

COMMUNITY:

:

:

DIVERSITY

:

INVOLVEMENT

:



Victorian Electoral Commission
ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005

HISTORY

Elections for the Victorian Parliament began when Victoria achieved independence from New South Wales in 1851. In 1910, Victoria's first Chief Electoral Inspector was appointed to head the new State Electoral Office.

For 70 years the State Electoral Office existed as part of a public service department. In the late 1980s, however, it became increasingly clear that it was inappropriate for the conduct of elections to be subject to ministerial direction.

On 1 January 1989, legislation established the independent statutory office of Electoral Commissioner who was to report to Parliament instead of to a Minister.

In 1995 the State Electoral Office was renamed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC).

LEGISLATION

The five main pieces of legislation that govern the VEC's operations are:

- **Electoral Act 2002**
- **Constitution Act 1975**
- **Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982**
- **Local Government Act 1989**
- **City of Melbourne Act 2001**

VEC ACTIVITIES:

The VEC's primary responsibilities include:

- **Conducting parliamentary, local government, and certain statutory elections;**
- **Maintaining the register of Victorian electors;**
- **Implementing electoral representation reviews of local councils; and**
- **Promoting public awareness and understanding of electoral issues.**

THE VEC'S MISSION

THE VEC'S MISSION IS TO CONDUCT FAIR AND IMPARTIAL ELECTIONS, EFFICIENTLY AND ACCORDING TO LAW, AND TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE VICTORIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

THE VEC IS A DYNAMIC ORGANISATION COMMITTED TO QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DELIVERY OF ELECTORAL SERVICES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

OUR AIM IS TO CONTINUE TO BE RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO ALL VICTORIAN ELECTORS AND OUR STAKEHOLDERS.

VALUES

The VEC values:

- **Conducting elections with complete impartiality and integrity;**
- **The efficient provision of innovative services that effectively facilitate participation in the democratic process; and**
- **An approach to our work that demonstrates a commitment to ensuring the highest standards of service and professionalism.**

Summary of VEC activity	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Number of enrolled electors (as at 30 June)	3,197,890	3,251,836	3,265,948	3,281,336	3,337,946
Total enrolment changes	477,629	565,730	597,902	457,608	542,033
Changes from VEC enrolment initiatives	100,654	94,774	223,706	117,611	112,566
State elections	-	-	1	-	-
State by-elections	-	-	2	-	-
Local government elections	3	17	54	-	25
Local government by-elections	5	5	5	9	6
Statutory, commercial and community elections	22	55	38	97 ¹	18
Local government representational reviews	-	-	-	9 ²	30
Staff numbers (as at 30 June) ³	60	67.2	66.8	65.4	72
Total expenditure	\$14.1m	\$21.5m	\$44.7m	\$13.8m	\$28.2m⁴
Revenue paid to the Consolidated Fund⁵	\$1.1m	\$2.5m	\$6.6m	\$1.5m	\$5.6m

1. The VEC conducted 46 Community Health Centre elections in this year.
2. In 2003-04 it was reported that a review was conducted of Surf Coast Shire. This review was conducted under terms of reference established by the Minister for Local Government, but has not been conducted under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989.
3. Reported as Full Time equivalent
4. Expenditure increased in 2004-05 due to the conduct of 25 local government elections, involvement in local government electoral representation reviews and support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission. The expenditure also includes \$9.4m being an adjustment due to relevant Accounting standards.
5. All revenue received by the Victorian Electoral Commission for local government and community and commercial elections as well as other user fees and charges, are paid into the State Consolidated Fund. The VEC also collects compulsory voting fines on behalf of councils, which are forwarded to councils and are not included in the above revenue figures. (Refer to Note 22 of the financial statements for further information).

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the VEC please contact us at:

Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne 3000

Telephone: 03 9299 0520

Facsimile: 03 9629 8632

TTY: 03 9299 0570

Website: www.vec.vic.gov.au

24 October 2005

Dear Attorney,

I am pleased to submit to you, for presentation to Parliament, the 2004-05 Annual Report of the Victorian Electoral Commission.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 1994.

The report also includes the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for 2004-05.

Yours sincerely



STEVE TULLY
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

THE VEC AT A GLANCE

LETTER TO THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

YEAR IN REVIEW

PART 1:

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Outlines the framework and structures that ensure the VEC meets community obligations.

PART 2:

QUALITY ELECTION SERVICES

The VEC provides election services that meet the needs of all members of the community.

PART 3:

TIMELY AND ACCURATE ENROLMENT AND ROLL SERVICES

The VEC has developed and implemented enrolment programs to ensure the accuracy of the register of electors.

PART 4:

COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATION

Campaigns and programs developed by the VEC aim to maximise community understanding and participation in the electoral system.

PART 5:

FAIR AND EQUAL REPRESENTATION

The VEC conducts electoral representation reviews to help ensure fair and equal representation for Victorian electors.

PART 6:

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Effective administration and a skilled workforce are crucial to the delivery of accessible, high – quality electoral services.

REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

APPENDICES

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORT :



I am pleased to submit my first Annual Report as the Victorian Electoral Commissioner. My appointment commenced on 24 January 2005, at the conclusion of the round of local government elections in November, and I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr Doug Beecroft who was Acting Electoral Commissioner until my appointment.

During the year the major activity for the VEC has been in the area of local government electoral services. In November the VEC conducted 25 local government elections, including the City of Melbourne election for the first time, and throughout the year completed 30 electoral representation reviews for local government.

The introduction of proportional representation for the round of November elections required the VEC to implement some major developments to the information technology infrastructure, as well as an increased level of training for our Returning Officers.

The Minister for Local Government accepted the recommendations put forward by the VEC in relation to the thirty electoral representation reviews, which brought to a conclusion this round of reviews. The VEC has now conducted electoral representation reviews for half of the Victorian municipalities.

I was pleased to provide a written and oral submission to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee's inquiry into electronic democracy during the year. Australian electoral bodies have often been led by developments in information technology by the Victorian Electoral Commission, and significant work has been completed this year on the feasibility of trialling electronic voting at the next State election. The target group for the trial will be Victorians with a disability, and Victorians who speak English as a second language, with a view to providing many of these voters with a secret vote for the first time.

The VEC's enrolment activities continue to make a significant contribution to ensuring that all electors are correctly enrolled. Improved coordination with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has been agreed, taking advantage of the AEC's fieldwork in updating enrolment where there is no response to the VEC's enrolment mail-outs.

The joint partnership work with the AEC produced some tangible education products throughout the year, as well as the announcements of grant funding for seven schools to run innovative civic and citizenship programs. Next year will focus on ensuring the electoral education material produced jointly between the VEC and the Centre for Adult Education has wider use and applicability.

During the year I worked with the other members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, who are responsible for the redivision of the Legislative Council. The VEC provided significant mapping and administrative support to the Commission, with the final boundaries and a detailed report due to be released next financial year. The redivision of the Legislative Council, and the change to proportional representation will provide both a challenge and an opportunity to inform Victorians on the changes prior to the 2006 State election.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the hard work and professionalism of the staff at the VEC throughout the year. I am looking forward to working with them towards the 54 local government elections in November 2005.

STEVE TULLY
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER



QUALITY ELECTION SERVICES:

PROVIDE ELECTION SERVICES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Objective: Continue to improve the quality of parliamentary, local government and commercial and community elections to ensure the integrity of democracy in Victoria.

Key achievements in 2004-05

Future Directions

Strategies:

Review and implement the impact of legislative changes, identify service improvements for voters (especially those with special needs) and develop a revised strategy for the delivery of election services.

