us to excuse 97,209 apparent non-voters during the pre-processing period.

The largest category of pre-excused voters was that their ballot pack was returned to us marked return to sender. The next largest category was that we had received notification that the voter was absent from Victoria in the 15 days immediately before the last day of voting. A full list of reasons for not voting and the number of voters excused is provided at Table 10.

From late January 2025, we prepared the list of apparent non-voters for each election according to the LG Regulations. Anyone on these lists who was automatically exempt from voting was excluded at this point.

Table 10: Number of records excused from compulsory voting enforcement, by reason for not voting

Reason for not voting	Number of records pre-excused	Number of records excused at AFTVN stage	Total percentage (%)
I did not receive my ballot pack	0	9,469	4.82
I sent in my ballot pack	0	13,812	7.02
Returned undelivered	59,667	0	30.35
The voter for religious reasons was unable to vote	19	7,741	3.95
The voter is aged 70 years or over	337	13	0.18
The voter is deceased	250	93	0.17
The voter made a request to have the postal ballot envelope redirected but did not receive a postal ballot envelope	26	56	0.04
The voter returned a declaration envelope within 7 days immediately after the last day of voting	7,926	6	4.03
The voter was absent from Victoria	36,822	20,431	29.12
The voter was ill, disabled or infirm and for that reason was unable to vote at the election or could have voted only with difficulty	1,491	6,225	3.92
The voter was ineligible to vote at the election	0	137	0.07
The voter was serving a sentence of imprisonment	130	145	0.14
Return to sender	0	13,851	7.04
No fixed address	411	124	0.27
The voter was entitled to receive replacement voting material but did not receive the replacement material	653	41	0.35
Sufficient excuse	7,044	9,705	8.52
Total	114,776	81,849	100

Enforcement

Ahead of the elections, we redesigned our compulsory voting enforcement notices with a focus on plain English and behavioural insight science where appropriate. While the redesigned notices did not raise the response rate as intended, the redesigned notices presented information more clearly to recipients and, critically, improved the quality of the responses to notices.

We are also creating an online compulsory voting enforcement submission form which is due for completion by October 2025. We currently receive responses to notices by post or email. The aim of the online enforcement submission form is to provide apparent non-voters a more efficient method of contacting us about their notice. It will include prompts to assist recipients of enforcement notices to provide all relevant information and remove the need to complete a separate application form when seeking a review of an enforcement decision.

Apparent failure to vote notices

Between 17 February and 17 March 2025, we prepared and sent a total of 532,168 apparent failure to vote notices to apparent non-voters who were not excused or automatically exempt. The notices invited apparent non-voters to provide an explanation why they were unable to vote, or evidence that they actually had voted.

Recipients had 28 days to respond to apparent failure to vote notices.

Infringement notices

Between 14 April and 19 May 2025, we sent 449,904 infringement notices with a \$99 penalty to apparent non-voters who:

- › did not respond to the apparent failure to vote notice
- › responded to the apparent failure to vote notice but did not provide a sufficient reason or evidence.

Recipients had 35 days to respond to the infringement notice. We also used VoterAlert to notify subscribed non-voters that they would be issued with infringement notices. This achieved a greater response rate among subscribed non-voters than when we used the same approach at the 2022 State election. During the infringement notice period, non-voters had the following options under the *Infringements Act 2006* (Vic):

- › pay the penalty in full
- › apply for a payment plan

- › request an internal review of the infringement (within certain criteria)
- › request the matter be heard in the Magistrates' Court.

We begin proceedings against any non-voters who chose to have their matter heard in the Magistrates' Court at the end of the penalty reminder notice stage. Prosecution involves significant time and resources, and matters referred to the Magistrates' Court usually continue into future years.

Penalty reminder notices

Following the close of the infringement notice period, we prepared and sent 332,526 penalty reminder notices to non-voters who did not respond to the infringement notice. This included an additional \$29.20 reminder notice fee. Recipients had 28 days to respond, and had the same payment, review or court referral options as for the infringement notice.

Table 11: Compulsory voting enforcement statistics across local government general elections, 2016–2024

Statistic	2016	2020	2024
Apparent failure to vote notices issued as a percentage of total enrolment	13.53% (598,913)	8.33% (354,245)	11.54% (532,168)
Responses to apparent failure to vote notices as a percentage of notices issued	41.55% (248,878)	29.58% (104,788)	25.92% (137,963)
Invalid responses as a percentage of total responses received	32.23% (80,227)	19.76% (20,714)	40.37% (55,699)
No response to apparent failure to vote notices as a percentage of notices issued	58.45% (350,035)	70.41% (249,457)	74.08% (394,205)
Voters excused based on responses as a percentage of total responses received	67.76% (168,651)	80.23% (84,074)	59.63% (82,264)
Infringement notices issued as a percentage of apparent failure to vote notices issued	71.84% (430,262)	76.27% (270,171)	84.54% (449,904)

13. Election findings

13.1 Evaluating the elections

We implemented major improvements to the evaluation of our election services for these elections. Our evaluation framework covers all strategic priorities, applies objective measures in its assessments, and takes a structured, methodical approach that links evidence and data to clearly defined measures and indicators.

For the most part, we delivered the elections as planned. There were major changes in several business-critical areas such as ballot paper distribution and processing replacement votes, which had significant flow-on effects and tested our operational and contingency planning.

Our processes and systems generally worked as intended and supported efficient election delivery. The enhancements and changes we made, such as centralising public enquiries and improved candidate nomination services, were well received and produced positive results.

While we underestimated the direct costs of the elections to the VEC, we overestimated council costs. Across councils, this equated to about \$12.5 million in overall cost savings.

Evidence shows we achieved all relevant outputs across our 4 strategic pillars and made good progress towards our immediate and intermediate outcomes. Feedback from key stakeholders (voters, candidates and election staff) about our performance was mostly positive.

We met our regulatory obligations in monitoring and addressing instances of non-compliance within our scope. Critically, we identified and addressed instances of election interference that were confirmed by VCAT.

Nonetheless, we identified several opportunities to improve aspects of election delivery and planning, including:

- › better automating manual processes across our election program
- › improving the consistency of our quality assurance processes
- › uplifting the capacity and functionality of our various systems
- › establishing and maintaining a comprehensive register of lessons learned.

We also identified ways to refine our evaluation framework in preparation for the 2026 State election. We are developing more efficient processes and analysing relevant data as we grow our evaluation capability.

Our full report on the evaluation of our election services is provided at **Appendix 8** to this report.

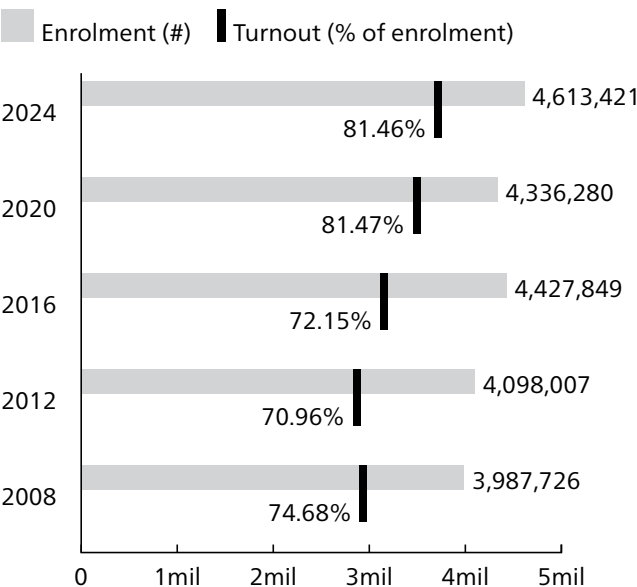
13.2 Turnout

We measure voter turnout by the number of formal and informal ballot papers counted in the election as a percentage of voters on the voters’ roll for the election. For the Melbourne City Council elections, we have used turnout data from the councillor election.

With a total of 3,612,556 votes counted, the average turnout rate across the elections was 81.46%. In the 2020 elections, turnout was 81.47%. Those elections saw the highest turnout on record since the timing for all council elections was aligned in 2008, and this rate was maintained at the 2024 elections.

When comparing turnout by council with 2020 results, the lowest rates of participation improved. The Melbourne City Council elections again had the lowest turnout rates but saw marginal increases when compared to 2020 (from 66.54% in 2020 to 67.21% in 2024, both for the councillor election). The council with the next lowest turnout rate was Port Phillip City Council, which saw a larger increase from 69.54% in 2020 to 72.85% in 2024.

Figure 3: Turnout and enrolment across local government general elections, 2008–2024



On average, turnout in metropolitan councils increased slightly from 81.52% in 2020 to 81.75% in 2024. At the same time, average turnout among rural and regional councils declined slightly from 82.99% in 2020 to 82.61% in 2024. However, overall turnout in rural and regional councils continued to average above that of metropolitan councils.

The decrease in turnout in rural and regional councils was most noticeable in those that changed to a single-councillor ward electoral structure, declining from 82.52% in 2020 by approximately 2 percentage points to 80.57% in 2024. In contrast, metropolitan councils that changed to single-councillor structures generally recorded higher turnout rates by an average of one percentage point.

The turnout rate for each council and ward election is provided at **Appendix 3** to this report.

13.3 Participation

We calculate election participation as the number of voters marked off the voters' roll, expressed as a percentage of the total enrolment. Election participation can differ from turnout for several reasons, such as when ballot packs are received too late to be included in the count or when envelopes are returned without any ballot papers inside.

Using roll mark-off data to measure participation allows deeper analysis of demographic trends such as age and enrolment type, while turnout is the predominant measure of how many people voted in an election as it is tied to election results.

The overall participation rate for the elections was 82.92%.

Voting options for all voters and situations
Commitment 27

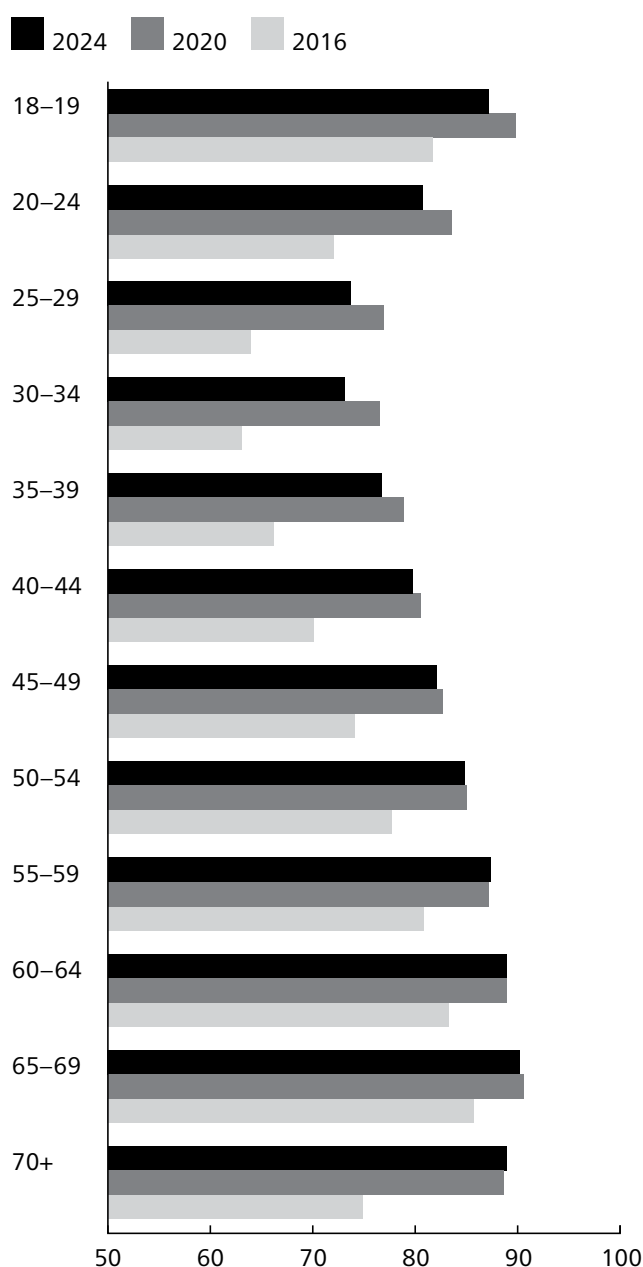
Ahead of the 2026 State election, we will conduct further research on the barriers preventing voter participation.

Age range

Participation by age range followed similar and expected trends observed at past local government elections. In general, older voters (especially those above 50 years of age) participated at a higher rate than younger voters.

As observed in past elections, potential first-time voters aged 18 to 19 years are an exception, participating at a similar or higher rate to older voters (approximately 87%).

Figure 4: Participation across age groups over local government general elections, 2016–2024



Enrolment type

Analysis of the different enrolment categories shows that participation was higher for state-enrolled voters (83.11%) than for council-enrolled voters (75.92%). However, in 2024 a greater proportion of council-enrolled voters turned out to vote when compared to the 2020 elections. This increase may be due to new legislation requiring all council-enrolled voters to apply to council to be enrolled on the voters' roll, whereas previously the non-resident owner cohort were automatically enrolled.

Table 12: Participation rate by enrolment type

Enrolment list	Participation rate (%)
State-enrolled (Electoral Commissioner’s list)	83.11
Council-enrolled (CEO’s list)	75.92
Overall	82.92

13.4 Informality

The average informality rate across the elections was 3.51%, a significant reduction from 4.72% at the 2020 elections. This was the lowest informal voting rate recorded for local government general elections.

This decrease is most likely due to a lower average number of candidates nominating per election, likely linked to the increased number of single-councillor ward elections. Past research has shown a correlation between higher numbers of candidates and increases in informality, particularly apparently accidental informality. Single-councillor ward elections tend to have fewer candidates than multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided council elections.

The informality rate for each election is provided at **Appendix 3** to this report.

We conduct a statewide study of all informal ballot papers after each council election. This study is undertaken in partnership with the University of Adelaide and Flinders University and analyses ballot papers in specific categories of informality. Physical ballot paper analysis is conducted at our secure warehouse facility.

Our 2024 analysis confirmed the continued significance of candidate numbers to informality rates. Research found that the higher the number of candidates, the stronger the correlation to a high informality rate. This is mainly due to the increased likelihood of sequence errors when preferencing more than 10 candidates. There are unlikely to be significant improvements in this category at future elections within the full preferential voting system.

The exception to this finding was elections with only 2 candidates, where the rate of ticks and crosses expressing a preference more closely correlates. Ticks and crosses expressing a preference were also the largest single category across informal votes (20.58%), up almost 16 percentage points from the 2020 elections. This is likely due to the increase in single-councillor ward

elections and the consequent higher number of elections with only 2 candidates.

The number of deliberately informal votes was almost equal to the number of votes showing a clear preference but deemed informal. This is a significant change from the 2020 elections, where approximately 70% of informal votes showed a preference. The shift may be due to the reduced average number of candidates per ward, resulting in fewer sequencing or other errors, and therefore a more equal division between deliberate and accidental informality.

For a more detailed analysis of rates and types of informal voting, see **Appendix 10** to this report.

13.5 Stakeholder feedback

As part of our evaluation framework, we engaged 4 key stakeholder groups (voters, candidates, election staff and council officers) through surveys, focus groups and interviews:

- › voter survey – post-election
- › voter focus groups – post-election
- › candidate survey – post-election
- › election staff pulse surveys – weekly during the election period
- › election staff survey – post-election
- › election staff debrief sessions – post-election
- › council officer interviews – post-election.

Our research collected feedback on key aspects of our voting and support services. At the same time, findings were generated based on specific performance measures developed as part of the evaluation framework.

Voters

A survey of voters (N = 453) showed most were satisfied with the election services provided. On a 10-point scale (1 = poor, 10 = excellent), voters rated their overall experience of the elections as 8 and our service performance as 8.3. This is a slight improvement from the 2020 elections, where voters recorded ratings of 7.9 and 8.2 respectively.

Focus groups with voters were conducted by an independent research company. There were 10 groups with 57 participants, representing a range of age groups, locations (regional and metropolitan) and socio-economic backgrounds.

The focus groups found:

- › voters considered the postal voting process convenient and straightforward
- › many wanted more information about candidates, including policy details and political affiliation
- › there was modest recall of our election messaging across channels such as radio, local newspapers, social media, and VoterAlert email and SMS
- › most found ballot materials and instructions easy to follow, though some suggested improvements to clarity and engagement
- › a small number experienced difficulty inserting their completed ballot paper into the envelope.

Overall, focus group participants were positive about the postal voting experience. While interest in local government elections was considered lower than state or federal elections, postal voting prompted discussion about candidates and the elections with friends and family.

Candidates

Of candidates surveyed (N = 148), satisfaction with the information and support we provided was measured as 7.1 on the same 10-point scale, comparable to 7.2 at the 2020 elections.

As in 2020, candidates most valued the information and support provided by election managers. They generally agreed that our staff were helpful, knowledgeable, prompt, impartial and professional.

Most were satisfied with our candidate handbook, Candidate Helper tool and other supports. Our complaints management process attracted the most negative ratings and feedback from candidates.

Councils

We interviewed officers of 35 councils to collect feedback on our support services and general performance.

Across all areas, including costings, communications and client liaison officers, feedback was:

- › 40% positive
- › 40% areas for improvement
- › 20% negative.

Council officers were most positive about the functioning of client liaison officers, election management teams and aspects of candidate supports, such as the Candidate Helper tool. They were less positive

and at times negative about arrangements and costs of election offices and the timelines for preparing voters' rolls and publishing election results.

Areas suggested for improvement mostly related to clarity about candidate training requirements, low rates of participation at candidate information sessions and the publication of election results.

Election staff

We collected feedback from election staff through:

- › regular weekly surveys during the elections
- › a post-election survey
- › formal debriefing sessions.

Overall, staff were highly satisfied with the supports we provided, with many considering 2024 the most successful local government elections yet. Key service developments, such as the centralisation of the public enquiry service and process for managing replacement votes, were well-received.

Staff provided various suggestions for improvements, including upgrades to the personnel system for managing casual staff appointments and further refinements to election staff manuals and guidelines.

13.6 Customer feedback and complaints

We received 1,581 feedback and complaint submissions in connection with the elections between 27 July and 15 November 2024. The majority of submissions (1,361) were complaints. We also received 178 enquiries and 42 suggestions.

We referred submissions about non-compliance with the LG Act or LG Regulations to the LGI. There were 296 submissions (19%) in this category. More information about our work with the LGI is at **12.2 Regulatory partnerships**.

The 1,581 submissions we received broadly fell into 5 themes:

- › election administration and services to voters
- › advertising and electoral campaign material
- › candidates, campaigners and parties
- › staffing

- › electoral integrity issues.

Each theme comprised several subthemes. Some submissions related to more than one subtheme, so the total number of submissions reported against each theme is greater than the total number of submissions we received.

Election administration and services to voters

There were 1,223 submissions about our election administration functions and services to voters. This theme captured a number of subthemes, shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Submissions relating to the theme of 'election administration and services to voters' by subtheme

Theme 1: election administration and services to voters	
Subtheme	Submission total
Postal voting	415
Enrolment	188
Overseas and interstate voting	112
Information about the elections	107
VEC website	82
Compulsory voting	70
VEC policies and procedures	45
Privacy	45
Ballot papers	34
Language accessibility	30
Miscellaneous	95
Total submissions	1,223

Postal voting

We received 415 submissions about postal voting, 84% of which were complaints. These submissions were about:

- › the postal voting process (161)
- › ballot packs arriving late (146) or not arriving by election day (99)
- › postal vote applications (7)

- › registering as a general postal voter (2).

Although we worked closely with Australia Post to get ballot packs to voters, we did not have control over how quickly they were delivered. This meant that some voters experienced delays in the delivery of their ballot pack or did not receive it before election day. We encouraged voters to request a replacement vote to make sure they could still participate.

Enrolment

We received 188 submissions about enrolment. Complaints made up 84% of these submissions. This subtheme included submissions about:

- › checking or updating enrolment (65)
- › council entitlements and the council enrolment process (41)
- › requests to be removed from the electoral roll (37) and mandatory enrolment (8)
- › incorrect enrolment (25)
- › enrolment objections (6)
- › direct enrolment (4)
- › the enrolment process generally (2).

Overseas and interstate voting

We received 112 submissions about overseas and interstate voting for the elections. Just over half (55%) were complaints. Customers contacted us to enquire about voting options or to notify us that they would be overseas or interstate during the elections.

Information about the elections

We received 107 submissions about information we provided to the public in connection with the elections. Complaints made up 88% of these submissions. Customers discussed:

- › a range of communication channels we used to inform voters, including radio and social media advertisements (50)
- › the availability of information about candidates (24)
- › our VoterAlert campaigns (18)
- › information sent directly to voters (13)
- › community engagement (2).

VEC website

We received 82 submissions about our website, 79% of which were complaints. The main topics were:

- › information on the website (33)
- › the release of progressive results (24)
- › layout and navigation (9)
- › website malfunctions (9)
- › webforms on the website (6)
- › the election venue locator (1).

Compulsory voting

We received 70 submissions during the elections about compulsory voting. Complaints made up 85% of these submissions. Customers contacted us to:

- › notify us that they had failed to vote at the election (33)
- › object to compulsory voting (31)
- › discuss an infringement notice issued in connection with a previous election (6).

Our enforcement of compulsory voting is discussed at **12.4 Compulsory voting**.

VEC policies and procedures

We received 45 submissions about VEC policies or procedures. Complaints made up 84% of these submissions. This subtheme captured submissions about:

- › VEC head office procedures (22)
- › counting procedures (11)
- › election office procedures (7)
- › VEC policies (3)
- › the ballot draw (2).

Privacy

We received 45 submissions about privacy, the majority of which (93%) were complaints. There were 6 main topics:

- › the source of personal or contact information obtained by a third party (14)
- › our privacy policies (13)
- › the release of electoral roll information (8)

- › privacy breaches on the part of a third party (6)
- › postal vote identity theft (3)
- › privacy concerns arising from the issue of replacement votes (1).

Ballot papers

We received 34 submissions about ballot paper format and design, 74% of which were complaints.

Language accessibility

We received 30 submissions about language accessibility. The majority (83%) were complaints. This subtheme captured submissions about the languages available on the multi-language leaflet and on our website.

See **10.1 Ballot material preparation** for more information about the multi-language leaflet.

Advertising and electoral campaign material

We received 486 submissions about advertising and electoral campaign material. This theme captured the subthemes shown in Table 14.

Most of these matters were about possible non-compliance with the LG Act and fell outside our remit. We referred submissions alleging non-compliance with these requirements to LGL.

Table 14: Submissions relating to the theme of 'advertising and electoral campaign material' by subtheme

Theme 2: advertising and electoral campaign material	
Subtheme	Submission total
Content of electoral campaign material	163
Authorisation	117
Electoral signage	100
Other matters	82
Miscellaneous	24
Total submissions	486

Content of electoral campaign material

We received 163 submissions about the content of electoral campaign material, 99% of which were complaints. The main topics were:

- › misleading or deceptive material (93)
- › allegedly false claims in material (42)
- › allegedly defamatory material (14)
- › offensive material (14).

Authorisation

There were 117 submissions about the authorisation of advertising and electoral material, 97% of which were complaints. These submissions were about:

- › electoral campaign material which was incorrectly authorised or not authorised at all (107)
- › authorisation requirements (8)
- › illegible authorisation statements (2).

Electoral signage

We received 100 submissions relating to electoral signage during the election period. Almost all (99%) were complaints. The main concerns relating to signage were:

- › the location of signs (63)
- › local council signage laws (16)
- › interference with signage (13)
- › the number and size of signs (8).

Other matters

We also received 82 submissions about other matters relating to electoral campaign material, 85% of which were complaints. This subtheme captured submissions about:

- › candidate statements (28) and candidate questionnaires (15)
- › calls, texts or emails from candidates, parties or third parties (20)
- › postal material from candidates and parties (19).

Candidates, campaigners and parties

We received 149 submissions about candidates, campaigners and parties.

Table 15: Submissions relating to the theme of 'candidates, campaigners and parties' by subtheme

Theme 3: candidates, campaigners and parties	
Subtheme	Submission total
Conduct of candidates or parties	75
Candidate eligibility and nominations	63
Other matters	11
Total	149

Conduct of candidates and parties

There were 75 submissions about the conduct of candidates or parties, most of which (99%) were complaints. Submissions discussed the conduct of:

- › candidates (65)
- › campaigners (9)
- › parties (1).

Candidate eligibility and nominations

We received 63 submissions about candidate eligibility and nominations, 95% of which were complaints. There were 3 main topics:

- › candidate eligibility requirements generally or the eligibility of a particular candidate (38)
- › the nomination of a particular candidate (15)
- › the nomination process generally (10).

Other matters

We also received 11 submissions about other matters. Complaints made up the majority of submissions (73%). These submissions were about:

- › the scrutineering process (8)
- › the treatment of scrutineers (1)

- › candidate training (1)
- › the registration process for registered political parties (1).

Staffing

We received 30 submissions relating to election officials and employment conditions, all of which were complaints.

Table 16: Submissions relating to the theme of 'staffing' by subtheme

Theme 4: staffing	
Subtheme	Submission total
Election officials	20
Employment conditions	10
Total	30

Election officials

There were 20 submissions about election officials. The main topics were:

- › the conduct of an election official (16)
- › inadequate supervision or instructions given to election officials (2)
- › an election official not following procedure (1)
- › inadequate training for election officials (1)

Employment conditions

We received 10 submissions about employment conditions, which discussed:

- › disclosure of political activities requirements (4)
- › offers of employment (4)
- › insufficient breaks for staff (1)
- › the online staff self-service portal (1)

All of these matters were resolved with the assistance of the relevant VEC teams.

Electoral integrity issues

There were 30 submissions about electoral integrity and compliance matters, 87% of which were complaints.

Table 17: Submissions relating to the theme of 'electoral integrity' by subtheme

Theme 5: electoral integrity	
Subtheme	Submission total
Electoral integrity	25
Compliance activity	5
Total	30

Of these submissions, 25 concerned electoral integrity and 5 related to compliance activity, including the process for disclosing political donations, which for local government elections is administered by councils.

13.7 Future research

Trends in voter participation

We plan to conduct detailed analysis of factors influencing election participation, including non-voting trends and behaviours. Areas of interest are:

- › non-voters and explanations for habitual non-voting behaviours
- › the relationship between non-voting, age and geographic location
- › the connection between non-voting and informality rates, including deliberate and unintentional informality.

This research aims to identify measures that could increase participation and encourage voter engagement with Victoria's democracy.

Informal voting analysis

The informal vote study in its current form, including partnerships with universities, will conclude in early 2026. As part of the study, university partners will independently produce a series of policy recommendations. Further research findings will be published and shared following final analysis and the formal end of the partnership.

In line with past recommendations made by Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee, public interest, and ongoing research, we intend to maintain the current level of analysis of all informal ballot papers after local government election events.

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14. Technical recommendations

Responding to a complex environment

Recommendation 10: Technical amendments

We recommend minor and technical amendments to local government electoral legislation, supporting clarity, simplicity and alignment with state electoral legislation (where appropriate).

Technical recommendation 1

Amend Part 2, Division 2 of the LG Act to provide that following delivery of the final recommendation or advice to the Minister for Local Government after an electoral structure or ward boundary review, the final structure decision must be gazetted on or before 30 April of the year of a scheduled general election. This will improve certainty in the sector and set clearer expectations for upcoming elections.

Technical recommendation 2

Amend section 15(2)(b) of the LG Act to provide that the $\pm 10\%$ tolerance may be determined by reference to the number of voters projected to be voters on the close of roll date for the next general election. This would reintroduce an important clarification that was not carried over from the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic). In practice, the close of roll date for the next general election is the appropriate point in time to aim for compliance with the $\pm 10\%$ rule, and also best facilitates the sustained compliance of ward boundaries beyond the election.

Technical recommendation 3

Codify criteria in the LG Act or regulations to cover the requirements outlined in section 16(8) of the LG Act for electoral structures recommended by electoral representation advisory panels. This will support consistency of decision making processes across review programs and review panels and provide transparency of decision making to voters.

Technical recommendation 4

Amend section 240(12) of the LG Act to replace incorrect references to '2024' with '2028' for general elections for Whittlesea City Council and Casey City Council. This will resolve a drafting error.

Technical recommendation 5

Amend section 245(7)(iv) of the LG Act to provide that a corporate appointment is revoked only on the voter (appointee) exercising their entitlement to be enrolled on the voters' roll in respect of the local council area for which the appointment was made. This recognises voters may hold multiple entitlements and ensures revocation

does not occur until the voter applies under sections 242 or 244, or becomes a state-enrolled elector for the local council under section 241.

Technical recommendation 6

Amend section 249(1)(a) of the LG Act to replace the incorrect cross-reference to 'section 268' with 'section 241'. This will resolve a drafting error.

