



2026 Nepean District by-election

Service plan

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Acknowledgement of Country

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

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

Foreword

Following the resignation of the Member for Nepean District, Sam Groth, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) will conduct a by-election to fill the vacancy. The formal resignation took effect on 13 February 2026.

We are responsible for planning and delivering this by-election in accordance with Victoria's electoral laws. As with every election we conduct, our focus is on providing a fair, accessible and trusted voting experience for the Nepean District community.

Delivering any election requires significant preparation and resources, and a single-district election is no exception. We are committed to balancing these demands responsibly while maintaining the high standards of integrity and service that Victorians expect.

Because of the scale and importance of this work, every aspect of the Nepean District by-election must withstand the closest scrutiny. We will deliver the election transparently and in full compliance with the law. Our processes and decision making are grounded in the recognition of our responsibility to maintain public confidence in the independence and impartiality of the VEC.

By-elections also provide a valuable opportunity to trial and refine initiatives aligned with our strategic outcomes: reinforcing public trust, responding to a complex environment, improving the voter experience, and prioritising staff safety and wellbeing. These operational improvements are informed by previous reports to Parliament and our responses to recommendations from the Electoral Matters Committee. The trials will assist in strengthening our election delivery model ahead of the 2026 state election.

This service plan outlines our priorities, key activities and performance measures. It is intended to provide clarity about how the election will be delivered and how our performance will be assessed.

Above all, our goal is to deliver an election that the Nepean District community can trust—one that is conducted professionally, transparently and with the care every Victorian deserves.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Sven Bluemmel'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner

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1. Background and purpose

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to establish the plan for the conduct of the Nepean District by-election.

This document is to be used to gain a clear understanding of the services delivered by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC).

1.2 Guiding principles

The Nepean District by-election is conducted on established and accepted principles.

We will:

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

1.3 Legal framework

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

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

All procedures and processes we implement during a by-election consider the above and implement the prescribed rules accordingly.

1.4 Privacy

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

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

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

1.5 Statement of intent

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

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

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

To meet this intent, the following major operational objectives were identified:

- › create a roll for the Nepean District by-election
- › provide every eligible elector with a voting experience that is:
 - safe, convenient and easy to access
 - timely to their requirements
 - easy to understand
 - respectful and courteous
 - confidential

- › assist candidates, registered political parties and other participants to meet nomination and other compliance requirements
- › provide electoral information to all stakeholders in a format that is easy to understand and use, easy to find, rapid and deliverable through a variety of media
- › ensure all votes cast are accounted for and counted accurately and efficiently, with results available in a timely manner
- › maintain stakeholder confidence and trust in our capacity to deliver impartial, transparent, accurate and efficient electoral outcomes
- › ensure a safe and OHS compliant environment for our staff, contractors and third-party providers in undertaking work on our behalf.

1.6 Electoral integrity

The planning, delivery and evaluation of election programs has included a focus on having robust integrity and decision-making measures. These measures will focus on election office and head office compliance, as well as specific activities vital for election result integrity.

1.7 Complaints management

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

- › online submission form
- › email
- › post

Complaints alleging a breach of the law should include any available evidence. We will forward complaints lodged at an election office or through our public enquiry service to our head office for review and appropriate action. Customer confidentiality is protected.

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

1.8 Constructive compliance

A 'constructive compliance' approach is in place and focuses on providing electoral participants with resources to understand and comply with their obligations. Where necessary and appropriate, enforcement tools may be used to assist compliance.

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

1.9 Court of Disputed Returns

The validity of the Nepean District by-election can only be disputed via a petition to the Court of Disputed Returns. The Supreme Court is the Court of Disputed Returns for the purpose of all Victorian state elections.

A petition to the Court of Disputed Returns must be filed with the Prothonotary of the Supreme Court within 40 days after the return of the writ.

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

1.10 Storage and disposal of ballot material

We manage the security and storage of ballot material in accordance with section 122 of the Electoral Act and the associated regulations. All parcels are to be kept safely until the completion of any proceedings in the Court of Disputed Returns. Where no petition is filed with the Court of Disputed Returns, ballot material may be disposed of once the period of 40 days after the return of the writ has elapsed.

The disposal of ballot material is governed by standards and disposal authorities issued by the Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) and standards issued by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC). A copy of the electoral roll prepared for the Nepean District by-election is retained permanently.

1.11 Report to Parliament on the conduct of the Nepean District by-election

Under section 8(2)(b) of the Electoral Act, we must report to both Houses of Parliament within 12 months of the conduct of each election on the administration of that election. The report will include:

- › analysis and summary of results and trends
- › selected detailed statistics
- › overview of the planning process
- › details of the election budget
- › election administration, staffing, and infrastructure
- › election services to voters, political parties, candidates, and the media
- › communication services
- › innovations and special projects
- › summary of count processes and transparency measures

The report may also provide details of any recommendations for legislative change or research topics which will assist the conduct of future elections.

2. Election timeline

The Nepean District by-election timeline is determined by the close roll, final nomination day and the election day appointed in the writ issued by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The rest of the timeline is determined by the Electoral Act based on the dates in the writ.

The timeline for the Nepean District by-election, based on the writ being issued on Friday 13 March 2026, is included in **Appendix 1**.

3. Election service management

3.1 Cost management

A Cost Management Strategy for election programs enables timely and accurate forecasting across the election program to embed probity, accountability and transparency on all costs incurred in delivering the election. Details of election costs will be included in our Report to Parliament.

3.2 External service providers

Many aspects of the Nepean District by-election require the expertise of external service providers. Contracting these providers enables our staff to focus on their election-specific areas of expertise, ensuring that Victorians are provided with the highest quality election services built on modern technology and systems.

For the Nepean District by-election, we will have service agreements and contracts in place for a range of specialist services, including:

- › Australia Post
- › ballot paper services
- › cardboard furniture and voting centre equipment
- › cartage and courier services
- › envelope production
- › information technology
- › mail-house services.

3.3 Arrangements with other organisations

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

Victorian Government Solicitor's Office

We will engage the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office for external legal services that may be required during the by-election. We plan for any legal matters that do arise to be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

Victoria Police

We will engage with Victoria Police before and throughout the by-election timeline. Interactions with Victoria Police have been supported by more streamlined disclosure, referral and response processes and active engagement with law enforcement to build their understanding of electoral offences.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

We will plan with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for the timely determination of any applications for review of the Electoral Commissioner's decision on the registration of a how-to-vote card.