Implement a comprehensive recruitment, training, assessment and appointment program for election officials to ensure the effective conduct of elections.

Develop and implement a resourcing strategy to procure and provide services and materials for election offices and voting locations to effectively conduct elections.

Identify, establish and maintain the infrastructure required to effectively conduct State, local government and commercial and community elections.

Deliver excellent State, local government, and commercial and community election services.

Conducted 25 local government elections, with approximately 1.2 million enrolled voters, and 826 candidates. (See page 21)

Amendments were made to practices and procedures to conduct proportional representation for local government elections in unsubdivided and multi-councillor wards. (See page 20)

Introduced a new ballot paper and candidate statement product, which reduced the risk of voters receiving the incorrect ballot paper. (See page 22)

Conducted the City of Melbourne election for the first time with increased participation and no complaints in relation to the conduct of the election. (See page 24)

Finalise the tenders and plan for the conduct of 54 local government elections across the State. (See page 25)

Plan for the 2006 State election, including optimising efficiencies from a fixed election date. (See page 17)

TIMELY AND ACCURATE ENROLMENT AND ROLL SERVICES

FACILITATE THE ENROLMENT OF ELIGIBLE VICTORIANS AND MAINTAIN AN UP TO DATE REGISTER OF ELECTORS.

Objective: To ensure the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.

Key achievements in 2004-05

Future Directions

Strategies:

Construct a framework for evaluating the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.

Continue to develop and implement enrolment strategies that encourage and assist eligible Victorians to enrol and maintain their enrolment.

Assess and process enrolment information and identify and implement opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of enrolment information processing.

Sample audit fieldwork showed that 95 percent of eligible Victorians are on the Victorian electoral roll, and 91 percent are enrolled at their current address. (See page 33)

A review of the strategic enrolment mail-out program gave confidence that the mail-out program is well matched to the geographic population. (See page 33)

Work conducted with the Australian Electoral Commission identified areas to minimise duplication in Victorian enrolment processing. (See page 34)

Implement a follow up mail out to those electors who do not respond to the first VEC mail-out. (See page 34)

Develop data sharing with the AEC to minimise duplication, and allow the AEC to initiate targeted door knocking reviews. (See page 35)

Objective: Deliver high quality enrolment information products, mapping products and services to stakeholders.

Strategy:

Review, monitor and implement the impact of legislative changes and develop a revised strategy for the compilation and delivery of electoral rolls, enrolment information and mapping products.

Voters' rolls for 25 local government elections were prepared in accordance with legislation. (See page 35)

Prepare voters' rolls for 54 local government elections. (See page 36)

Objective: Maximise public confidence in the security of personal information held by the VEC.

Strategy:

Ensure that the privacy of personal information held by the VEC is protected and that disclosures of enrolment information meet legislative requirements.

Considered 30 requests for enrolment information under section 34 of the Electoral Act 2002. Of those 30 requests, the VEC approved 19 during the period. (See page 36)

Review AEC and VEC legislation and practices for the collection and release of enrolment information. (See page 41)

**COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATION:
ENGAGE AND INFORM MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SO THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

Objective: Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2006 State election and any by-elections.

Key achievements in 2004-05

Future Directions

Strategies:

Develop and implement a coordinated communication strategy (advertising, public relations, on-line and telephone services) to provide information and engage the community about enrolment and voting to all Victorians.

Redevelop the VEC's website in order to provide current on-line information and services that meet the needs of all voters and other stakeholders.

Enhancements were made to the useability and visual presentation of the VEC website. (See page 49)

Deliver a campaign to inform Victorian electors of the new structure and voting system for the Legislative Council. (See page 43)

The VEC will produce new publications to explain the Federal, State and local government electoral systems in Victoria. (See page 49)

The VEC will complete development of its new website for launching on 1 September 2005. (See page 49)

Objective: Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2004 and 2005 local government elections and any by-elections.

15 of the 24 contested local government elections had increased voter participation from their last election. (See page 47)

Comprehensive communications campaigns will be implemented at the 54 local government elections taking place in November 2005. (See page 49)

Strategy:

Work with municipal councils to develop and implement co-ordinated communication campaigns at local government elections in 2004 and 2005.

The City of Melbourne election voter participation increased from 62.0 percent in 2001 to 65.1 percent in 2004. (See page 47)

Objective: Encourage a culture of democratic participation and community engagement, particularly among those whose participation is identified as lower than average.

Provided grant funding to secondary schools to increase the enrolment and voting participation rates by young people in areas of low voter participation. (See page 50)

The VEC will continue to expand its education services in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission. (See page 51)

Strategy:

In partnership with the AEC and other organisations implement an electoral education strategy to increase Victorians' engagement in and understanding of the electoral system.

The Democratic Engagement Program at the Centre for Adult Education resulted in an increased level of interest in the electoral system from those who participated. (See page 49)

Objective: Demonstrate integrity, impartiality and accountability by reporting transparently to Parliament and communicating effectively with stakeholders.

Strategy: Provide stakeholders with user friendly comprehensive information about the VEC's role, organisational performance and cost effectiveness, and respond appropriately to all issues and enquiries.

Prepared a detailed report to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee's enquiry into electronic democracy. (See page 51)

**FAIR AND EQUAL REPRESENTATION:
 PROVIDE SUPPORT SERVICES DURING ELECTORAL BOUNDARY REVIEWS TO HELP
 ENSURE FAIR AND EQUAL REPRESENTATION FOR VICTORIAN ELECTORS**

Objective: Provision of high quality electoral representation review services to Local Government.

Key achievements in 2004-05

Future Directions

Strategy:

Develop and implement a framework, procure resources and, in consultation with the Local Government and Regional Services Division, develop a timetable for the conduct of local government representation reviews.

The Minister for Local Government endorsed the VEC's recommendations for reviews previously conducted in 2003-04. (See page 58)

Completed 30 electoral representation reviews, which were all endorsed by the Minister for Local Government. (See page 56)

Plan resources to conduct the remaining 39 local government representation reviews from November 2006 until June 2008. (See page 59)

Objective: Provision of high quality representation review services to the Electoral Boundaries Commission

Strategy:

Provide support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission by developing electoral boundaries for the new Legislative Council.

Mapping and administrative support was provided to the Electoral Boundaries Commission in the redivision of Upper House boundaries. (See page 59)

Continue to provide administrative and mapping support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission in its review of the new Legislative Council regions. (See page 59 and 71)

**ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:
EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION AND A SKILLED WORKFORCE ARE
CRUCIAL TO THE DELIVERY OF ACCESSIBLE, HIGH-QUALITY ELECTORAL SERVICES.**

Objective: Ensure the receipt of funds, payment of expenses and maintenance of the VEC's operations within budget and according to legislation.

Key achievements in 2004-05

Future Directions

Strategy:

Effectively manage the VEC's financial systems and infrastructure.

Implemented comprehensive budgeting, costing and reporting systems to manage and monitor operational and capital expenditure in line with approved Department of Treasury and Finance Appropriations. (See page 61)

Determine budgets and resources for new election cycles. (see page 62).

Objective: Ensure the availability of a skilled workforce needed by the organisation to deliver its corporate and legislative objectives.