Technical recommendation 7

Amend section 249 of the LG Act to allow the VEC to remove (or not include) a council-enrolled voter on the voters' roll where they are no longer qualified to be enrolled on the Victorian register of electors in accordance with section 44(2)(d) of the *Constitution Act 1975* (Vic). This will align the eligibility criteria between state-enrolled voters and council-enrolled voters.

Technical recommendation 8

Amend section 249(5) of the LG Act to provide that the removal of silent elector addresses from voters' rolls applies to silent elector requests made before the close of nominations. This will prevent roll products from needing to be re-generated every time a request for the voters' roll is received, and will remove the risk of inadvertently drawing more attention to the addresses of new silent electors by comparing copies of the voters' roll provided before and after the granting of the silent elector request.

Technical recommendation 9

Amend section 252(1) of the LG Act to allow candidates to submit a request for a copy of the voters' roll from the time of their nomination, to be provided after the close of nominations. This will allow requests to be processed earlier and roll products to be provided sooner after the close of nominations.

Technical recommendation 10

Amend sections 260(2) and (3) of the LG Act to expand the prescribed time limits for the holding of by-elections from 100 days and 150 days to 120 days and 170 days, respectively. This will boost the options available to the VEC for conducting by-elections concurrently where possible, aligned to streamlined and pre-determined election timelines, which will in turn reduce costs.

Technical recommendation 11

Amend section 260 of the LG Act to place an appropriate limitation on the holding of by-elections in perpetuity to fill a particular vacancy. This will prevent the significant cost of repeated failed elections where there are repeated instances of no candidates nominating.

Technical recommendation 12

Repeal section 312(2) of the LG Act to remove the ability of VCAT to impose a financial penalty in relation to a review of the declaration of the result of an election. This has no context under the LG Act, and removing it will reduce confusion around the conduct of election challenges.

Technical recommendation 13

Amend regulation 5(2)(a)(ii) of the LG Regulations to refer to a corporation's ABN or an ACN. This will provide clarity about corporation eligibility for council enrolment.

Technical recommendation 14

Amend regulation 24(1)(d) of the LG Regulations to replace the requirement for nomination fees to be paid by cash or bank cheque with a form of payment determined by the VEC. This will address the phasing out of cheques and better reflect the modern electoral landscape.

Technical recommendation 15

Amend regulation 31(4) of the LG Regulations to remove the phrase 'in relation to the same Council', to prohibit all candidates from being appointed as scrutineers across simultaneous council elections. This will address the complexities and potential integrity issues that arise at centralised sites where counting activities occur for multiple council elections in a shared space.

Technical recommendation 16

Amend regulation 41(3) of the LG Regulations to replace '300 words' with '200 words'. This will resolve an omission during the last update to the LG Regulations.

Technical recommendation 17

Amend regulations 54 and 93 of the LG Regulations to provide that for the purposes of redirection, a 'request in writing' includes an update to a voter's enrolled mailing address. This will streamline the need for voters to make 2 transactions to update their mailing address and request a redirection.

Technical recommendation 18

Amend regulations 54(2)(a) and 93(2)(a) of the LG Regulations to replace 'the day on which the voters' roll is certified' with 'the business day before the voters' roll is certified'. This will address the practical need for the voters' roll to be certified before election offices open to ensure that nominations can begin.

Technical recommendation 19

Amend regulation 56 of the LG Regulations to remove the requirement for spoilt ballot papers to be returned in order to receive a replacement. While well-suited for attendance elections, this provision has little utility in postal elections.

Technical recommendation 20

Amend regulation 57(3) of the LG Regulations to introduce savings provisions supporting undated postal votes received before the close of postal voting receipt period to be admitted. This will better enfranchise voters who inadvertently omit the date in the voter declaration.

Technical recommendation 21

Amend regulation 60(2) of the LG Regulations to replace the 'or' between paragraphs (a) and (b) with 'and', aligned to the wording of regulation 57(3B). This will resolve a drafting error causing inconsistency between managing changes to the last day of postal receipt and changes to the last day of voting.

Technical recommendation 22

Amend section 3, definition of 'registrar' and section 11 of the CoM Act to clarify that certain functions of registrar can be performed by either the CEO or the VEC (while the registrar remains the CEO). This will prevent the need for the functions to be delegated from the CEO to the VEC.

Technical recommendation 23

Amend Schedule 1, clause 6 of the CoM Act to require that groups in the Melbourne City Council councillor election must submit one or more group voting tickets. Consequently, amend Schedule 1, clauses 5(5)(a) and 8 to clarify the printing requirements if a group does fail to lodge a group voting ticket. Requirements should align as closely as possible to Victorian Legislative Council elections (as set out in section 69B of the Electoral Act), and as such it may be appropriate for a penalty to be tied to the requirement should a group fail to lodge at least one group voting ticket before the deadline.¹⁷

Technical recommendation 24

Amend Schedule 1, clause 8 and Schedules 2 and 3 of the CoM Act to increase the threshold of requiring ballot papers for Melbourne City Council councillor elections to be printed in 'double depth' from 20 or more groups to 30 or more groups. This will increase

17 Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee is, at the time of this report, conducting an inquiry into Victoria's Upper House electoral system and is scheduled to table its report on its inquiry by 8 December 2025. This may impact the policy objective of harmonising Melbourne City Council councillor election rules with Legislative Council election rules.

the available printers to produce ballot papers in the event that 20 or more groups nominate and will reduce voter confusion with completing their ballot paper.

Technical recommendation 25

Amend the LG Act and/or the CoM Act to clarify whether Melbourne City Council is intended to be subject to electoral structure reviews.

Technical recommendation 26

Amend sections 17(ba) and (c) of the *Fines Reform Act 2014* (Vic) to extend the time for registering an infringement offence under the LG Act or CoM Act from 6 months to 12 months. This should also be amended in section 17(b) so that it applies to infringement fines under the Electoral Act.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of changed structures and boundaries

Appendix 1.1: Outcomes of 2023–24 electoral structure reviews

Council	Structure prior to review	Electoral structure from October 2024	Number of councillors
Rural councils			
Buloke Shire Council	3 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 2)	3 wards with 2 councillors per ward	6
Campaspe Shire Council	5 wards, 9 councillors (2 x 3, 3 x 1)	Unsubdivided	9
Central Goldfields Shire Council	4 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 4, 3 x 1)	7 single-councillor wards	7
Corangamite Shire Council	5 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 4 x 1)	7 single-councillor wards	7
Gannawarra Shire Council	4 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 1 x 2, 2 x 1)	Unsubdivided	7
Hepburn Shire Council	5 wards, 7 councillors (2 x 2, 3 x 1)	Unsubdivided	7
Moorabool Shire Council	4 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 4, 3 x 1)	Unsubdivided	9
Mount Alexander Shire Council	5 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 4 x 1)	8 single-councillor wards	8
Northern Grampians Shire Council	4 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 1 x 2, 2 x 1)	3 wards with 2 councillors per ward	6
Strathbogie Shire Council	5 wards, 7 councillors (2 x 2, 3 x 1)	Unsubdivided	7
Surf Coast Shire Council	4 wards, 9 councillors (1 x 4, 2 x 2, 1 x 1)	3 wards with 3 councillors per ward	9
Yarriambiack Shire Council	3 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 2)	3 wards with 2 councillors per ward	6
Regional city and metropolitan councils			
Ballarat City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9

Council	Structure prior to review	Electoral structure from October 2024	Number of councillors
Brimbank City Council	4 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 2, 3 x 3)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Frankston City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Glen Eira City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Greater Bendigo City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Greater Geelong City Council	4 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 2, 3 x 3)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Greater Shepparton City Council	Unsubdivided, 9 councillors	9 single-councillor wards	9
Hobsons Bay City Council	3 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 2)	7 single-councillor wards	7
Horsham Rural City Council	Unsubdivided, 7 councillors	7 single-councillor wards	7
Latrobe City Council	4 wards, 9 councillors (1 x 4, 2 x 2, 1 x 1)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Maribyrnong City Council	3 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 2)	7 single-councillor wards	7
Melton City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (1 x 4, 1 x 3, 1 x 2)	10 single-councillor wards	10
Merri-bek City Council	3 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 4)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Mildura Rural City Council	Unsubdivided, 9 councillors	9 single-councillor wards	9
Monash City Council	4 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 2, 3 x 3)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Moonee Valley City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Port Phillip City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Stonnington City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Wangaratta Rural City Council	4 wards, 7 councillors (1 x 4, 3 x 1)	7 single-councillor wards	7
Warrnambool City Council	Unsubdivided, 7 councillors	7 single-councillor wards	7
Wodonga City Council	Unsubdivided, 7 councillors	7 single-councillor wards	7

Council	Structure prior to review	Electoral structure from October 2024	Number of councillors
Yarra City Council	3 wards, 9 councillors (3 x 3)	9 single-councillor wards	9
Interface councils			
Casey City Council	6 wards, 11 councillors (5 x 2, 1 x 1)	12 single-councillor wards	12
Hume City Council	3 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 4)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	6 wards, 11 councillors (2 x 3, 1 x 2, 3 x 1)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Whittlesea City Council	3 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 4)	11 single-councillor wards	11
Wyndham City Council	3 wards, 11 councillors (1 x 3, 2 x 4)	11 single-councillor wards	11

Appendix 1.2: List of 2024 ward boundary reviews

Council

- › Bass Coast Shire Council
- › Baw Baw Shire Council
- › Boroondara City Council
- › Cardinia Shire Council
- › Greater Dandenong City Council
- › Loddon Shire Council
- › Murrindindi Shire Council
- › Pyrenees Shire Council
- › South Gippsland Shire Council
- › Wellington Shire Council

Appendix 2: Summary of responses to recommendations from Report to Parliament on 2020 local government elections

Recommendation	Outcome
That the Government introduces legislation that ensures enrolment entitlements and compulsory voting obligations for the next Casey City Council and Whittlesea City Council general elections in October 2024 are aligned with all other local councils going to election at the same time.	This was actioned by the <i>Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022</i> (Vic). The requirements for the Casey City Council and Whittlesea City Council general elections in October 2024 matched those which went to their second election under the LG Act.
That the Government notes the total possible number of scrutineers able to be appointed for an election under the ordinary operation of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic) (LG Regulations) may be unsustainable if social distancing protocols extend beyond current regulatory relief arrangements.	This was actioned by the inclusion of an ongoing provision permitting the maximum number of scrutineers for each candidate to be varied to ensure compliance with pandemic orders, which replaced the temporary regulatory relief inserted into the LG Regulations.
That the local government sector notes the VEC's growing difficulty with sourcing suitable local counting venues.	No action required.
That the Government notes the increasing role of political parties in local government elections and the community's desire for transparency in respect to candidate-party affiliations.	No action required. See also recommendation 5 of this report.
That the Government notes voters have reported that the candidate questionnaire is not fit-for-purpose.	No action required. See also recommendation 5 of this report.
That the Government notes that reach and readership of local newspapers continues to decline, and that news and information consumption is largely digital.	No action required.
That the Government amends the deadline for candidates to lodge their candidate statements, photographs, and candidate questionnaires to align with the close of nominations.	This recommendation was actioned as part of the changes to the LG Regulations in time for the 2024 local government elections.
That the Government amends legislation to require councils to directly contact eligible council-enrolled voters and notify them in relation to their enrolment eligibility, application deadlines and obligation to vote (once enrolled).	This recommendation was partly actioned by changes to the LG Act requiring councils to contact council-enrolled voters whose applications expire. See also recommendation 3 of this report.
That the Government amends the prescribed list of excuses for failing to vote in the LG Regulations to include voters who were unable to vote at an election because they were experiencing homelessness.	This recommendation was actioned as part of the changes to the LG Regulations in time for the 2024 local government elections.

Appendix 3:

Key election statistics

Candidates who were retired after the close of nominations are not included in the candidates column of this table. Elections where one or more candidates were retired are denoted with an asterisk (*). For more information, see **9.6 Candidate retirements**.

Turnout is calculated based on the number of votes counted as a proportion of the number of voters on the voters' roll for contested elections only. Turnout is not to be confused with participation, which is measured as the number of voters marked off the voters' roll and used to analyse demographic trends. For more information, see **13.3 Participation**.

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Alpine Shire Council	7	12	10,237	81.78%	5.69%	NICHOLAS, Sarah ANDERSEN, John GRAHAM, Gareth SMITH, Peter TANZEN, Noah BYRNE, David RONCO, Jean-Pierre
Ararat Rural City Council	7	12	8,331	83.54%	4.78%	ARMSTRONG, Jo SANDERS, Bob KAUR, Teli JOYCE, Peter PRESTON, Luke Matthew WATERSTON, Bill ARMSTRONG, Rob
Ballarat City Council	9	38	86,108	82.43%	2.91%	
Alfredton Ward	1	6	10,464	86.15%	2.35%	SAUNDERS, Damon
Brown Hill Ward	1	3	9,241	82.72%	2.20%	LAPKIN, Ted

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Buninyong Ward	1	3	9,328	86.57%	2.81%	TAYLOR, Ben
Central Ward	1	4	9,462	82.60%	1.60%	McINTOSH, Samantha
Delacombe Ward	1	5	9,403	79.67%	3.08%	HARGREAVES, Tracey
Golden Point Ward	1	8	9,144	78.40%	3.45%	MORGAN, Tess
North Ward	1	4	10,103	83.86%	2.74%	RINALDI, Jim
Sebastopol Ward	1	2	9,465	79.36%	5.67%	HUDSON, Des
Wendouree Ward	1	3	9,498	82.01%	2.53%	MORRISON, Jay
Banyule City Council	9	38*	92,196	83.02%	2.94%	
Bakewell Ward	1	6	10,453	83.18%	3.43%	DI PASQUALE, Mark
Beale Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	10,334	–	–	NEALY, Elizabeth
Chelsworth Ward	1	3	9,737	83.43%	2.77%	McKERN, Alida
Griffin Ward	1	4*	10,143	82.71%	2.54%	CASTALDO, Peter
Grimshaw Ward	1	3	10,302	85.59%	3.27%	GAROTTI, Rick
Hawdon Ward	1	4	10,690	85.14%	2.43%	WOOD, Matt
Ibbott Ward	1	5	9,648	84.86%	2.50%	CURRY, Alicia
Olympia Ward	1	8	10,689	75.38%	3.67%	O'KANE, Mary
Sherbourne Ward	1	5	10,200	84.25%	2.90%	CHAMPION, Alison
Bass Coast Shire Council	9	22	35,398	82.74%	3.98%	
Bunurong Ward	3	9	11,829	84.26%	4.28%	TESSARI, Brett EDWARDS, Meg MORGAN, Mat
Island Ward	3	7	12,087	81.72%	3.51%	BAUER, Ron BELL, Tracey O'BRIEN, Tim
Western Port Ward	3	6	11,482	82.25%	4.14%	HALSTEAD, Rochelle TEMBY, Jon THOMPSON, Jan
Baw Baw Shire Council	9	23	45,084	83.72%	3.83%	

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Central Ward	3	8	15,416	83.37%	3.94%	GOSS, Danny PRATT, Paul ALLEN, Suzanne
East Ward	3	8	15,071	85.50%	3.92%	KINGWILL, Brendan SHEEHAN, Adam WILSON, Kate
West Ward	3	7	14,597	82.25%	3.61%	LUCAS, Ben HAMILTON, Jess JONES, Tricia
Bayside City Council	7	69	75,633	83.57%	4.77%	
Beckett Ward	1	4	10,400	86.96%	2.34%	TAYLOR-HAYNES, Debbie
Bleazby Ward	1	7	11,424	82.83%	3.77%	IRLICH, Robert
Boyd Ward	1	7	11,185	84.75%	3.38%	MCINTOSH, Kylie
Castlefield Ward	1	15	11,577	83.68%	7.49%	MURRAY, Elli
Dendy Ward	1	18	10,692	80.75%	7.70%	EL MOUALLEM, Hanna
Ebden Ward	1	9	9,999	84.71%	4.21%	LEIGH, Geoff
Ivison Ward	1	9	10,356	81.40%	4.52%	HOCKLEY, Andrew
Benalla Rural City Council	7	15	11,684	83.85%	6.83%	DAVIS, Peter TOLLIDAY, Nathan KING, Justin R BLORE, David George HEARN, Bernie MERKEL, Jillian HEWA GUNARATNE, Puna
Boroondara City Council	11	38	117,753	83.89%	2.01%	
Bellevue Ward	1	5	10,908	85.62%	1.81%	NOLAN, Michael
Cotham Ward	1	2	11,007	85.19%	3.08%	SINFELD, Felicity

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Gardiner Ward	1	3	11,439	85.63%	2.16%	FRANCO, Victor
Glenferrie Ward	1	3	9,901	79.10%	1.49%	GAULT, Wes
Junction Ward	1	2	9,732	81.66%	3.11%	OSBORNE-SMITH, Mal
Lynden Ward	1	3	10,994	86.29%	1.78%	HOLLINGSWORTH, Lisa
Maling Ward	1	4	10,784	85.98%	1.53%	IBUKI, Shima
Maranoa Ward	1	4	10,717	85.42%	1.86%	PATTAS, Chris
Riversdale Ward	1	3	10,345	78.69%	1.63%	BAILLIEU, Rob
Solway Ward	1	5	11,078	86.62%	1.94%	FRIEND-PEREIRA, John
Studley Ward	1	4	10,848	81.51%	1.67%	TORNEY, Sophie
Borough of Queenscliffe Council	5	11	3,351	87.85%	3.09%	GRIGAU, Donnie TOLHURST, Isabelle MONAHAN, Brendan RULE, Di CAMERON, Hélène
Brimbank City Council	11	61	126,621	82.53%	3.50%	
Albanvale Ward	1	3	10,791	82.35%	4.42%	BORG, Victoria
Cherry Creek Ward	1	5	12,010	82.89%	2.57%	TRUONG, Kim Thien
Copernicus Ward	1	12	12,042	84.27%	5.72%	KERR, Maria
Delahey Ward	1	7	11,040	83.87%	3.28%	NIKOLIC, Katharine
Grasslands Ward	1	4	11,933	81.82%	3.96%	DANG, Thuy
Harvester Ward	1	4	11,577	80.94%	2.84%	KRUK, Daniel
Horseshoe Bend Ward	1	4	11,960	86.01%	2.59%	TACHOS, Virginia
Kororoit Creek Ward	1	5	10,486	77.65%	3.21%	NGUYEN, Lucy
Mount Derrimut Ward	1	5	11,336	82.04%	2.81%	BAUCH, Joh
Organ Pipes Ward	1	6	11,939	85.14%	3.02%	RASIC, Ranka
St Albans East Ward	1	6	11,507	80.20%	4.13%	PHAM, Duyen Anh
Buloke Shire Council	6	8	4,813	85.48%	1.82%	
Lower Avoca Ward	2	3	1,570	85.61%	2.53%	STAFFORD, Bruce BARRATT, Stephen

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Mallee Ward (Uncontested)	2	2	1,728	–	–	HOGAN, Bernadette GETLEY, Alan Ronald
Mount Jeffcott Ward	2	3	1,515	85.35%	1.08%	MILNE, Graeme Leon DELANEY, Charmaine
Campaspe Shire Council	9	12	29,734	81.46%	5.34%	AMOS, Rob MITCHELL, Jessica JARMAN, Paul ZOBEC, John SHARROCK, Luke MARWOOD, Tony WESTON, Adrian MACKRELL, Daniel COOK, Zoe
Cardinia Shire Council	9	23	82,475	82.23%	4.25%	
Beacon Hills Ward	1	2	9,578	86.31%	4.54%	OWEN, Brett
Bunyip Ward	1	2	8,839	83.61%	4.49%	POMEROY, Alanna
Central Ward	1	2	9,310	81.50%	5.06%	ROSS, Collin
Henty Ward	1	5	9,252	78.39%	3.71%	ROBERTS, Liz
Officer Ward	1	2	9,081	82.74%	4.38%	POTTER, Samantha-Jane
Pakenham Hills Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	8,719	–	–	KOWARZIK, Jack
Ranges Ward	1	3	9,543	81.85%	3.61%	NICKELL, David
Toomuc Ward	1	4	9,305	80.71%	2.81%	THOMSEN, Casey
Westernport Ward	1	2	8,848	82.71%	5.37%	PATON, Trudi
Casey City Council	12	89	246,906	81.33%	4.07%	
Akoonah Ward	1	6	20,648	81.43%	2.88%	DOWLING, Scott William
Casuarina Ward	1	10	22,069	80.81%	5.57%	ROSS, Kim
Correa Ward	1	6	22,066	79.23%	3.80%	ROWE, Gary

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Cranbourne Gardens Ward	1	6	20,717	81.84%	3.65%	CROWTHER, Michelle
Dillwynia Ward	1	8	18,903	82.28%	4.15%	WALTER, Anthony
Grevillea Ward	1	9	21,498	83.95%	4.45%	PERRY, Dave
Kalora Ward	1	9	21,084	83.17%	4.80%	AMBROS, Melinda
Kowan Ward	1	8	19,977	84.12%	3.55%	TAYLOR, Shane
Quarters Ward	1	8	20,144	79.63%	3.84%	EAVES, Carolyn
River Gum Ward	1	7	19,600	80.27%	3.90%	PEREIRA, Lynette
Tooradin Ward	1	7	20,125	81.06%	3.51%	DIZON, Jennifer
Waratah Ward	1	5	20,075	78.19%	4.57%	KOOMEN, Stefan
Central Goldfields Shire Council	7	13	10,886	81.84%	4.25%	
Flynn Ward	1	2	1,498	82.64%	5.09%	LONG, Liesbeth
Maryborough Central Ward	1	2	1,617	82.56%	3.90%	MURPHY, Gerard Michael
Maryborough East Ward	1	2	1,538	76.40%	5.36%	MEYER, Jacob
Maryborough North Ward	1	2	1,564	84.40%	3.79%	BARTLETT, Geoff
Maryborough West Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,644	–	–	LA VELLA, Grace
Paddys Ranges Ward	1	3	1,466	83.22%	3.20%	GREEN, Ben
Tullaroop Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,559	–	–	DE VILLIERS, Anna
Colac Otway Shire Council	7	18	17,536	84.83%	6.95%	SCHRAM, Jason POTTER, Chris HUDGELL, Zoe HOWARD, Phil BUCHANAN, Charlie McCRICKARD, Mick DE DEUGD, Chrissy
Corangamite Shire Council	7	8	12,312	82.05%	3.11%	

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Cooriemungle Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,625	–	–	VOGELS, Jamie John
Gnotuk Ward	1	1	1,835			GSTREIN, Ruth
Lake Elingamite Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,875	–	–	MAKIN, Kate
Lake Keilambete Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,899	–	–	CONHEADY, Geraldine
Leura Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,640	–	–	HICKEY, Laurie
Mt Elephant Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,633	–	–	COLE, Nicholas
Tandarook Ward	1	2	1,805	82.05%	3.11%	BEARD, Jo
Darebin City Council	9	48*	108,217	79.76%	3.58%	
Central Ward	1	8	11,636	78.14%	3.97%	OLARIS, Kristine
North Central Ward	1	7	11,866	78.38%	3.68%	TSALKOS, Vasilios
North East Ward	1	6	11,954	81.43%	3.24%	ARTURI, Matt
North West Ward	1	4	12,284	81.57%	3.10%	GRECO, Gaetano
South Central Ward	1	3*	11,881	77.52%	2.84%	JELLEY, Ruth
South East Ward	1	8	12,294	80.60%	3.56%	DIMITRIADIS, Emily
South Ward	1	3	12,341	79.55%	3.29%	O'BRIEN, Julie
South West Ward	1	3	11,115	79.91%	4.76%	SANGSTER, Alexandra
West Ward	1	6	12,846	80.55%	3.89%	BOGLIS, Connie
East Gippsland Shire Council	9	22*	39,423	82.31%	12.28%	BUCKLEY, Sonia WHITE, John FARQUHAR, Bernie ALLEN, Arthur TREVASKIS, Ian CROOK, Tom ASHWORTH, Jodie DAVIS, Barry EASTMAN, Joanne

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Frankston City Council	9	40*	101,147	79.82%	3.12%	
Ballam Ward	1	4	11,937	77.12%	2.89%	BOLAM, Kris
Centenary Park Ward	1	4	11,187	82.89%	3.03%	O'REILLY, Michael
Derinya Ward	1	6	11,359	82.62%	3.26%	HILL, Brad
Elisabeth Murdoch Ward	1	5*	11,821	84.53%	3.37%	WANAT, Cherie
Kananook Ward	1	5	10,625	75.60%	2.86%	GREEN, Emily
Lyrebird Ward	1	3	11,325	79.51%	3.43%	CONROY, Steffie
Pines Ward	1	4	10,422	73.88%	3.36%	BAKER, Sue
Wilton Ward	1	4	11,565	82.31%	2.71%	ASKER, David
Yamala Ward	1	5*	10,906	79.07%	3.20%	BUTLER, Nathan
Gannawarra Shire Council	7	11	8,353	84.16%	3.31%	FARRANT, Lisa SMITH, Garner J BOLITHO, Daniel STANTON, Ross QUINN, Pat GILLINGHAM, Charles LINK, Keith Harold
Glen Eira City Council	9	43	102,201	82.52%	2.85%	
Bambra Ward	1	7	11,536	82.78%	3.05%	ESAKOFF, Margaret
Booran Ward	1	5	11,180	82.45%	2.81%	KARSLAKE, Jane
Caulfield Park Ward	1	5	11,673	79.55%	2.05%	PARASOL, Sam
Jasper Ward	1	3	11,413	84.18%	2.58%	DANIEL, Arabella
Mallanbool Ward	1	4	11,251	84.98%	2.51%	YOUNG, Kimberley
Moorleigh Ward	1	2	11,425	84.06%	4.56%	RIMBALDO, Kay
Murrumbeena Ward	1	5	11,354	82.49%	2.58%	RAGNI, Luca
Orrong Ward	1	5	11,235	78.14%	2.44%	ZMOOD, Simone
Wattle Grove Ward	1	7	11,134	84.11%	3.04%	ZHANG, Li

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Glenelg Shire Council	7	13	15,796	83.36%	4.86%	STEPHENS, Karen CARR, Michael PEPPER, John NOSKE, Mike McDONALD, Robyn JOWETT, Matt ANGELINO, Duane
Golden Plains Shire Council	7	10	18,970	85.97%	4.87%	GLEN, Lachlan HAYDEN, Sarah PHELAN, Des CUNNINGHAM, Brett Brian ROBBINS, Emma KIRBY, Helena Angela SHARKEY, Owen
Greater Bendigo City Council	9	24	91,672	81.00%	3.72%	
Axedale Ward	1	4	9,887	86.98%	2.29%	CHATLEY, Shivali
Eppalock Ward	1	2	10,660	80.49%	4.46%	SPONG, Aaron
Epsom Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	9,631	–	–	METCALF, Andrea
Golden Square Ward	1	4	10,111	79.73%	3.01%	CORR, Karen
Kennington Ward	1	2	10,298	81.25%	4.30%	AWASTHI, Abhishek
Lake Weeroona Ward	1	2	9,845	77.02%	5.08%	PRINCE, Thomas
Lockwood Ward	1	2	10,286	81.91%	4.76%	McILRATH, John
Ravenswood Ward	1	4	10,246	80.45%	2.79%	HURRELL, Damien
Whipstick Ward	1	3	10,708	80.29%	3.14%	COSGRIFF, Owen
Greater Dandenong City Council	11	45	93,869	82.45%	3.44%	
Cleeland Ward	1	4	8,102	75.36%	4.26%	GARAD, Rhonda
Dandenong North Ward	1	5	9,019	83.78%	2.62%	MILKOVIC, Bob

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Dandenong Ward	1	2	7,965	75.05%	7.64%	MEMETI, Jim
Keysborough South Ward	1	5	9,184	86.82%	2.27%	DO, Isabella
Keysborough Ward	1	7	8,864	84.54%	3.00%	YIM, Melinda
Noble Park North Ward	1	4	8,660	82.79%	2.58%	FORMOSO, Lana
Noble Park Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	9,066	–	–	TAN, Sophie
Springvale Central Ward	1	6	8,366	85.35%	2.42%	LE, Alice Phuong
Springvale North Ward	1	3	7,831	83.64%	2.29%	O'REILLY, Sean
Springvale South Ward	1	6	8,512	86.37%	3.56%	TRUONG, Loi
Yarraman Ward	1	2	8,300	79.57%	4.75%	DANH, Phillip
Greater Geelong City Council	11	50*	205,894	83.11%	3.08%	
Barrabool Hills Ward	1	3	20,155	86.28%	1.88%	NELSON, Ron
Charlemont Ward	1	6	19,029	81.16%	3.50%	SINCLAIR, Emma
Cheetham Ward	1	5	18,274	80.86%	3.14%	CADWELL, Melissa
Connewarre Ward	1	2	18,293	84.44%	3.20%	WILKINSON, Elise
Corio Ward	1	6	18,565	77.83%	3.78%	AITKEN, Anthony
Deakin Ward	1	8	19,812	83.89%	3.75%	KATOS, Andrew
Hamlyn Heights Ward	1	4	18,375	84.05%	2.14%	KONTELJ, Eddy
Kardinia Ward	1	7	18,592	81.26%	3.15%	KONTELJ, Stretch
Leopold Ward	1	3	19,033	85.39%	2.96%	SULLIVAN, Trent
Murradoc Ward	1	2	17,706	85.21%	3.60%	STORY, Rowan D.
You Yangs Ward	1	4*	18,060	83.61%	2.98%	BURSON, Chris
Greater Shepparton City Council	9	28	46,851	79.33%	2.75%	
Balaclava Ward	1	3	5,324	81.95%	1.74%	SALI, Shane
Goulburn River Ward	1	6	4,861	83.21%	1.83%	WICKHAM, Paul
Kialla Ward	1	4	5,483	84.46%	2.35%	BROPHY, Anthony
Lower Goulburn Ward	1	4	5,120	75.35%	2.62%	EDDY, Kieron
McEwen Ward	1	2	5,313	73.59%	4.99%	THRELFALL, Steven