Section 82A of the Electoral Act provides that VCAT has until 5 pm the next working day after receiving the application to determine the application or give directions on any changes required to obtain registration.

Supreme Court

Under section 176 of the Electoral Act, the VEC or a candidate may seek an injunction to prevent a person from committing any offence which might apply to elections. We will plan with the Supreme Court to ensure any applications for an injunction received on election day can be prioritised and heard without delay.

3.4 Evaluation and reporting

Following the Nepean District by-election, an evaluation will be conducted to identify successes, capture lessons learned and identify performance improvement opportunities through an established continuous improvement framework. We will collect and analyse a range of qualitative and quantitative datasets to support our findings.

Informal ballot paper analysis

We will conduct a survey of informal ballot papers as soon as practicable following the election. The aim of the survey is to measure the incidence of various types of informal voting, and to contribute to Australia-wide literature on this subject.

3.5 Resource management and sustainability

We are committed to managing resources in a way that minimises environmental impact across its operations.

Examples include:

- › extending the provision of recycling facilities currently at VEC offices to all election venues
- › encouraging recycling of how-to-vote cards and other materials by providing clearly labelled recycling bins at voting centres and other election venues
- › careful consideration and planning for more environmentally sustainable transportation of election materials across the State
- › paper reduction strategies such as reducing the amount of paper sent to election offices for election use and the provision of electronic copies of reports where possible.

We value and promote knowledge, learning and collaboration. We actively work to empower and engage staff and the community in decisions of importance to all and will continue to promote sustainable practices during the Nepean District by-election.

4. Initiatives

State by-elections provide us with the opportunity to design, implement and evaluate new approaches to operational challenges. By-elections are suitable for refinements in the operating model as any initiative deployed is done so in a controlled manner at a limited scale, that if successful, could be expanded to a state election. Only the initiative is evaluated, not the by-election as a whole.

We have reviewed the 12 key recommendations and 16 commitments within our Report to Parliament on the 2022 Victorian state election and the evaluations of the Warrandyte, Mulgrave, Prahran and Werribee District by-elections to identify suitable initiatives for testing in the Nepean District by-election.

Each activity directly aligns to one of 4 strategic outcomes identified in our *Strategy 2027*: reinforcing public trust, responding to a complex environment, improving the voter experience and prioritising staff safety and wellbeing. A list of the status of all commitments arising from our Report to Parliament on the 2022 Victorian state election as at the end of the 2025 Prahran and Werribee District by-election is provided in **Appendix 3**, which will be updated in our Report to Parliament on the Nepean District by-election. Our commitments for the 2026 state election are contained in our 2026 state election draft service plan, which is planned to be finalised in August 2026.

For the 2026 Nepean District by-election we will trial 3 commitments made in the 2026 state election draft service plan.

4.1 Improving the voter experience: EasyVote Guide

For the Nepean District by-election, we will trial our commitment made in the 2026 state election draft service plan to mail a printed EasyVote guide to every household in the district.

This initiative also responds to Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee (EMC) recommendation in its report on the conduct of the 2022 state election "that the VEC ensure all electors are provided with an EasyVote guide at future elections".¹

The EasyVote guide will include important information for voters such as the date of the by-election, options for voting, how to access information about candidates and how to vote cards, as well as a reminder that voting is compulsory. This information will complement the material which will be available on the VEC website and the awareness campaign which will be undertaken throughout the election period.

The primary objective of the trial is to improve voter awareness of the election and consequently voter participation.

4.2 Improving the voter experience: Postal vote declaration envelope redesign

For the Nepean District by-election, we will further trial our commitment made in the 2026 state election draft service plan to redesign the postal vote declaration envelope. This follows earlier redesign trials at the 2023 Warrandyte and Mulgrave District by-elections and the 2025 Prahran and Werribee District by-elections that sought to reduce the rejection rate of postal votes.

This initiative responds to the EMC's recommendation in its report on the conduct of the 2022 state election that the VEC "should test and publicly report before the 2026 election on the effectiveness of its redesigned postal ballot packs at reducing elector errors. If the opportunity arises, the VEC should test the new design at a by-election."²

Although the trialled redesign significantly reduced the rejection rate, in its report on the 2025 Prahran and Werribee District by-elections, the EMC recommended additional research and design changes be made to seek to further reduce the rejection rate due to elector error.³

The primary objective of the refinement to the earlier trials is to further reduce the rejection rate of postal votes.

1 Volume 2 of the *Electoral Matters Committee report on the conduct of the 2022 state election*, recommendation 30 (p. 141).

2 Volume 2 of the *Electoral Matters Committee report on the conduct of the 2022 state election*, recommendation 19 (p. 89).

3 *Electoral Matters Committee report on the 2025 Prahran and Werribee by-elections*, recommendation 5 (p. 22).

4.3 Responding to a complex environment: Visitor registration trial

For the Nepean District by-election, we will further trial our commitment made in the 2026 state election draft service plan to implement a campaigner registration initiative by expanding it to a visitor registration trial that reflects our ongoing commitment to OHS and positive voting experiences. This follows earlier campaigner registration trials at the 2025 Prahran and Werribee District by-elections in response to our duty of care obligations to provide a safe environment at election venues identified at the 2023 Mulgrave District by-election under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic).

This initiative aligns to first part of the EMC's recommendation to Government in its report on the conduct of the 2022 state election "to require all people who wish to campaign at a voting centre to register their details with the VEC or an alternative body involved with enforcing electoral law."⁴

Our OHS obligations apply to all venues we control or manage, and the immediate surrounding area. Our obligations to protect health and safety extend to all persons attending a venue for a purpose connected with our use of the venue. Accordingly, we have expanded this trial to a broader group of visitors who attend the sites. These include:

- › Campaigners
- › Contractors
- › Election observers
- › Site volunteers (such as people running a barbecue or cake stall near the venue)
- › Media

Visitors attending an early or election day voting centre will be asked to register their emergency contact with us via a paper form on arrival. If they will be at the same venue over multiple days, they will only need to complete the form once. This remains entirely voluntary for all visitors who attend the early voting centre and/or election day voting centres.