Strategy:

Ensure the VEC has a workforce that is able and ready to efficiently deliver accessible, high quality electoral services by:

- identifying and attracting people with the skills and knowledge required;
- developing and retaining a dynamic and highly skilled workforce;
- implementing an effective performance management system; and
- creating a working environment that is safe, supportive and free from discriminatory behaviour

A total of 142 learning and development days (an average of over 2 days per employee) were completed by staff. (See page 65)

Staff were able to utilise a variety of options available under the VEC's flexible work arrangements policy. (See page 65)

A variety of initiatives were conducted to improve employee well-being throughout the year. (See page 67)

Aligning staff capability to the newly established electoral cycles for State and local government elections and required periodic work in conducting electoral representation reviews for local government. (See page 68).

Objective: Ensure the VEC has an ongoing, effective and cost-efficient IT environment to conduct its business.

Strategies:

Provide an IT management function to align current and emerging technology with organisational strategies, policies and standards.

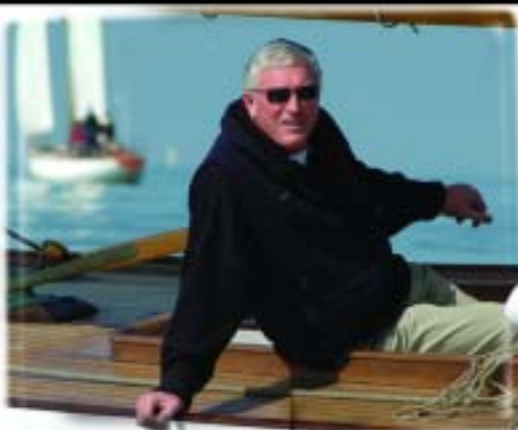
Plan, deploy and support IT infrastructure to meet the requirements of State and local government elections.

Ensure the VEC's IT environment is covered by appropriate risk and security management plans.

A major project was conducted to enhance the VEC computer count application to handle the electronic calculation of proportional representation elections. (See page 69)

Information technology infrastructure was provided to the Election Managers Offices, as well as for the computer counts. (See page 69)

The VEC will provide the IT requirements for the November 2005 local government elections including twenty computer counts and improved remote access to the VEC's election management software. (See page 70)



HOBSONS BAY



HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

Hobsons Bay changed from an attendance election to a postal election for the first time for the 2004 local government elections. Indicative of postal elections, informal voting decreased significantly from 8.7 percent to 2.26 percent since the council's previous election.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

A BASIS IN LEGISLATION

The VEC's business is underpinned by legislation.

The *Electoral Act 2002* is Victoria's principal electoral Act, providing for the enrolment system and the conduct of parliamentary elections. It sets out the VEC's primary responsibilities, which are to:

- conduct parliamentary elections and by-elections;
- conduct local government elections and by-elections, and certain statutory elections;
- ensure the enrolment of electors;
- prepare electoral rolls for parliamentary elections, voters' lists for local government elections and jury lists;
- contribute to public understanding of the electoral system and awareness and participation in elections;
- conduct and promote research into electoral matters;
- provide advice to the Attorney-General and Parliament on electoral issues; and
- report to Parliament on the VEC's activities.

The *Constitution Act 1975* sets out who is entitled to enrol as an elector, who is entitled to be elected to Parliament and the size and term of Parliament.

The *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982* governs the determination of State electoral boundaries.

The *Local Government Act 1989* provides for local government elections and electoral representation reviews, and requires the VEC to supply voters' lists to councils. The *City of Melbourne Act 2001* provides for the conduct of the City of Melbourne election.

A number of other Acts impose duties on the VEC. For example, the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* relates to the conduct of liquor licensing polls and the *Juries Act 2000* refers to the provision of jury lists. Further details are available at Appendix 1.

ROLE OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

The Electoral Commissioner's chief responsibility is to conduct elections according to law and with complete impartiality.

The Electoral Commissioner is appointed by the Governor-in-Council for a ten-year term. Under the *Electoral Act 2002* the Electoral Commissioner is independent of the Government and reports directly to Parliament.

By virtue of section 16(1)(f) of the *Public Administration Act 2004* the Electoral Commissioner has all the functions of a department head in relation to officers and employees of the VEC.

THE VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The VEC is the administrative agency through which the Electoral Commissioner's legislative obligations are exercised.

The VEC is divided into five branches as well as the Executive and Corporate Services area. The responsibilities of each branch are listed in the organisational chart on page 10.

Unlike many other government agencies, the VEC's workload fluctuates depending on election cycles. Legislative changes will result in Victorian local government elections taking place over a four-year cycle. State Parliamentary elections also occur every four years and the VEC's work reaches a peak in the years leading up to these elections taking place.

Other ongoing work of the VEC in enrolment, research and development, conducting electoral representation reviews of municipal councils and conducting commercial and community elections continues around these election cycles.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

ELECTIONS BRANCH

ELECTORAL ENROLMENT BRANCH

COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH BRANCH

FINANCE AND BUDGET BRANCH

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BRANCH

KEY RESULT AREAS:

Quality election services

Timely and accurate enrolment and roll services

Fair and equal representation

Community understanding and participation

Fair and equal representation

Organisational effectiveness

Organisational effectiveness

ROLE

- Plan and conduct parliamentary, local government and commercial and community elections;
- Promote the VEC's local government election services and tendering to conduct local government elections;
- Recruit, train and assess election managers and election officials;
- Develop election manuals and handbooks;
- Resource election managers' offices and voting centres; and
- Develop and implement election management systems.

- Maintain an up to date and accurate electoral enrolment register;
- Implement electoral enrolment programs;
- Coordinate electoral representation reviews for municipal councils and support electoral boundary work by the Electoral Boundaries Commission;
- Produce electoral rolls and other roll products; and
- Provide advice on electoral enrolment matters.

- Develop and implement communication strategies for elections and electoral representation reviews;
- Deliver information services to stakeholders;
- Develop strategies to promote and encourage electoral enrolment;
- Provide electoral education services;
- Provide advice on electoral legislation, privacy and strategic matters; and
- Provide performance evaluation and corporate reporting.

- Maintain the financial management systems of the VEC;
- Manage the VEC's budget and expenditure; and
- Provide payroll services for the VEC.

- Provide a stable and reliable technology environment for the VEC;
- Plan, set up and support the technology used during the conduct of all elections;
- Maintain and enhance the VEC's enterprise software;
- Maintain and administer the VEC's corporate databases; and
- Manage the technology environment for the VEC.

Pictured: Back (Left to right): Simon Hancock, Liz Williams and David Clarke.
Front (Left to right): Paul Strickland, Steve Tully, Doug Beecroft, Glenda Frazer.
Absent: Gill Bray



ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

1 July 2004 – 23 January 2005

DOUG BEECROFT

Mr Doug Beecroft, the Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner, was the Acting Electoral Commissioner from 1 July 2004 - 23 January 2005. This was following the departure of Mr Colin Barry, the former Electoral Commissioner, and prior to the appointment of Mr Steve Tully in January 2005.

24 January 2005 – 30 June 2005

STEVE TULLY

Mr Tully was appointed as Victoria's Electoral Commissioner on 24 January 2005. Previously Mr Tully was South Australia's Electoral Commissioner, a position he had held since 1997, after holding the position of Deputy Electoral Commissioner from 1996. Mr Tully has a variety of experience in public sector departments including the Department of Agriculture, the Public Service Board, the Department of Local Government and the Arts, as well as the Mental Health Service of South Australia as the Chief Operating Officer.

ACTING MANAGER, ELECTIONS BRANCH

1 July 2004 until 11 February 2005

DAVID KELLY B Com

Mr Kelly was appointed Acting Manager, Elections Branch on 27 October 2003, during the absence of Manager, Elections Branch, Ms Debra Byrne. Prior to this Mr Kelly managed the branch responsible for maintaining the register of Victorian electors. He had previously worked in the financial services sector managing the strategic and operational requirements of multi-disciplined business units.