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Midland Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	5,213	–	–	SCHUBERT, Rod
Pine Lodge Ward	1	4	5,447	84.16%	2.42%	AKERS, Geoff
Poplar Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	5,102	–	–	SPINKS, Sam
Yanha Gurtji Ward	1	3	4,988	72.05%	3.67%	SUMMER, Fern
Hepburn Shire Council	7	12	13,231	83.30%	5.71%	HENDERSON, Don HOOD, Brian HEWITT, Lesley CLARK, Tony DRYLIE, Tim HOCKEY, Pat CORNISH, Shirley
Hindmarsh Shire Council	6	8	4,317	84.33%	2.34%	
East Ward	2	3	1,439	83.74%	1.00%	UOY, Chan BARRY, James
North Ward	2	3	1,292	84.98%	3.83%	CLARK, Tony AITKEN, Roger
West Ward (Uncontested)	2	2	1,586	–	–	BARKER, Rosie ISMAY, Ron
Hobsons Bay City Council	7	26*	64,932	82.34%	2.73%	
Altona Meadows Ward	1	4	9,885	84.73%	2.44%	GRIMA, Diana
Altona North Ward	1	4	8,739	80.57%	1.92%	HAWLI, Rayane
Altona Ward	1	5	9,973	83.07%	2.44%	KELLANDER, Daria
Laverton Ward	1	2*	9,164	79.22%	3.11%	KEYS-MACPHERSON, Paddy
Spotswood Ward	1	5	9,262	81.99%	2.73%	BISHOP, Kristin
Williamstown North Ward	1	4	9,324	83.43%	3.19%	DISBURY, Michael
Williamstown Ward	1	2	8,585	83.03%	3.34%	BENTLEY, Lisa

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Horsham Rural City Council	7	15	15,314	83.02%	3.21%	
Green Park Ward	1	2	2,267	88.05%	3.91%	O'LOUGHLIN, Dean
Horsham North Ward	1	3	2,269	78.36%	1.97%	WILSON, Todd C.
Kalimna Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	2,369	–	–	SLUGGETT, Rebecca
May Park Ward	1	2	2,101	80.96%	4.41%	McDONALD, Cam
Oatlands Ward	1	3	2,139	79.80%	3.28%	MUNN, Angela
Pine Lake Ward	1	3	2,057	88.09%	2.48%	ROSS, Ian
Wyn Wyn Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	2,112	–	–	KLOWSS, Brian
Hume City Council	11	67*	162,752	80.37%	3.77%	
Aitken Ward	1	3	14,098	80.56%	3.63%	MOORE, Carly
Bababi Marning Ward	1	6*	15,302	75.28%	4.64%	HADDAD, John
Burt-kur-min Ward	1	9	14,613	81.69%	4.39%	OVEREND, Jim
Emu Creek Ward	1	3	15,185	84.06%	2.55%	HAMLEY, Kate
Jacksons Hill Ward	1	3	15,524	82.25%	2.78%	BELL, Jarrod
Merlynston Creek Ward	1	9	15,794	73.31%	5.12%	SHERRY, Karen
Mount Ridley Ward	1	7*	14,558	81.43%	3.75%	ENGLISH, Daniel
Roxburgh Park Ward	1	11	14,874	80.09%	5.15%	MISHO, Sam
Tullamarine Ward	1	3	15,215	82.39%	2.40%	KURT, Naim
Woodlands Ward	1	6	14,173	83.16%	3.26%	GAGEN, Steve
Yubup Ward	1	7	13,416	80.45%	4.10%	WATSON, Ally
Indigo Shire Council	7	11	13,644	83.82%	4.98%	PRICE, Sophie DOWSLEY, Jane HARVEY, John LANDELLS, Scott HORNE, Roberta BOURKE, Greg SHEPHEARD, Diane

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Kingston City Council	11	65	114,046	84.01%	3.26%	
Banksia Ward	1	4	10,611	80.35%	2.94%	HOWE, Chris
Bunjil Ward	1	2	10,575	83.42%	4.66%	ATHANASOPOULOS, Tony
Caruana Ward	1	9	10,336	88.38%	3.69%	WHITE, Caroline
Chicquita Ward	1	10	10,325	85.45%	4.79%	AGIRTAN, Jane
Como Ward	1	5	10,734	82.09%	2.30%	HILL, Chris
Karkarook Ward	1	4	10,272	83.59%	3.18%	SAAB, Hadi
Longbeach Ward	1	6	9,896	83.32%	3.46%	OXLEY, Georgina
Melaleuca Ward	1	6	11,065	83.31%	2.50%	LAW, Tess
Sandpiper Ward	1	4	10,173	85.13%	2.08%	ASHWORTH-COLLETT, Kirralee
Wattle Ward	1	7	9,848	81.99%	3.10%	EREVNIDIS, Georgia
Yammerbook Ward	1	8	10,211	87.29%	3.18%	O'DONNELL, Sarah
Knox City Council	9	30	111,489	85.23%	3.07%	
Baird Ward	1	5	12,441	83.32%	2.88%	LOCKWOOD, Peter
Chandler Ward	1	4	11,656	83.45%	3.06%	KENNETT, Paige
Collier Ward	1	4	11,789	86.38%	2.33%	DUNCAN, Chris
Dinsdale Ward	1	4	11,831	82.62%	2.22%	WILLIAMS, Robert
Dobson Ward	1	4	13,494	85.50%	2.71%	BAKER, Meagan
Friberg Ward	1	2	13,582	85.13%	3.96%	CONSIDINE, Parisa
Scott Ward	1	2	12,010	86.59%	4.04%	COOPER, Lisa
Taylor Ward	1	2	13,263	87.35%	3.75%	PEARCE, Susan
Tirhatuan Ward	1	3	11,423	86.55%	2.47%	ATWELL, Glen
Latrobe City Council	9	20	58,168	78.41%	4.57%	
Boola Boola Ward	1	2	5,865	82.30%	3.58%	BARNES, David
Budgerie Ward	1	2	6,789	79.47%	4.76%	POTTER, Leanne
Jeeralang Ward	1	3	6,971	81.85%	3.58%	CAMPBELL, Joanne Mary
Loy Yang Ward	1	3	6,411	78.51%	3.74%	HARRIMAN, Dale

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Moe Ward	1	2	6,674	74.60%	6.49%	PUGSLEY, Adele
Morwell River Ward	1	3	6,478	73.85%	3.57%	LUND, Tracie
Newborough Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	6,541	–	–	GIBSON, Sharon
Tyers Ward	1	2	6,582	82.47%	4.72%	HOWE, Darren
Yallourn Ward	1	2	5,857	73.91%	6.44%	MORGAN, Steph
Loddon Shire Council	5	10	5,958	84.79%	2.77%	
Boort Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,201	–	–	WEAVER, David
Inglewood Ward	1	3	1,265	83.79%	2.36%	WILSON, Miki
Tarnagulla Ward	1	4	1,161	85.87%	3.21%	ANGELO, Nick
Terrick Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,197	–	–	STRAUB, Dan
Wedderburn Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,134	–	–	HOLT, Gavan Lindsay
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	9	20	39,169	84.82%	3.64%	
East Ward	3	7	12,535	85.51%	4.02%	BORTHWICK, Cassy YOUNG, Daniel SCANLON, Andrew
South Ward	3	5	13,698	84.83%	2.94%	BONANNO, Dom WALKER, Christine JOSEPH, Alison
West Ward	3	8	12,936	84.15%	4.00%	KENDALL, Kate ANDERSON, Jennifer PEARCE, Janet
Manningham City Council	9	30*	84,065	86.07%	2.31%	
Bolin Ward	1	4	10,038	85.75%	1.82%	GOUGH, Geoff
Currawong Ward	1	3	8,740	88.16%	1.80%	CONLON, Andrew
Manna Ward	1	5	8,835	85.94%	2.73%	BAIN, Peter Timothy
Ruffey Ward	1	4	9,484	86.66%	2.28%	GRIVAS, Jim

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Schramm Ward	1	4	9,108	83.57%	2.60%	MAYNE, Laura
Tullamore Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	9,534	–	–	DIAMANTE, Deirdre
Waldau Ward	1	5	8,917	87.10%	2.81%	CHEN, Anna
Westerfolds Ward	1	3*	9,280	85.45%	2.19%	ELTAHA, Isabella
Yarra Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	10,129	–	–	LANGE, Carli
Mansfield Shire Council	5	9	8,176	82.90%	3.02%	TEHAN, James RABIE, Steve TREASURE, Mandy CLARK, Bonnie BERENYI, Tim
Maribyrnong City Council	7	38	59,078	78.32%	2.71%	
Bluestone Ward	1	5	8,626	80.67%	2.07%	TIWARI, Pradeep
Braybrook Ward	1	4	8,995	78.41%	3.15%	LAM, Cuc
Burndap Ward	1	7	8,600	76.93%	2.93%	SEMRA, Mohamed
River Ward	1	7	8,566	78.73%	2.74%	YENGI, Susan
Saltwater Ward	1	6	8,101	76.51%	3.03%	MEREDITH, Samantha
Sheoak Ward	1	4	7,982	76.63%	2.94%	THOMAS, Bernadette
Wattle Ward	1	5	8,208	80.20%	2.16%	PEREYRA, Elena
Maroondah City Council	9	22*	81,048	85.19%	3.57%	
Barneong Ward	1	2	9,292	87.30%	4.71%	JONES, Chris
Bungalook Ward	1	3*	8,463	84.67%	3.08%	GORDON, Catherine
Jubilee Ward	1	3	8,880	84.41%	2.96%	REX, Claire
McAlpin Ward	1	3	9,395	87.51%	2.30%	HENDERSON, Nathaniel
Tarralla Ward	1	2	8,884	83.86%	3.95%	MACDONALD, Paul
Wicklow Ward	1	2	9,971	82.06%	4.39%	HEATHERICH, Daniella
Wombolano Ward	1	2	8,155	83.75%	4.25%	SPEARS, Kylie
Wonga Ward	1	2	9,158	84.83%	4.29%	HANCOCK, Linda
Yarrunga Ward	1	3	8,850	88.37%	2.28%	STEANE, Rob

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Melbourne City Council						
Leadership Team	1 team	11 teams	136,502	67.73%	4.98%	REECE, Nick / CAMPBELL, Roshena
Councillors	9	58	136,502	67.21%	2.33%	LOUEY, Kevin GUEST, Owen BALL, Olivia LIU, Gladys LIU, Philip Le SCOTT, Mark CAMILLO, Rafael ROWSE, Andrew GRIFFITHS, Davydd
Melton City Council	10	60	125,619	80.92%	3.75%	
Bullum Bullum Ward	1	3	12,921	84.35%	2.93%	ABBOUSHI, Steve
Cambrian Ward	1	5	12,756	78.85%	3.49%	TURNER, Bob
Coolibah Ward	1	10	11,272	77.63%	5.86%	MORRIS, Brandi
Hilltop Ward	1	4	11,744	84.52%	3.02%	VERDON, John
Jackwood Ward	1	8	14,162	82.88%	3.05%	VANDENBERG, Ashleigh
Lake Caroline Ward	1	6	13,735	83.26%	3.09%	MAJDLIK, Kathy
Mount Atkinson Ward	1	6	11,438	78.26%	3.70%	ZADA, Phillip
Stringybark Ward	1	6	12,099	78.10%	4.47%	SHANNON, Julie
Sugar Gum Ward	1	3	13,649	84.50%	3.40%	CARLI, Lara
Watts Ward	1	9	11,843	75.28%	5.27%	RAMSEY, Sophie
Merri-bek City Council	11	53*	123,327	78.81%	2.89%	
Bababi Djinanang Ward	1	4	11,405	80.65%	3.17%	BOLTON, Sue
Box Forest Ward	1	4*	12,098	76.96%	3.53%	MILES, Chris
Brunswick West Ward	1	4*	10,718	76.51%	2.52%	SVENSSON, Ella
Bulleke-bek Ward	1	5	10,516	75.96%	2.34%	IWASAKI, Jay
Djirri-Djirri Ward	1	6	11,201	80.95%	2.97%	DAVIDSON, Helen

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Harmony Park Ward	1	6	11,720	81.58%	2.57%	POLITIS, Helen
Pascoe Vale South Ward	1	3	11,880	84.18%	2.19%	YILDIZ, Oscar
Pentridge Ward	1	7	11,029	78.98%	3.23%	ABBOUD, Nat
Randazzo Ward	1	5	10,507	75.18%	2.57%	IRVIN, Liz
Warrk-Warrk Ward	1	3	10,718	75.10%	3.67%	PULFORD, Adam
Westbreen Ward	1	6	11,535	79.79%	3.06%	THEODOSIS, Katerine
Mildura Rural City Council	9	21	39,823	74.25%	4.47%	
City Gate Ward	1	2	4,251	71.89%	6.77%	CLEMENTS, Katie
Henderson Park Ward	1	2	4,604	72.28%	5.53%	HEALY, Helen
Karadoc Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	4,509	–	–	CROSSLING, Rebecca Louise
Kings Billabong Ward	1	2	4,577	77.10%	4.22%	MILNE, Glenn
Lake Ranfurly Ward	1	3	4,216	78.23%	2.58%	BAILEY, Troy
Mildura Wetlands Ward	1	2	4,588	78.18%	3.82%	CUPPER, Ali
Millewa Ward	1	6	4,513	77.13%	2.82%	ARNEY, Ian Richard
Nowingi Place Ward	1	2	4,191	64.26%	6.16%	REYNOLDS, Jodi
Sunset Country Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	4,374	–	–	BROWN, Greg
Mitchell Shire Council	9	22	37,598	80.46%	4.02%	
Central Ward	3	7	12,538	81.14%	4.10%	HANSON, Timothy CLARK, Nathan HUMM, Bob
North Ward	3	6	12,244	80.18%	3.61%	JEFFERY, Ned DOUGALL, John PACE, Andrea
South Ward	3	9	12,816	80.08%	4.34%	EVANS, Riley CORNISH, Bob JAMES, Claudia
Monash City Council	11	43	114,010	84.66%	2.61%	

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Banksia Ward	1	5	10,003	81.76%	2.45%	LITTLE, Cameron
Blackburn Ward	1	5	10,246	85.26%	2.04%	PATERSON, Rebecca
Gallaghers Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	10,495	–	–	LAKE, Geoff
Gardiners Creek Ward	1	5	10,378	84.81%	3.06%	DE SILVA, Anjalee
Jells Ward	1	6	10,987	88.32%	2.02%	LEE, Elisha
Mayfield Ward	1	6	9,675	84.16%	2.73%	LITTLE, Brian
Scotchmans Creek Ward	1	3	11,070	86.45%	1.87%	LUO, Nicky
University Ward	1	5	10,206	80.91%	2.71%	FERGEUS, Josh
Warrigal Ward	1	2	10,364	82.96%	3.86%	JAMES, Stuart
Waverley Park Ward	1	3	10,568	87.39%	1.70%	McCLUSKEY, Shane
Wellington Ward	1	2	10,018	83.97%	3.96%	KLISARIS, Paul
Moonee Valley City Council	9	43	89,755	83.12%	2.91%	
Airport Ward	1	5	9,757	84.76%	2.39%	JONES, Hamish
Buckley Ward	1	6	10,086	85.49%	2.63%	BARNES, John
Canning Ward	1	3	10,880	85.40%	3.05%	THEOCHARIDES, Paula
Fairbairn Ward	1	2	8,925	78.72%	5.45%	BURN, Phil
Milleara Ward	1	3	10,348	86.45%	2.12%	SIPEK, John
Myrnong Ward	1	5	9,829	78.29%	2.31%	ISER, Rose
Queens Park Ward	1	7	9,867	81.08%	3.56%	ADAMS, Ava
Steele Creek Ward	1	5	10,568	83.91%	2.03%	BYRNE, Samantha
Woodlands Ward	1	7	9,495	83.06%	3.11%	COSGRIFF, Fran

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Moorabool Shire Council	9	15	27,703	83.63%	6.83%	TACHELL, Paul MUNARI, Ally BINGHAM, Jarrod James VENDITTI TAYLOR, Steven WARD, Rodney BERRY, Moira SULLIVAN, Tom KEOGH, John FREEMAN, Sheila
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	11	36*	134,797	83.48%	2.99%	
Beek Beek Ward	1	2	11,816	85.56%	5.64%	ROPER, Kate
Benbenjie Ward	1	3	11,374	85.18%	2.30%	PATTON, Max
Briars Ward	1	2*	12,948	85.97%	1.57%	MARSH, Anthony
Brokil Ward	1	3	12,435	82.85%	2.47%	BINYON, Patrick
Coolart Ward	1	3	12,766	83.64%	2.03%	GILL, David
Kackeraboite Ward	1	2	11,854	85.83%	4.58%	BATTY, Stephen
Moorooduc Ward	1	2	11,622	83.98%	4.36%	RANKEN, Bruce
Nepean Ward	1	7	12,976	82.68%	2.52%	ALLEN, Andrea
Tanti Ward	1	4	11,937	83.28%	1.96%	PINGIARO, Paul
Tootgarook Ward	1	3	12,347	79.50%	2.59%	WILLIAMS, Cam
Warringine Ward	1	5	12,722	80.22%	3.04%	STEPHENS, Michael
Mount Alexander Shire Council	8	13	16,225	83.17%	3.10%	
Barkers Creek Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,864	–	–	ANNEAR, Rosie
Calder Ward	1	3	2,121	83.07%	2.67%	CORDY, Anthony Glenn
Campbells Creek Ward	1	2	2,055	82.58%	3.48%	MALTBY, Bill
Coliban Ward	1	3	2,146	83.83%	3.17%	WALKER, Phillip

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Forest Creek Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,932	–	–	HEYDON, Toby
Loddon River Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	2,161	–	–	DRISCOLL, Matt
Moonlight Creek Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	2,010	–	–	MADDOCK, Lucas
Tarrengower Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	1,936	–	–	HASTWELL, Rosalie
Moyne Shire Council	7	10*	13,486	82.35%	4.15%	DOUKAS, Jim FOSTER, Karen LOCKETT, Jordan RYAN, Lisa TAYLOR, Susan ROSS, Lloyd MURRIHY, Myra
Murrindindi Shire Council	7	16	12,541	81.96%	3.94%	
Cathedral Ward	1	2	1,724	82.19%	4.66%	McAULAY, Sandice
Cheviot Ward	1	2	1,838	84.22%	4.59%	CARPENTER, Sue
Eildon Ward	1	3	1,858	81.59%	2.77%	CARR, Anita
King Parrot Ward	1	2	1,816	81.00%	5.91%	LORDING, Eric
Kinglake Ward	1	2	1,804	81.32%	4.23%	ADAMS, Jodi
Koriella Ward	1	3	1,758	82.14%	1.59%	HILDEBRAND, Paul
Red Gate Ward	1	2	1,743	81.24%	3.81%	GALLAGHER, Damien
Nillumbik Shire Council	7	35*	47,461	86.66%	3.08%	
Blue Lake Ward	1	2	7,253	87.00%	4.58%	BROOKER, Grant
Bunjil Ward	1	6*	6,456	85.78%	2.60%	JOINER, Naomi
Edendale Ward	1	7	6,993	87.96%	3.61%	JOY, Kelly
Ellis Ward	1	4	7,045	85.83%	2.51%	PERKINS, Peter
Sugarloaf Ward	1	5	6,264	84.45%	2.38%	COPE, Kim
Swipers Gully Ward	1	3	7,176	87.70%	2.80%	McKAY, Kate

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Wingrove Ward	1	8	6,274	87.66%	2.87%	DUMARESQ, John
Northern Grampians Shire Council	6	15	9,150	84.59%	2.49%	
Central Ward	2	6	3,299	84.45%	3.05%	HYSLOP, Karen GREENBERGER, Jenny
Grampians Ward	2	4	2,954	84.53%	2.00%	HIDE, Justine BLAKE, Jack
Kara Kara Ward	2	5	2,897	84.81%	2.36%	PROBST, Karen EMERSON, Murray
Port Phillip City Council	9	48	74,095	72.85%	2.36%	
Albert Park Ward	1	7	8,649	78.91%	2.24%	HARDY, Rod
Alma Ward	1	5	8,159	71.44%	1.97%	HALLIDAY, Justin
Balaclava Ward	1	7	9,133	71.77%	2.47%	BUCKINGHAM, Libby
Elwood Ward	1	4	7,936	72.74%	2.29%	CRAWFORD, Louise
Lakeside Ward	1	5	7,620	69.92%	2.82%	MEARS, Bryan
Montague Ward	1	5	7,414	74.79%	2.72%	MAKIN, Alex
Port Melbourne Ward	1	5	8,328	77.07%	2.01%	CUNSOLO, Heather
South Melbourne Ward	1	4	7,927	72.47%	2.19%	JAY, Beti
St Kilda Ward	1	6	8,929	66.77%	2.58%	THOMANN, Serge
Pyrenees Shire Council	5	12	6,137	85.32%	3.72%	
Avoca Ward	1	2	1,288	86.10%	3.25%	WARDLAW, Rebecca
Beaufort Ward	1	2	1,313	82.64%	4.15%	FERRARI, Damian Hugh
De Cameron Ward	1	4	1,172	85.67%	2.59%	PHELAN, Megan
Ercildoune Ward	1	2	1,164	87.63%	5.39%	TOL, Simon
Mount Emu Ward	1	2	1,200	84.83%	3.24%	KEHOE, Tanya
South Gippsland Shire Council	9	17	24,875	85.77%	2.63%	
Coastal-Promontory Ward	3	5	8,227	85.10%	2.43%	RAE, Scott GILLIGAN, Sarah FINLAY, Steve

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Strzelecki Ward	3	5	8,563	86.71%	2.55%	HERSEY, Nathan BEACH, Bron KENNEDY, John
Tarwin Valley Ward	3	7	8,085	85.47%	2.92%	SCHELLING, John WILLIAMS, Clare SNELL, Brad
Southern Grampians Shire Council	7	11	12,640	84.98%	4.68%	CAMPBELL, Adam RAINSFORD, Katrina BARBER, Afton R. CALVANO, Albert HENRY, Helen MANNING, Jayne HESLIN, Dennis
Stonnington City Council	9	36	76,729	76.69%	2.43%	
Como Ward	1	5	7,841	67.59%	1.64%	HOPPER, Meghan
Greville Ward	1	7	7,888	68.46%	2.50%	SEHR, Melina
Hedgeley Dene Ward	1	4	8,734	84.23%	2.11%	DAVIS, Sally
Malvern Valley Ward	1	2	9,366	83.31%	4.37%	KLISARIS, Jami
Orrong Ward	1	3	8,518	73.82%	1.99%	CHOUDHURY, Samantha
South Yarra Ward	1	3	7,615	69.99%	2.31%	HELY, Kate
Toorak Ward	1	4	8,869	77.57%	2.31%	HUMPHRIES, Tom
Tooronga Ward	1	3	9,130	82.16%	2.17%	BELL, Jamie
Wattletree Ward	1	5	8,768	79.70%	2.06%	STEFANOPOULOS, Steve

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Strathbogie Shire Council	7	15	9,409	83.91%	6.93%	JEFFERY, Scott
						STEVENS, Fiona
						EWART-KENNEDY, Claire
						HALSALL, Vicki
						BINKS, Laura
						CARLSON, Gregory
						HOLLOWAY, Clark
Surf Coast Shire Council	9	16	30,125	83.44%	2.58%	
Otway Range Ward	3	4	9,852	83.40%	1.63%	STAPLETON, Libby
						WALKER, Leon
						BODSWORTH, Mike
Torquay Ward	3	6	10,276	83.50%	2.75%	PATTISON, Liz
						BOURKE, Rebecca
						BARKER, Paul
Winchelsea Ward	3	6	9,997	83.43%	3.33%	GRIST, Joel
						PHELPS, Tony
						SCHONFELDER,
						Adrian
						Dwight
Swan Hill Rural City Council	7	14*	14,004	76.49%	5.66%	KING, Stuart
						JENNINGS, Terry
						McPHEE, Les
						BROAD, Hugh
						THORNTON, Peta
						ROGERS, Lindsay
						ENGLEFIELD, Phillip

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Towong Shire Council	5	7	4,931	81.40%	2.74%	WORTMANN, David John WHITEHEAD, Andrew ANDERSON, Denise PITMAN, Jon TOLSHER, Peter
Wangaratta Rural City Council	7	16	22,820	81.10%	3.12%	
Appin Ward	1	2	3,418	85.58%	3.21%	MAXWELL, Tania
Bullawah Ward	1	2	3,286	79.15%	5.31%	FULLER, Dave
King River Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	3,264	–	–	BUSSELL, Harry
Ovens Ward	1	3	3,056	85.44%	2.18%	BENTON, Harvey
Warby Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	3,104	–	–	GRANT, Irene
Wareena Ward	1	3	3,395	79.82%	2.95%	FITZPATRICK, Ashlee
Yarrunga Ward	1	4	3,297	75.67%	1.88%	WINTERS, Allison
Warrnambool City Council	7	13	27,067	77.32%	4.23%	
Botanic Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	3,888	–	–	EDIS, Billy
Central Ward	1	2	3,981	76.87%	3.79%	ARNOTT, Debbie
Hopkins River Ward	1	2	3,871	76.78%	4.78%	BENTER, Willy
Pertobe Ward	1	4	3,642	78.61%	2.90%	WALSH, Matthew
Platypus Park Ward	1	2	4,099	77.14%	5.34%	JELLIE, Vicki
Russells Creek Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	3,830	–	–	BLAIN, Ben
Wollaston Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	3,756	–	–	ZIEGELER, Richard
Wellington Shire Council	9	16	34,651	81.63%	3.10%	

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Central Ward	3	4	12,401	79.86%	2.18%	ROSSETTI, Scott FOAT, Liz WELLS, Geoff
Coastal Ward	3	6	10,796	83.29%	3.84%	STEPHENS, Garry MADELEY, Cindy BANNERMAN, Catherine
Northern Ward	3	6	11,454	81.98%	3.35%	LOWE, Edward RIPPER, Carmel TATTERSON, John
West Wimmera Shire Council	5	6	3,017	85.68%	1.82%	HOBBS, Helen MEYER, Tim PRETLOVE, Jodie HICKS, Richard William HOULIHAN, Tom
Whitehorse City Council	11	48*	106,116	86.25%	2.46%	
Cootamundra Ward	1	6	9,636	87.62%	1.92%	SIMPSON, Kieran
Eley Ward	1	5*	10,169	85.88%	2.24%	GRIFFITHS, Daniel
Elgar Ward	1	4	9,125	84.28%	1.83%	BARKER, Blair
Kingsley Ward	1	7	9,613	86.54%	2.42%	LANGFORD, Kirsten
Lake Ward	1	4	9,956	87.92%	2.09%	WELLER, Hayley
Mahoneys Ward	1	4	10,292	86.14%	2.35%	MARTIN, Jason
Simpson Ward	1	2	10,118	87.64%	3.64%	CUTTS, Prue
Sparks Ward	1	5	8,877	84.00%	2.27%	ALLAN, Peter John
Terrara Ward	1	2	9,451	88.57%	3.55%	GUNN, Jarrod
Walker Ward	1	6	9,990	87.41%	2.44%	STENNETT, Ben
Wattle Ward	1	3	8,889	82.08%	2.14%	DAVENPORT, Andrew
Whittlesea City Council	11	57	161,358	81.60%	3.84%	
Bundoora Ward	1	8	15,296	82.03%	4.37%	ZINNI, Daniela