The primary objective of the expanded trial is to inform the proposed approach for our operating model for the 2026 state election.

4 Volume 1 of the *Electoral Matters Committee report on the conduct of the 2022 state election*, recommendation 13 (p. 42).

5. Enrolment and close of rolls

5.1 Overview

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

5.2 Enrolment eligibility checks

Nominations open the day following the issue of the writ. We will check that nominating candidates are enrolled on the Victorian register of electors and that their nominators (where applicable) are enrolled in the electorate in which the candidate is nominating.

5.3 Close of roll

The roll for the election closes at 8 pm on Friday 20 March 2026 (7 days after the issue of the writs).

We work closely with the AEC to ensure that enrolment data received by the close of roll is processed by the AEC within 24 hours.

Electors who enrol or update their details in the weeks following the close of roll will be contacted. Where applicable, electors will be advised they may attend a voting centre and complete an 'Application for Enrolment/Provisional Vote'.

5.4 Election roll products

Candidate and registered political party roll products for the Nepean District by-election will be generated and provided upon request. Candidates and registered political parties must only use roll data for limited purposes, and they will be reminded of their legislative obligations and significant penalties for misusing roll data when accessing these roll products.

6. Communication and engagement

6.1 Information services

Public enquiry service

A call centre will be established to manage the increased volume of calls and emails received during a district by-election.

The operation period for the call centre will be as follows:

Date	Operating Hours
Friday 20 March (Close of the Roll)	8:30 am to 8 pm
Monday 23 March to Tuesday 21 April (excl. public holiday and weekends)	8:30 am to 5 pm
Wednesday 22 April to Friday 24 April	8:30 am to 8 pm
Saturday 25 April (Anzac Day)	1 pm to 8 pm
Sunday 26 April	Closed
Monday 27 April to Thursday 30 April	8:30 am to 8 pm
Friday 1 May	8:30 am to 6 pm
Saturday 2 May	8 am to 6 pm

Outside our hours of operation, a recorded service will provide information on enrolment and voting.

Multi-language telephone interpreting service

An existing telephone multi-language information service will be available. Voters will be able to request an interpreter if they wish. We provide 10 dedicated telephone numbers for the most widely spoken languages in Victoria. See **Appendix 2**.

info@vec.vic.gov.au

People who prefer to engage with the VEC online can email us using the address info@vec.vic.gov.au

6.2 Digital services

VoterAlert notification service

We offer an electronic notification service – VoterAlert – by email and/or SMS.

Electors in Nepean District registered for VoterAlert will receive voting reminders during the election, including the digital EasyVote Guide.

Website

Our website will feature comprehensive Nepean District by-election information, updated at each phase of the election cycle. Information will include:

- › how to enrol, or check or update enrolment details
- › information for candidates, including nominations, campaigning and political donations
- › how-to-vote cards
- › early, postal, telephone-assisted, interstate and overseas voting options
- › details of how, when and where to vote on election day
- › information on vote counting
- › election results.

From approximately 7:30 pm on election night, provisional results information will become available on our website. Results will continue to be updated after election night as postal votes continue to arrive before the close of the postal vote receipt period, and other declaration votes are processed.

A full preference distribution will be conducted for this election.

Voting centre locator

Our voting centre locator is an interactive map searchable by address, street name and locality and will provide detailed voting centre, early voting centre and election office information. The voting centre locator is available via our website and can be used via most mobile phones. The voting centre locator will show voting centres nearest to any search result and will provide information about the facilities at the voting centres, including wheelchair accessibility.

6.3 Advertising

We will run print, radio and targeted sponsored social media advertisements through the election period to convey key electoral information to electors and other key stakeholders.

We will also distribute a paper copy of our EasyVote guide to all households in Nepean District via Australia Post to provide an alternate source of information for voters.

6.4 Media

Media releases

A number of media releases will provide journalists and media outlets with key election information for their publications such as; enrolment, nomination and voting information, key dates, facts and figures, and results publication information.

Social media

We will use social media platforms to provide key election updates and continue to establish ourselves as an authoritative and trusted source of truth for all election-related enquiries. This will include proactively promoting key messages regarding the election as well as responding in a timely and accurate manner to queries received from users.

Similarly, we will monitor emerging issues that arise via social media.

6.5 Education and inclusion services

We are committed to delivering safe and inclusive election services that enable all Victorians to participate in democracy. We offer extensive education and inclusion services year-round to support the broad diversity of eligible Victorians.

Outreach sessions for priority communities are available on request.

Inclusion of people with disabilities

Our existing services for people with disabilities include but are not limited to braille ballot papers, telephone-assisted voting, and wheelchair-accessible voting centres. Further, a number of accessibility aids and tools are available for use at voting centres. We will aim to further enhance the support provided to people with disabilities to vote.

7. Venue and resource management

7.1 Election Infrastructure Location Strategy

The Election Infrastructure Location Strategy (EILS) sets out our strategic direction in adopting election infrastructure solutions for election events.

The following guiding principles apply:

1. Election offices remain the centre for the administrative oversight of the delivery of the election in each district.
2. Early voting centres (EVCs) will take the majority of votes and should be located in areas of high voter traffic to maximise the accessibility to the electorate.
3. Election day voting centres will be retained, though numbers and staffing will reduce as early voting rises in popularity.

All election venues are audited for accessibility and we are committed to ensuring that there is at least one fully accessible voting centre or early voting centre that can provide maximum access to voters. All accessibility ratings for all venues will be included on our website.

7.2 Voting centre equipment

We will arrange for the delivery of furniture (where required) and equipment to each voting centre ahead of voting activities.

This will include customised cardboard voting centre equipment, such as voting screens, directional signage and ballot boxes.

Laptops will be used for electronic roll mark-off at all voting locations. Paper scannable rolls will be used as a contingency where there are connectivity issues.

8. Election office management

We will establish an election office in Nepean District for the by-election.

Once established and open to the public, the election office will be clearly identified with signage and will have appropriate security.

The election office provides facilities for the election manager to meet with candidates and/or their representatives and provides a counter service to members of the public.

The election office will be supplied with all equipment, stationery and materials necessary for the conduct of the election.

The election manager will have access from the election office to our election management system, an IT application specifically developed to support the conduct of the election. Nominations and results for the Nepean District by-election will be entered directly into the application.

We will arrange the collection of materials and equipment from the election office once all election services have been successfully delivered.