Key result area: Quality Election Services

ACTING MANAGER, ELECTIONS BRANCH - PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION SERVICES

11 February until 30 June 2005

GLENDA FRAZER

Ms Frazer commenced work with the VEC in 1988 as a returning officer for the State election, and maintained that appointment at the 1992 and 1996 State elections. Since moving to a full time position in 1995, Ms Frazer has developed an extensive knowledge of Council and Parliamentary elections, with significant experience in information technology. Ms Frazer is currently responsible for the Computer and Voting Services Team as well as the management of the VEC's warehouse, compulsory voting and the support of the Election Management system (EMS).

Key result area: Quality Election Services

ACTING MANAGER, ELECTIONS BRANCH - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION SERVICES

11 February until 30 June 2005

LIZ WILLIAMS

Ms Williams commenced with the Victorian Electoral Commission in 1992, and is responsible for the appointment, training and support of Returning Officers and their staff, and the management of election contracts with Local Government and commercial clients. She has significant electoral experience, due to her various roles during the conduct of State, local and non-government elections. Ms Williams has also been involved with the training of senior electoral officials and the development and implementation of the VEC election management software.

Key result area: Quality Election Services

PAUL STRICKLAND

ACTING MANAGER, ELECTORAL ENROLMENT BRANCH

Mr Strickland has gained comprehensive experience and expertise in a range of election operations over a 20 year period of employment at the VEC. He has applied modern mapping technologies to the VEC's business environment, enhancing the conduct of local government electoral representation reviews and State redivision processes. Mr Strickland was appointed Acting Manager of Electoral Enrolment Branch (EEB) in November 2003.

*Key result areas: Timely and accurate enrolment and roll services
Fair and equal representation*

DOUG BEECROFT BSc, BA, Dip Ed, Grad Dip App Soc Psych
MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
ACTING DEPUTY ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Mr Beecroft joined the VEC in 1995 and manages the branch responsible for coordinating the VEC's communication, education and research strategies. He has extensive experience in policy development and advice in key service delivery areas of government. Mr Beecroft was appointed Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner on 2 December 2003, and was Acting Electoral Commissioner from 1 July 2004 until 23 January 2005.

*Key result areas: Community understanding and participation
Fair and equal representation*

SIMON HANCOCK

MANAGER, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Mr Hancock commenced at the VEC in April 2000 and was appointed Manager of the new Information Technology Branch in October 2003. Prior to working at the VEC, Mr Hancock worked for a number of Information Technology companies providing project management and technical consultancy over a range of industry settings.

Key result area: Organisational Effectiveness

DAVID CLARKE CPA

MANAGER, FINANCE AND BUDGET BRANCH

Mr Clarke was appointed to the role of Manager, Finance and Budget in January 2004. Previously Mr Clarke worked in private industry in audit, and spent ten years at the former City of Prahran and six years at the Mildura Rural City Council. His roles in local government have included Finance Manager and Director of Finances. Other roles have included Secretary of Mildura Cemetery Trust and Executive Officer of Mildura Regional Waste Management Group.

Key result area: Organisational Effectiveness

GILL BRAY

MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms Bray commenced with the VEC in December 2000 in the position of Human Resource coordinator. Ms Bray is an experienced HR practitioner with over eight years experience in both the private and public sector and has significant experience in people management initiatives across the HR spectrum, including performance management, recruitment, learning and development, OH&S, and employee relations.

Key result area: Organisational Effectiveness

VEC DEPARTURES

COLIN BARRY

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Mr Barry joined the VEC in 1987 as Deputy Chief Electoral Officer. He became Deputy Electoral Commissioner in 1989 and was appointed Electoral Commissioner in 1999. He contributed significantly to improving electoral administration by introducing a range of measures to increase the accuracy of the electoral roll, introducing innovation in helping voters with disabilities, and working towards the new, modernised *Electoral Act 2002*.

Mr Barry left the VEC on 30 June 2004 to become the Electoral Commissioner for New South Wales.

DEBRA BYRNE

DEPUTY ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Ms Byrne was Deputy Electoral Commissioner from 1999 until January 2005. Ms Byrne made a considerable contribution to the use of information technology in electoral administration at the VEC, and the management of election processes.

DAVID KELLY

ACTING MANAGER, ELECTIONS BRANCH

Mr Kelly was Manager of Enrolment Branch in 2001, and in 2003 was appointed as Acting Manager of Elections Branch where he managed a number of large-scale elections including the operations for the recent City of Melbourne elections. Mr Kelly left the VEC in February 2005 to take up a position in the commercial sector.

THE VEC'S AUDIT COMMITTEE

The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist the Electoral Commissioner in fulfilling the VEC's responsibilities as they relate to the accounting, operational practices, controls and risks of the Commission.

This involves the oversight of financial performance and reporting, the scope of work, performance and independence of the internal and external auditors, the operation and implementation of the risk management framework, and matters of accountability and internal control.

In 2004-05 the Committee comprised:

- Mr Robert Yeo (Chairman), Partner, Hall Chadwick Chartered Accountants
- Ms Elisabeth Reeves, accountant and senior election official
- Ms Alex Zavisic, Senior Analyst, Department of Treasury and Finance

The Committee held five formal meetings during the year, with other informal meetings and discussions between members and the Electoral Commissioner and the Manager of Finance and Budget on various issues and outcomes. Margaret Crossley from WHK Day Neilson, the VEC's internal auditors, also attended each formal meeting.

Various items were considered and discussed at these meetings, including:

1. Annual Accounts for year ending 30 June 2004 including:

- Reviewing the draft and final statements
- Receiving and reviewing the Auditor General's audit program and management letter, and follow-up action taken in relation to points raised.

2. Review of the Audit Committee and Internal Audit Charters

3. Oversee the internal audit function and initiate and review audits conducted for:

- Confidentiality of Vic Roads data
- Fringe Benefits Tax compliance
- Credit card compliance
- Implementation of International Accounting Standards
- Review of Financial Management Compliance Framework
- Payroll and Human Resources controls and processes

4. Receive updates and discuss the report on the VEC Budget and Operational Review

5. Review the status of and compliance with the Financial Management Compliance Framework

6. Review and monitor VEC compliance with the introduction of International Accounting Standards

7. Review updates to VEC financial policies and procedures

8. Monitor and review the risk register that includes an evaluation of risks encountered during the November 2004 local government elections.

9. Review the adequacy of insurance coverage by the VEC

ELECTORAL STAKEHOLDERS

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

ALL VICTORIANS

The VEC assists all Victorians by providing information about Victoria's democratic electoral systems and electors' rights and responsibilities to enrol and vote.

Victorians must be confident that the VEC provides excellent services, as well as value for money.

ELECTION CLIENTS

The VEC conducts elections on behalf of municipal councils and other organisations. Councils seek competitive tenders for the conduct of their elections. The VEC provides the highest quality election services at a cost-effective price.

The VEC has a statutory responsibility to conduct certain statutory elections and provides specialised election services to a range of organisations.

ELECTION PARTICIPANTS

The VEC provides candidates and registered political parties with information and services to enable them to participate in the electoral system, and it ensures that all processes are fair and impartial.