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Epping Ward	1	5	14,412	80.74%	3.93%	LENBERG, David
Ganbu Gulinj Ward	1	7	14,132	80.56%	3.84%	COX, Lawrie
Kirrip Ward	1	4	13,435	80.57%	4.02%	McLINDON, Aidan
Lalor Ward	1	3	15,823	80.41%	3.32%	KOZMEVSKI, Stevan
Mernda Ward	1	3	15,247	81.21%	3.21%	LAPPIN, Jarrod
Mill Park Ward	1	6	15,035	83.96%	3.52%	COLWELL, Blair
North Ward	1	7	13,955	81.33%	4.10%	STOW, Christine
Painted Hills Ward	1	2	14,895	82.12%	4.82%	GUNN, Deb
South Morang Ward	1	4	14,510	84.39%	2.71%	TAYLOR, Martin
Thomastown Ward	1	8	14,618	80.15%	4.52%	BROOKS, Nicholas James
Wodonga City Council	7	19	32,407	77.09%	3.29%	
Baranduda Range Ward	1	2	4,437	81.45%	3.60%	KNIGHT, Josh
Barnawartha North Ward	1	3	4,800	81.17%	2.77%	COWAN, Michelle
Huon Creek Ward	1	2	4,785	82.51%	4.13%	ALDRIDGE, Cassie
Lake Hume Ward	1	3	4,709	73.39%	2.63%	SEYMOUR, Hannah
Marimba Park Ward	1	3	4,603	73.84%	3.24%	QUILTY, Olga
Racecourse Ward	1	3	4,591	75.97%	3.07%	HALL, Libby
Sumsion Gardens Ward	1	3	4,482	71.00%	3.55%	GOBEL, Michael
Wyndham City Council	11	91*	169,311	81.18%	3.85%	
Bemin Ward	1	15	13,590	81.59%	6.25%	SINGH, Preet
Brinbeal Ward	1	8	15,652	82.32%	4.07%	SZATKOWSKI, Robert
Cheetham Ward	1	6	14,133	80.92%	2.37%	McINTYRE, Susan
Featherbrook Ward	1	9	15,443	81.57%	3.67%	HILL, Jasmine
Grange Ward	1	10	15,628	83.41%	4.55%	McGUIRE, Shannon
Heathdale Ward	1	3	15,869	77.82%	2.92%	BARRERA, Jennie
Iramoo Ward	1	7	15,683	80.22%	4.04%	KING, Maria
Quandong Ward	1	6	15,273	79.32%	3.24%	MAYNARD, Peter John

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Werribee Park Ward	1	3*	15,990	80.87%	2.22%	SHAW, Mia Frances
Williams Landing Ward	1	12	16,821	82.21%	5.02%	ZHAO, Larry
Wimba Ward	1	12	15,229	82.76%	4.02%	GILLIGAN, Josh
Yarra City Council	9	50*	68,723	73.21%	2.10%	
Boulevard Ward	1	6	7,279	74.64%	2.41%	HARRISON, Sharon
Curtain Ward	1	5	8,330	72.81%	1.76%	CROSSLAND, Edward
Hoddle Ward	1	7	6,936	66.68%	2.40%	WADE, Sophie
Langridge Ward	1	4	7,299	72.69%	1.58%	ASTON, Evangeline
Lennox Ward	1	7	7,902	75.01%	2.02%	DAVIES, Andrew
MacKillop Ward	1	4	7,982	68.60%	1.95%	JOLLY, Stephen
Melba Ward	1	7*	7,419	72.61%	2.90%	HO, Meca
Nicholls Ward	1	5	7,730	76.52%	1.61%	GOMEZ, Kenneth
Yarra Bend Ward	1	5	7,846	78.75%	2.38%	McKENZIE, Sarah
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	9	24	116,720	83.02%	4.03%	
Billanook Ward	1	2	14,709	83.45%	4.45%	HEENAN, Tim
Chandler Ward	1	3	12,371	82.50%	3.52%	WARD, Gareth
Chirnside Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	13,377	–	–	HIGGINS, Richard
Lyster Ward	1	3	12,118	84.45%	3.50%	MCILWAIN, Peter
Melba Ward	1	3	13,533	81.54%	2.71%	MAZZARELLA, Mitch
O'Shannassy Ward	1	7	12,521	79.99%	4.03%	CHILD, Jim
Ryrie Ward (Uncontested)	1	1	13,380	–	–	McALLISTER, Fiona
Streeton Ward	1	2	12,102	86.61%	5.08%	MARRIOTT, Jeff
Walling Ward	1	2	12,609	82.83%	4.92%	COX, Len
Yarriambiack Shire Council (Uncontested)	6	6	5,170	–	–	
Dunmunkle Ward (Uncontested)	2	2	1,767	–	–	KEEL, Melinda HEINTZE, Corinne

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Voters' roll	Turnout	Informality	Elected candidates
Hopetoun Ward (Uncontested)	2	2	1,637	–	–	McLEAN, Andrew LEHMANN, Chris K.
Warracknabeal Ward (Uncontested)	2	2	1,766	–	–	KIRK, Karly ZANKER, Kylie

Appendix 4:

Election managers and election offices

AWA = assisted wheelchair accessible,
IWA = independent wheelchair accessible

Council	Election manager	Election office address	Accessibility rating
Alpine Shire Council	Linda Parkinson	Bright Masonic Hall, 20 Hawthorn Lane, Bright	AWA
Ararat Rural City Council	Alan Dennis	Gum San Chinese Heritage Centre, 31–33 Lambert Street, Ararat	AWA
Ballarat City Council	Lynne Josephs	79–81 Bridge Mall, Ballarat Central	AWA
Banyule City Council	Ken Seiler	Factory 3, 25–31 Sherbourne Road, Briar Hill	AWA
Bass Coast Shire Council	Graeme Patterson	Old Post Office, 74 McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi	AWA
Baw Baw Shire Council	Brenda Barnes	Exhibition Hall, 15 Howitt Street, Warragul	AWA
Bayside City Council	Ruth West	Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, 14 Thomas Street, Hampton	AWA
Benalla Rural City Council	Wendy McDonald	75 Bridge Street East, Benalla	AWA
Boroondara City Council	Jenni Colgan	Chambly Hall, 405 Camberwell Road, Camberwell	AWA
Borough of Queenscliffe Council	Michelle Visser	Council Offices, 50 Learmonth Street, Queenscliff	AWA
Brimbank City Council	Jeff Bradley	Suite 2, Level 1, 25–29 Devonshire Road, Sunshine	AWA
Buloke Shire Council	Bevan Spencer	370 Broadway, Wycheproof	AWA
Campaspe Shire Council	Kate O'Connor	Former Echuca-Moama Information Centre, 2 Heygarth Street, Echuca	AWA
Cardinia Shire Council	Ian Herron	Comely Banks, 125 Bridge Road, Officer	IWA

Council	Election manager	Election office address	Accessibility rating
Casey City Council	Amanda Golding	Suite OF003, Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre, 125 High Street, Cranbourne	AWA
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Angela Ang	Former Visitor Information Centre, 53 Burns Street, Maryborough	AWA
Colac Otway Shire Council	Richard Gordon	16–20 Murray Street, Colac	AWA
Corangamite Shire Council	David Cadby	McCabe Room – Killara Complex, 210–212 Manifold Street, Camperdown	AWA
Darebin City Council	Gerry Cartwright	Preston City Hall, 284 Gower Street, Preston	IWA
East Gippsland Shire Council	Sandra Wood	Ground Floor, 76 Main Street, Bairnsdale	AWA
Frankston City Council	Peter Williams	Suite G.03, 405 Nepean Highway, Frankston	AWA
Gannawarra Shire Council	PJ Williamson	36 Victoria Street, Kerang	AWA
Glen Eira City Council	Adrienne Osborne	DC Bricker Social Room – Princes Park, Beech Street, Caulfield South	IWA
Glenelg Shire Council	Kathryn Joseph	Portland Drill Hall, 26 Bentinck Street, Portland	IWA
Golden Plains Shire Council	Richard Shiells	Bannockburn Cultural Centre, 27 High Street, Bannockburn	AWA
Greater Bendigo City Council	Brenda Day	Level 1, 56–60 King Street, Bendigo	AWA
Greater Dandenong City Council	Bill Irvine	Ground Floor, 237 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong	AWA
Greater Geelong City Council	Mark Hughson	403 Moorabool Street, South Geelong	AWA
Greater Shepparton City Council	Victoria Parker	Shepparton Senior Citizens Centre, 132 Welsford Street, Shepparton	AWA
Hepburn Shire Council	Mark Taylor	79A Raglan Street, Daylesford	AWA
Hindmarsh Shire Council	Vanessa Reynolds	Jeparit Memorial Hall, 12 Lower Roy Street, Jeparit	AWA
Hobsons Bay City Council	Maree Fitzpatrick	Hobsons Bay Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona	IWA

Council	Election manager	Election office address	Accessibility rating
Horsham Rural City Council	Peter Lee	Former Kindergarten, 23 Roberts Avenue, Horsham	AWA
Hume City Council	Simon Greaves	36 Macedon Street, Sunbury	AWA
Indigo Shire Council	Derek Duncan	Ground Floor, 8 Albert Road, Beechworth	AWA
Kingston City Council	Robyn Farmer	Suites 1.08 and 1.09, Level 1, 4–10 Jamieson Street, Cheltenham	AWA
Knox City Council	Diane Agius	Former Knox Gymnastics Centre, 4 Mossfield Avenue, Ferntree Gully	AWA
Latrobe City Council	Janette Gibson	Moe Town Hall, 69 Albert Street, Moe	AWA
Loddon Shire Council	Mandy-Lee Cooper	37 Peppercorn Way, Serpentine	AWA
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Kate Daniel	Woodend Community Hub, 49 Forest Street, Woodend	IWA
Manningham City Council	Erin Wood	Manningham Civic Centre, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster	AWA
Mansfield Shire Council	David Westphalen	Visitor Information Centre, 175 High Street, Mansfield	AWA
Maribyrnong City Council	Neville Healey	Unit 14, 61 Wattle Road, Maidstone	AWA
Maroondah City Council	Sandi Miller	Former Maroondah City Council Offices, 304A Maroondah Highway, Ringwood	IWA
Melbourne City Council	Brenda Novak	Drill Hall, 51–57 Victoria Street, Melbourne	AWA
Melton City Council	Priscilla Mayne	16–18 Palmerston Street, Melton	AWA
Merri-Bek City Council	Elise Scully	Brunswick Town Hall, 233 Sydney Road, Brunswick	AWA
Mildura Rural City Council	Gary Green	52 Lime Avenue, Mildura	IWA
Mitchell Shire Council	Chris Chadwick	125 High Street, Broadford	AWA
Monash City Council	William Kennedy	Oakleigh Chambers, 1A Atherton Road, Oakleigh	AWA
Moonee Valley City Council	Tamara Moravski	605A Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds	AWA

Council	Election manager	Election office address	Accessibility rating
Moorabool Shire Council	Noel Shillito	Bacchus Marsh Bowling Club, Lord Street, Bacchus Marsh	AWA
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Julie Allan	13/143 Point Nepean Road, Dromana	AWA
Mount Alexander Shire Council	Kelvin Tori	Ray Bradfield Rooms, 33 Forest Street, Castlemaine	AWA
Moyne Shire Council	Gordon McLeod	89 Dunlop Street, Mortlake	AWA
Murrindindi Shire Council	Susan Cross	Murrindindi Shire Council Yea Office, 15 The Semi Circle, Yea	AWA
Nillumbik Shire Council	Doug Hocking	970 Main Road, Eltham	AWA
Northern Grampians Shire Council	Andrew Esplan	Media Centre, Grandstand 1, Central Park, 14–18 Main Street, Stawell	AWA
Port Phillip City Council	Rodney Van Cooten	Port Melbourne Town Hall, 333 Bay Street, Port Melbourne	AWA
Pyrenees Shire Council	Natasha Amendola	Beeripmo Development Centre, 1 Lawrence Street, Beaufort	AWA
South Gippsland Shire Council	Janine Taylor	6–12 Smith Street, Leongatha	AWA
Southern Grampians Shire Council	Jenny Porter	117 Thompson Street, Hamilton	AWA
Stonnington City Council	Mike Harrison	Malvern Town Hall, 1251 High Street, Malvern	IWA
Strathbogie Shire Council	Helen Gwilliam	Strathbogie Shire Council Offices, 109A Binney Street, Euroa	AWA
Surf Coast Shire Council	Richard Trigg	1/1 Haystacks Drive, Torquay	AWA
Swan Hill Rural City Council	Lee Tompsett	Stradbroke Hall, 44 - 50 Rutherford Street, Swan Hill	AWA
Towong Shire Council	Lynne Tickell	Corryong Customer Service Centre, 76 Hanson Street, Corryong	IWA
Wangaratta Rural City Council	Chris Browne	Former Visitor Information Centre, 104 Murphy Street, Wangaratta	AWA
Warrnambool City Council	Ian Sadler	Warrnambool Civic Centre, 25 Liebig Street, Warrnambool	AWA
Wellington Shire Council	Frederick Coleman	Former Fulham TAFE, 19 Lyon Crescent, Fulham	AWA

Council	Election manager	Election office address	Accessibility rating
West Wimmera Shire Council	Antony Boland	Former Senior Citizens Clubrooms, 54–56 Langford Street, Edenhope	AWA
Whitehorse City Council	Genevieve Hammerton	Ground Floor, 1–5 Station Street, Mitcham	AWA
Whittlesea City Council	Maureen Gee	Suite 28 Level 1, 797 Plenty Road, South Morang	AWA
Wodonga City Council	Constance Constatas	82 High Street, Wodonga	AWA
Wyndham City Council	Colleen Kopelke	Warehouse 3, 5 Connect Road, Truganina	AWA
Yarra City Council	Jo McCoy	Loughnan Hall, 67–69 Coppin Street, Richmond	AWA
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	Greg Shillabeer	Silvan Public Hall, 271 Monbulk Road, Silvan	IWA
Yarriambiack Shire Council	Louise Byrne	Yarriambiack Shire Council Offices, 34 Lyle Street, Warracknabeal	AWA

Centralised activity sites

Centralised activity site	Accessibility rating
Sandown Park	IWA
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre	IWA

Appendix 5:

Communication products

Appendix 5.1: Sample public notices

Close of roll

Alpine Shire Council postal election

My council, my vote



You must be enrolled to vote

A general election for Sample Council will be held in October 2024. To be able to vote in the election, you must be enrolled by the close of roll at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024**. Two categories of voters can be enrolled to vote in the Sample Council election: State-enrolled voters and Council-enrolled voters.

State-enrolled voters

Am I enrolled to vote?

You are automatically enrolled for this election if:

- you will be 18 years of age or over on Saturday 26 October 2024 and
- you live in the Alpine Shire Council and you are on the State electoral roll for your current address.

You need to enrol if:

- you are an Australian citizen aged 18 or over on Saturday 26 October 2024 and
- you live in the Alpine Shire Council and you are not on the State electoral roll or
- you have lived at your current residential address within the Alpine Shire Council for at least a month and have not yet updated your enrolment details, including any changes to your postal address.

How do I enrol?

You can enrol online at vec.vic.gov.au

You can also download an enrolment form from the website.

All enrolment applications must be received by the Victorian Electoral Commission by the close of roll at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024**.

How can I check my State enrolment?

You can check your enrolment details online at vec.vic.gov.au at any time, or call 131 832.

Council-enrolled voters

Am I enrolled to vote?

To be a Council-enrolled voter, you must be:

- 18 years of age or over on Saturday 26 October 2024 and
- not a State-enrolled voter within the Alpine Shire Council.

New rules mean you are no longer automatically enrolled if you are a non-resident property owner (e.g. a landlord or a business owner that pays rates). If you are a non-resident property owner within the Alpine Shire Council, you need to apply to enrol if you wish to vote in the Sample Council election.

Who else can enrol & vote?

You may also apply to enrol if:

- you have purchased a rateable property within the Alpine Shire Council location since the last election but you are not a resident of the Alpine Shire Council, or
- you are not an Australian citizen and you live in, and pay rates for, a property within the Alpine Shire Council location, or
- you pay rates on a property you occupy within the Alpine Shire Council and have no other voting entitlement within the Alpine Shire Council, for example you are a shop tenant and pay rates to the Council for your tenancy, and you have no other voting entitlement within the Alpine Shire Council, or
- you are a director or company secretary of a corporation within the Alpine Shire Council that pays rates to Sample Council and you have no other voting entitlement within the Alpine Shire Council.

How do I apply to be a Council-enrolled voter?

If you meet any of the above criteria and wish to enrol, contact Sample Council on 0000 0000 for a council enrolment form. Council enrolment forms must be received by the Council by the close of roll at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024**.

How can I check if I am Council-enrolled?

You can check your enrolment details by contacting the Council on 0000 0000.

Thinking about standing for election?

To nominate as a candidate for Sample Council, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for Sample Council and
- be eligible to become a councillor and
- have completed the mandatory candidate training provided by Local Government Victoria before lodging your nomination with the Election Manager.

For further information, visit vec.vic.gov.au

Enrolment closes
4 pm Wednesday 7 August 2024

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

For enquiries in languages other than English:
• العربية (Arabic) 9209 0100 • ܐܪܡܝܐ (Assyrian) 9209 0160 • မြန်မာစာ (Burmese) 9209 0161 • 简体中文 (Mandarin) 9209 0106 • 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101
• Hrvatski (Croatian) 9209 0102 • دری (Dari) 9209 0193 • Thuəŋjəŋ (Dinka) 9209 0119 • Ελληνικά (Greek) 9209 0103 • آذربای (Azerbaijani) 9209 0162 • Italiano (Italian) 9209 0104
• Khmer (Khmer) 9209 0192 • 한국어 (Korean) 9209 0194 • македонски (Macedonian) 9209 0105 • नेपाली (Nepali) 9209 0163 • فارسی (Persian) 9209 0195 • ไทย (Thai) 9209 0164
• Türkçe (Turkish) 9209 0110 • اردو (Urdu) 9209 0165 • Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 • All other non-English languages 9209 0112
Authorised by S. Bluemel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionsvic





Victorian
Electoral
Commission

Victorian Electoral Commission

149

My council, my vote



Ballot packs will be mailed to voters enrolled in the Alpine Shire Council general election from Monday 7 October. Complete and return your ballot material ASAP. Ballot material must be in the mail or delivered to the election manager by **6 pm on Friday 25 October**.

If you will be away when ballot packs are mailed, or your address has changed since Wednesday 7 August, you can request for your ballot pack to be redirected by completing the online redirection form at vec.vic.gov.au/redirections, or call 131 832.

Requests for redirection must be received by
5 pm on Monday 9 September.

Large print or braille ballot papers are available for voters who are blind or have low vision—please register by 5 pm Tuesday 10 September. To register, call 03 8620 1314 during business hours.

If you will be away during the voting period (7–25 October), you can go to your local election office to vote in person, from 10 am on Wednesday 18 September.

The Alpine Shire Council election office is at:

Bright Masonic Hall
20 Hawthorn Lane
Bright

To nominate as a candidate, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters roll for Alpine Shire Council AND

- be eligible to become a councillor should you be elected AND
- have completed the mandatory candidate training before lodging your nomination with the election manager.

To nominate, complete the nomination form and lodge it with the election manager together with the \$250 nomination fee. Nomination forms can be lodged by appointment during business hours from Monday 9 September until 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September at the election office.

Visit vec.vic.gov.au for more information and to pre-complete your nomination form using the online Candidate Helper. The online Candidate Helper will be available from Tuesday 20 August.

If you use the online Candidate Helper, print your pre-completed form and make an appointment to lodge it with the election manager along with the nomination fee.

Call the election manager from Monday 9 September
on 131 832 to make a nomination appointment.

Nominations close 12 noon Tuesday 17 September.



6 pm Thursday 5 September at Bright Masonic Hall,
20 Hawthorn Lane, Bright

Candidate information kits containing nomination forms and other electoral information will be available online and from the election manager.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

For enquiries in languages other than English:
 Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0160 - آسٹریائی (Burmese) 9209 0160 - 简体中文 (Mandarin) 9209 0160 - 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0171 - Hrvatstki (Croatian) 9209 0102 - داری (Dari) 9209 0183 - Thuzongl (Dinka) 9209 0119 -
 Ελληνικά (Greek) 9209 0163 - Hazargi (Hazargi) 9209 0184 - हिन्दी (Hindi) 9209 0162 - 한국어 (Korean) 9209 0114 - македонски (Macedonian) 9209 0183 - नेपाली (Nepali) 9209 0163 - پارسی (Persian) 9209 0195 -
 Türkçe (Turkish) 9209 0110 - ไทย (Thai) 9209 0116 - Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 - All other languages 9209 0112
 vecic@cam.ac.uk | 131 832 | @electrolife Authorised by: Bluenamed, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.



Voting details notice

My council, my vote



An election will be held for Alpine Shire Council.

Ballot packs containing voting material will be mailed to enrolled voters from **Monday 7 October.**

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Tuesday 15 October** please visit **vec.vic.gov.au** to complete the online replacement form, or call **131 832** to arrange a replacement.

Candidates who have nominated for election are listed in the ballot packs and at vec.vic.gov.au

A photo and candidate statement will also be included if provided by candidates. Responses to a candidate questionnaire, if provided, are available at vec.vic.gov.au.

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you want to see elected, then number all the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number **every box** and only use each number once.

Put your completed ballot paper in the ballot paper envelope, complete the declaration, then post it ASAP using the reply-paid envelope provided, or hand deliver it during election office hours to:

Sample election office address

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were enrolled at 4 pm on Wednesday 7 August. This includes state-enrolled and council-enrolled voters.

If you don't vote and don't have a valid excuse, you may be fined.

Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand delivered by **6 pm Friday 25 October**.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

For enquires in languages other than English:

Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0160	عربى (Assyrian) 9209 0160	မြန်မာ (Burmese) 9209 0161	普通话 (Mandarin) 9209 0106	廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101
Hrvatski (Croatian) 9209 0162	داری (Dari) 9209 0193	മലയാളം (Malayalam) 9209 0119	एङ्ग्रेजी (English) 9209 0103	हिज़ारी (Hazaragi) 9209 0162
Italiano (Italian) 9209 0104	한국어 (Korean) 9209 0194	македонски (Macedonian) 9209 0163	नेपाली (Nepali) 9209 0163	فارسی (Persian) 9209 0195
ภาษาไทย (Thai) 9209 0164	اردو (Urdu) 9209 0165	தெலுగ్గు (Telugu) 9209 0111	All other non-English languages 9209 0112	

Turkish (Turkish) S. Blumental, Electoral Commissioner, 536 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionsvic



Reminder notice

Alpine Shire Council postal election

My council, my vote

An election is being held for Alpine Shire Council.

Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material were mailed to enrolled voters from **Monday 7 October**.

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Tuesday 15 October** please visit vec.vic.gov.au to complete the online replacement form, or call **131 832** to arrange a replacement.

Candidates

Candidates who have nominated for election are listed in the ballot packs and at vec.vic.gov.au

How to vote correctly

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you want to see elected, then number all the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number **every box** and only use each number once.

How to return your ballot pack

Put your completed ballot paper in the ballot paper envelope, complete the declaration, then post it ASAP using the reply-paid envelope provided, or hand deliver it during election office hours to:

Sample election office address

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were enrolled at 4 pm on Wednesday 7 August. This includes state-enrolled and council-enrolled voters.

If you don't vote and don't have a valid excuse, you may be fined.

Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand delivered by **6 pm Friday 25 October**.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

For enquiries in languages other than English:

* Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0100 * Azərbaycanca (Azerbaijani) 9209 0160 * বাংলা (Burmese) 9209 0161 * 简体中文 (Mandarin) 9209 0106 * 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101

* Hrvatski (Croatian) 9209 0102 * Dansk (Danish) 9209 0193 * Tshazungja (Dinka) 9209 01119 * Ελληνικά (Greek) 9209 0103 * اوردو (Hazaregi) 9209 0162 * Italiano (Italian) 9209 0104

* Khmer (Khmer) 9209 0192 * 한국어 (Korean) 9209 0194 * македонски (Macedonian) 9209 0105 * नेपाली (Nepali) 9209 0163 * فارسی (Persian) 9209 0195 * ไทย (Thai) 9209 0164

* Türkçe (Turkish) 9209 0110 * اردو (Urdu) 9209 0165 * Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 * All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorised by S. Bluemmel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionsvic

 Victorian Electoral Commission

Declaration of results

Alpine Shire Council election

Declaration of results

The following candidates were elected to Alpine Shire Council at the general election held in October 2024:

NICHOLAS, Sarah (1st elected)

ANDERSEN, John (2nd elected)

GRAHAM, Gareth (3rd elected)

SMITH, Peter (4th elected)

TANZEN, Noah (5th elected)

BYRNE, David (6th elected)

RONCO, Jean-Pierre (7th elected)



Appendix 5.2: Statewide media releases and advisories

Council-specific media releases and advisories (all councils)

Enrol now for the <Council Name> election	Monday 29 July 2024
Call for candidates for <Council Name> election	Thursday 22 August 2024
Ballot packs mailed for <Council Name> election	Monday 7 October 2024
Voting closes soon for <Council Name> election	Tuesday 15 October 2024
New councillor(s) for <Council Name>	Between Monday 28 October 2024 and Thursday 14 November 2024

Statewide media releases and advisories

Victorians urged to enrol for upcoming local council elections	Monday 22 July 2024
Media advisory: 2024 local council elections briefing	Monday 22 July 2024
Last chance to enrol for Victorian council elections	Friday 2 August 2024
News alert: Enrolment closes tomorrow for October's council local elections	Tuesday 6 August 2024
Nominations open soon for Victorian local council elections	Monday 26 August 2024
Media advisory: Accessing candidate information for the 2024 Victorian local council elections	Friday 6 September 2024
Nominations for the 2024 Victorian local council elections now open	Monday 9 September 2024
Over 4.6 million enrolled for local council elections	Tuesday 10 September 2024
Time is running out to nominate for this year's local council elections	Monday 16 September 2024
Electoral Commissioner calls for transparency in the use of AI in upcoming local council elections	Tuesday 17 September 2024
Media advisory: Media attendance at local council election ballot draw	Tuesday 17 September 2024
Nominations are in for October local council elections	Wednesday 18 September 2024
Democracy ambassadors help community voices 'Be Heard'	Thursday 19 September 2024
VEC retires 16 local council election candidates	Monday 30 September 2024
Voting starts next week for Victoria's local council elections	Friday 4 October 2024
Police investigate break-in at the Ballarat election office	Thursday 10 October 2024
Voters urged to request a replacement ballot pack following van theft	Friday 18 October 2024

Statewide media releases and advisories

Local council elections voting deadline looms	Monday 21 October 2024
Voters urged to request a replacement ballot pack following theft	Thursday 24 October 2024
Final day of voting	Friday 25 October 2024
Media advisory: Results timelines for Victorian local council elections	Friday 25 October 2024
Media advisory: Media attendance at results declarations	Wednesday 6 November 2024
Suspected postal vote tampering in 2 local council elections referred for inquiry	Wednesday 13 November 2024
Didn't vote in the 2024 local council elections?	Monday 17 February 2025
Non-voters asked to explain why they didn't vote in the 2024 local council elections	Friday 7 March 2025
Infringements sent to 2024 local council election non-voters	Monday 14 April 2025
VCAT voids Lalor Ward's 2024 local council election result	Friday 9 May 2025
Results upheld for the 2024 Knox City Council, Baird Ward election	Thursday 5 June 2025
Act on penalty reminder notice or risk enforcement action	Wednesday 2 July 2025

Appendix 5.3: VoterAlert advisories

SMS alerts

Close of roll – sent from Wednesday 17 July to Wednesday 31 July 2024

VoterAlert: Vic council elections will be held by post this Oct. Make sure your details are correct before 4pm Wed 7 Aug. More info <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>. If you'd rather not open links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832 to check. Unsubscribe <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Uncontested election – sent from Wednesday 25 September to Tuesday 1 October 2024

VoterAlert: the election in your area is uncontested, as only one person nominated per vacancy. You do not need to vote. More info: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>. If you'd rather not visit links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Mail-out of ballot packs – sent from Monday 7 October to Monday 14 October 2024

VoterAlert: ballot packs for the local council elections are on their way, arriving by 15 Oct. Complete and return before 6pm on Fri 25 Oct. For more info visit <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Error in printed candidate statement – sent Tuesday 15 October 2024

Port Phillip City Council

VoterAlert: there is an error in the printed candidate statement of Bridget Mullahy contained in the Port Phillip City Council, South Melbourne Ward ballot pack. Correct statement is on our website at vec.vic.gov.au/south-melb-ward. If you'd rather not visit links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Australia Post van stolen in Oakleigh – sent Friday 18 October 2024

Monash City Council

VoterAlert: an Aus Post van was stolen in the Oakleigh area on Thursday 17 October. Visit <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/monash> to find out what to do if you recently posted your ballot pack in this area. If you'd rather not visit links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Reminder close of voting – sent from Tuesday 22 October to Wednesday 23 October 2024

VoterAlert: return your council election ballot pack by 6pm Fri Oct 25. If your ballot pack hasn't arrived, find out how to get a replacement at <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>. Ignore if you've already voted or asked for a replacement. If you'd rather not visit links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

**Street post box stolen in Brighton – sent Thursday
24 October 2024**
Bayside City Council

VoterAlert: an Aus Post box was stolen from 79 Asling Street, Brighton on Mon 21 Oct. Visit vec.vic.gov.au/Bayside to find out what to do if you posted your ballot pack in this post box on Sun 20 or Mon 21 Oct. If you'd rather not open links in this message look up the VEC website or call 131 832 to check. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

**Votes damaged in street post box fire – sent Friday
25 October 2024**
Wodonga City Council

VoterAlert: your ballot pack was damaged in a fire at an Aus Post box on Kelliher Ave, Wodonga. Visit the Wodonga City Council election office at 82 High St, Wodonga for a replacement. If you can't make it in person, call us to request personal delivery on (03) 8619 1841.