Public office hours

The Nepean District election office will open to the public to respond to public and candidate queries following the issue of the writ. The standard hours of operation for the election office will be as follows:

Date	Operating Hours
Monday 16 March to Thursday 19 March	9 am to 5 pm
Friday 20 March (Close of the roll)	9 am to 8 pm
Saturday 21 March and Sunday 22 March	Closed
Monday 23 March to Friday 27 March	9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 28 March and Sunday 29 March	Closed
Monday 30 March to Thursday 2 April	9 am to 5 pm
Friday 3 April (Good Friday) to Monday 6 April (Easter Monday)	Closed
Tuesday 7 April to Friday 10 April	9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 11 April and Sunday 12 April	Closed
Monday 13 April to Friday 17 April	9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 18 April and Sunday 19 April	Closed
Monday 20 April to Friday 24 April	9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 25 April (Anzac Day) and Sunday 26 April	Closed
Monday 27 April to Friday 1 May	9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 2 May (Election Day)	8 am to 6 pm

8.1 Senior Election Officials

Election managers and assistant election managers

The Electoral Commissioner will appoint an election manager for the Nepean District by-election, and two assistant election managers to support the election manager in delivering the election.

The election manager will appoint and train an optimum number of staff to ensure the efficient conduct of their election. This will include staff to work in the election office, in early voting centres and in election day voting centres.

8.2 Support for the election manager

Election support officer

An election support officer will provide support to the election manager throughout the election. The election support officer will be the central point of contact between the election manager, the Electoral Commissioner and other VEC staff.

The election support officer will assist the election manager with procedural and operational issues. The election support officer will visit the election office to provide in-person checks on election progress and be available for further visits to support the election manager as required.

Election liaison officers

The election manager will appoint liaison officers who will visit voting locations during the voting period. Early voting liaison officers support all pre-election day activity, and election liaison officers support election day voting.

The liaison officers will alert the election manager to instances where voting locations may need extra resources and deliver them where appropriate, and to ensure procedures are applied consistently.

Help Desk

We will establish a Help Desk to respond to support requests from the election manager. The Help Desk will triage support calls so they can be efficiently resolved or forwarded to the appropriate specialist depending on the support needed. Help Desk will provide direct support for use of the election management system, while IT infrastructure queries will be referred to our IT support team, and any questions regarding election procedures or operations, or election staffing, will be directed to the election support officer.

The Help Desk also undertakes quality assurance checks of the election office's IT infrastructure provided by us prior to its opening.

Personnel Helpline

The Personnel Helpline service provides telephone and email support to election staff in the use of our personnel systems, and assists them to:

- › complete their online registration for appointment (potential new staff)
- › understand political disclosure requirements
- › access and navigate the election staff self-service portal to update contact details, enter banking, tax and superannuation details, access pay advices and accept any offers of appointment
- › resolve queries relating to the online training platform
- › complete timesheets
- › resolve pay-related queries.

9. Candidates and parties

9.1 Nominations

Nominations will open following the issue of the writ. We will produce information for prospective candidates including candidate and scrutineer handbooks and all forms required for nominating at the election. All candidate information will be available on our website and from the election manager.

Nominations from registered political parties must be lodged at the VEC head office and include a nomination deposit of \$350 for each endorsed candidate. The election manager will receive and record nominations from independent candidates, including the receipt of the \$350 nomination deposit.

Independent candidates will be able to complete their nomination form online via Candidate Helper on our website but will also still need to lodge their hard copy nomination form and nomination deposit with the election manager.

Nomination information captured electronically will be uploaded into our election management system and will be checked against the signed, hardcopy nomination forms.

Each day during the nomination period the election manager will publish, in a prominent position in the election office, a list of all nominations received. Details of nominations that have completed a full quality assurance process will be published on our website daily.

9.2 Draw for position on ballot paper

Following the close of nominations, the election manager will hold an electronic ballot draw to determine the order of candidates' names on the ballot paper by a single random draw.

Following the draw, candidates' names will be updated on the website to reflect the draw order. This will happen within the hour following the draw completion.

9.3 How-to-vote cards

All how-to-vote cards (HTVCs) to be distributed within 400 metres of voting centres on election day, or to be carried by mobile voting teams, must be registered by the VEC.

Registered political parties must lodge their HTVCs directly with the VEC's head office. Independent candidates and others may lodge their HTVCs with the election manager who will forward these to the Electoral Commissioner for registration. The first day for submission of HTVCs to us for registration will be the first working day following the close of nominations.

Applicants will be required to submit an electronic copy of each card, as well as 2 hard copies. The provision of electronic copies will speed up the process of publishing all registered cards on our website.

Detailed information on the requirements for HTVC registration will be contained in the candidate handbook.

9.4 Candidate enquiries

The election manager will personally deal with all enquiries from candidates to ensure that timely, accurate and consistent information is being provided. Registered political parties will deal directly with our Candidate Services team.

9.5 Refund of nomination deposits

Candidates who are eligible will have their nomination deposit refunded as soon as practicable after the declaration of the election.

If eligible, nomination deposits for independent candidates will be refunded to the candidate. Nomination deposits for candidates endorsed by a registered political party will be refunded directly to the relevant party. Refunds will be made by direct credit into a nominated bank account where requested, or by cheque.

The nomination deposit for any candidate or registered political party that is not eligible to be refunded will be forfeited.

10. Funding and disclosure

10.1 Funding

The Electoral Act provides registered political parties and independent candidates with access to public money to cover particular expenses.

Public funding is for electoral and political expenditure in relation to the election. To be eligible for public funding, the candidate must achieve at least 4% of first preference votes or be elected, and the candidate or party must lodge an audited statement detailing their expenditure for the by-election within 20 weeks after the by-election.

After the election results are returned we will calculate the maximum entitlement amount based on the number of first preference votes received and reconcile this against candidates' statement of expenditure to determine any public funding to be paid to the parties and candidates that contested the election. The timing of payments is dependent on when candidates and parties provide us with their audited statement of expenditure.

Public funding amounts are adjusted for inflation each year. For the 2025-26 financial year, the maximum funding entitlement is \$7.46 per first preference vote for the Legislative Assembly.

The elected member is eligible to apply to receive administrative expenditure funding. This is payable to independent elected members directly and the registered political party for endorsed members. It can be used to cover the general running costs of the office of a party or an independent member of Parliament.