ELECTION RESEARCHERS AND COMMENTATORS

The VEC encourages electoral research that provides a basis for robust community debate and understanding about the broader electoral system. The media also provides vital opportunities for the VEC to motivate and inform voters.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

The VEC provides members of Parliament with accurate and timely elector information to help them undertake their duties.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The VEC operates within well-defined corporate governance accountabilities that are linked to the responsibilities of individual officers (see the organisational chart on page 10).

The VEC develops comprehensive risk management strategies for all electoral events. This is essential given the critical nature of election arrangements and the fixed timeframes that operate during an election. These strategies cover key aspects of election management, infrastructure, communication strategies, recruitment, and information technology.

In 2004-05 the VEC conducted a risk evaluation workshop to identify organisational risks and evaluate the controls that are in place. The workshop had a particular focus on the local government elections. The evaluation provided a risk rating of potential hazards identified across operational and non-operational activities and the outcome was presented to the Audit Committee as part of its charter to assess the risks to the organisation. A similar exercise will be conducted in preparation for the November 2006 State election. The process highlighted that the risks identified had extensive controls in place, but that periodic reviews of those controls needed to occur. However the process did identify the need to develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, which will be developed in 2005-06.

ELECTORAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

The Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) is a consultative forum with membership comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory Electoral Commissioners. The Council meets approximately each three months and at the time of elections to consider the maintenance of the electoral rolls, the operation of new electoral legislation, 'best practice' in the management of elections and other issues of common interest. During 2004-05 the ECA undertook projects and consulted on a range of issues including the following:

- Proposed changes to Commonwealth electoral enrolment legislation;
- The redesign of the joint Commonwealth/State and Territory electoral enrolment forms;
- A review of arrangements for public access to the electoral roll;
- Sponsorship of a three year research scholarship at the Australian National University entitled Enrolling the People: the Development of Modern Electoral Administration; and
- Planning of an electoral educators conference to take place in late 2005.

A subcommittee of the Council, the Continuous Roll Update Implementation Steering Committee (known as CISCO), met regularly to jointly manage the implementation and progress of the Continuous Roll Update (CRU) program for the review of the joint rolls. Outcomes of the CRU program for the year included the redesign of all mail review letters and implementation of a new computer system and operational procedures to better integrate the various Commonwealth and State and Territory data sources, used to stimulate enrolment and check the accuracy of the roll.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* gives Victorians the right to access certain classes of documents held by government agencies. Freedom of Information (FOI) procedures are detailed in Appendix nine of this report.

The VEC received one FOI request for the 2004-05 financial year, which was processed within the legislative requirements.

SECURITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION HELD BY THE VEC

The VEC is subject to the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (IPA). The VEC must act in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the IPA to protect the personal information that it collects from electors and other individuals.

The VEC collects personal information only in order to fulfil its functions under the *Electoral Act 2002*. The personal information collected, used and disclosed by the VEC falls into six main categories:

- Enrolment information – personal information associated with the maintenance of the register of electors. (See the section on enrolment information for further details, pages 36-41)
- Political party registration information – personal information associated with the registration of political parties;
- Candidate information – personal information associated with nomination of candidates for election and subsequent administration of elections;
- Voting information – personal information associated with voting in elections;
- Human resources information – personal information associated with the employment of full time and temporary staff; and
- Miscellaneous contact information – personal information about business contacts in other organisations, the media and complainants etc.

The VEC's policies regarding its management of this personal information are set out in its Privacy Policy, which is available for public inspection at the VEC or at www.vec.vic.gov.au.

ACCESS AND CORRECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Individuals have rights of access and correction under the IPA in relation to any personal information about them held by the VEC. The VEC complies with these requirements by following the FOI processes laid down in the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* in the event that it receives a request relating to accessing and correcting personal information.

No such requests were received during the reporting period.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PRIVACY

No complaints about privacy were received in the reporting period.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

The VEC provides information to staff on the provisions of the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001* and has established structures for receiving and considering disclosures in accordance with the Act. There were no complaints during 2004-05.

The VEC's procedures under the Act are detailed in Appendix ten of this report.



MELBOURNE



CITY OF MELBOURNE

The VEC conducted the City of Melbourne election for the first time in 2004. Specific enhancements were made to the VEC's election management computer system, including the computer count application to support the conduct of these elections.

QUALITY ELECTION SERVICES

Ensure that election services meet the needs of all members of the community

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Conducted 25 local government elections, with approximately 1.2 million enrolled voters, and 826 candidates. (See page 21)
- Amendments were made to practices and procedures to conduct proportional representation for local government elections in unsubdivided councils and multi-councillor wards. (See page 20)
- Conducted 40 individual computer counts across 11 sites. (See page 22)
- Introduced a new ballot paper and candidate statement product, which reduced the risk of voters receiving the incorrect ballot paper. (See page 22)
- Conducted the City of Melbourne election for the first time with increased participation and no complaints in relation to the conduct of the election. (See page 24)
- Introduced electronic payments for compulsory voting enforcement. (See page 23)
- Reviewed political parties as per the *Electoral Act 2002*. (See page 19)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Finalise the tenders and plan for the conduct of 54 local government elections across the State. (See page 25)
- Plan for the 2006 State election, including optimising efficiencies from a fixed election date. (See page 17)

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE:

CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PARLIAMENTARY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNITY ELECTIONS TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF DEMOCRACY IN VICTORIA

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION SERVICES

There were no State elections or by-elections in 2004-05, with the next State election to be held, barring exceptional circumstances, in November 2006.

PLANNING FOR THE 2006 STATE ELECTION

Legislation passed in 2003 will see the system for electing the Legislative Council change from preferential voting (with half of the 44 members elected for individual provinces at each State election) to proportional representation (with eight regions each electing five members). The system resembles that used for the Commonwealth Senate, except that voting 'below the line' will be optional preferential. The amendments also require the Electoral Boundaries Commission to draw the new Upper House boundaries.

Changes in how members are elected to the Legislative Council have required the VEC to make significant modifications to the VEC's election management system to enable the computerised counting of votes necessary for efficient administration of the proportional representation system. Proportional representation has not previously been used at Victorian State elections, which poses a challenge for the VEC to ensure that all Victorian electors and officials are aware of the amendments for the election.

INFRASTRUCTURE ARRANGEMENTS

The VEC has undertaken a review to establish the proposed locations and sizes of election offices for the 2006 State election. The new configuration will be designed in order to improve services to stakeholders, improve administrative efficiency, and maintain or reduce infrastructure costs. The new Upper House boundaries may have an impact on office size and location, and the review will take into consideration the new boundaries once released in 2005-06.

In addition the VEC has explored options to improve the efficiency of its voting centres as a result of having a fixed date for the State election. These initiatives include:

- Training and assessment of voting centre managers and declaration voting staff prior to the election period;
- Centralised booking of all voting centres;
- Information leaflet distributed to potential mobile early voting centres which will be assessed prior to the State election;
- Preliminary mail out and phone calls to voting centre staff prior to the election period to determine availability;
- Selection of voting centre staff by election managers prior to election period;
- Identification and booking of customer service centres for early voting; and
- Management of some mobile early voting by a central group – for example metropolitan hospitals.

The draft proposal will undergo a review once the Upper House boundaries have been finalised and information will be sent to the VEC's stakeholders for review.

CENTRALISED UPPER HOUSE COUNT

Changes to proportional representation for the Upper House will result in changes to the count of the Upper House ballot papers. It is intended that the count will take place at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre during the two weeks after election day, and will be conducted by computer.