Voting closes at 6pm Fri 25 Oct. You will not be fined if you choose not to vote again.

If you'd rather not open links in this message look up the VEC website or call 131 832 to check. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Email alerts

Close of roll email

Do not reply to this email. Please go to an unmonitored phone. Contact us with any questions.

VoterAlert 

Hi (First Name)

Victorian local council elections are being held by post this October. You must be correctly enrolled by **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August**.

What you need to do

Not sure if your enrolment details are up to date? You can check online at vec.vic.gov.au/enrolment

If you've changed your address or name since you last voted in an election, you should update your details. Please also check the postal address listed on your enrolment, as this is where we will send your ballot pack.

[CHECK MY DETAILS](#)

If your details haven't changed since the last time you voted, get ready to vote. All voting in this election is by post. We will start posting ballot packs out from Monday 7 October.

The full list of candidates will be available on our website from 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September.

[Find out more about your council election](#)

Voting is compulsory – don't risk a fine.

If you own properties in more than one Victorian council

Some people are eligible to enrol in more than one council. If you own or pay rates on a property in a Victorian council other than where you normally live, you can apply to enrol with that council. This is known as council enrolment.

Contact the council directly for more information about council enrolment.

[Find out more about council enrolment](#)

You must vote for all councils you are enrolled in.

Electoral structure changes

Over half of Victoria's local councils have new electoral structures or have changed internal ward boundaries. You may be voting in a new ward this October.

You can check your council's ward boundaries on our [interactive map](#).

Information in your language

You can find election information in 29 languages other than English on our website.

[Find in-language information](#)

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website at vec.vic.gov.au. You can also hover over links to confirm they go to a vec.vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have 'Victorian Electoral Commission <voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au>' as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information

Visit vec.vic.gov.au or call us on 131 832 between 9:30 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Authorised by S. Blumenthal, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll. Responses are not monitored.

[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)



vec.vic.gov.au | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Uncontested election email



Ballot pack mail-out email



Error in printed candidate statement Port Phillip City Council



Australia Post van stolen in Oakleigh Monash City Council



Last week to vote email

VoterAlert



Reminder: for the 2024 local council elections closes at 6 pm
this Friday 25 October

Please ignore this email if you've already voted or asked for a replacement ballot pack.

How to vote

Voting in these elections is by post.

Please follow the instructions in your ballot pack to complete your vote and mail it back to us as soon as possible. You can find instructions on [how to fill out a ballot paper](#) on our website.

Voting closes at **6 pm on Friday 25 October**, but your total mail collection times may be earlier than this. We recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

You can also drop your vote off at your local election office.

Find my election office

If you don't get a ballot pack

If you haven't received your ballot pack in the mail yet, you can ask us to send you a replacement by:

- visiting your election office* to get a replacement on the spot. You can fill in your vote there and return it straight away
- calling us on [131 832](tel:131 832) between 8:30 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday
- filing in our [online form](#).

*This must be the election office for your enrolled address. [Check your enrolment details](#) if you've recently moved.

Find my election office

Information in your language

Our website has information in more than 20 languages. There are also videos explaining how to vote in 10 different languages.

Find information in your language

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website: vec.vic.gov.au. You can hover your mouse over links to confirm they go to a vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have "Victorian Electoral Commission <voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au>" as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information

For more information visit [yourlocalcouncil](https://www.vec.vic.gov.au) or call us on 121 832 between 8:30 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday.

Authorised by S. Blumenthal, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne, Victoria

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3006

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll.
Responses are not monitored.

UNSUBSCRIBE



[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Street post box stolen in Brighton

Bayside City Council

Don't reply to this email. Repress go to an unauthorised inbox. Contact us with any questions.

VoterAlert



Hi (First Name)

An Australia Post street post box was stolen on Monday 21 October at 79 Asling Street (corner Martin Street) in Brighton. This street post box is in Bayside City Council.

If you put your completed ballot pack in this box between 9 am Sunday 20 October and 9:30 am Monday 21 October please **visit the Bayside City Council election office** to get a replacement ballot on the spot.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall
14 Thomas Street Hampton VIC 3168

You can fill in your vote there and return it straight away between:

- 9 am to **8 pm** Thursday 24 October
- 9 am to **6 pm** Friday 25 October

You can also call us on **131 832**. Voting closes at **6 pm this Friday 25 October**

Find election office

Australia Post and Victoria Police are investigating this incident. If you have any information about the theft, call Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or visit crimestopper@vic.com.au

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website: vec.vic.gov.au. You can hover your mouse over links to confirm they go to a vec.vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have 'Victorian Electoral Commission - voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au' as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information

Visit vec.vic.gov.au or call us on **131 832** between:

- 8:30 am and 8 pm Thursday 24 October
- 8:30 am and 6 pm Friday 25 October

Authorised by S. Stannard, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne, Victoria

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll. Responses are not monitored.

UNSUBSCRIBE



[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Appendix 6:

Sample ballot material

Outer envelope

Sample Council

If undeliverable, return to
Locked Bag 0000
LOCALITY VIC 0000

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA
PRIORITY

STAT-ENVM938 06/24

Local council elections 2024
Postal ballot pack

Voting closes 6 pm
Friday 25 October

 Victorian
Electoral
Commission

Reply-paid envelope

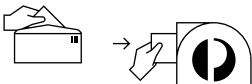
Sample Council
Sample Ward

Delivery address:
Locked Bag 0000
LOCALITY VIC 0000



No stamp required
if posted in Australia


Sample Council
Sample Ward
STAT-ENVM937 07/24



Post your completed ballot pack
before 6 pm on Friday 25 October

Local post box collection times vary. Check the
collection time on your post box to make sure your
vote is in the mail on time.



Election Manager
Sample Election Office
Sample Ward
Reply Paid 00000
LOCALITY VIC 0000

Ballot paper envelope

Ballot paper envelope

1. →

2. →

3. →

4. →

5. →

 Victorian
Electoral
Commission

STAT-ENV-LG-003 06/24

How to vote

1. Complete your ballot paper/s.
2. Put your completed ballot paper/s inside this envelope and seal it.
3. Sign the declaration on the back of this envelope.
We remove it before counting to keep your vote secret.

Voters unable to sign: Blind or low vision voters, or voters with low literacy or limited English can ask someone to sign for them. The authorised person must sign and write their name on the back of this envelope.

4. Put this ballot paper envelope into the reply-paid envelope and seal it.
5. Post it straight away.

Candidate leaflet

Voting closes

6 pm Friday

25 October 2024

All voting in this election is by post.

Post your vote before voting closes.

We cannot accept late votes.

Local post box collection times vary. Check the collection time on your post box to make sure your vote is in the mail on time.

You can also drop your vote off during business hours to:

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

For more information, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](#) or call 131 832 during business hours.

Voting is compulsory

You are enrolled to vote in this election.

Voting is your right. By voting, you get to have a say in who represents you on your local council.

Voting is also a responsibility. If you don't vote, you may get a fine.

If your enrolment details have changed, it is your responsibility to update them. Visit [vec.vic.gov.au/update](#) for more information.

Sample Council

Sample Ward



Candidate leaflet

Sample Council election 2024

Sample Ward

Sample Ward



Notice

The contents of candidate statements are provided by the candidates. Any enquiries about candidate statements should be directed to the relevant candidate. Candidate statements are not verified or endorsed by the election manager. Candidate statements are also available at [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

Candidates may also provide answers to a questionnaire. Responses are available at [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

 Victorian Electoral Commission

Ballot paper

Sample Council

Sample Ward

Election of 1 Councillor

Number the boxes 1 to 4 in the order of your choice.

Number every box to make your vote count.

You must not use any number more than once.

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

Melbourne City Council elections candidate information booklet

Voting closes 6 pm Friday

25 October 2024

All voting in this election is by post.

Post your vote before voting closes. We cannot accept late votes.

Local post box collection times vary. Check the collection time on your post box to make sure your vote is in the mail on time.

You can also drop your vote off during business hours to:

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

For more information, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](#) or call 131 832 during business hours.

Voting is compulsory

You are enrolled to vote in this election.

Voting is your right. By voting, you get to have a say in who represents you on your local council.

Voting is also a responsibility. If you don't vote, you may get a fine.

If your enrolment details have changed, it is your responsibility to update them. Visit [vec.vic.gov.au/update](#) for more information.

Candidate information

Melbourne City Council elections 2024

This ballot pack contains 2 ballot papers: one for councillors and one for the leadership team (Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor). Follow the instructions on each ballot paper to complete your vote.

Before voting, you can use the information in this booklet to learn more about each candidate and their voting preferences.

Remember, any voting preferences given by candidates are just a suggestion. You can fill in your ballot in order of your preference.

This booklet is divided into 2 sections for each ballot paper. Candidates are listed in the order they appear on the ballot paper.

 Victorian Electoral Commission

Melbourne City Council elections ballot papers

City of Melbourne

Election of the Leadership Team of the Melbourne City Council

Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor

Number the boxes 1 to 11 in the order of your choice.

Number every box to make your vote count.

You must not use any number more than once.

☐	VAN DER CRAATS, Anthony	Lord Mayor	RIP UP THE BIKE LANES! ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY TEAM HAKIM - RESIDENT INDEPENDENTS TEAM NICK REECE TEAM MORGAN - MAKE MELBOURNE SAFE TEAM KOUTA LIBERALS FOR MELBOURNE CITY TEAM WOOD THE GREENS VOICES FOR MELBOURNE LABOR FOR MELBOURNE
☐	CRAGG, David Keith	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	KIM, Eylem	Lord Mayor	
☐	POON, Bruce	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	HAKIM, Jamal	Lord Mayor	
☐	ANATOLITIS, Esther	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	REECE, Nick	Lord Mayor	
☐	CAMPBELL, Roshena	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	MORGAN, Gary	Lord Mayor	
☐	GE, Liz	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	KOUTOUFIDES, Anthony	Lord Mayor	
☐	KHAN, Intaj	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	RIZA, Mariam	Lord Mayor	
☐	MARTIN, Luke	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	WOOD, Arron	Lord Mayor	
☐	DEERING, Erin	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	INGLETON, Roxane	Lord Mayor	
☐	MCRAE McLEOD, Marley	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	BISINELLA, Greg	Lord Mayor	
☐	STEVENSON, Megan	Deputy Lord Mayor	
☐	REED, Phil	Lord Mayor	
☐	WILLS, Virginia	Deputy Lord Mayor	

City of Melbourne Election of 9 Councillors of the Melbourne City Council

City of Melbourne

Either

Place the single figure 1 in one, and one only of these three boxes, to indicate the group voting ticket which you wish to adopt as your vote.

☐ TEAM WOOD	☐ TEAM MORGAN MAKE MELBOURNE SAFE	☐ VOICES FOR MELBOURNE	☐ TEAM HAKIM - RESIDENT INDEPENDENTS	☐ TEAM KOUTA	☐ RIP UP THE BIKE LANES!	☐ TEAM PARTICIPATE	☐ ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY	☐ INNOVATE MELBOURNE	☐ LIBERALS FOR MELBOURNE CITY	☐ LABOR FOR MELBOURNE	☐ YOUR VOICE MATTERS TO ME	☐ THE GREENS	☐ TEAM ELVIS MARTIN	☐ TEAM NICK REECE
------------------------------------	--	---	---	-------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	--	--	---	-------------------------------------	--	--

Or

Place the numbers 1 to 58 in the squares immediately to the left of the name of the respective candidates so as to indicate the order of your preference for them.

☐ JILL BURGILL Team 000001	☐ CAMELLO, Rafael Team 000002	☐ MASTERS, Terry Team 000003	☐ SMITH, Richard Team 000004	☐ LIL, Oishi Team 000005	☐ GEL, Sandra Team 000006	☐ SAITO, Andrea Team 000007	☐ KATVAL, Aashvi Team 000008	☐ KOWSE, Andrew Team 000009	☐ GUEST, David Team 000010	☐ GRIFFITH, David Team 000011	☐ MITCHELL, Eryka Team 000012	☐ BALL, China Team 000013	☐ MARTIN, Dana Team 000014	☐ LOONEY, David Team 000015	☐ DADIC, David Ray Team 000016	☐ SING, Z
☐ OKE, Cathy Team 000017	☐ CADZELL, Matthew Team 000018	☐ HAYDEN, Christopher, James Team 000019	☐ LAM, Lawrence Team 000020	☐ RAMANI, Zoya Team 000021	☐ VIRGO, Prasad Team 000022	☐ JANDA, Prashant Team 000023	☐ KANGAR, Kabe Team 000024	☐ GREENWOOD, James Team 000025	☐ VEDON, Yusef Team 000026	☐ SHENAI, Anshu Raj Team 000027	☐ DUBBIN, Barry Team 000028	☐ HADON, Anna Team 000029	☐ GAGARLY, Lydia Team 000030	☐ SCOTT, Mark Team 000031	☐ FOX, Ben Team 000032	☐ LANG, Jane
☐ ZEPHOS, Michael Paul Team 000033	☐ GAO, Judy Team 000034	☐ CANNEY, Emma Elizabeth Team 000035	☐ DANDRAMULU, Divya Team 000036	☐ CANEY, Emily Team 000037	☐ ALDO, Michael Team 000038	☐ BISH, Barry Team 000039	☐ MURRAY, Stuart Team 000040	☐ PANTOSOL, Jennifer Team 000041	☐ LIN, Ping Team 000042	☐ MOORE, Paul James Team 000043	☐ STANLEY, Stephen Team 000044	☐ COLLIER, Simon Team 000045	☐ HANDELY, Emma Team 000046	☐ KANGARAL, Ashwaga Team 000047	☐ YOUNG, Michael Team 000048	☐ FRENCH, Catherine Team 000049

Ungrouped

☐ NEWBY, Graham
Team 000050

Note: Group voting tickets and indication of preferences are published in the booklet provided in your ballot pack.

How to vote leaflet

Uncontested ward leaflets

**Yarriambiack Shire Council
election 2024**
Hopetoun Ward

At the close of nominations for the Yarriambiack Shire Council, Hopetoun Ward election, 2 nominations were received for 2 vacancies. Therefore, Chris K. Lehmann and Andrew McLean will be elected unopposed.

You are not required to vote.

Louise Byrne
Election Manager

For more information call 131 832

 Victorian
Election
Commission

Appendix 7:

Councils and VEC – key interactions timeline

Date	Action	Responsible	Update
26 September 2023 – 18 October 2023	Publish 2024 local government elections draft service plan Provide council information sessions	VEC	We published our draft service plan on our website on 11 October 2023. We provided copies to local councils, Victorian Local Governance Association, Local Government Victoria, Municipal Association of Victoria and the Local Government Inspectorate. We delivered council information sessions in September and October 2023.
8 December 2023	Provide election service agreements to councils Provide estimates to councils	VEC	We sent service agreements and estimates to councils on 8 December 2023.
1 December 2023 – 15 January 2024	Period for council to prepare and send preliminary roll data CEO's list to VEC	Councils	We sent emails to councils on 14 December 2023 to request preliminary roll data CEO's lists by 15 January 2024. This was part of our broader engagement to provide ongoing support to councils, including through information sessions and meetings to deliver key election information, regular progress reports about key election milestones, engagement with council CEOs, and responses to phone and email enquiries.
15 January 2024	Final deadline for preliminary roll data CEO's list to be shared with VEC	Councils	Delays caused by a system provider affected the sharing of roll data CEO's lists with the VEC. All lists were provided by 8 March 2024.
1 February 2024	Recommended deadline for council to ensure enrolment application and resignation processes are operating	Councils	This action was rephased to April 2024.

Date	Action	Responsible	Update
1 February 2024 – 1 April 2024	Period for council to provide further information in response to VEC requests while analysing the preliminary roll data CEO's list	Councils	We worked closely with councils to obtain the required information. All CEO's lists were supplied by 8 March 2024.
26 March 2024 – 15 April 2024	Provide council information sessions	VEC	We delivered council information sessions in March and April 2024.
24 April 2024	Provide quotes to councils	VEC	We sent quotes to councils on 24 April 2024.
1 May 2024	Deadline for VEC to send preliminary roll data feedback to councils	VEC	We provided feedback to councils by mid-March 2024 after the preliminary phase finished earlier than expected.
1 May 2024 – 31 May 2024	Recommended period for council to send notices inviting ratepayers to enrol or renew enrolment under section 240(10) and 240(12)	Councils	We monitored progress throughout May 2024.
1 May 2024 – 7 August 2024	Enrol completed council application and appointment forms as they are received under section 246(1)	Councils	This was a council action without oversight from the VEC.
31 May 2024	Councils complete writing to CEO's list voters	Councils	We confirmed completion by May 2024.
7 June 2024	Final service plan completed	VEC	We published our service plan on 30 June 2024.
14 June 2024	Provide trial CEO's list to VEC for all councils unless otherwise advised.	Councils	Councils supplied trial CEO's lists between 13 June and 1 July 2024.
15 June 2024 – 30 June 2024	Provide council information session	VEC	Council information sessions were proposed but did not go ahead as we were holding in-person meetings with councils in June 2024.
15 July 2024	Deadline for primary roll CEO's list to be shared with the VEC	Councils	We received final primary roll CEO's lists by 31 July 2024.
8 July 2024	Deadline for councils to send notices under section 240(10) and 240(12)	Councils	We confirmed completion by May 2024 (see above).

Date	Action	Responsible	Update
14 July 2024 – 31 July 2024	Period for council to provide further information in response to VEC requests while preparing the primary voters' roll	Councils	All responses were received by 29 July 2024.
23 August 2024	Primary voters' roll production	VEC	We produced primary voters' rolls between 6 July and 3 August 2024.
7 August 2024	Close of the rolls	VEC and councils	Rolls closed on 7 August 2024 at 4 pm.
9 August 2024	Deadline for council to provide certified roll CEO's list to the VEC	Councils	Certified roll CEO's lists were received by 9 August 2024.
10 August 2024 – 8 September 2024	Period for council (including weekends) to provide further information in response to VEC requests while preparing the certified voters' roll.	Councils	All responses were received by 29 August 2024.
3 September 2024 – 25 October 2024	Period for council to provide any new silent voter requests or other information to the VEC	Councils	All requests were supplied by 30 August 2024.
9 September 2024	Certification of the voters' roll	VEC	We certified voters' rolls by 9 am on 9 September 2024.
9 September 2024 – 17 September 2024	Period for council to respond to VEC on enrolment queries from people nominating as candidates	Councils	We conducted enrolment checks between 11 September and 1 November 2024.
9 September 2024 – 1 November 2024	Period for council to respond to any requests for investigation into accuracy of the voters' roll, or requests for unenrolled votes	Councils	We conducted enrolment checks between 11 September and 1 November 2024.
May 2025	Forward invoice 1 (electoral services) to councils	VEC	We sent invoice 1 on 30 May 2025.
July 2025	Forward invoice 2 (compulsory voting - part A) to councils	VEC	We sent invoice 2 on 31 July 2025.
December 2025	Forward invoice 3 (compulsory voting – penalty and final court files)	VEC	Pending

Appendix 8: Report on evaluation of election services

Introduction

For the 2024 local government general elections (LG2024) the VEC adopted a new framework for the evaluation of elections. This framework was developed to:

- › provide the overarching architecture to inform evaluative activity in election delivery at the VEC
- › ensure objectivity and accuracy in how the VEC conducts 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.

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 LG2024 election services.

- › KEQ 1 Efficiency – *To what extent has the VEC demonstrated efficiency in the delivery of LG2024?*
- › KEQ 2 Effectiveness – *To what extent have planned objectives and outcomes of LG2024 been achieved?*
- › KEQ 3 Future Considerations – *To what extent are the VEC’s operations able to deliver the intended outcomes into the future?*

New initiatives

Five new or enhanced initiatives were implemented for LG2024. These are evaluated separately using evidence collected as part of the evaluation framework.

Program logic

The program logic provides a structured approach to the monitoring and assessment of success 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 performance and progress towards specific outcomes to be measured over the immediate-, medium- and long-term.

The following report provides a summative assessment of the evaluation. It is organised into three: (1) a summary of the KEQs, (2) assessment of the 5 new or enhanced initiatives introduced at LG2024 and (3) results on the measures and indicators applied as part of the evaluation program logic.

Part 1 – Key evaluation questions (KEQs)

KEQ 1 – Efficiency

To what extent has the VEC demonstrated efficiency in the delivery of LG2024?

Line of enquiry	Measure
To what extent were the 2024 local government elections delivered within time, budget and scope?	Degree to which the elections were delivered in accordance with project plans, across key work areas Analysis of staffing and budget versus true cost of election delivery
To what extent did systems, processes and people support efficient delivery of the 2024 local government elections?	Assessment of system and process performance, including a comparative assessment where different local processes and systems were used Staff and stakeholder perceptions of system or process failures, or key system or process stress points, in the delivery of the elections
What were the key enablers and challenges in the delivery of the 2024 local government elections?	Identification of key enablers and challenges in the delivery of the elections

Line of enquiry	Measure
Are there opportunities to improve the efficiency of election delivery, without compromising the realisation of outcomes?	Identification of costs associated with election delivery, disaggregated by key cost drivers, for example ward type (electoral structure), geographic location, access and engagement activities
	Identification of benefits, both quantifiable and unquantifiable, of specific election delivery activities, for example, enrolment and participation rate for target groups, take-up of accessible voting options
	Demonstrated cost efficiency through comparison of election delivery costs to outcomes and benefits
	Identification of potential efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities, assessed against ramifications for service delivery
	Evidence of cost and benefit realisation through project implementation

To what extent were the 2024 local government elections delivered within time, budget and scope?

Degree to which the elections were delivered in accordance with project plans, across key work areas

LG2024 comprised nearly 70 individual projects across 13 distinct work programs. Project closure reports indicate more than 90% of all project objectives were delivered or completed as planned. This suggests a high degree of consistency between project planning and delivery.

Delays to objectives and milestones occurred across numerous projects, as a consequence of legislative change, staffing and resourcing availability,

change to project scope, change requests from senior staff, competing work priorities, process or project complexity, change in personnel, and system issues or unreliability.

Some project plans were adjusted significantly to accommodate unexpected issues. This occurred across a number of key election activities, including ballot paper distribution and the issuing of replacement votes.

Key finding: Significant flow-on effects occurred due to these changes, testing operational and contingency planning, most notably the ability to stand up venues/spaces and large numbers of staff at short notice.

Analysis of staffing and budget versus true cost of election delivery¹

As in previous elections, staffing was the main cost of election delivery at LG2024, accounting for about 30% of total actual costs, (approximately \$18.7 million of \$61.1 million during the 2024–25 financial year), with election staff management making up around a third (or \$6.31 million) of total salaries.²

The main other election delivery costs included: postage (~\$13.39 million), print and publications (mostly ballot printing at ~\$3.90 million), mail-processing (~\$3.63 million), rents (~\$2.72 million) and advertising (~\$1.38 million).

The LG2024 Local Government costings framework was developed to provide councils with an accurate quote (or budget) for voting and related services.

Key finding: In practice, the actual costs to councils were in most cases less than the estimated costs, which across all councils equated to about \$12.5 million in cost savings to councils.

The VEC absorbed on average around 20% (or nearly \$9 million in total) of the estimated costs across all councils. The proportion of council costs absorbed by the VEC was significantly greater than 20% in smaller, rural councils. On the basis of the cost-per-vote calculation, election delivery costs were proportionally higher in rural councils with significantly lower-than-average numbers of electors.

¹ Data for LG2024 costs (actual and budget) are correct as at 24 July 2025. Note: approximately \$5.48 million was costed to LG2024 during the 2023–24 financial year, bringing the total cost across the two financial reporting periods to about \$66.6 million.

² This total does not include associated salary costs, such as payroll tax or meals and allowances, which together entailed about another \$5 million. Agency staff costs (~\$4.74 million) and salaries for overtime (~\$2.26 million), both of which were under-budgeted, added further to the overall staffing costs.

Direct actual costs to the VEC were about double the costs that were budgeted for (approx. \$32.93 million compared to \$14.85 million), mostly due to staffing costs (agency staff and overtime), advertising, print and publications (ballot printing) and mail processing. The main factors leading to this were greater than expected costs for election staff salaries, challenges with encountered with general mail processing and replacement votes.

As such, the 'true' costs of election delivery relate to the costs to councils covered by the VEC, increased staffing costs (centrally and in the field), staffing and other relevant costs deployed in response to unforeseen events (quality assurance (QA) automation and mail processing; replacement votes), the unexpected levels of overtime required and agency staff costs.

A more accurate application of staffing costs to relevant projects/programs, along with improvements in contract management for external service providers, would help reduce the divergence of budgeted, actual and true costs in election delivery.

Suggestions were made for increased clarity and streamlining of budgetary and costing processes to more accurately reflect costs by project or program, greater capacity for planning around the use of staff overtime, casual staff, surge capacity and specialised staff or services.

To what extent did systems, processes and people support efficient delivery of the 2024 local government elections?

Assessment of system and process performance, including a comparative assessment where different local processes and systems were used

Key finding: For the most part, processes and systems functioned as intended and supported efficient delivery of LG2024.

The list of election delivery processes and systems relevant to the evaluation program logic includes:

- › project planning
- › election rehearsal
- › roll production and certification
- › costings and budget (includes council costing framework/process)
- › staff training
- › personnel management (Aurion) and election staff appointments

- › election management team (EMT) support systems (Help Desk, feedback register)
- › candidate nominations and support
- › public enquiry service
- › communications and outreach
- › ballot paper preparation and distribution
- › Election Management System (EMS)
- › venue resourcing and management
- › issue and risk management systems/registers
- › regulatory compliance (multiple systems/processes)
- › complaints management (voters and candidates)
- › IT systems and support.

While there were no major system failures, processes and systems identified for improvement or uplift include: EMS, Aurion, QA automation and ballot paper insertion, costings and budget (to more accurately reflect staffing costs to relevant projects), enhanced streamlining of QA processes across multiple projects, management of agency staff and clarification of risk and issue management processes for VEC staff.

Greater levels of communication and collaboration across different systems/process via project leads were called for by VEC staff. At times bottlenecks emerged where subject matter expert knowledge was in demand, as evidenced by some delay in complaints/feedback response times.

Further, some inconsistencies in the use of internal dashboards for monitoring and analysing aspects of the elections were observed. As a result, suggestions were made to standardise the number and uses of internal dashboards.

In relation to different local systems, the major challenge appeared to be integration of VEC processes and systems to the specific requirements and capabilities of election office venues. At the election office level, the integration of VEC operational requirements and IT systems to different council and private venues presented some issues.

Furthermore, EMTs often adapted or applied localised approaches and workarounds to create efficiencies and to meet operational standards. Although the VEC is interested in maintaining a centralised and standardised approach to all election office activities, this needs to be balanced with specific, localised demands satisfactorily met or addressed by EMTs.

Staff and stakeholder perceptions of system or process failures, or key system or process stress points, in the delivery of the elections

The following system and process stress points were identified by staff and other stakeholders:

- › lack of clear, pre-planned process or longer-term strategy for the deployment of core (head office) staff, particularly in the event of a major disruptions (QA automation activity)
- › shortfalls in functionality of the Aurion personnel management system, preventing efficiencies in appointment of casual staff and proper review of the casual pool
- › some inconsistency in understanding of the distinction between crises, issues and operational problems as part of the risk management framework/system
- › underestimation of replacement vote requests, which prevented effective planning and required additional resourcing late in the election timeline
- › protracted approval processes and/or unclear authorship responsibilities for some VEC publications, which created delays to timelines, specifically the publication of the election service plan.

KEQ 2 - Effectiveness

To what extent have planned objectives and outcomes of LG2024 been achieved?