Our Regulatory Services team will communicate entitlement obligations and amounts to eligible candidates and relevant registered political parties after the by-election.

10.2 Donation disclosure

Victorian law requires donors and recipients of political donations to declare donations that meet or exceed the disclosure threshold (\$1,240 for the 2025–26 financial year). A donor must be an Australian citizen, an Australian resident, or a company with an Australian Business Number.

Recipients must confirm any donation above the threshold that they have received from an authorised donor. Disclosures must be made through the VEC within 21 days of the donation via disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au.

Recipients of political donations have a legal obligation to notify donors of their requirement to disclose their donations. Failure to properly disclose a political donation is an offence against the Electoral Act.

10.3 Prohibited donation activity

Anonymous political donations above the disclosure threshold (\$1,240 for the 2025-2026 financial year) and political donations from a foreign source are banned.

There is a general cap on political donations that can be given to any single recipient by the same donor across a four-year election period (the period in between State general elections). For the 2025-26 financial year, the general cap for the 2022-26 election period is \$4,970.

Any political donations that exceed the general cap, including aggregated donations, are prohibited. While a small contribution, as defined by the Electoral Act, does not contribute to the general cap, small contributions cannot be used as a way of evading donation disclosure and reporting obligations.

10.4 Compliance and enforcement

Our dedicated Electoral Compliance team uses a range of intelligence and investigation techniques to monitor and enforce compliance with Victoria's donation disclosure and reporting laws.

This includes analysis and reconciliation of annual returns provided by reporting entities, complaints and tip-offs, and ongoing monitoring of donation activity within our disclosures system.

We routinely work with a range of integrity and law enforcement agencies, and actively partners with other agencies to exchange intelligence and share information.

10.5 Further information

Further information regarding Victoria's funding and disclosure laws is available on our website.

11. Ballot material

Our staff will supervise all stages of the preparation, printing and distribution of ballot material.

11.1 Ballot papers

Artwork for ballot papers will be generated using our automation tool, which creates each product dynamically, based on nominations. The tool imports relevant candidate information into the products directly from the election management system's database.

In line with legislation, ballot papers will include Registered Political Party logos where registered. Logos will appear next to party candidate names on district ballot papers.

Mail house ballot paper stock to be used for postal voting will be pre-printed with the initials of the VEC officer responsible for postal voting.

Print ready .pdf files will be securely transmitted directly to our internal print facility for production.

11.2 Braille ballot papers

Electors who are blind or have low vision can register to receive braille ballot material.

11.3 Ballot paper tracking and security

Physical security and integrity are critical aspects of our election design. Election materials such as ballot papers and certified copies of the electoral roll, both paper and electronic, are strictly controlled.

12. Pre-election day voting

12.1 Early voting

Electors can vote before election day at any EVC in Nepean District. Early voting will be available from Wednesday 22 April.

We will work to ensure that EVCs are well located within the district and provide ease of access, while at the same time ensuring early voter queuing times are kept to a minimum as much as possible.

We will adopt consistent voting hours throughout the early voting period. Hours of operation for early voting will be as follows:

Date	Operating Hours
Wednesday 22 April to Friday 24 April	9 am to 8 pm
Saturday 25 April (Anzac Day)	1pm to 8pm
Sunday 26 April	Closed
Monday 27 April to Thursday 30 April	9 am to 8 pm
Friday 1 May	9 am to 6 pm

Staff at early voting centres will be provided with electronic roll mark-off facilities.

12.2 Mobile voting

The Electoral Commissioner may appoint aged care facilities, homelessness support agencies, neurodiverse suitable facilities, Aboriginal community locations, and other institutions as mobile voting centres at the election.

If applicable, mobile voting teams will visit these facilities during the early voting period to enable electors that are unable to attend an early or election day voting centre to vote. To reduce risk, we will encourage postal vote applications or telephone-assisted voting (electors who are unable to vote without assistance because they are blind, have low vision or a motor impairment) from these venues.

Candidates and registered political parties will be advised of mobile voting itineraries.

A mobile voting team will attend a dedicated site on Tuesday 21 April from 10 am to 4 pm and provide a low-sensory voting experience for neurodivergent electors prior to early voting centres opening on Wednesday 22 April.

12.3 Postal voting

Electors may apply online for a postal vote. The postal vote application does not need to be signed or witnessed, although the elector will be required to successfully answer a verification question when completing their postal vote.

Hardcopy application forms will also be available from Australia Post offices, the VEC head office and the election office from Monday 16 March. In special circumstances, electors will also be able to receive emailed ballot material – see 'Interstate and overseas voting' for more information.

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

Postal votes will be returned to the VEC centralised activity site (CAS) for processing and counting.

12.4 Telephone-assisted voting

We will provide telephone-assisted voting (TAV) services to electors who are unable to vote without assistance because they are blind, have low vision or a motor impairment.

Telephone-assisted voting entails a 2-step process and electors are required to make 2 telephone calls. The first call is to register for a telephone-assisted vote and the second is to cast their vote.

The service will operate from the opening of early voting. Registration will close at 6 pm on election day, Saturday 2 May 2026. Voters that are still in the phone queue at 6 pm will be allowed to vote, as if they were in a queue at a voting centre.

12.5 Interstate and overseas voting

We will identify the volume of eligible electors for the Nepean District by-election outside of Victoria during the election period.

For the Nepean District by-election, ballot papers will be available to eligible electors outside of Victoria during the election period through secure email or post. Electors can then return their ballot by post ensuring the returned ballot is postmarked before the close of voting at 6 pm on election day.

Electors applying from outside Victoria will be offered an express post delivery option for both dispatch and return of their completed ballot paper.

13. Election day voting centres

13.1 Operation of voting centres

A voting centre manager will be appointed to manage each voting centre operating on election day. Voting centre managers will be trained in the strict legal requirement to adhere to the procedures for operation of the voting centre. This includes the requirements around the display of signage outside voting centres and ballot paper security.

13.2 Voting centre staff

Our online registration system for prospective election officials is available on our website. The election manager will appoint the optimum number of staff for each voting centre to provide a smooth flow of electors on election day and will ensure voting centres are resourced and that election tasks are completed as required.