EARLY AND ABSENT VOTING

Planning is underway for the more efficient use of information technology during the early voting period and for absent voting on election day. At the 2002 State election, voting centres were provided with laptops for the electronic marking of voters on the electoral roll. Whilst this streamlined the process for the issuing of votes it proved to be extremely difficult to manage the configuration of some 400 laptops with the necessary software. The VEC is investigating alternative options for the electronic marking of the roll for the next State election. One alternative being considered is for accessing the voters' roll via a secure internet link into the VEC.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOR VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY

The VEC will introduce initiatives at the State election to improve access to voting for people with a disability. Based on consultation with disability groups and people with a disability, the VEC will concentrate on improving the signage at voting centres, reviewing the training material provided to election officials, and investigating new voting centres to lease which are fully wheelchair accessible.

ELECTRONIC VOTING KIOSKS

In April 2005 the VEC sought registrations of interest from suitable companies with the capacity to implement a trial of a small number of electronic voting kiosks at the November 2006 State election. Voting kiosks were considered to be the most appropriate means to assist voters with disabilities and voters with poor English language skills to have improved access to a secret vote. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee's inquiry into electronic democracy. The VEC received 15 registrations of interest by the due date (5 May 2005). The VEC shortlisted these and selected three companies to be invited to each present a proposal in response to an invited tender.

The VEC is considering the responses to three invited tenders to assess the feasibility of proceeding with the project to the point of trialling kiosks at the next State election, and of engaging the preferred company to undertake all aspects of the project.



SERVICES TO INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS COMMISSIONS

The VEC provided early voting and pre poll services for the following interstate electoral commissions:

Figure 1: Services to interstate commissions

Electoral Commission	Date	Election
Australian Electoral Commission	9 October 2004	Federal election
Australian Capital Territory Electoral Commission	16 October 2004	Territory election
New South Wales State Electoral Office	20 November 2004	Dubbo by-election
Western Australian Electoral Commission	26 February 2005	State election and referendum
Tasmanian Electoral Commission	7 May 2005	Legislative Council elections
Northern Territory Electoral Commission	18 June 2005	Territory election

REVIEW OF REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

Under section 54 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, three parties (Abolish Child Support and Family Court, One Nation (Victoria) and the Shooters' Party (Vic)) had to be de-registered as it was more than five years since they had endorsed a candidate. These parties last stood candidates in the September 1999 State election. The parties were de-registered on 18 November 2004. Shortly thereafter the VEC de-registered the Australian Reform Party because it had become apparent that the party had ceased to exist.

Section 52 of the *Electoral Act 2002* provides that the VEC may review the registration of a political party from time to time, and must review the registration of a political party as soon as practicable after an election if the party obtained an average of less than 4% of the first-preference votes over all electorates contested by the party. To be eligible for registration, a political party must have at least 500 members who are Victorian electors, are members in accordance with the rules of a political party and are not members of another registered political party or of a party applying for registration.

The VEC tests a party's eligibility in a review by requiring the party to provide an up-to-date list of the names and addresses of at least 500 members of the party who meet the above requirements, together with a statutory declaration about the party's eligibility and a copy of the party's constitution. The VEC then writes to the people on the list, asking them to confirm whether they are eligible members of the party.

A VEC review of the parties that failed to meet the 4% threshold in the 2002 State election was delayed by developments at the Commonwealth level, where the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) challenged the legality of similar provisions in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* in the High Court. However, on 20 May 2004 the High Court dismissed the DLP's appeal, confirming the Australian Electoral Commission's right to review registered political parties and require them to provide lists of members. This decision cleared the way for the VEC to review Victorian registered parties.

On 18 October 2004, the VEC then wrote to the six registered political parties that failed to meet the 4% threshold in the 2002 State election, requesting names and addresses of members. The VEC wrote to the people on the lists provided by the six parties. The responses showed that five parties (the Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group), Citizens Electoral Council (Victorian Division), Australian Democrats – Victorian Division, Democratic Labor Party (DLP) of Australia and Socialist Alliance (Victoria)) have at least 500 eligible members and so should retain their registration. However, the Hope Party Victoria ethics equality ecology failed to demonstrate that it had the required members by the extended deadline of 30 June 2005.

On 16 May 2005, the VEC began a review of the four larger political parties (Australian Labor Party – Victorian Branch, Liberal Party of Australia – Victorian Division, National Party of Australia – Victoria and The Australian Greens – Victoria) in the interests of treating all parties alike. The parties provided the required information by the deadline of 15 June 2005, and the VEC prepared a mail-out to the people whose names were provided.

On 22 June 2005, the Country Alliance applied for registration as a political party. The VEC is processing this application in accordance with the legislative requirements.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS SERVICES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN VICTORIA

The VEC has been active in the conduct of local government elections since 1994, when an amendment was made to the *Local Government Act 1989* that enabled municipal councils to tender for the provision of election services. Councils can conduct their own elections or invite tenders for election services from the VEC, the AEC or another council. The AEC has subsequently withdrawn from submitting tenders for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria and the VEC has tendered for and conducted all local government elections in Victoria from March 2003.

Elections can be conducted by either postal or attendance voting, with the method of election being determined by each council. There has been a shift from attendance to postal elections as the benefits of the postal voting system are acknowledged (generally a higher voter turnout, a lower rate of informal voting and lower cost). The majority of councils now hold their elections by post.

Figure 2 - Local government elections conducted 1 July 2000 – 30 June 2005

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
VEC Postal	3	15	47	0	22
Attendance	0	2	7	0	3
VEC Total	3	17	54	0	25
AEC Postal	0	3	0	0	0
AEC Attendance	0	2	0	0	0
AEC Total	0	5	0	0	0

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

In December 2003 amendments were made to the *Local Government Act 1989* which introduced four-year terms for the conduct of local government elections. From November 2008 all local government elections will be conducted simultaneously across Victoria on a four yearly basis. Council election dates have been revised in preparation for these arrangements, with 25 councils having elections in November 2004 and 54 councils scheduled to have elections in November 2005.

The amendments also included the introduction of proportional representation for unsubdivided councils or multi-councillor wards.

The VEC introduced changes to practices and procedures and its election management software to accommodate the *City of Melbourne Act 2001* and the changes to the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*. These changes were incorporated within revisions to manuals, handbooks and other support material for the 25 local government elections conducted in November 2004.

The VEC introduced increased training for Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers to 3-days (previously 2) to allow sufficient time to cover the new legislation as well as the opportunity to provide adequate practical components.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER 2004

Following a tender process, in November 2004 the VEC successfully conducted elections for 25 local councils.

Figure 3 – Elections conducted in November 2004.