Line of enquiry	Indicator
To what extent has the VEC delivered, or is on track to deliver, the intended outputs?	Evidence of progress towards delivery of intended outputs, as defined in program logic
To what extent has the VEC met, or is on track to meet, the intended immediate and intermediate outcomes?	Evidence of progress towards delivery of intended immediate and intermediate outcomes, as defined in program logic
If outputs or outcomes have not been met, what internal and external factors contributed to this?	Stakeholders' perception of factors, internal or external, that may have contributed to outputs or outcomes not being met Evidence of factors, internal or external, that may have contributed to outputs or outcomes not being met (for example, voter behaviour, climate events, information trends)
Are there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, that have been observed in the delivery of activities?	Identification of unintended outcomes observed in the delivery of election activities

To what extent has the VEC delivered, or is on track to deliver, the intended outputs?

Evidence of progress towards delivery of intended outputs – as defined in program logic

Progress towards outputs and outcomes is detailed in the program logic tables.

Key finding: The evidence shows all relevant outputs were achieved across the four areas of wellbeing (staff), voters, processes and systems, and trust.

The key outputs by area are summarised below.

Wellbeing (staff)

- › there were next to 100% training completion rates across all staff groups, though comparatively lower for venue site staff (88.4%)
- › all field staff roles (election managers (**EMs**) and assistant election managers (**AEMs**), 77 and 105 respectively), plus additional support roles, were filled totalling 1,975 staff across 2,410 roles. The 1,238 centralised workforce roles were filled by over 1,000 staff
- › there were 5 election staff support mechanisms in place and operational – Election office (**EO**) Help Desk, election support officers (**ESOs**), client liaison officers (**CLOs**), head office specialists and Personnel Helpline.

Voters

Voter turnout was maintained (81.46% compared to 81.47% at the 2020 local government elections). The informal vote rate (3.51%) was the lowest on record for Victorian local government general elections. This was most likely due to lower numbers of candidates on ballot papers, as a consequence of the widespread move to single-councillor wards.

Voters were engaged through multiple channels and approaches:

- › the statewide advertising campaign was delivered across a mix of media channels, and with a modest budget achieved above market standards for impact and reach
- › the VEC's VoterAlert campaign delivered 11.7 million total messages, reaching 2.8 million electors and generating good click-through rates to the VEC website
- › the Democracy Ambassador program provided 238 individual sessions to over 10,000 electors in targeted council areas, with post-session surveys showing positive results.

Processes and systems

Processes and systems relevant to outputs included:

- › **candidate nominations and support:** 2,244 candidate nominations were received, with nearly 94% submitted via the Candidate Helper tool, compared to 87.92% in 2020 and 73.99% in 2016. Relevant updates were made to candidate resources (including the candidate handbook) and candidates were provided ongoing support through the candidate enquiry service, which fielded 872 enquiries (694 by phone, 178 by email)

- › **roll production:** all deadlines and stages to roll certification across 77 councils were met. Roll production also processed candidate roll requests, delivering over 90% of the 833 requests within one business day
- › **ballot paper design and production:** timelines were met and to standard, as per VEC standard operating procedures for the production of ballot material at local government elections
- › **set up of election offices:** all were resourced appropriately and to deadline, with EMTs generally positive about the preparation and process for resourcing and setting up election offices
- › **election results:** all results were declared within the timelines set out in the Service Plan. There is some demand for a similar approach used at state elections, to provide 'live' or updated counting results on the VEC website and/or for a more consistent approach to daily count updates provided at election offices
- › **efficiency opportunities:** various were identified, including possible automation of enrolment processes (redirections, replacement votes, QA of VoterAlert files), aspects of signature checking, compulsory voting enforcement (online processes), reporting via EMS and Aurion, QA automation to continue, council self-service options
- › **cost mitigation:** several opportunities identified, falling mostly into 2 categories:
 - service/system integration and automation to reduce manual processes and duplication of effort and to improve resource allocation
 - uplift in staff management and budgeting to better align staffing with work programs, improve costing methodologies and reduce unnecessary deployment of staff or use of overtime

Trust

Key finding: The VEC met all of its obligations monitoring and addressing instances of non-compliance, logging and resolving a total of 334 cases through the regulatory advice and incidents desk.

New and improved electoral integrity processes at LG2024 included: the election office integrity checklist, safeguarding postal voting project, signature checking and ongoing management of regulatory partnerships.

There was no evidence of major IT or cyber security events during the election period.

A total of 78 Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) events were recorded at LG2024, a significant increase from the 26 recorded at LG2020. Over half (42) of these events occurred at election offices, including 20 (48%) near misses, 14 (33%) and 8 (19%). One notifiable incident was escalated to WorkSafe Victoria.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of election service delivery and continuous improvement efforts will be achieved through creation of an organisation-wide lessons learnt register, and refinement and application of the evaluation framework to all future electoral events.

To what extent has the VEC met, or is on track to meet, the intended immediate and intermediate outcomes?

Evidence of progress towards the delivery of intended immediate and intermediate outcomes, as defined in program logic

Key finding: There is evidence of good progress towards the immediate and intermediate outcomes as defined in the program logic.

Wellbeing (staff)

Satisfaction with VEC services and supports among EMTs was high, with most reflecting positively on training, voting services and the support mechanisms provided throughout the election period. Election staff generally considered their work hours to be sufficient, with far fewer EMTs working more than 10-hour days compared with core (head office) staff.

The VEC was able to appoint all EMs and AEMs as required and as determined by council type, though 36 withdrawals had to be filled by the senior election official (SEO) pool. Challenges were encountered in the appointment of agency staff (data entry officers) and casual staff more broadly.

Key priorities moving forward and to achieve longer-term wellbeing outcomes include:

- › maintaining and increasing the number of SEOs for future electoral events, with a particular focus on attracting people in younger age-groups and from areas of the state where SEO numbers are low or zero
- › uplifting management of the casual staff pool (see personnel management system below)
- › identifying effective ways to reduce workload stress and improve levels of satisfaction (and other relevant measures) among VEC core staff.

Voters

The enrolment rate continues to increase overall and among electors in younger age groups. At the same time, divergence between the state and federal electoral rolls will progressively narrow. However, while the overall turnout rate (81.46%) was maintained from previous elections (81.47% at LG2020), the longer-term pattern of non-voting among electors in their 30s and 40s continues.

Continued enhancement to engagement efforts was demonstrated, with an increased VoterAlert subscription rate, reasonable recall rates for VEC communications and advertising and increasing use of social media and the VEC website to connect with voters.

Positive outcomes were achieved through voter education and outreach, with over 10,000 voters participating in Democracy Ambassador sessions across key target groups and target areas. The provision of enrolment and voting information in diverse formats and languages was broadened from LG2020.

Longer-term priorities for progressing key outcomes for voters include:

- › development and adoption of new or adapted metrics (plus further refinement of available data) to better track voter engagement, enrolment and voting patterns
- › continued enhancement of VEC voter outreach activities among current target groups.

Processes and systems

A broad range and number of processes and systems functioned to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the elections according to legislative requirements. For the most part, these processes and systems operated effectively and as intended.

The relevant areas and key outcomes achieved were:

- › **candidate nominations and support:** the Candidate Helper system supported 2,102 candidates (or 93.67% of all nominations) to successfully nominate, albeit with some issues faced with the processing of candidate photographs
- › **results management:** multiple processes and systems combined to manage results and declarations, including the transfer of election data from all EOs/count sites via EMS, the management of recount requests and a dedicated count integrity team confirming the veracity of all election results prior to declaration

- › **complaints management:** complaints and enquiry systems responded to 1,361 complaints and feedback from voters, 872 from candidates, while the public enquiry service managed 228,608 contacts from the public, with an average customer satisfaction score of 97.15%
- › **regulatory compliance:** monitoring processes and systems identified 2 incidents of possible election interference, which were in turn submitted by the VEC to VCAT. VCAT found that in both cases, there was attempted and actual interference in the elections
- › **costings and budget:** the LG2024 costings framework provided budgeted costs to all 77 councils, totalling nearly \$35 million, while the total costs of the elections totalled about \$58.5 million (at approx. \$3 million over-budget)
- › **IT support:** EMTs submitted 826 requests for IT support (the highest of any category) via the Help Desk system.

Stakeholder satisfaction and feedback on various VEC processes and systems were mostly positive. For example:

- › candidates were satisfied with VEC services and support at similar rates to LG2020 and recorded high satisfaction ratings for specific support services including the Candidate Helper system and the candidate handbook
- › voters were generally satisfied with their election experience, and rated highly the VEC's enrolment system and public enquiry service
- › EMTs were positive about the level of support provided by VEC via the Help Desk, election support officer (ESO) support and training materials, and they generally appreciated system improvements made since the last election
- › councils were for the most part positive about VEC services and support systems, especially the process for engaging with the VEC via council liaison officers.

Trust

Outcomes covered under trust relate to electoral compliance, data and information security, informed decision-making and the security of VEC systems. On the whole, trust outcomes over the medium- to longer-term were met or are on track, with key standouts being electoral compliance activities and maintenance of the VEC's reputation among staff and others to deliver elections with integrity. Indeed, the VEC has either maintained or improved on key measures of the reputation index.

Electoral compliance was monitored and actioned through specific projects or systems (e.g. regulatory advice and incidents desk, regulatory partnerships, safeguarding postal voting), through the incorporation of compliance-related activities into other work areas (e.g. election office compliance checklists, staff training, candidate support services) and by providing advice on legal and regulatory matters to different parts of the organisation.

Among other things, these activities involved managing 334 cases through the regulatory advice and incidents desk (all of which were closed or resolved within accepted timeframe) and preparing for 5 VCAT cases, including 2 filed for suspected election interference by VEC. Of the 1,361 complaints lodged with the VEC, a small number (16 or about 1%) concerned the conduct of election officials, with most stakeholders reflecting positively on the impartiality and professionalism of election staff.

Informed decision-making will be progressed as part of this and ongoing evaluation activities and further supported through increased evidence-led practices and the creation and dissemination of an organisation-wide lessons learnt register.

If outputs or outcomes have not been met, what internal and external factors contributed to this?

Stakeholders' perception of factors, internal or external, that may have contributed to outputs or outcomes not being met

Evidence of factors, internal or external, that may have contributed to outputs or outcomes not being met (for example, voter behaviour, climate events, information trends)

Various internal and external factors impacted project outputs and outcomes, some to a significant degree. While these factors did not result directly in the failure to meet specific outputs or outcomes, they did cause disruption and change to particular projects. These factors are summarised below, drawing on stakeholder views and relevant evidence.

Internal factors included:

- › **project/program planning and monitoring:** there appears to be a tendency for staff to over-estimate capacity to meet tight and in some cases overly ambitious timelines, which in turn left little room for any changes required in response to external, unexpected factors or issues. Furthermore, some projects did not adequately plan or map out all of the project dependencies. There were improvements to progress monitoring processes (i.e. use of project management software Monday.com), with further enhancements proposed as part of the LG2024 lessons learnt register, including more consistent,

organisation-wide progress monitoring efforts

- › **staff/personnel changes:** changes to key VEC staff and personnel in some projects led to delays in meeting milestones
- › **deployment of core (head office) staff:** no detailed plan or strategy in place for the deployment of head office staff. This was particularly evident in the use of VEC staff (and the casual pool) for the QA of ballot packs after the QA automation process was supplemented by manual insertion. Moreover, the redeployment of VEC staff to election activities as needed and use of overtime to meet urgent demands tended to be reactive rather than pre-planned
- › **staff workload and HSW:** the VEC continues to face challenges managing staff workloads during the busy times of election delivery, with better integration of HSW processes into work programs considered a necessity
- › **changes to project activities:** some staff and work teams found unscheduled additions to pre-planned communication and other relevant timelines (VoterAlert, late changes to website content) to be challenging and/or disruptive.

External factors included:

- › **legislative change:** the election timeline between the close of rolls and election day was lengthened by 23 days. This created some uncertainty among VEC staff, while bringing forward and delivery timelines and project deliverables (e.g. the timing of public notices and changes required to various VEC communications). The lengthened timeline, in combination with continued AEC direct enrolment activity, likely contributed to the unprecedented number of replacement vote requests

Note: While changes to the enrolment process for council-entitlement voters and council/ward boundary review changes impacted election delivery, and caused some challenges for individual councils, these changes were for the most part managed effectively by the VEC.

- › **staff availability (labour market):** the VEC faces the ongoing challenges of a competitive and fluid labour market, which impacts the ability to source skilled and experienced election officers, maintain a core pool of SEOs (which is progressively ageing) and a larger pool of casual workers for more short-term, ad hoc employment opportunities. While the VEC was able to appoint an appropriate level of SEOs, issues were encountered in the appointment of casual employees (especially in some council areas) and specialised staff (e.g. data entry officers)

- › **use of agency staff:** issues faced in the availability of suitably trained/experienced data entry officers attained via labour hire agencies impacted counting timelines and activities at the centralised activities sites to a significant degree
- › **external service providers:** challenges were encountered in the contracting of services to external providers, particularly performance issues with QA automation project, public enquiry service and ballot material printing, albeit to varying degrees. It is important to note that for some services there are few or no appropriate alternative providers
- › **venue availability (rental market):** as in previous elections, the VEC faced major challenges in leasing appropriate venues (election offices and centralised activity sites). While all election offices were leased and set-up within set timelines, some councils were dissatisfied with the selection of venues. Sandown Park was not considered the most appropriate site for centralised activities and entailed significant cost to the VEC.

Are there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, that have been observed in the delivery of activities?

Identification of unintended outcomes observed in the delivery of election activities

Voter turnout and participation rates were maintained from the previous high rates of LG2020, at the same time as rates of informal voting declined to the lowest level ever. The enrolment rate for council entitlements was well below what the VEC had planned for.

The number of uncontested elections occurred at much the same rate as at LG2020, with 42 (or about 9%) of the 466 separate elections being uncontested at LG2024 compared with 26 (or about 8.7%) out of 298 elections being uncontested at LG2020. There were also no failed elections (compared with one in LG2020). This was despite some concerns that the move to single-councillor wards would potentially result in a significant increase in uncontested or failed elections, as has been the case in some other jurisdictions such as Western Australia. Moreover, total candidate nominations increased marginally compared to LG2020.

KEQ 3 – Future considerations

To what extent are the VEC’s operations able to deliver the intended outcomes into the future?

Line of enquiry	Indicator
What are the risks and challenges if the VEC were to continue delivering elections with its current systems, processes and resources?	Identification of changes and trends affecting election delivery, for example, demographic changes, voter behaviour and preferences, information/misinformation trends, legislative and regulatory changes Identification of limitations with current systems, processes and resources Assessment of implications for election delivery sustainability
To what extent have external conditions affected election delivery, and how can the VEC meet these conditions? For example, process or system improvements or regulatory or legislative changes.	Evidence of factors, internal or external, that may have contributed to outcomes (refer to KEQ 2.3) Identification of potential actions within the VEC’s remit that can be taken to address external conditions

What are the risks and challenges if the VEC were to continue delivering elections with its current systems, processes and resources?

Identification of changes and trends affecting election delivery, for example, demographic changes, voter behaviour and preferences, information/misinformation trends, legislative and regulatory changes

Elections are becoming more complex, with election service demands increasing due to a range of factors, including:

- › population and elector growth
- › increasing external requests (e.g. Parliament’s Electoral Matters Committee) for additional or broadened election services
- › increased scrutiny from the public and governing authorities

- › growing regulatory and compliance activities
- › increasing emphasis on digital communications and new media, combined with sustained interest (albeit declining somewhat among some cohorts) and legislative requirements for traditional media
- › increased use of technology in election delivery
- › increased reporting requirements
- › increased costs generally, both to councils and the VEC.

While misinformation did not appear to play a significant role in media coverage or public perceptions of the elections, there is an expectation that misinformation and disinformation will be an ongoing focus of VEC media engagement and communications.

Identification of limitations with current systems, processes and resources

Some internal VEC systems require upgrades or uplift, such as EMS (underway or planned), Aurion (underway or planned) and candidate services (underway or planned).

A key limitation identified in LG2024 was the accurate prediction of staffing and resources required for some activities. For example, the VEC did not plan or prepare for the large number of replacement votes or the volume and type of enquiries to the public enquiry system.

There is as well an identified need to automate a range of election-based activities, which would in turn create efficiencies and save resources and staff time. This need was particularly evident in systems developed to manage public enquiries and complaints, roll production activities, QA automation, replacement votes and potential self-service options for council enrolled voters and councils.

Nonetheless and despite the above limitations, there was a strong sense among some stakeholder groups, including EMTs, that the VEC was better prepared for LG2024 than for any other election and that its processes and systems were much improved compared to LG2020.

Assessment of implications for election delivery sustainability

The core factors impacting election delivery sustainability include VEC baseline and election funding, staffing, processes and systems.

To what extent have external conditions affected election delivery, and how can the VEC meet these conditions? For example, process or system improvements or regulatory or legislative changes.

The evaluation highlighted many opportunities for system or process improvements, including:

- › ongoing and more effective management of the lessons learnt at elections (through establishment of an organisation-wide lessons learnt register with items extracted from multiple sources – project closure reports, staffing and stakeholder debriefing, evaluation efforts and other relevant research)
- › appropriate automation of manual processes across various projects and work areas
- › more consistent QA processes across different election delivery activities
- › improved processes for managing contracts with external providers
- › increased use of evidence in decision-making processes (e.g. voter estimates, management of recounts, integration of evaluation activities into election delivery work areas)
- › general uplift in capacity and functionality across a range of election management systems

Evidence of factors, internal or external, that may have contributed to outcomes

See response to KEQ 2.3.

Identification of potential actions within the VEC's remit that can be taken to address external conditions

The VEC will continue to advocate for regulatory change as part of its electoral reform agenda.

Consolidating and securing funding for future electoral events (baseline funding uplift) is being progressed through a service sustainability review project.

The VEC is currently addressing the limitations of printing services and leasing appropriate venues for centralised counting activities through the acquisition of additional VEC-owned or leased locations in Port Melbourne.

Increased efforts are being directed towards recruiting larger numbers of senior election officials and an ever-large pool of active casual employees through the creation of an Election Staffing division in the Event Strategy and Delivery branch.

Improving the job, workload, training and development opportunities of VEC staff remains an ongoing challenge and is currently being addressed through the uplift to VEC HSW and the related Safe@Work initiative. There was, however, positive feedback on the wellbeing activities introduced to support staff during LG2024.

In addition, various changes to the structure and governance of the VEC are being implemented to better manage emerging and ongoing risks to election delivery.

Part 2 – Evaluation of new or enhanced initiatives

Five new or enhanced initiatives were introduced at LG2024. Evidence collected as part of the evaluation of election services was used to evaluate each of the following initiatives:

- › centralisation of the public enquiry service
- › centralisation of the issuing of replacement votes
- › improved design, tracking and handling of ballot papers
- › improved candidate guidance and services
- › specific engagement campaigns for voters affected by the change in entitlements.

Centralisation of the public enquiry service (PES)

For the 2024 local government elections the VEC centralised all public enquiries. Previously, public enquiries had been managed via election offices, with an overflow call centre operating from head office. At the 2020 local government elections, 219,392 public enquiry calls were received by election offices, of which 23,100 were diverted to the overflow call centre. In 2024, the centralised PES received 228,608 contacts from the public.

The PES performed well on various measures. Nearly 90% (88.89%) of calls to PES were answered within 90 seconds, with the average call time lasting 7.15 minutes and a call abandonment rate of 1.43%. PES processed over 11,000 email enquiries, with an average response time of 1.55 hours and all emails being responded to within 24 hours. The average customer satisfaction rating of the service was high at 97.15%, while a small number of complaints (114 or 0.05% of all contacts) were received.

Election staff were particularly positive about the initiative, with staff debriefs and surveys showing most agreed that it allowed EMTs to focus on election administration. Indeed, 77.8% of election staff surveyed were either very satisfied (49.1%) or satisfied (28.7%) with the centralisation of phone enquiries.

Centralisation of the issuing of replacement votes

A completely centralised service to respond to, process and issue replacement votes was introduced at LG2024. Previously, in LG2020, the centralised issuing of replacement votes had only applied to the 46 regional councils.

There was a significant increase in the number of replacement votes requested at LG2024 (168,824) compared to LG2020 (87,781). This was most likely due to the longer time period between the close of roll date and election day, combined with ongoing Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) direct enrolment activities and the greater ease of applying for a replacement vote online. This put some pressure on the VEC's ability to process all replacement vote requests within acceptable timeframes and required rapid deployment of additional resourcing.

Nonetheless, all replacement vote requests were processed and mailed within acceptable timeframes.

Despite some issues identified in relation to public messaging about the issuing of replacement votes, most election staff surveyed were either very satisfied (40.1% of respondents) or satisfied (35.9% of respondents) with the centralisation of replacement votes.

Improved design, tracking and handling of ballot papers

A comprehensive review of the design of all local government ballot material products, including systems and processes used in production, was conducted in the lead-up to LG2024. Various changes to the design of ballot papers, candidate leaflets and supplementary materials used in ballot packs were made as a result. The aims of the changes were to enable printing to start earlier in the timeline, reduce printing costs and paper usage, improve readability of the visual and written instructions on ballot material and create efficiencies overall.

Outcomes of the ballot pack redesign process saw:

- › a reduction in overall paper usage by about 43%
- › a reduction in overall third-party printing time by about 65% (from over 7 days at LG2020 to less than 3 days at LG2024)
- › ongoing cost savings realised through in-house production
- › a reduction in transport resources and costs through a reduction in volume of raw materials and finished goods.

Feedback from voters collected via surveys and focus groups was mostly positive about the usefulness and ease of understanding ballot pack information, including instructions for completing and returning ballot papers. Some did suggest better use of type fonts, dot-points and graphics to make the ballot pack information easier to follow and understand. A small number communicated difficulties inserting their completed ballot paper into the return slip/envelope.

Barcodes were introduced to all council/ward specific information (including ballot papers) in ballot packs to allow automation of the postal ballot pack insertion quality assurance process. This initiative was informed by research with voters prior to implementation. Issues were evident in the timelines set for the automation process, which required manual insertion and quality assurance of ballot material at a critical point in election delivery. Delays with the automation process required rapid deployment of additional resourcing.

A ballot material tracking procedure and offsite standard operating procedures were adopted to ensure all transport vehicles and locations used a standardised approach when handling sensitive ballot materials. No issues with ballot paper tracking arose during LG2024 and further improvement in the tracking of ballot papers and other election material is currently underway. Furthermore, election staff were generally positive about the ballot tracking procedures in place at LG2024.

Improved candidate guidance and services

Various improvements were made to the guidance and services provided to candidates, including the candidate handbook and kit, online Candidate Helper tool, information sessions and an enquiry service.

There was continued growth in the proportion of candidates using the VEC's Candidate Helper tool. Of the 2,244 nominations received by the VEC, 2,102 candidates (or 93.67%) used Candidate Helper compared with 87.92% in 2020 and 73.99% in 2016.

In addition, the candidate enquiry service fielded 872 enquiries (694 by phone, 178 by email), while over 90% of the 834 candidate requests for roll products were provided within 1 business day.

Overall, candidates were satisfied with VEC services and support at similar rates to LG2020. Candidates rated the information and support provided by the VEC at 7.1 (on a 10-point scale with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent), similar to the rating of 7.2 recorded previously.

Candidate ratings of specific resources and information provided by the VEC were relatively high. For example, 68.49% of candidates found the candidate handbook useful, and found information about the nomination process, candidate statements and the election timeline to be particularly useful.

Specific engagement campaigns for voters affected by the change in entitlements

The VEC conducted research with councils and voters potentially impacted by the entitlement changes well in advance of LG2024. This research measured council preparedness for the changes and where assistance from

the VEC might be required, and the potential take-up of enrolment and voting among ratepayers with a council entitlement to vote at LG2024.

The results of the research showed that councils were, for the most part, moderately prepared for the changes, with the greatest concerns related to the time, resources and staffing required to implement the changes. Among a sample of electors with an entitlement to vote there was a relatively high level of interest in voting at LG2024, but this declined in light of the requirement to apply to enrol and then again with the possibility of being fined for not voting.

The VEC's engagement with council-enrolled voters mostly occurred via councils, through the provision of information packs, guidance and assistance with relevant enrolment letters and forms. While this approach generated and promoted standardised information about the entitlement changes, engagement levels with relevant electors across all councils varied.

Part 3 – Program logic tables

Note: Some results of particular indicators require further examination. This was due to information/ data not being available at the time of reporting or where further refinement of individual measures might be needed. Where relevant, results requiring further information and/or examination are marked as such in the following tables.

Wellbeing (staff)

Item	Output indicator	Results
Election workforce pool	Number of staff in workforce pool, by role type and key demographics of interest	A total of 337 staff (161 women, 176 men) participated. Nearly 90% were aged 50 years or older, with workforce gaps identified in some local government areas in Western Victoria.
Election workforce induction and training	Percentage of staff who completed relevant VEC core training	95.9% of all VEC staff completed their assigned online training modules
	Percentage of training completed by assigned staff	Election management teams (EMTs): › Online training: 100% › Face-to-face: 99.6% Centralised venue teams: › Online, including compliance modules: 88.4%

Item	Output indicator	Results
Process resources developed for workers	Number of process resources updated or developed	Election Manual: inclusive of updates to 15 specific election management processes, and relevant resources (EMT activity timeline and election diary) Handbooks and Guides: Candidate and Scrutineer handbooks and Ballot paper extraction, Manual count and Computer count guides New or significantly changed processes: › Australia post service quality › Centralising phone enquiries (PES) › Centralising replacement votes › Head Office acquisition of election offices › Head Office nominations scheduling › Vote exchange
Staff allocated across sites	Percentage (and/or numbers) of required roles filled across sites	Staffing overview: › Election managers: 77 › Assistant election managers: 105 › Field staff: 2,410 roles filled (1,975 individual staff) › Centralised workforce roles: 1,238 positions (~1,000 individual staff)
Staff support mechanisms in place	Number and type of support mechanisms available to staff	› Election office Help Desk: primary point of contact for operational queries and technical support › Election support officers: provided on-ground support and guidance to local offices › Client liaison officers: facilitated communication between election offices and central support teams › Head office specialists: offered subject matter expertise across functional areas › Personnel Helpline: dedicated support for staffing, rostering, and people-related matters

Item	Output indicator	Results
A team of staff with knowledge and skills	Percentage of staff who completed relevant VEC core training	95.9% of all VEC staff completed their assigned online training modules
	Percentage of training completed by assigned staff (EMTs, count team leaders, early voting centre managers, mobile voting centre managers, team leaders)	EMTs: see above Online training completion (including compliance courses) for election office teams (excluding EMTs): 99.4%

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Election delivery workforce is available and appropriate	Percentage of election delivery workforce roles appointed, divided by role type and demographic profile	Role breakdown (of 2,410 total appointments): › Count team leader: 8.42% › Computer count team leader: 1.29% › Office assistant level 1: 15.60% › Office assistant level 2: 2.24% › Counting officer: 55.93% › Office assistant/counting officer: 16.51%
Election delivery workforce performs role required	Number of senior election official (SEO) role changes	The SEO reserve pool was used to fill 36 EMT withdrawals
	Average confidence scores as rated by election managers	Average confidence score: 4.43/5
	Staff-reported sufficiency of tools and resources to perform their role	Relatively high 'satisfaction' and 'helpfulness' ratings recorded among election staff across all resources/tools › Most 'helpful' resources: Election manual, Ballot paper extraction guide, Count guide and Election diary › Least 'helpful': Candidate handbook, Scrutineer handbook and EMT activity timeline
	Number of election managers requiring additional support	All Election Offices requested some form of additional support via the VEC's Help Desk
	Number and percentage of nominations failing quality assurance (QA) checks	4 statements and 3 questionnaires failed QA (<1% each)

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Election workforce operates in a sustainable and supportive environment	Compliance with established parameters relating to workforce hours and welfare management	Requires further examination
	Percentage of reported incidents resolved within 48 hours	N/A (more data required)
	Number of calls to Help Desk, by request type and outcome	5,051 calls to Help Desk
	Number of submissions to feedback register by election officials, by issue type	540 submissions
	User feedback on usability of election products (e.g. training manuals, forms)	Useability ratings of election products among EMTs generally >75%
		Suggested improvements recorded across a range of products and to be actioned via the Lessons Learnt Register
	Reported satisfaction with workforce supports in place	91% of EMTs satisfied with Help Desk support
		8% of EMTs satisfied with ESO support
	Reported awareness of workforce supports in place	Reported as high, based on Help Desk interactions and survey results (pulse survey and post-election survey)

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Effective coordination and distribution of staff across roles and processes	Percentage of election delivery workforce roles appointed by site	All election offices staffed with a minimum of one EM and one AEM. › 15 election offices were staffed with one additional AEM › 6 election offices were staffed with 2 additional AEMs
	Percentage of staff working extended hours, by role and work area	The proportion of head office staff working extended hours during the 10-week election period ranged between about 35% (weeks 1 and 5) and 65% (week 9). For EMTs it was 0% (week 4) and 66% (week 8). Across all staff there were higher rates of extending working hours during the latter weeks of the elections. Further examination required on role and work area data.
	Percentage of field staff who reported there were sufficient staff at their site to deliver required work	55.41% of EMTs agreed there was a sufficient allocation of hours for office assistants
	Percentage of office staff reporting there were sufficient staff to deliver work required	Requires further examination
	Number of staff reporting they were the sole subject matter expert (SME) for their role	Requires further examination

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Workforce is sustainable and allows us to deliver our services and manage workloads	Percentage of staff reporting that they would re-engage with the VEC	› Average likelihood to recommend the VEC to family or friends: 4.35 / 5 › Intent to return (EMT debriefs): 72% (109 of 152 respondents)
	Percentage of staff reporting their individual workload was reasonable and able to be completed within allocated time	Proportion of staff who agreed or strongly agreed that their work package allocation was appropriate: › EMs: 55.15% › AEMs: 63.23%
	Percentage of required roles filled	All EMT roles were filled, including 36 withdrawals replaced via the SEO reserve pool
	Number and percentage of election workforce retained from previous election	› First-time staff: 18.56% › Worked 1 or 2 elections: 26.35% › Worked 3 or more elections: 55.09% (Sample size: N = 167)
	Percentage of election workforce that is new	18.56% (based on EMT survey responses)
	Percentage of staff working additional hours during election period	The proportion of head office staff working extended hours during the 10-week election period ranged between about 35% (weeks 1 and 5) and 65% (week 9). For EMTs it was 0% (week 4) and 66% (week 8). Across all staff there were higher rates of extending working hours during the latter weeks of the elections.
	Percentage change in casual workforce pool over time	Requires further examination. (The election casual workforce pool system is currently under review and will be updated accordingly, which will allow this indicator to be measured accurately)

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Our people are engaged, satisfied, have high levels of wellbeing and reflect the diversity of Victoria	Workforce satisfaction with working hours, workload, site allocation, safety, support mechanisms, tools, resources and systems, engagement with head office, disaggregated by role type	Overall, average satisfaction rating among VEC staff across the election period was 3.65 / 5. For EMTs, it was 4.28 / 5. (This is not at this stage disaggregated by role type)
	Percentage of staff feeling positive about working for the VEC (Target: Employee Satisfaction Index $\geq$ 80%)	65.40%
	Election workforce, by key demographic metrics	See relevant indicator above.
	Number of WorkSafe claims	One health, safety and wellbeing report was formally notified to WorkSafe Victoria during the elections
Our people are capable, have access to training and can advance their careers	Workforce satisfaction with training and career progression opportunities	› Training satisfaction: 46% › Career progression satisfaction: 47%
	Staff self-reported skills and capability to perform role	Requires further examination
	Identification of professional development opportunities	Requires further examination

Voters

Item	Output indicator	Results
Timely and appropriate communication with electors	Percentage of key communication timelines and benchmarks met	100% of key communication timelines and benchmarks met
	Regularity and reach of communications about democracy	Various measures including: › Click-through rate (CTR) › Cost per thousand › Earned media rate › Number of downloads See 5.2 Media for more detail
	Engagement and reach metrics	Google Search Engine Marketing (SEM): › CTR: 45% › Cost per click (CPC): \$0.45

Item	Output indicator	Results
Accessible voting sites	Percentage of election sites meeting key accessibility benchmarks	International Web Accessibility benchmark: 25% Accessible Web Accessibility benchmark: 40% Final International Web Accessibility outcome: 14.1% Final Accessible Web Accessibility outcome: 85.9%
	Availability of accommodations for postal voting	Total number of election offices: 78 Centralised process and counting venues: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre Sandown Park
Alternative voting options for those who can't attend voting site	Number of and type of ways to vote, by district	Not applicable to local government elections, which are held entirely by post
	Percentage (and/or number) of enrolled voters able to be accommodated by early voting footprint	Early postal votes: 5,131

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Electoral roll is complete and accurate	Estimated percentage of electors not on electoral roll	› As of May 2025, 1.5% of eligible electors were estimated as not being on the electoral roll. › In October 2024, the equivalent figure was about 2%.