Election day staff will be provided with training tools that outline voting centre procedures, with special emphasis on integrity, accuracy, and quality customer service. Election officials in certain roles will be required to complete a suite of online training modules prior to election day, allowing the election manager to monitor the progress and proficiency of all staff. The online training is to complement the face-to-face training sessions for voting centre managers and election liaison officers.

13.3 Queue management

Queues both inside and outside of the voting centre will be managed to ensure electors move as quickly as possible through the voting centre to cast their vote.

A queue controller will also ensure that any elector in the queue at the close of voting is able to vote and will ensure that no further persons join the queue after 6 pm.

If a disturbance occurs either within the voting centre or outside the premises, voting centre managers are trained in the steps to be taken to diffuse and resolve the situation as required.

13.4 Visitor registration trial

For the Nepean District by-election, we will be expanding our campaigner registration initiative to trialling visitor registration which includes a broader group of visitors outside early voting centres and election day voting centres. This is part of our risk management approach to ensure that all electors, party and candidate workers, visitors and our staff are safe while attending VEC-managed venues, in accordance with our occupational health and safety obligations.

Any visitor to an early voting centre or election day voting centre, other than a voter coming to cast their vote, will be invited to complete a paper registration form on arrival. See **Chapter 4: Initiatives**.

13.5 Additional voting centre services

The following will be provided at each early and election day voting centre and where practicable also at mobile voting centres:

Multi-language instructions

Voting instructions in a minimum of 20 languages, plus English, will be pre-printed on voting compartments at voting centres. A list of the languages included appears in **Appendix 2**.

Accessibility aids and tools

A number of tools and aids are provided to assist electors to vote. These include:

- › large magnifying sheets at each voting centre
- › maxi pencils to allow certain electors to more easily grip the pencil
- › assisted hearing devices at early voting centres and voting centres
- › wheelchair or desktop voting compartments.

It is our intent to provide an accessible experience for as many electors as possible.

14. Counting the votes

An overview of the counting processes for the Nepean District by-election is provided below.

14.1 Counting methods

The counting method that applies for the Nepean District by-election is preferential counting. All counting will be conducted manually.

14.2 Vote counting

Progressive results information will be provided as it becomes available and will include:

- › first preference results
- › 2-candidate-preferred (2CP) results
- › recheck results
- › preference distribution result
- › 2-party-preferred (2PP) result (if required)
- › the name of the elected member.

14.3 Election day

Early extraction and sort

Legislation allows for the early extraction and sort of postal and early votes on election day between 8 am and 6 pm. This activity must take place within a restricted area with tight controls in place. Restricted areas will be established at each location where the extraction and sorting activities will occur. Scrutineers and staff will not be able to take recording devices into the restricted area. Check-in facilities will be made available at each venue. Further information will be provided to candidates prior to the activities commencing.

The early extraction and sort of postal votes will take place at the VEC's CAS.

The sort of early votes taken in early voting centres is expected to occur in the election office.

All sort and extraction details will be communicated to candidates in advance by the election manager.

Counting

After the close of voting at 6 pm on election day, ordinary votes issued in election day voting centres will be counted in election day voting centres.

Two counts of district ballot papers will be conducted in each election day voting centre in strict order as follows:

1. First preference count
2. 2-candidate-preferred count

The 2-candidate-preferred (2CP) count is a statistical count that involves preferences being distributed to the 2 candidates considered 'most likely' to be in the lead after the distribution of preferences. We will make this determination prior to election day.

The purpose of the 2CP count is to provide an early indication of the result of the election and information for candidates, Registered Political Parties and analysts. It has no status in determining the actual election outcome.

Counting of early votes will also commence at 6 pm in the election office following the completion of early sort activities, as well as the counting of votes taken in mobile voting centres. As per election day voting centres, a first preference count followed by a 2CP will be conducted for each EVC and the mobile votes.

Counting of postal votes received and verified up to the close of voting on the Friday before election day will commence at 6 pm at the CAS (first preference and 2CP) following the early extraction of these votes from envelopes. TAV votes (both early and absent) will also be counted at the CAS on election night.

A second extraction and count of postal votes received and verified by 5 pm on the Tuesday after election day will occur at the CAS on the Wednesday.

A third and final extraction and count will occur once the final postal votes have been received on the last day to admit postal votes into the count (Friday after election day). Any marked-as-voted declaration votes will also be extracted and counted on the Friday.

All count details will be communicated to candidates in advance by the election manager.

14.4 Provisional vote checking

Checking of the enrolment entitlement for voters completing an *Application for Enrolment/Provisional Vote* will take place during the week after election day. Enrolment entitlement must be checked before any of these votes can be admitted to the count.

Information from the applications from provisional votes taken in voting centres on election day and at mobile and early voting centres prior to election day will be sent to the CAS for processing.

A thorough check of enrolment entitlement will be conducted for each provisional vote. This will include a search of the enrolment register to check that the elector had not previously been removed from the register of electors on the grounds that they were no longer eligible. A check will also be made to determine if citizenship or British subject status has previously been confirmed for the voter, and that the address for which enrolment is claimed is a valid address for enrolment purposes.

As a result of these checks, a decision will be made to either admit the vote to the count or exclude it. The extraction and counting of these votes will also take place at the CAS on the Friday after election day. The enrolment register will also be updated from provisional votes where required.

14.5 Counting after election day

District rechecks and preference distributions

First preference counts will be rechecked after election day. Ordinary and early votes will be rechecked in the election office, and postal, TAV, marked-as-voted and provisional votes will be rechecked at the CAS.

A full preference distribution to determine the result of the election will occur if no candidate receives an absolute majority (more than 50%) of the first preference votes. If a candidate does achieve an absolute majority following the completion of all rechecks, a full preference distribution for information purposes will be conducted following the completion of the declaration.

The preference distribution will only take place after all rechecking has been completed and the last date for admission of postal votes to the count has passed.

All count details will be communicated to candidates in advance by the election manager.

The outcome of the preference distribution will be published on our website.

Recount

At the conclusion of all counting activities, when a provisional result has been obtained but before the successful candidate is declared elected, the election manager may conduct a recount. A recount may occur:

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

We will monitor the outcome of the election and work with the election manager to determine if a recount should take place.

If so, the Electoral Act requires the VEC to provide at least 4 hours' notice to candidates and political parties relevant to a recount.