Council	Enrolled Voters*	Total Votes	Votes Participation	Candidates	Vacancies	Voting method	Counting method
Ararat Rural City Council	9,111	7,549	82.9%	10	7	Postal	Proportional
Ballarat City Council	68,599	53,744	78.3%	36	9	Postal	Preferential
Boroondara City Council	122,620	81,600	66.5%	45	10	Postal	Preferential
Colac Otway Shire Council	20,024	16,300	81.4%	13	7	Postal	Preferential and Proportional
Corangamite Shire Council	13,756	3,297	79.6%	11	7	Postal	Preferential
Darebin City Council	99,170	72,425	73.0%	70	9	Postal	Preferential
Glenelg Shire Council	17,810	7,801	77.1%	16	9	Postal	Preferential
Golden Plains Shire Council	14,043	3,642	78.4%	12	9	Postal	Proportional
Greater Bendigo City Council	77,792	33,167	77.9%	25	9	Postal	Preferential
Greater Geelong City Council	160,844	127,613	79.3%	72	12	Postal	Preferential
Hobsons Bay City Council	63,408	47,828	75.4%	31	7	Postal	Preferential
Melbourne City Council	75,864	49,390	65.1%	107	9	Postal	Proportional and Preferential
Melton Shire Council	49,586	35,296	71.2%	58	7	Postal	Preferential
Moorabool Shire Council	20,118	8,809	79.1%	15	7	Postal	Proportional
Moreland City Council	106,270	68,058	64.0%	30	11	Attendance	Proportional
Moyness Shire Council	12,639	6,690	84.2%	14	10	Postal	Proportional
Nillumbik Shire Council	44,291	36,064	81.4%	114	9	Postal	Preferential
Port Phillip City Council	79,478	30,964	45.3%	23	7	Attendance	Preferential
Pyrenees Shire Council	7,117	5,715	80.3%	12	5	Postal	Preferential
Borough of Queenscliff Council	4026	Uncontested	Uncontested	7	7	Uncontested	Uncontested
Southern Grampians Shire Council	13,076	11,421	87.3%	14	7	Postal	Proportional
Stonnington City Council	77,467	50,594	65.3%	31	9	Postal	Proportional
Surf Coast Shire Council	24,737	18,312	74.0%	20	9	Postal	Proportional
Warrnambool City Council	22,155	18,452	83.3%	13	7	Postal	Proportional
Yarra City Council	61,407	32,292	52.6%	27	9	Attendance	Proportional
Total	1,265,408	827,023		826	208		

*includes voters who are enrolled in uncontested wards

Figure 4 - Key election dates

Entitlement Date	Wednesday	1 September 2004
Close of nominations	Tuesday	26 October 2004 (postal voting)
Close of voting	Wednesday	27 October (attendance voting)
Election Day	Friday	26 November 2004 (postal voting)
	Saturday	27 November (attendance voting)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION IMPROVEMENTS IN 2004

For the November local government elections the VEC made the following improvements:

- The local council contract management role and support role for the Returning officer were combined to streamline communication;
- A new improved ballot paper product was developed, which included the candidate statements attached to the actual ballot paper with a perforated edge, reducing the risk of receiving the incorrect ballot paper;
- The City of Melbourne ballot pack was reduced in size so that it would fit into a standard size letter box;
- Electronic scanning of ballot material (to mark off voters as they delivered ballot packs in postal elections) was decentralised to election offices to streamline movement of ballot papers between Australia Post and election offices;
- Forty individual computer counts were conducted across 11 sites. A computer count is more time efficient, less costly and less likely to be affected by human error than a manual count for elections involving proportional representation and/or large fields of candidates; and
- Electronic payment was introduced for compulsory voting enforcement.

SERVICES TO CANDIDATES

A total of 826 nominations were received for the 208 vacancies in the November 2004 elections. Especially large fields of candidates contested the elections in the City of Melbourne (107), Nillumbik (114), Greater Geelong (72) and Darebin (70).

During an election, the VEC's returning officers are the first point of contact for candidates.

The services provided to candidates by the VEC included:

- Information sessions for all prospective candidates;
- A candidates' kit that outlined their rights and responsibilities;
- The provision of voters' rolls (electoral rolls) to assist in campaigning;
- Briefing sessions before the counting of votes;
- Coordinating the attendance of scrutineers at the count; and
- Responding to candidates' enquiries.

During the November 2004 local government elections, the VEC received queries regarding the legitimacy of its practice of publishing candidates' statements on its website. The VEC sought legal opinion and was advised that the availability of personal statements should be limited to their inclusion in the ballot packs sent to voters. In view of this it was not possible for the VEC to publish candidates' statements on the web at the November 2004 local government elections. The VEC regretted that it was not able to provide this service that it had provided to all councils holding postal elections in the past.

PERFORMANCE – CANDIDATE SURVEYS

Two councils employed the VEC to conduct a survey to assess the VEC's performance and the level of assistance that was available to candidates.

In both elections, 100% of candidates rated the conduct of the election as either satisfactory or very satisfactory, and all but one felt they had enough assistance made available to them.

The survey respondents provided useful suggestions for the future conduct of elections.

SERVICES TO VOTERS

The VEC provided a range of election services to the electors eligible to vote at the 2004 local government elections.

To help voters participate in the elections:

- The VEC sent ballot papers to over 1 million voters to enable them to vote in postal elections;
- 11 pre-poll locations and 63 polling places were set up to allow voters to vote at the three attendance elections;
- Voting facilities were available at all postal election offices for voters who required replacement ballot material;
- Municipality-wide electoral rolls were available at polling places, removing the requirement that electors vote at a polling place in their ward;
- Voters were able to call the returning officer or the VEC's hotline if they had any enquiries about the elections;
- Dedicated web pages were listed on the VEC's website for each council election; and
- Staff at Victorian Vision Australia centres were available to provide voters with equipment to assist in reading voter information and completing ballot papers.

Figure 5 – Compulsory voting

COMPULSORY VOTING ENFORCEMENT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS NOVEMBER 2004

TOTAL VOTERS ENROLLED (in contested wards)	1,161,699
TOTAL VOTES COUNTED	827,269
ELECTORS WHO DID NOT VOTE *	334,430
FAILURE TO VOTE NOTICES SENT	122,527
FINES PAID •	\$1,365,010

• as at 30 June 2005

* This includes electors for whom voting was not compulsory (electors over 70 and non-residents) and those with a legitimate excuse.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The VEC received 108 written complaints relating to the November 2004 local government elections.

The majority of these complaints related to the behaviour of candidates. Most suggested that candidates had breached provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) by distributing election material that was misleading, defamatory or unauthorised. Fifty of the 108 complaints which alleged a breach of the Act demonstrated sufficient substance to be referred to Local Government Victoria, the body which has responsibility for the administration of the Act. The remaining 58 complaints were considered by the VEC and responded to directly.

Following the elections, three applications were lodged with the Municipal Electoral Tribunal (MET). The MET is established under the *Local Government Act 1989* to consider disputes arising from local government elections. Applications are made to the Magistrates Court. These are summarised in Appendix six.



CITY OF MELBOURNE

The VEC conducted the City of Melbourne elections for the first time in November 2004. The AEC had conducted these elections in 1996, 1999 and 2001.

The City of Melbourne has its own electoral legislation and regulations, the *City of Melbourne Act 2001* and City of Melbourne (Elections) Regulations 2001. Two elections are conducted for the City of Melbourne. One election is for seven councillors to represent the whole municipality, which is characterised by;

- Proportional representation;
- Candidates can register as a group, and the group may register a voting ticket; and
- Voters have the option of above or below the line voting.

The other election is for the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor team, which is conducted by preferential voting with a standard ballot paper.

The VEC was required to make significant enhancements to its election management computer system including the computer count application to support the conduct of these elections.

A total of 42 nominations were received for the Leadership Team (Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor) and 65 nominations received for the election of councillors. Ballot packs for 75,864 voters enrolled in the City of Melbourne were lodged with Australia Post for delivery over three days from Tuesday 9 November to Thursday 11 November. In addition 1,668 ballot packs were hand-delivered to high-density housing estates in Carlton and Kensington and to law chambers in the central business district by trained election officials over the three day period.

Details on the City of Melbourne communication campaign are outlined in the Community Understanding and Participation chapter.

