Media briefing

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) invited a key selection of broadcast, print, and online media representatives to a media briefing on Thursday 27 September 2018. Ten State political journalists attended, representing the Herald Sun, the Sunday Herald Sun, the ABC, The Australian, The Age, AAP and Nine News.

Senior VEC staff provided an outline of the State election timeline, results and counting information, complaints handling, recent legislative changes to the Electoral Act 2002, the VEC’s advertising and awareness campaign, and outreach activities. Attendees were provided with a media handbook and the counting schedule.

A subsequent media briefing webinar was conducted on Tuesday 16 October to reach non-metropolitan journalists. Ten regional and suburban media representatives registered for the webinar. The recording was made available on the VEC’s YouTube channel, and this was distributed to four regional and suburban media outlets.

Media handbook

A media handbook was developed and distributed to Victorian metro and regional media outlets prior to the election period.

The handbook contained State election information such as timelines, key facts and figures, legislative changes, an electoral pendulum (see Appendix 24), political advertising rules, counting information, the VEC’s outreach activities, and the major advertising and awareness campaign.

Media centre

A dedicated media centre was created on the VEC website, providing a hub of useful links, resources and information for the media.

The media centre received 4,067 page views during the election period. A ‘2018 State Election Counting Activities’ page was created after election night to keep the media and public informed of daily counting activities for both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. This page was viewed 41,979 times during the counting period.
Services to the media

Radio and television interviews

A total of 27 radio interviews were conducted with VEC representatives during the election period. These were mostly informative interviews regarding enrolment, early voting and voting. The radio stations conducting these interviews ranged from mainstream metropolitan stations such as 3AW and ABC Radio Melbourne, to local community radio such as RRR and OKR 98.3 FM, to CALD radio and SBS where a number of the VEC’s Democracy Ambassadors promoted awareness of the election in languages including Arabic, Spanish and Cantonese (see Section 6: Education and inclusion services program).

Five interviews addressed emerging issues of concern to the community, including the mail-out of postal vote applications by political parties (see Section 12: Complaints management).

Six interviews were filmed with VEC representatives for TV or online video publication. A highlight was a feature on ABC News Breakfast showcasing the Voters Voice app, where Democracy Ambassador Simone Stevens demonstrated how the app could support people with a disability to enrol and vote in person.

Media releases

Thirty-one media releases were issued to targeted contacts of metro and regional media outlets during the election. A total of 837 print and online articles referenced VEC media release content.¹

Seven media releases, based on the main phases of the election cycle, were translated into 19 languages and distributed to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) print and online publications across Victoria. Over 200 articles were generated by these targeted media releases.

In addition, the VEC organised the pre-recording of five radio grab sets for the State election. Each grab set corresponded to the main phases of the election cycle, while also taking into consideration the best timing for optimal airplay. These grabs were downloaded for broadcast by 79 stations.

¹ Victorian Electoral Commission Meltwater Insights Report, February 2019

ABC News Breakfast aired a segment in October 2018 based on the VEC’s media release ‘Free app gives Victorians a voice’. The story showcased the Voters Voice app, which was created to provide a better voting experience for people with complex communication needs. Democracy Ambassador Simone Stevens (left) featured in the news segment and demonstrated various features of the app and how it could support people with a disability to participate in the election.
By the numbers:

Services to the media

Media enquiries

Over 250 State election media enquiries were logged during the election period, including:

- enrolment facts and figures
- early voting centre and election day voting centre locations and accessibility
- political party mail-out of postal vote applications
- electoral roll data
- early voting statistics
- authorisation of political material
- results and counting updates
- funding and disclosure legislation.

Media coverage

The VEC received a total of 8,704 mentions across online, print and broadcast sources between Saturday 1 September and Monday 31 December 2018. News websites accounted for 72% of total media coverage, followed by broadcast channels (22%) and social media platforms (10%).

---

2 Victorian Electoral Commission Meltwater Insights Report, February 2019