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Voters are informed about the elections and electoral processes	Number of updates to the electoral roll between issue of the writs and close of the roll	This was not a measured metric. It is worth noting that 302 roll amendments were made following certification, including: › 292 deletions › 10 additions
	Percentage of voters surveyed reporting communication about the elections was clear, disaggregated by target group	Not specifically measured for 2024 local government elections but will be in place for 2026 State election.
	Elector recall rate of VEC communications and advertising, by key target groups	46.20% of voters surveyed (sample N = 453) Further examination and refinement of measures required for target group data
	Percentage increase in proportion of enrolled voters who are subscribed to VoterAlert	› 2024 local government elections: 2,698,617 (61%) › 2022 State election: 2,490,869 (56.7%, target: 55%) Increase of 4.3 percentage points

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Voters are engaged and aware of civic rights/responsibilities	Number of updates to enrolment, disaggregated by target group	Requires further examination
	Percentage of eligible Victorians on the electoral roll, by target group	Target groups have not yet been set. Presently, age (or youth enrolment) is available using Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) sources. › AEC sources show that as of May 2025, 92.5% of youth (18–24 years) were enrolled. › Overall enrolment rate: 98.5%.
	Percentage decrease in inaccuracies in electoral roll	Roll divergence between the state and federal electoral rolls continues to decline. As of May 2025, there were 32,670 divergent electors, a decrease of 12,750 over the past 12 months.
	Engagement rates with information about how to participate	Total views for all explainer videos: 2,533
	Number of downloads of user-friendly explanatory guides	Total views for all explainer videos: 2,533
	Percentage of communications in diverse formats	› In-language resources: 10 languages + AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language). › LEBA media – see 5.2 Media
	Key indicators around reach, engagement and implementation of voter outreach programs	See 5.8 Community outreach and engagement
	Effectiveness of voter outreach programs	See 5.8 Community outreach and engagement

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Voting is accessible	Percentage of voters surveyed reporting access issues, by access issue type	No issues reported in voter survey
	Voter satisfaction with diverse participation options	Not relevant for local government elections
	Participation rate, by key demographics	Currently, the key demographics for measuring electoral participation are: › turnout by council/ward (see Appendix 3) › participation by age (see 13.2 Participation) › participation by enrolment type (see 13.2 Participation) › participation by community outreach activity (see 5.8 Community outreach and engagement). › New participation measures are currently being explored in response to specific Electoral Matters Committee recommendations and may be trialled at SE2026.
	Adoption of alternative voting options, by voting type and district	N/A
	Progress towards advocacy for electronic and telephone assisted voting (EAV/TAV) availability at all elections	Ongoing
Voters, including underrepresented communities, vote formally	Voter turnout rate, overall and disaggregated by target group (target turnout rate >75%)	The overall voter turnout rate for the elections was 81.46%. A breakdown of turnout by council-ward is available in Appendix 3
	Informal vote rate, by district and vote type	The overall informality rate across the elections was 3.51%. Further details on informality rates for individual councils and wards can be found in Appendix 3
	Percentage turnout increase in directly enrolled and young electors	Requires further examination
	Participation rate for target groups	See 5.8 Community outreach and engagement

Processes and systems

Item	Output Indicator	Results
Parties registered, candidates nominated and informed	Compliance with key party registration and candidate nomination benchmarks	All candidate nomination benchmarks met
	Candidate handbook produced in accordance with benchmarks	The candidate handbook was produced with changes and updates to meet legislative requirements. It also addressed accessibility, quality assurance (QA) processes, and publication. While the handbook was generally wellreceived by candidates, there were some delays in its publication.
	Candidate call log metrics including response times, issues by type	A total of 872 calls were logged. › 694 via phone › 178 via email
Roll products despatched to stakeholders	Percentage of electoral district rolls produced and available for distribution within 8 days of roll close	All roll production and certification deadlines were met. 834 requests for candidate rolls were received, with more than 90% of them delivered within one business day.
Accurate ballot papers distributed	Percentage of design/print QA checklists met	All design and print QA checklists were met, except for some delays in the QA process for Melbourne City Council ballot papers.
	Percentage of print schedule deadlines met	All print schedule deadlines were met.
	Ballot papers distributed to voting centres in accordance with benchmarks	Postal ballot packs were distributed according to the scheduled mailouts (7–10 October 2024).
Voting sites have equipment and resources in place during voting period	Percentage of voting centres fully resourced within 48 hours of operating date	All election offices and centralised activity sites were leased and resourced within the designated timeframes.
	Number of additional resource requests, by request type and location	Resource requests were tracked through the Help Desk system by type and location. All election offices requested further assistance or support, with the top 5 most common types being assistance/support for communications (16.85%), IT (16.35%), voting (16.29%), candidates, parties and scrutineers (12.04%) and personnel management (9.23%).

Item	Output Indicator	Results
Electoral results reported	Compliance with key reporting benchmarks, including: › Percentage of votes counted on election night › Percentage of voting centre district results published by 9 pm on election night	N/A
Efficiency opportunities identified	Identification of manual processes that have potential to be automated	Several manual processes were identified for automation, including: › QA automation for ballot distribution › compulsory voting › candidate nominations › enrolment (CEO voter applications; replacement votes; redirections) › automated reporting via Electronic Management System (EMS) and Aurion.
	Identification of efficiency opportunities, as articulated in Election Delivery Strategy 2027	Requires further examination
Cost mitigation measures identified	Identification of cost mitigation measures	Several cost mitigation measures were identified, including: › better coordination and budgeting of EMT work. › service/system integration and automation (online replacement vote applications, postal audits). › uplift management and budgeting of agency staff (including data entry officers).
Regulatory reform agenda produced	Evidence of articulated reform agenda based on evidence	Advocacy efforts by the VEC are outlined in the VEC's electoral reform agenda and list of recommendations of the Report to Parliament

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Legislative requirements met for party and candidate management	Key legislative requirements met for party and candidate management, including:	
	Percentage of Registered Political Party (RPP) briefings conducted by the issue of the Writs and/or number of candidate information sessions held	Registered political parties do not have formal involvement in local government elections. A total of 127 candidate information sessions were conducted, averaging 1.6 sessions per council.
	Number of how-to-vote cards registered and rejected	N/A
	Number and percentage of candidates processed within legislated timeframe	All candidates were processed within the legislated timeframe.
	Number and percentage of candidate material quality assured within timeframes	All candidate materials were quality assured within the specified timeframes.
Elections delivered in accordance with legislative commitments and operational guidelines	Number of VCAT cases presented by candidates, by outcome	2 VCAT cases were presented by candidates. One of these was ultimately withdrawn; the other, for a recount in Dobsons Ward election in Knox City Council, was agreed to by the VEC, but the recount did not change the initial result.
	Key legislative requirements and operational guidelines met for election delivery including:	
	Percentage of results declared on time	All results were declared on time.
	Number of legislated dates met	All legislated dates were met.
	Percentage of operational benchmarks not met, by type (e.g. complaint response times)	› 95% of complaints submitted were responded to within 5 working days. › 88.89% of calls to public enquiry service were answered within 90 seconds, though some callers faced longer wait times.
	Number of reported incidents of non-compliance with procedures	Requires further examination and analysis
	Number of recounts undertaken during election	A total of 14 recounts were undertaken, including: › 6 recounts requested by candidates › 8 recounts initiated by the VEC

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
	Number of VCAT cases where the election result is invalidated due to a proven claim against VEC conduct of the event	No VCAT cases invalidated election results due to claims against VEC conduct.
Process improvement activities planned and in progress	Evidence of implementation of Election Delivery Strategy 2027	Reporting against outcomes of the Election Delivery Strategy 2027 is detailed in the VEC's Annual Report (2024–25)
Regulatory change advocated for	Evidence of regulatory and legislative change agenda advocated for	Regulatory change is the responsibility of Local Government Victoria (LGV) Relevant legislative change is covered under the VEC's electoral reform agenda.
Voters, candidates and parties are satisfied with our services	Percentage of voters satisfied with election, by vote type	› Overall satisfaction with elections: 8/10 › Satisfaction with VEC performance: 8.3/10
	Number of voters reporting satisfaction with enrolment system	79.7% of voters expressed satisfaction with the enrolment system, slightly below the target of 80%.
	Percentage of candidates and parties surveyed reporting satisfaction with information received about legislative requirements, registration process	Not surveyed for local government elections. However, satisfaction among LG2024 candidates surveyed (N=148) with the information and support provided by the VEC was 7.1/10. For comparison, the same measure at LG2020 was 7.2/10.
	Number of complaints received by voters, by complaint type	A total of 1,361 complaints were received. See 13.6 Customer feedback and complaints
	Percentage of customers satisfied with call centre engagement	97.15% of customers were satisfied with their call centre engagement, surpassing the target of 95%.

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Elections are delivered within VEC resource envelope	Budget vs actual costs in delivery of election, by cost area	The budget for the elections was approximately \$55.5 million, while the actual expenditure was approximately \$61.1 million. See discussion above for the main cost areas at LG2024.
	Identification of key cost drivers in delivery of election	Key cost drivers during election processes included: › coordination and budgeting for EMTs and SEOs › service and system integration › automation of certain processes like online replacement vote applications and postal audits › uplift management and budgeting for agency staff (e.g. data entry officers).
Election delivered in an efficient manner	Utilisation of efficiency measures, including:	
	Percentage of candidates using candidate helper (target 95%)	93.67% of candidates (2,102 of 2,244 total nominations) used Candidate Helper
	Percentage of RPPs successfully lodging bulk nominations (target 100%)	N/A
Electoral systems are optimised to deliver elections efficiently (financial, HR, IT information and data systems)	Total number of issues raised during planning and delivery of election	A total of 89 scenarios were carried out across 5 phases as part of election rehearsal
	Number of IT application support requests received and implemented, by issue type	In addition, 826 out of 5,051 total calls made by EMTs via the Help Desk related to IT support or IT services.
	Number of election delivery processes with documented process maps	Further information required; currently being assessed
	Evidence of progress in implementation of strategic measures as outlined in Election Delivery Strategy 2027, including:	At about the time of the elections (January 2025), approximately 60% of activities identified in the Election Delivery Strategy 2027 were completed or on track. As of July 2025, this had increased to about 80%.
	› Percentage of identified activities which have been initiated or completed as identified in the Election Delivery Strategy 2027	Subject matter expert reflections require further examination.
	› Subject matter expert reflections on efficiency of operations and processes, including head office, election official and casual pool	

Trust

Item	Output Indicator	Results
Response to non-compliance	Adherence to benchmarks for response to any identified instances of non-compliance with legislated requirements	All benchmarks were met.
Physical, cyber, OHS security of election processes and systems	Number of physical security incidents reported at election sites	A total of 54% (42) health, safety and wellbeing events occurred at election offices. These included: › 33% (14) hazards › 48% (20) near misses › 19% (8) injuries/illnesses Figures above include 10 physical security incidents recorded across all election offices.
	Number of reported WorkSafe incidents/claims	› A total of 78 health, safety and wellbeing events were reported (compared to 26 at the 2020 local government elections). › One notifiable incident was escalated to WorkSafe Victoria for further investigation.
Election integrity process improvements	Number and type of election integrity process improvements being implemented	Various election integrity measures were implemented, including: › Election office integrity checklist › Regulatory advice and incidents desk › Safeguarding postal voting project › Signature checks › Regulatory partnerships project
	Evidence of implementation of Electoral Integrity Framework	Implementation of Electoral Integrity Framework will be addressed in future reporting.
Monitoring data and actioning recommendations	Evidence of response to recommendations provided through evaluation activities or project closure	The lessons learnt register is currently under development. Key learnings from evaluations are currently ongoing.

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Everyone involved in elections plays by the rules	Number of reported incidents of non-compliance with procedures	A total of 334 regulatory advice and incidents cases were reported. All cases were closed and resolved within an acceptable timeframe
	Number of enforcement actions for non-compliance	N/A
	Number of VCAT cases submitted against and/or relevant to the VEC, by outcome	A total of 5 applications were made to VCAT: 1 resulted in the election being declared void (filed by the VEC) 1 resulted in the election result being upheld as actual and attempted interference had not impacted the outcome (filed by the VEC) 1 resulted in a recount being held, which did not change the outcome of the election (filed by a candidate) 1 was withdrawn by the applicant (filed by a candidate) 1 was dismissed by VCAT (filed by multiple voters) See 12.3 VCAT matters.
	Number of complaints about VEC staff conduct	16 complaints were received regarding the conduct of election officials.
Election data/information secure and risks actively managed	Adherence to procedures in place to ensure secure packaging, movement and storage of election material	Relevant procedures and processes for secure packaging, movement and storage of election materials were adhered to.
	Staff perceptions of the security of the elections	Requires further examination.
	Evidence of risk management processes in place	Risk management processes are documented as part of internal VEC processes, including the LG2024 Program Risk Register and the LG2024 Crisis and Issues Register.
Informed decision making	Production of post-election evaluation reports	In progress.
	Evidence of decision-making process	Decision-making processes are documented as part of internal governance and reporting, including an action, issues and decision log for the VEC's election delivery group.

Item	Immediate Outcome Indicator	Results
Systems are fit for purpose to uphold electoral integrity and prevent security risks (financial, HR, IT, information)	Subject matter expert reflections on security and integrity of systems	Requires further examination.
	Systems gap analysis	Underway
Quality and integrity of electoral services	Assessment of performance against core integrity objectives, as outlined in Electoral Integrity Framework	6 Core Objectives:
		1. promoting enrolment
		2. reducing barriers to participation
		3. motivating participation and promoting respect for electoral law
		4. fostering public trust in the VEC's services and electoral systems
		5. developing knowledge of how, when and where to participate
		6. delivering systems, tools and processes that enable free and fair participation.
		Reporting against the above objectives will be detailed in future reports
	Reputation index score, and % change in reputation index score over time	The reputation index score for January 2025 was 80.2%, surpassing the target of 80%.
		The baseline score as of July 2023 was 79.6%.
	Stakeholder perceptions of quality and integrity of electoral services	Requires further examination

Appendix 9: Outcomes of performance targets

Area	Target – measure	Outcome
Service agreements	The VEC will establish all election service agreements with local councils by 30 April 2024.	This target was achieved . All signed election service agreements were returned by 24 April 2024.
Election offices	The VEC will establish election offices that are suitable and accessible.	This target was achieved . All election offices had a minimum accessibility rating of assisted wheelchair accessible, with 14.1% being rated independent wheelchair accessible.
Awareness/comms:	The VEC will ensure that statutory advertising is accurate and produced within legislative timeframes.	This target was achieved . All statutory advertisements were accurate and published before the legislated deadlines.
› Statutory advertising		
› State awareness campaign		
› New voting entitlements	The VEC will ensure the communication plan objectives and benchmarks are achieved.	This target was achieved . Post-event evaluation has found that all objectives and benchmarks were met.
	The VEC will ensure new voting entitlements are adequately communicated to voters.	This target was achieved . Comprehensive information about entitlement changes was published on the VEC website and all councils were provided with communication packs for distributing information to voters.
	The VEC will provide support to councils to assist with new enrolment requirements.	This target was achieved . All councils were provided with a comprehensive guidance note for preparing voters' rolls, as well as communication packs for distributing information to voters.
Voters' rolls	The VEC will ensure the deadlines to produce voters' rolls are achieved.	This target was achieved . All voters' roll production activities were completed within legislated timelines.
	The VEC will assess and report on roll accuracy following the roll amendments period.	This target was achieved . Information about roll accuracy was provided to each council in the VEC's election reports.

Area	Target – measure	Outcome
Candidates	The VEC will provide relevant information to assist prospective candidates.	This target was achieved . Prospective candidates were provided with comprehensive information about election processes and rules in a variety of formats.
	The VEC systems will support the efficient processing of nominations and candidate information.	This target was achieved . 93.68% of candidates used the online Candidate Helper portal to complete their nomination form.
Complaints and enquiries	The VEC will ensure all complaints and enquiries are responded to appropriately and within acceptable timeframes.	This target was partly achieved . 95% of submissions through the complaints portal were responded to within 5 working days. Early in the postal voting period, some callers to the public enquiry service faced long wait times, however this issue was rectified within 2 days.
Ballot postage	The VEC will lodge all postal ballot material with Australia Post within the required timeframes.	This target was achieved . All postal ballot material was lodged with Australia Post within legislated timelines.
Declarations	The VEC will declare all elections before 5 pm on Friday 15 November 2024.	This target was achieved . All elections were declared by 11 am on Thursday 14 November 2024.
Voter participation	The VEC will anticipate a turnout rate of >75% and record turnout rates by voter types.	This target was achieved . The total turnout rate was 81.46% and participation by voter type is provided at 13.3 Participation of this report.
	Turnout rates by voter type: › State › Council-entitlement types	
Counting of votes	The VEC will conduct reconciliation and integrity checks to ensure correct recording of results during counting activities.	This target was achieved . There were a variety of reconciliation activities at election offices and centralised counting sites. A dedicated team oversaw count integrity and investigated numerical discrepancies.
Ballot security	The VEC will put procedures in place to ensure the secure packaging, movement, and storage of election material.	This target was achieved . An improved system for design, tracking and handling of ballot papers was implemented as a strategic initiative.

Area	Target – measure	Outcome
Trust in VEC procedures and processes	The VEC will establish and maintain robust election procedures so that no election can be overturned as a result of VEC procedures.	This target was achieved . VCAT declared one election void due to attempted and actual interference with the election. No elections were overturned as a result of VEC procedures.
Evaluation	The VEC will implement a new evaluation framework.	This target was achieved . A new independent evaluation framework was implemented for post-election evaluation.
	The VEC will evaluate the performance of its services and activities relevant to the planning and delivery of the local government election program.	This target was achieved . A report on the evaluation of election services is provided at Appendix 8 to this report.
	The VEC will ensure all reporting obligations are met.	This target was achieved . Election reports were provided to all councils within 6 months after election day and this report has been provided to Parliament within 12 months after the conduct of the elections.
	The VEC will evaluate the effect/ impact/success of new initiatives.	This target was achieved . Outcomes of the evaluation of new initiatives are provided in the report on the evaluation of election services, available at Appendix 8 to this report.

Appendix 10: Analysis of informal votes conducted after the 2024 local government elections

Introduction

Following the elections, we undertook research into informal votes at contested elections, and analysed rates, patterns and trends. The study of the informal votes at the 2024 local government elections was the third round of a long-term research project on informal voting. This was a collaborative project between the VEC, Professor Lisa Hill of the University of Adelaide, and Professor Rodrigo Praino of Flinders University. The first 2 stages were the 2020 local government elections and the 2022 State election.

It is important to note that, because this research took place after the conclusion of the elections, the findings of the research do not constitute the official results of the elections, and may have slight variations from the official informality figures for each election. This is an expected outcome of our statistical research, which may reveal small numbers of missorts or differing interpretations of formality. The figures in this research are for statistical purposes only.

The Melbourne City Council councillor election has a different voting system to all other Victorian local government elections, and a separate analysis of informality in that election is provided in Part 3.

Part 1 – Contributors to informal voting

Voting system

The voting system in local government elections affects the informal voting rate. These elections have a compulsory preferential voting system, under which voters have to number all the boxes on the ballot paper. Apart from the Melbourne City Council leadership team election, there is no requirement to include information, such as party or group affiliation, on the ballot paper to assist voters who may be ranking candidates unknown to them. There is a potential for voters who feel they do not know enough about who they are voting for to instead opt to vote informally. Many informal ballot papers reflect this in written comments about unknown candidates or candidates with unknown party affiliation.

Comparative rates of informal voting at recent elections

Finding: At 3.54% of total votes, the informal voting rate in 2024 was the lowest ever recorded in Victorian local government general elections.

Table 1: Informal voting rate at local government elections

Local government elections	Informal votes (%)
2004–05	4.6
2008	4.99
2012	5.51
2016	6.29
2020	4.76
2024	3.54

Number of candidates

Finding: The number of candidates contesting an election is the largest single factor affecting informality rates. The more candidates there are on a ballot paper, the more likely voters are to give up or make mistakes. Furthermore, a direct correlation was observed between the number of candidates and the rates recorded for various categories of informal votes.

In 2024, the number of candidates in individual elections ranged from 2 to 23, and informality rates ranged from 1% (Hindmarsh Shire Council, East Ward election) to 12.28% (East Gippsland Shire Council election).

As shown in Table 2, the more candidates there were in an election, the higher the informal voting rate tended to be, with the exception of a relatively high informal voting rate if there were only 2 candidates.¹ The average informal voting rate for elections with 3 candidates (2.69%) was just over half of that for 2 candidates (4.51%). Elections with 4 or 5 candidates had an even lower average rate. The average rate rises slowly with the number of candidates. Except for elections with only 2 candidates, it was only when there were 10–12 candidates that the informality rate reached and surpassed 5%.

¹ Analysis is based on the number of candidates that appeared on ballot papers. Consequently, references to the number of candidates in an election includes any candidates who were retired from that election after ballot papers had already been printed.

Table 2: Average informal votes by number of candidates

Number of candidates	Average informal vote (%)
2	4.51
3	2.69
4	2.57
5	2.59
6	3.09
7	3.27
8	3.71
9	4.31
10	5.13
11	4.33
12	5.18
13	4.86
15	6.67
18	7.33
23	12.28

Because the average informal voting rate in elections with 2 candidates was so high, the correlation between the number of candidates and the informal voting rate was only 0.38582, much weaker than in previous local government elections. If elections with only 2 candidates are excluded, the correlation rises to 0.78605.

Finding: The decreased rate of informal voting in 2024 compared to previous local government elections appears to be mostly due to a change to single-councillor wards in many councils, which reduced the number of candidates per election.

Under the LG Act, the electoral structures of 30 councils changed from multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures to single-councillor wards.² On average,

2 The details of changed structures is provided at **Appendix 1** of this report.
3 These comparisons do not include councils that did not have elections, or contested elections, in 2020 or 2024, but do include South Gippsland Shire Council, which was under administration in 2020 but held an election in 2021.

these council elections had fewer candidates per ward and their informal votes fell by an average of 2.44 percentage points (and a median of 2.67 percentage points) compared with 2020.³ The greatest decrease was in the Hume City Council elections, where the informal voting rate fell by 5.59 percentage points. That council’s electoral structure had changed from one 3-councillor ward and two 4-councillor wards to 11 single-councillor wards.

In contrast, 5 rural councils (Campaspe Shire Council, Gannawarra Shire Council, Hepburn Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council and Strathbogie Shire Council) changed from a mixture of multi- and single-councillor wards to unsubdivided structures. These councils’ elections had an increased number of candidates compared with 2020, producing a higher informal voting rate. The informality rate rose in all these council elections from 2020, by an average of 2.91 percentage points.

Outside these 2 groups of councils, the change in informality rates was more variable, with an average increase of 0.23 percentage points from 2020. The greatest increase (4.22 percentage points) was in the Bayside City Council, Dendy Ward election, and the steepest decline (3.16 percentage points) was in the Indigo Shire Council election.

Variations each way were usually associated with changes in the number of candidates, with the informality rate rising in 34 elections with increased numbers of candidates, and declining in 50 elections with fewer numbers of candidates. For example, in the Bayside City Council, Castlefield Ward election the number of candidates increased from 10 to 15 and the informality rate rose by 3.83 percentage points, and in the Mansfield Shire Council election there were 5 fewer candidates than in 2020 and the informality rate fell by 2.56 percentage points.

In 38 elections the informal voting rate increased despite a drop in the number of candidates from 2020. In 25 of these elections, there were only 2 candidates in 2024 which followed the pattern of a high informal vote in elections with 2 candidates. In 12 elections the informal vote decreased despite an increase in the number of candidates from 2020. In 4 of those elections there were only 2 candidates in 2020.

Other contributors

The association between candidate numbers and informal voting rates was so strong that it obscured other possible factors. In state elections there is a positive correlation between how many residents speak a language other

than English and informal votes, but in the 2024 elections the correlation was very weak at 0.215094. Selecting councils with the same electoral structure made no difference; the correlation was 0.230683 for single-councillor wards, 0.302424 for multi-councillor wards, and 0.025034 for unsubdivided councils. There was a similar weak correlation with the SEIFA score for socio-economic disadvantage, at 0.11135. The percentage of tertiary-educated residents has a negative correlation with the informal vote in state elections, but there was no relationship in 2024 (0.083538).

Part 2 – Types of informal votes

As part of our academic research, we have progressively introduced additional categories of informal votes to understand the motivations and behaviour of informal voters. New categories introduced to the study for these elections included 'drawing – racist' (such as swastikas), 'writing – racist', and 'writing – conspiracies', to measure trends in the prominence of these views in deliberate informal voting.

A limitation of the project is how to best allocate ballot papers that would fit more than one category. To address this limitation, we have allocated these ballot papers to the category that appeared to best fit the voter's attitude. This was often the feature that made the vote informal, but in some cases it was a comment.