Corrected 2-candidate-preferred counts

We will monitor the results of the 2CP count on election night. Where the selected candidates are incorrect, a corrected 2CP may take place during the week following election day. We will not adjust any incorrect 2CP on election night. Minor variations may be observed between the statistical 2CP results, and the official recheck and preference distribution results.

District 2-party-preferred counts

The purpose of the 2-party-preferred count is to show how the vote is divided among the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and the Liberal Party and The Nationals, considering the preferences of people who vote for other parties and independents.

We will conduct a 2-party-preferred count once all counting has been completed if the 2CP or preference distribution results have not provided a 2PP outcome. Should the ALP or the Liberal Party/National Party not stand a candidate, the VEC will be unable to conduct a 2PP.

14.6 Availability of election results

We will provide downloadable result data files for the district by-election in a form that can be readily used by TV and print media.

Results will also be published at regular intervals on our website. The results will include information on candidates, party affiliation (where applicable) and voting locations. The result will be displayed in ballot paper position order and will contain the total number of votes received by each candidate for the district count.

First preference results should start to become available on our website and in the media data files after 7:30 pm.

14.7 Declaration of the result

The election manager is required to publicly declare the election and to announce the name of the candidate elected.

The election will be declared as soon as possible once the result has been determined and we have confirmed that no residual counting activity could possibly change the successful candidate. Candidates will be advised of the date, time and location of the declaration.

The election must be declared before the return of the writ.

15. Compulsory voting enforcement

Within 6 months of election day, we are required by Section 163 of the Electoral Act to send a notice by post to each voter who appears not to have voted, asking why they did not vote.

The non-voter enforcement process will take place in 5 stages. The first 4 stages will be conducted by us, with the final enforcement stage managed by Fines Victoria.

15.1 Stage one – Pre enforcement

We will prepare a list of non-voters in accordance with the Regulations. This includes the exclusions of any non-voters who are automatically exempt from compulsory voting.

Elector information reports completed at voting centres or via our Public Enquiry Service that provided reasons why an elector could not vote will be processed during this stage.

15.2 Stage two – Apparent failure to vote notice

As required under the Electoral Act, we will prepare and send an apparent failure to vote notice to all voters who appear to have failed to vote in the Nepean District by-election and are not automatically exempt.

15.3 Stage three – Infringement notice

The *Infringements Act 2006* sets out the steps to be followed at the infringement notice stage of enforcement.

We will prepare and send an infringement notice to any apparent non-voter whose excuse is not considered valid and sufficient, and those who failed to respond to the apparent failure to vote notice. A penalty applies to this infringement notice. Non-voters must either pay the penalty in full by the due date or they may seek a payment plan.

During the infringement notice stage, non-voters may seek a review of the infringement. A request for a review may result in the infringement being withdrawn. A 'Withdrawal of Infringement' notice will be sent to each non-voter who has their infringement withdrawn at this stage.

During the infringement stage non-voters may request to have their infringement heard in the Magistrates' Court.

15.4 Stage four – Penalty reminder notice

We will prepare and send a penalty reminder notice to those apparent non-voters who, at the conclusion of the infringement notice stage have not paid the penalty for failing to vote. The original penalty and a penalty reminder notice fee applies to this notice. Non-voters continue to have the same review and hearing options available as at the infringement notice stage.

15.5 Stage five – Lodgement with Magistrates' Court and Fines Victoria

At the end of the enforcement program, we will commence proceedings against any non-voter that elected to have their matter heard in the Magistrates' Court.

We will also collate all outstanding infringements and prepare and lodge a final court file with Fines Victoria within the prescribed timeframe.

15.6 Receipt of penalties

We will receive and record all payments made in relation to compulsory voting enforcement. At the conclusion of the enforcement program, all penalty payments collected for the Nepean District by-election will be transferred to consolidated revenue.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Election timeline

NEPEAN DISTRICT BY-ELECTION TIMELINE – 2026 – 2 MAY

COUNTDOWN

FRI	13 MAR		50	ISSUE OF WRIT
MON	16 MAR		47	OPENING OF NOMINATIONS (9am) First day for submission of postal vote applications
FRI	20 MAR		43	CLOSE OF ROLLS (8pm)
FRI	3 APR		29	Good Friday – Public Holiday
SAT	4 APR		28	Easter Saturday – Public Holiday
SUN	5 APR		27	Easter Sunday – Public Holiday
MON	6 APR		26	Easter Monday – Public Holiday
THU	9 APR		23	RPPs CLOSE OF NOMS (12 noon)
FRI	10 APR		22	CLOSE OF NOMS (12 noon) with EM ballot draw from 1pm
MON	13 APR		19	HTVCs registration open 9am
TUE	14 APR		18	
MON	20 APR		12	
TUE	21 APR		11	Low Sensory Voting 10am to 4pm
WED	22 APR		10	TAV & Early Voting commences 9am to 8pm
THU	23 APR		9	Early Voting open 9am to 8pm
FRI	24 APR		8	Early Voting open 9am to 8pm Final day for submission of HTVCs to Commission for registration (12 noon)
SAT	25 APR		7	Early Voting Centres open 1pm to 8pm - Anzac Day – Public Holiday
SUN	26 APR		6	Early Voting Centres closed
MON	27 APR		5	Early Voting open 9am to 8pm
TUE	28 APR		4	Early Voting open 9am to 8pm
WED	29 APR		3	Close of submission of postal vote applications (6pm) Early Voting open 9am to 8pm
THU	30 APR		2	Early Voting open 9am to 8pm
FRI	1 MAY		1	Close of early voting at 6pm
SAT	2 MAY		0	ELECTION DAY
FRI	8 MAY	DAYS PAST ELECTION DAY	6	Last day for votes to be admitted to count
SAT	23 MAY		21	Last Day for Return of Writ (on or before this day)