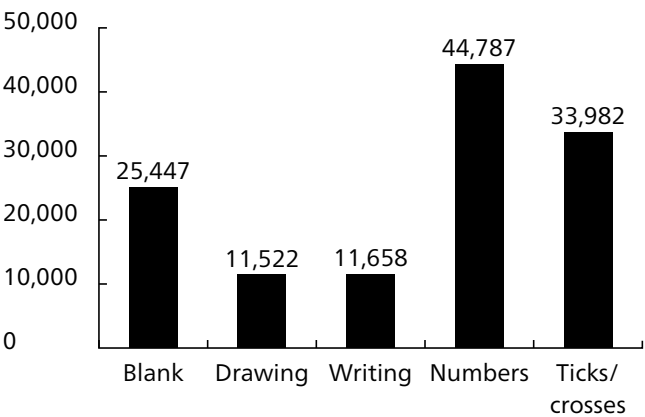
Table 3: Detailed categories of informal votes at 2024 local government elections

Category	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Blank	Completely unmarked – considered deliberately informal	25,447	19.90
Drawing – ballot paper crossed out	Typically slashes across the whole of the ballot paper	9,483	7.42
Drawing – offensive	Includes vulgar anatomical drawings	663	0.52
Drawing – racist	Includes symbols such as swastikas	12	0.01
Drawing – other	Mostly vague scrawls, but includes ‘smiley faces’ or donkeys	1,364	1.07
Writing – against compulsory voting	Explicitly opposes compulsory voting	194	0.15
Writing – corruption	Accuses council or candidates of being corrupt or criminal	290	0.23
Writing – voting makes no difference	States voting is a waste of time or makes no difference	96	0.08
Writing – against the system	Statements denouncing the political system or the electoral system	661	0.52
Writing – none of the above	Statements rejecting all of the candidates, sometimes with a joke candidate written in, such as ‘Me’ or Mickey Mouse	5,220	4.08
Writing – insufficient choice	Includes complaints that there are not enough candidates, that they are all from one side of politics, or that they are all male or all female	177	0.14
Writing – conspiracies	Includes formulaic statements by ‘sovereign citizens’ and that local government is unconstitutional	239	0.19
Writing – racist	Includes anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and anti-Indian statements, and complaints that there are no ‘Australians’ on the ballot	125	0.1
Writing – other protest	A wide variety of complaints, such as poor roads or high rates	2,279	1.78
Writing – other	Writing that does not fit into any of the categories above, including best wishes to election staff	2,377	1.86
Numbers – 1 only	A single 1 on the ballot paper	6,028	4.72
Numbers – 1 and other symbols	Mostly 1 and a tick or cross	536	0.42
Numbers – no 1 but expresses preferences	Often starts with a 2 or other number	657	0.51
Numbers – insufficient	The voter has a correct sequence, but has failed to number all the boxes (or all but one)	5,500	4.30

Category	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Numbers – sequence error	The voter has numbered all the boxes, but has skipped or duplicated numbers	18,841	14.74
Numbers – one box blank, one number missing	The voter has left one box blank and skipped a number	1,427	1.12
Numbers – Langer vote	The voter has started numbering correctly and then repeated numbers, such as '1, 2, 3, 3, 3'	237	0.19
Numbers – includes 0	Ballot papers including a 0 in a sequence, plus ballot papers with all zeros	4,067	3.18
Numbers – obscured	Ballot papers where the numbers have been obscured through being covered or torn off	329	0.26
Numbers – deliberate	Ballot papers with clearly deliberately informal numbering, such as '1, 2, 25, 300' or '20, 20, 20, 20'	6,782	5.30
Numbers – other	Numbers that don't fit into any of the above categories	383	0.3
Ticks/crosses – preference	The ballot paper clearly indicates the desired candidate through ticks or crosses for the number of candidates to be elected	26,287	20.56
Ticks/crosses – deliberate	Ticks or crosses in all boxes	7,290	5.7
Ticks/crosses – other	Ticks or crosses that don't fit into the above categories, including, for example, 3 crosses in a single-councillor ward	405	0.32
Administrative error – really formal	Including ballot papers that were actually formal but were classed as informal by election officials	445	0.35
Total		127,843	

Figure 1 shows the informal votes in broader categories. The largest component of informal votes was numbering errors, followed by ticks and crosses.

Figure 1: Broader categories of informal votes



Deliberately informal and accidentally informal votes

Our key question in this analysis is how many informal votes were deliberately informal, where the voter appears to have deliberately spoiled their vote, and how many were accidentally informal, where the voter appears to have tried to vote correctly but made an error. For this study, we have classified the following vote categories as apparently deliberately informal:

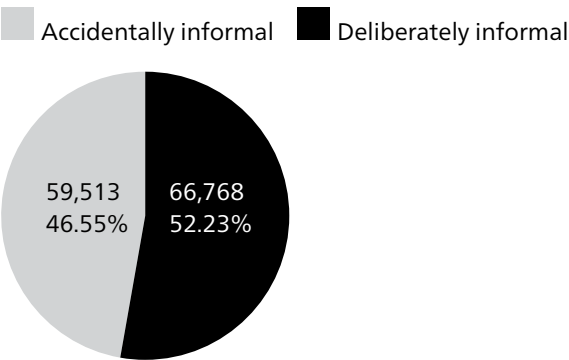
- › Blank
- › Drawing
- › Writing
- › Numbers – includes 0
- › Numbers – deliberate
- › Ticks/crosses – deliberate

We have classified other votes as showing a preference, meaning they were accidentally informal:

- › Numbers – 1 only
- › Numbers – 1 and other symbols
- › Numbers – no 1 but expresses preferences
- › Numbers – insufficient
- › Numbers – sequence error
- › Numbers – one box blank, one number missing

- › Numbers – Langer vote
- › Ticks/crosses – preference

Figure 2: Deliberately informal and accidentally informal votes



This figure does not include informal ballot papers from categories outside of accidental or deliberate (e.g. Administrative error)

Finding: Across all informal votes, there was an almost even split between the 2 broad categories of deliberately informal and accidentally informal.

Comparison to the 2020 local government elections

Table 4 compares the categories of informal votes in 2020 to 2024.

Table 4: Categories of informal votes, 2020 and 2024 local government elections

Category	2020 elections (%)	2024 elections (%)	Change
Blank	19.11	19.90	+0.8
Drawing – ballot paper crossed out	5.86	7.42	+1.56
Drawing – offensive	0.28	0.52	+0.24
Drawing – racist		0.01	
Drawing – other	0.47	1.07	+0.6
Total drawing	6.61	9.02	+2.4
Writing – against compulsory voting	0.11	0.15	+0.04
Writing – corruption	0.14	0.23	+0.09
Writing – voting makes no difference	0.03	0.08	+0.05
Writing – against the system	0.27	0.52	+0.25
Writing – none of the above	1.35	4.08	+2.73
Writing – insufficient choice		0.14	
Writing – conspiracies		0.19	
Writing – racist		0.1	
Writing – other protest	0.94	1.78	+0.84
Writing – other	2.57	1.86	-0.71
Total writing	5.41	9.13	+3.72
Numbers – 1 only	6.33	4.72	-1.612
Numbers – 1 and other symbols	0.24	0.42	+0.18
Numbers – no 1 but expresses preferences	0.2	0.51	+0.31
Numbers – insufficient	10.77	4.30	-6.47
Numbers – sequence error	33.79	14.74	-19.05
Numbers – one box blank, one number missing	3.44	1.12	-2.32
Numbers – Langer vote	0.46	0.19	-0.27
Numbers – includes 0	0.15	3.18	+3.03

Category	2020 elections (%)	2024 elections (%)	Change
Numbers – obscured	0.4	0.26	-0.14
Numbers – deliberate	4.86	5.30	+0.44
Numbers – other	0.14	0.30	+0.16
Total numbers	60.79	35.04	-25.75
Ticks/crosses – preference	4.67	20.56	+15.89
Ticks/crosses – deliberate	2.82	5.7	+2.88
Ticks/crosses – other	0.35	0.32	-0.03
Total ticks/crosses	7.84	26.58	+18.74
Administrative error – really formal	0.24	0.35	+0.11
Total deliberately informal	38.95	52.22	+13.27
Total unintentionally informal	59.91	46.55	-13.36

There was a notable decrease between 2020 and 2024 in numbering-error categories (except for apparently deliberate errors), and a corresponding rise in ticks and crosses. The proportion of the drawing and writing categories also increased.

The significant increase in ticks and crosses is likely due to higher numbers of elections with only 2 candidates. With only 2 to choose from, many voters likely placed a tick or a cross against the candidate they wanted.

Finding: There was a marked shift from accidentally informal to deliberately informal votes. This seems to have been caused by a reduced number of candidates per election, given that voters had less opportunity to make inadvertent numbering errors on shorter ballot papers. This led to a proportional increase in deliberately informal votes despite being a small number.

Council and ward analysis

The following analysis explores whether factors such as geographic location and size, candidate numbers on the ballot, and social variables had an impact on the type and frequency of informal voting.

Ward size varied greatly between elections, with metropolitan wards averaging around 8,000 to 12,000 voters on the voters' roll while regional single-councillor wards were much smaller. The smallest ward election was Loddon Shire Council, Tarnagulla Ward with only 1,161 enrolled voters.

A result of these differences was a somewhat random variation in the informal vote category distribution. Grouping the elections by councils as a whole allows us to account for these variations and where appropriate use Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data by local government area to help explain informal voting. However, this approach can also obscure differences within local government areas.

For example, the informal voting rate in the Greater Bendigo City Council elections ranged from 2.29% in the semi-rural Axedale Ward, which had 4 candidates, to 5.08% in the inner-urban Lake Weeroona Ward, which had 2 candidates. The distribution of vote types differed significantly in these wards. For example, crossed-out ballot papers comprised 13.2% of the informal votes in Axedale Ward but only 3.64% in Lake Weeroona Ward. These differences are obscured if the ward data is combined for analysis.

Blank ballot papers

Finding: At 19.90% of all informal votes, blank votes were the second highest single category of informal votes for all elections combined, and were consistently the largest or second-largest category across most elections. Only in 43 of the 424 contested elections was this not the case.

Blank ballot papers ranged from zero in the Pyrenees Shire Council, Avoca Ward election to 51% of informal votes in the Casey City Council, Casuarina Ward election. There was no apparent geographic or social pattern to blank votes. Calculating the average proportion of blank votes by the number of candidates did show, on the other hand, that the number of candidates had a clear effect.

In elections with 2 candidates, only 13.89% of informal votes were blank. The average rose steadily to 25.26% in elections with 5 candidates, then tended to decline as candidate numbers increased (with a drop to 13.27% in the East Gippsland Shire Council election, which had 23 candidates). A possible explanation is that, with only 2 candidates on the ballot paper, it is easy for voters to tick or cross one of them, while in elections with many candidates more voters may make an effort to number their ballot papers correctly, and make mistakes in doing so.

Drawing – ballot paper crossed out

There was also variation in crossed-out ballot papers across elections. Seven regional wards had zero, while in both the Buloke Shire Council, Lower Avoca Ward and Frankston City Council, Derinya Ward elections they made up 17.65% of the informal votes.

There was again no apparent geographic pattern to crossed-out ballot papers. The category was the second-largest category in 31 wards across the state, and third largest in 124 wards. Unexpectedly, there was a weak positive correlation (0.397058) between the percentage of crossed-out votes and overall levels of socio-economic advantage in the local government area.⁴ This meant that in general, the more advantaged a municipality was, the higher its proportion of crossed-out votes.

As with blank votes, there was a clear association between candidate numbers and the proportion of crossed-out ballot papers. The proportion was low (an average of 4.49% of informal votes) in elections with 2 candidates. This rose to 10.1% in elections with 5 candidates then fell back to 4.42% in the East Gippsland Shire Council election (23 candidates).

Writing – none of the above

The proportion of informal ballot papers with 'none of the above' or similar comments written on them ranged from zero in the Northern Grampians Shire Council, Grampians Ward election to 16.67% in the Hindmarsh Shire Council, East Ward election. 'None of the above' was the largest category in the Merri-bek City Council, Warrk-Warrk Ward election, the second-largest category in 8 wards, and the third-largest category in 32 wards. Most of these wards were in rural areas.

There was no apparent relation between the proportion of 'none of the above' votes and social variables, but there was a clear link to the number of candidates. Across elections with 2 candidates, 4.75% of informal votes were in this category. This increased to 6.36% in elections with 3 candidates, then gradually declined to around 2% for elections with 11 candidates or more. A possible explanation for this is that ballot papers with fewer candidates offered more blank space for disgruntled voters to express their feelings.

Numbers – 1 only

The 'numbers – 1 only' category did not apply in wards with only 2 candidates, as in these elections a '1 only' vote was counted as formal.⁵ There were 11 elections that had 3 or more candidates but no '1 only' votes, mainly in rural councils with smaller voting populations. The highest proportion of '1 only' votes was for the Melbourne City Council leadership team election, where 25.12% of informal votes fell into this category. This is likely due to confusion with the instructions on the ballot paper for the councillor election, which only requires voters to place a 1 above the line to make their vote formal.

Ballot paper design explains some of the variation in this category. Ballot papers for single-councillor wards display the words 'election of 1 councillor', which some voters may have confused for an instruction to only choose 1 candidate. In contrast, ballot papers for multi-councillor elections display 'election of [n] councillors', which may be less confusing.

The average proportion of '1 only' informal votes in single-councillor wards (excluding elections with 2 candidates) was 5.09%, compared with an average of 3% across multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided councils. Excluding elections with 2 candidates, there was no correlation between the number of candidates and '1 only' votes, whether across all elections, in single-councillor wards, or in multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided councils.

4 Levels of social and economic advantage by local government area are measured using the ABS Socio-economic index for areas (SEIFA) by local government area. See <https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia-methodology/2021>

5 Section 269(2) of the LG Act.

This was the largest category in the Melbourne City Council leadership team election, the second largest category in 3 wards (2 of which were metropolitan), and the third largest category in 16 elections (12 of which were metropolitan). There was a positive correlation (0.535379) between the proportion of residents speaking a language other than English and the '1 only' informal vote rate, and a slightly stronger positive correlation (0.619346) between the proportion of tertiary-educated residents and the '1 only' vote.

Numbers – insufficient

Ballot papers lacking enough numbers to be formal occurred unevenly across elections. This category did not include elections with only 2 or 3 candidates, as they would be counted as formal or fall into the '1 only' category respectively.⁶ As such, the proportion of insufficiently numbered informal votes ranged from zero (by definition) in the elections with 2 or 3 candidates to 26.55% in the Wyndham City Council, Bemnin Ward election.

The votes in this category rose steadily with the number of candidates, showing a strong positive correlation of 0.7677233. In elections with 4 or more candidates, the correlation was almost as strong at 0.7273453. Insufficient numbering was the second-largest category in 8 elections and the third-largest category in 30 elections. These included nearly all of the unsubdivided councils. In single-councillor wards with 4 or more candidates, the average proportion was 3.94%, while in multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided councils the average was 6.45%.

Ballot paper design may have also contributed to this pattern. Elections for more than one councillor included the words 'election of [n] councillors', and many ballot papers for these elections were numbered up to the number of vacancies, suggesting a degree of confusion with the instructions on the ballot paper.

There was no correlation between the incidence of ballot papers in this category and social variables (the proportions of residents speaking languages other than English or those with tertiary education and indicators of social and economic advantage/disadvantage). However, some votes demonstrated a selective bias against candidates with names appearing to be from diverse backgrounds, such as Arabic and South Asian Australian peoples. This pattern was especially evident in councils with large culturally diverse communities, such as Casey, Wyndam and Melton. Concerningly, a few informal ballot papers in these councils also contained offensive, racist commentary.

Numbers – sequence error

Sequence errors were the third-largest category of informal votes overall. Their incidence ranged from none at all in all elections with 2 candidates and in 38 wards with more than 2 candidates to 55.44% of informal votes in the East Gippsland Shire Council election (which had 23 candidates, the most of any election other than the Melbourne City Council councillor election).

This was the main category of informal votes in 70 elections, including nearly all of the unsubdivided councils. There was a very strong positive correlation of 0.918714 between the number of candidates and the percentage of sequence errors, reflecting the explanation that voters are more likely to make counting mistakes when faced with a larger number of candidates on the ballot paper.

There was no apparent connection between sequence errors and social factors.

Numbers – includes 0

Most ballot papers including the number zero were clearly intentionally informal, though some that included a full sequence starting with zero may have been accidental. The proportion of informal votes in this category ranged from none in 10 wards, 9 of which were regional wards with smaller voting populations, to 21.43% in the Buloke Shire Council, Mount Jeffcott Ward election.

Ballot papers including a zero were the second-largest category in 4 rural wards with small voting populations, but their incidence was usually a small but significant group. There was a weak negative correlation between the number of candidates and the proportion of informal votes containing a zero (-0.20451).

The informal votes in this category rose with the number of candidates, starting with 2.62% in elections with 2 candidates, peaking at 5.21% in elections with 3 candidates, then gradually declining to 1.13% in the East Gippsland Shire Council election (23 candidates).

Numbers – deliberate

The 'numbers – deliberate' category ranged from zero in 10 wards, which were nearly all in regional areas, to 17.39% of informal votes in the Murrindindi Shire Council, Koriella Ward election. This category was the second largest in 12 wards, evenly divided between metropolitan and regional local government areas.

6 A small number of ballot papers with mixed numbers and crosses have been included in this category.

There was a weak negative correlation (-0.23217) between the number of candidates and the proportion of 'numbers – deliberate' votes. The distribution of votes in this category by number of candidates was similar to that for votes including zero, reaching a peak of 7.73% of informal votes in elections with 4 candidates, then gradually declining to 1.66% in the East Gippsland Shire Council election (23 candidates). A possible explanation is that while it is easy to write joke numbers on ballot papers with a moderate number of candidates, it may be more difficult on larger ballot papers.

There was no association between informal votes in this category and social factors.

Ticks/crosses – preference

Finding: Ticks and crosses showing a preference was the largest category of informal votes across all elections, but ranged from 0.42% of informal votes in the Alpine Shire Council election to 80.56% in the Pyrenees Shire Council, Avoca Ward election.

It was the largest category in 173 elections, overwhelmingly in metropolitan and regional urban municipalities. The number of candidates was the biggest factor affecting this category, with a strong negative correlation of -0.66939 with the number of candidates. More than half (55.74%) of the informal votes in elections with 2 candidates fell into this category. This fell to 28.21% in elections with 3 candidates, dropped below 20% when an election had at least 5 candidates, and below 10% where there were at least 8 candidates. The category comprised 0.5% of informal votes in the East Gippsland Shire Council election (23 candidates).

There was no statewide correlation between the proportion of votes in this category and social factors. However, in at least one local government area there appears to have been a relationship with languages spoken, country of birth, and possibly different voting systems.

For example, Wyndham City Council has the fourth highest proportion of residents speaking a language other than English, many of whom were born in a Southeast Asian country, including India. In some of these democratic nation's voters use a tick or cross to vote for a single candidate.

The ticks and crosses category in the Wyndham City Council elections made up over 20% of the total informal votes, in more than half the wards. Significantly, most wards in the Wyndham City Council elections had high numbers of candidates (the average was 8.3 per ward). In other councils, large numbers of candidates would usually reduce the proportion of ticks and crosses

informal ballot papers as more sequences errors are made. However, even in the Wyndham City Council, Wimba Ward election, which had 12 candidates, 21.89% of informal votes were ticks and crosses. There was a similar pattern observed in the Whittlesea City Council elections.

It is possible in these elections some voters may be mistakenly using the ticks and crosses system of voting from their country of birth to vote. The link between this category and the proportion of residents speaking a language other than English was observed at this and at previous elections, but requires further examination before drawing firm conclusions.

Ticks/crosses – deliberate

There were a moderate number of ballot papers where voters appeared to have deliberately drawn ticks and crosses to cast an informal vote. This ranged from no cases in 6 elections (mostly in rural areas) to 19.05% of informal votes in the Central Goldfields Shire, Maryborough East Ward election.

It was the largest category in the Loddon Shire Council, Tarnagulla Ward election, and the second-largest category in 15 wards across metropolitan and rural areas.

There was a moderate negative correlation (0.4115) between the number of candidates and the proportion of apparently deliberate ticks and crosses. In elections with 2 candidates, 6.51% of informal votes were in this category. It reached a peak of 8.02% in elections with 4 candidates, then gradually declined to between 1% and 2% in elections with more than 10 candidates. The mechanics of filling out a ballot paper largely explain this pattern. It may be easy to write ticks or crosses next to the candidates' names on smaller ballot papers, but not when there are many candidates.

Accidentally and deliberately informal

The proportion of informal votes which appeared to indicate a preference ranged from 11.86% in the Merri-bek City Council, Warrk-Warrk Ward election to 81.1% in the Wyndham City Council, Bemim Ward election. They were generally highest among informal votes in unsubdivided rural councils and in some metropolitan and regional wards.

There were no apparent links between social factors and the incidence of apparently accidental informal votes. The number of candidates was again the most significant contributor. The correlation between the number of candidates and the percentage of preference votes was low, at 0.237945. However, Table 5 shows a clear relationship.

In elections with 2 candidates, an average of 56.99% of informal votes showed a preference, nearly all of them with a single tick or cross. In elections with 3, 4 and 5 candidates the proportions of preference votes were lower. It is likely that in these elections, it was simple for voters to number the ballot paper and more obvious that a tick or cross would not count as a formal vote.

Thereafter, as the number of candidates and difficulty of numbering increased, so did the proportions of informal preference votes. The highest was 71.53% in the East Gippsland Shire Council election, which had 23 candidates.

Table 5: Average percentage of preference votes by number of candidates

Number of candidates	Percentage of preference votes (%)
2	56.99
3	34.26
4	31.78
5	31.96
6	36.76
7	44.05
8	48.44
9	55.36
10	52.39
11	61.41
12	60.67
13	61.41
15	65.15
18	70.10
23	71.53

The proportion of apparently deliberately informal votes mirrored the trend for accidentally informal votes. It ranged from 16.67% of informal votes in the Pyrenees Shire Council, Avoca Ward election to 86.96% in the Murrindindi Shire Council, Koriella Ward election.

7 Savings provisions under the CoM Act mean that votes that number at least 90% of the squares correctly or that make a single sequence error are counted as formal.

There was a weak positive correlation of 0.232878 between the deliberately informal voting rate and measures of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, meaning that the more advantaged a municipality was, the higher the deliberately informal voting rate was likely to be.

Finding: No strong correlations were observed between social factors and the different categories of informal voting. However, there did appear to be a link between high rates of informal voting recorded as ‘ticks/crosses showing a preference’ and ‘number 1 only’ in councils/wards with large numbers of overseas-born residents.

At the same time, no identifiable geographic patterns in the type and rates of informal voting was recorded across all elections.

The single most important factor, which impacted nearly all categories of informal voting recorded, was the number of candidates on the ballot paper.

Part 3 – Melbourne City Council councillor election

Due to the different voting system for the Melbourne City Council councillor election, analysis of informal votes needs to be considered separately.

As for the Victorian Legislative Council, voters in Melbourne City Council elections can vote above the line for a group, or below the line for individual candidates. However, in Melbourne City Council elections, below-the-line voters must number every square, while in Legislative Council elections they only need to number 1 to 5 below the line.⁷

Finding: The nature of the voting system appears to have affected the informal voting rate in several ways. It is easy to vote by writing 1 in a square above the line (as 91.54% of Melbourne City Council votes entered into the count did in 2024). While the voting system encourages large numbers of candidates, this does not affect informal voting rates in the way that it would in other local government elections. The total rate of informal votes in the councillor election was 2.33%.

Our research required different categories of informal votes from other councils’ elections, due to the existence of above-the-line and below-the-line votes. Table 6 shows the frequency of the categories of informal votes for the councillor election.

Table 6: Detailed categories of informal votes, 2024 Melbourne City Council councillor election

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Blank	1,012	47.31
Drawing – ballot paper crossed out	195	9.12
Drawing – offensive	4	0.19
Drawing – racist	0	–
Drawing – other	23	1.08
Writing – against compulsory voting	7	0.33
Writing – corruption	5	0.23
Writing – makes no difference	0	–
Writing – against the system	6	0.28
Writing – none of the above	35	1.64
Writing – insufficient choice	3	0.14
Writing – conspiracy	2	0.09
Writing – racist	1	0.05
Writing – other protest	18	0.84
Writing – other	47	2.2
Above the line – numbers – deliberate	73	3.41
Above the line – numbers – other	75	3.51
Above the line – ticks and crosses – deliberate	31	1.45
Above the line – ticks and crosses – other	18	0.84
Below the line – numbers – 1 only	30	1.4
Below the line – numbers – insufficient	270	12.62
Below the line – numbers – sequence error	151	7.06%

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Below the line – numbers – one box blank, one number missing	0	–
Below the line – numbers – repeated	8	0.37
Below the line – numbers – other	6	0.28
Below the line – ticks and crosses – preference	10	0.47
Below the line – ticks and crosses – deliberate	8	0.37
Below the line – ticks and crosses – other	35	1.64
Administrative error – really formal	44	2.06
Total	2,139	

Finding: Blank votes were by far the largest category of informal votes in the Melbourne City Council councillor election. This may represent voters who were reluctant to vote because of the size of the ballot paper.

Other notable categories were:

- › insufficient numbering below the line (12.62%)
- › crossing out the ballot paper (9.12%)
- › making sequence errors below the line (7.06%).

To cast a vote below the line, voters had to number 58 squares sequentially and, consistent with other elections with large numbers of candidates, many below-the-line voters made mistakes or failed to complete their ballot papers. Many informal votes in the category ‘numbering – insufficient’ had only numbered up to 9 – the number of councillors to be elected, again suggesting confusion around the instructions on the ballot paper and the wording ‘election of 9 councillors’.

Votes that had been counted as informal but were really formal were a larger category (2.06%) than in other elections. This was not unexpected due to the complex formality rules for this election as well as the high number of candidates.

Table 7 groups the informal votes into broader categories, and compares them with informal votes for the Melbourne City Council leadership team election in 2024 and councillor election in 2020.

Table 7: Broader categories of informal votes, 2020 and 2024 Melbourne City Council elections

Category	2024 councillor election	2024 leadership team election	2020 councillor election
Blank	1,012 (47.31%)	1,045 (22.69%)	901 (53.41%)
Drawing	222 (10.38%)	266 (5.78%)	232 (13.75%)
Writing	124 (5.8%)	164 (3.56%)	117 (6.94%)
Numbers	635 (29.69%)	2,627 (57.05%)	357 (21.16%)
Ticks/crosses	102 (4.77%)	482 (10.47%)	74 (4.39%)
Above the line	197 (9.21%)	N/A	169 (10.02%)
Below the line	540 (25.25%)	N/A	262 (15.53%)
Deliberate	1,486 (69.47%)	1,694 (36.79%)	1,340 (79.43%)
Accidental	467 (21.83%)	2,860 (62.11%)	255 (15.12%)
Total	2,139	4,605	1,687

Finding: Deliberately informal votes made up almost 70% of the informal votes for the Melbourne City Council councillor election. This may be because there was less opportunity for voters to make a mistake unless they were numbering squares below the line. Both above- and below-the-line votes were small minorities, with the below-the-line informal votes overwhelmingly comprised apparently unintentional errors.

Comparison between councillor election and leadership team election

Comparing the councillor election with the leadership election highlights the impact of the voting system on the informality rate. The same voting population voted in both elections in 2024, but the informal voting rate for the leadership team election was more than twice than the rate in the councillor election. It is likely that this was because in the leadership team election voters had to number the ballot paper from 1 to 11, and many apparently unintentionally missed or duplicated numbers or gave up before numbering all the squares. Almost half of the numbering errors in the leadership team election were ‘1 only’ votes, which may have been due to confusion with the voting instructions for the councillor election.

The percentage of blank ballot papers for the leadership team election was only half that for the councillors election, but the total number was almost identical. This suggests that the same voters left both ballot papers blank. Similarly, the proportion of deliberately informal votes for the councillor election was almost twice that for the leadership team election but the total numbers were similar.

In contrast, votes showing a preference were far lower in both number and proportion for the councillor election, possibly because it was more difficult to accidentally vote informally in that election due to the ease of voting above the line.

Comparison to the 2020 councillor election

The pattern of informal votes in the 2024 councillor election resembled the pattern observed in 2020. The main differences were increases in numbering, below-the-line and preference votes. It appears that in 2020, a higher proportion of voters attempted to vote below the line and made a mistake.

Part 4 – Recommendations

The research found that the VEC should:

1. continue to conduct and refine research on informal voting patterns with a similar depth of categorical and demographic analysis
2. identify opportunities to tailor education and outreach campaigns to address common errors in apparently accidental informal voting, such as ticks and crosses and 1 only
3. advocate for broad, longer-term strategies and approaches needed to combat the prevalence of deliberate informal voting, including civics education and electoral engagement.

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