Appendix 2: Community languages

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

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

Appendix 3: Operational Commitments

Table 1: Closed

Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election – operational commitment	2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections
1 The VEC will continue to identify emerging trends in intensified scrutiny and electoral mis- and dis-information campaigns, and responding as required to ensure that critical election activities are not undermined.	<p>This operational commitment was successfully deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>The VEC pre-bunked misinformation regarding the election writ by adding an item to its misinformation register linking to the scanned writ for the 2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>The VEC has now adopted this approach into its operating model for future elections, and this commitment is completed.</p>
2 The VEC will increase the number of early voting centres at future elections to respond to the increasing demand amongst Victorian voters to vote early.	<p>This operational commitment was successfully deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>Prahran District had 2 early voting centres for the 2022 state election and 2 for the 2025 by-election, based on projected early vote intake.</p> <p>Werribee District had 2 early voting centres for the 2022 state election and 2 for the 2025 by-election, and the total number of issuing points was increased from 12 to 16 in accordance with this commitment.</p> <p>As part of the VEC’s commitment to ensuring the OHS risk profile of the site and its surrounds are understood and treatments and controls are appropriately deployed, the VEC committed to broadening its site assessments, to extend beyond the leased site to the surrounding environment to ensure the safety of electoral participants.</p> <p>A campaigner registration trial was deployed for the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections, as an extension of the risk management approach deployed in previous events.</p> <p>The VEC has now adopted the increase in EVCs into its operating model, and this commitment is completed. The campaigner registration trial is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>

Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election – operational commitment	2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections
<p>3 The VEC intends to consolidate the number of election day voting centres to be able to more efficiently allocate resources to early voting.</p>	<p>This operational commitment was successfully deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>Prahran District had 15 voting centres for the 2022 state election and 9 voting centres for the 2025 Prahran District by-election.</p> <p>Werribee District had 13 dedicated voting centres for the 2022 state election and 11 voting centres for the 2025 Werribee District by-election.</p> <p>The VEC has now adopted this approach into its operating model for future elections, and this commitment is completed.</p>
<p>4 The VEC will maintain its focus on the enrolment phase of its election advertising on the close-of-roll date, so that the number of voters enrolling 'on the day' is manageable at voting centres, and to reduce the number of rejected provisional votes.</p>	<p>This operational commitment was successfully deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>The VEC conducted radio, print and social media advertising in the week between the issue of the writ and the close of roll for the 2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections, to encourage voters to enrol or update their enrolment prior to the close of roll. This was complemented by a media release and website content with the same key messaging.</p> <p>The VEC has now adopted this approach into its operating model for future elections, and this commitment is completed.</p>
<p>5 The VEC intends to expand the capacity of its electoral compliance team to triage and manage serious incidents, poor behaviour and other possible electoral offences that occur during elections and assist election staff and scrutineer management, including in regional areas.</p>	<p>This operational commitment was successfully deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>The VEC's intelligence function produced timely assessments, informing resourcing and rostering decisions, and establishing crucial structures and communication channels for future electoral events.</p> <p>The VEC's electoral compliance team actively engaged with the election management team through training, defining clear lines of reporting, and escalation channels which streamlined constructive compliance, ensuring effective assessment and resolution of matters in both the field and VEC head office. To support a timely response to any serious incidents and poor behaviour at voting locations during the event, the electoral compliance team maintained an increased presence throughout the voting period. During early voting, the team attended the sites regularly and as needed.</p> <p>The VEC has now adopted this approach into its operating model for future elections, and this commitment is completed.</p>

Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election – operational commitment	2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections
6 The VEC will increase the focus in election management training on common areas of difficulty for election managers, including managing conflict and maintaining oversight over a greater number of tasks.	<p>This operational commitment was deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>Experienced staff were used for the election support officer, election manager and assistant election manager roles, as all had completed training recently as part of the 2022 state election. An additional briefing on how to respond to issues with candidate, campaigner and scrutineer compliance was also provided by the VEC’s electoral compliance team.</p> <p>In 2025, an independent audit was completed on the election manager training for the 2024 local government elections.</p> <p>The VEC has considered the recommendations from this report and from our internal investigation into Werribee District election day counting arrangements and events, and we have incorporated these in plans to further progress this approach into our operating model for future electoral events, including changes to our training and instructional materials for all levels of election staff.</p> <p>This is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>
7 The VEC intends to invest in deploying electronic roll mark-off to more issuing points on election day. This will provide real-time visibility of ballot paper consumption and an additional safeguard against accidental or intentional multiple voting as election officials will be recording voter turnout through a secure online list of voters.	<p>This operational commitment was deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>130 laptops (53 in Prahran District and 77 in Werribee District) were rolled out across 9 and 11 voting centres respectively for electronic roll mark-off.</p> <p>This is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>
8 The VEC will continue to examine ways to relieve pressures on election day voting centre staff, including greater centralisation of some count activities.	<p>This is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>
9 The VEC will uplift its count planning to improve the timeliness of count information and increase the period of notice given in relation to count activities.	<p>This is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>
10 The VEC will investigate options to better utilise the available counting timeline for Legislative Assembly election counts, while still trying to ensure that outcomes are known for as many districts as possible in a timely manner.	<p>This is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>
11 The VEC will investigate options to implement computerised counting more broadly for Legislative Assembly elections.	<p>This is a targeted commitment for the 2026 state election in the VEC’s <i>Strategic service plan</i> (May 2025), and progress in future will be reported as such.</p>

Table 2: In progress

	Report to Parliament on the 2022 state election – operational commitment	2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections
1	The VEC intends to expand National Police Records Checks and Working with Children Checks to additional election roles at future election events.	<p>This operational commitment was deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>All senior election officials had a current National Police Records Check and Working with Children Check.</p> <p>The VEC plans to further progress this approach into its operating model for future electoral events.</p>
2	The VEC will conduct a website content review to ensure that all website content is up-to-date and accurate, remains accessible, and meets the needs of its audiences.	<p>This operational commitment was deployed in the Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections.</p> <p>The content specific to the events was developed to be plain, accessible and audience centred.</p> <p>The VEC plans to further progress this approach into its operating model for future electoral events.</p>

Table 3: Not applicable to the 2025 Prahran District or Werribee District by-elections

	Report to Parliament on the 2022 Victorian state election – operational commitment	2025 Prahran District and Werribee District by-elections
1	The VEC intends to further develop its partnership with the Victorian Public Service Commission, which provided a talent platform that could be leveraged for future events.	This commitment will be progressed in future elections.
2	The VEC intends to further refine labour hire agency service levels for future election events, in line with the changing nature of the labour market.	This commitment will be progressed in future elections.
3	The VEC will consider better promotion opportunities for Auslan interpreting services with the aim to boost access and usage.	This commitment will be progressed in future elections.

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