CITY OF MELBOURNE - PERFORMANCE

Results were known for both elections by 7:00 pm on Sunday 28 November and declared by the Returning Officer at 10:00 am on Tuesday 30 November. The Returning Officer received a total of seven complaints during the conduct of the election, but none related to the VEC's conduct of the election. In addition the Returning Officer and staff received excellent feedback from candidates and scrutineers regarding the professional manner in which the election was conducted, including correspondence to the Electoral Commissioner commending the VEC's professional service.

The voter participation increased by 3.1 per cent from 62.0 per cent in the election in 2001 to 65.1 percent in November 2004.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY-ELECTIONS

The VEC conducted six by-elections for local government in 2004-05. By-elections occur when an elected councillor resigns or dies before the end of their term for a single vacancy election.

Figure 6 – Local government by-elections

Election	Date	Type	No. of voters	Voter participation
Wodonga City Council	17 July 2004	Postal	23,869	75.73%
Yariambiack Shire Council - Hopetoun Ward	17 July 2004	Postal	830	Uncontested
Macedon Ranges Shire Council - Mt William Ward	14 August 2004	Attendance	3,852	61.16%
Whitehorse City Council - Central Ward	1 October 2004	Postal	21,578	70.39%
Knox City Council - Scott Ward	10 December 2004	Postal	12,810	77.73%
Macedon Ranges Shire Council - Barrigo Ward	7 January 2005	Postal	3,194	71.51%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The amendments to the *Local Government Act 1989* will mean that 54 local councils will have elections in November 2005.

At the end of the 2004-05 financial year, 48 of the 54 Councils had approved the VEC 's tender to conduct their election in November 2005. The preparation of these bids is a detailed process that involves preparing different responses for postal and attendance elections, as well as additional options for the communication campaign.

In 2004-05 the VEC will concentrate on finalising the remaining tenders, as well as finalising the contractual arrangements, such as office locations, staffing requirements, early voting facilities and the specific advertising and media components of the communication campaigns.

Prior to the November elections the VEC will conduct some coordinated seminars with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for councils conducting elections in November 2005. The purpose of the sessions will be to provide information to the councils on the electoral process and clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the VEC. In addition the VEC will also participate in candidate information sessions coordinated by the MAV.

STATUTORY, COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNITY ELECTION SERVICES

INDEPENDENT ELECTION SERVICES

The VEC is an independent provider of election services with a recognised reputation. Its experience conducting State and local government elections enables the VEC to provide expert, independent election services to commercial and community organisations.

A range of legislation also requires the VEC to conduct specific statutory elections and polls. This includes elections for the boards of management of community health centres, the Victorian Institute of Teaching, liquor licensing and agriculture polls.

The VEC conducts elections and polls for organisations including superannuation funds, credit unions and universities. The VEC conducts these elections and polls following consideration of their public interest, the size and timing of the election and the nature of the organisation. These elections and polls are conducted on a cost recovery basis.

Figure 7 – Statutory elections and polls conducted

Statutory elections conducted	2003-04	2004-05
Liquor Licensing Polls	3	1
Community Health Centres	46	7*
Industry Development Polls	4	1
Total statutory elections and polls	53	9
Total number of voters	15,869	2,055

*Includes countbacks. A countback occurs where a board member of a community health centre either resigns or dies. The votes that the vacating board member received when elected are transferred to unelected members to fill the vacancy.

LIQUOR LICENSING POLLS

The VEC is required to conduct polls for Liquor Licensing Victoria under the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*. A poll is required when Liquor Licensing Victoria receives an application for a liquor licence in a 'dry' neighbourhood. (Melbourne's dry area is located in the eastern part of the City of Boroondara and the western part of the City of Whitehorse). Electors in the immediate neighbourhood of the premises making the application are required to vote.

The VEC conducted one liquor licensing poll this year. The election was conducted by attendance voting, with 734 voters, and resulted in a "yes" vote.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE ELECTIONS

The *Health Services (Amendments) Act 2000* requires the VEC to conduct elections for elected positions on the boards of community health centres (previously all board members had been appointed). In accordance with Regulation 28 of the Health Services (Community Health Centre Elections) Regulations 2001, and the Health Services (Community Health Centre Elections) (Amendment) Regulations 2003, the Department of Human Services engaged the VEC to conduct the by-elections for five community health centres during 2004-05, and two countbacks.

Figure 8 – Community Health Centre elections

Community Health Services Inc. Board of Management By-Elections	Poll Date	Type	Voters	Participation
Ballarat Community Health Centre Inc	6 June 2005	Postal	300	Uncontested
Bass Coast Community Health Centre Inc	6 June 2005	Postal	101	59.41%
Castlemaine District Community Health Centre (CHIRP) Inc	6 June 2005	Postal	300	Uncontested
Grampians Community Health Centre Inc	6 June 2005	Postal	300	Uncontested
Sunraysia Community Health Services Inc	6 June 2005	Postal	300	Uncontested
Inner South Community Health Centre - Countback	23 February 2005	Countback	N/A	N/A
Bendigo Community Health Services Inc - Countback	23 June 2005	Countback	N/A	N/A

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT POLLS

The VEC was required to conduct one industry development poll under the *Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990*. The Act establishes committees to promote marketing of agricultural commodities.

Figure 9 – Industry Development Poll

	Poll Date	Type	Voters	Participation
Fresh Tomato Industry Development Poll	6 August 2004	Postal	20	95.23%

NON-STATUTORY COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNITY ELECTIONS

The VEC conducted nine non-statutory commercial and community elections in 2004-05. This was a significant reduction from the previous year, when the VEC conducted 44 of these elections. However the number of elections is in line with the new policy position developed by the VEC in 2003-04. There is no obligation on the VEC to conduct these elections and the conduct of the elections is now based on a set of criteria, including the number of votes, the existence of formal election rules, and the timing of the election.

Figure 10 – Non-statutory commercial and community elections

	Poll Date	Type	Voters	Participation
La Trobe University Union Board & PEMS0 Elections	5 May 2005	Attendance	Figures not available	
MONSU Caulfield Inc. Student Council Elections	9 September 2004	Attendance	10000	11.00%
MONSU Peninsula Inc. Student Council Elections	16 September 2004	Attendance	3000	5.30%
Police Association Credit Co-op Ltd Directors Election	30 September 2004	Postal	54,324	16.10%
University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association Elections	24 September 2004	Postal	10,906	6.82%
University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association Special Election	30 May 2005	Postal	11,327	12.40%
Victoria Racing Club Committee By-election	22 July 2004	Postal	21,120	33.00%
Victoria Teachers Credit Union Election of Directors	21 October 2004	Postal	61,771	8.25%
Victorian Canine Association Committee Elections	28 Mary 2005	Postal	9,362	9.29%

NATIONAL COMPETITION POLICY

National Competition Policy applies to the VEC's conduct of commercial and community elections, where the VEC is in direct competition with private service providers for the delivery of election services. A review held in 1997 concluded that at the current level of operations the VEC's pricing and costing policy for commercial and community elections complied with competitive neutral pricing policy.



: : **DAREBIN**



DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

The Darebin election was conducted by post, and had the fourth largest field of candidates, with 70 candidates standing for election. The VEC provided assistance to candidates including information sessions and a candidate handbook.

TIMELY AND ACCURATE ENROLMENT AND ROLL SERVICES

Facilitate the enrolment of eligible Victorians and maintain an up to date register of electors

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Sample audit fieldwork showed that 95% of eligible Victorians are on the Victorian electoral roll, and 91% are enrolled at their current address. (See page 33)
- A review of the strategic enrolment mail-out program gave confidence that the mail-out program is well matched to the geographic population. (See page 33).
- Work conducted with the AEC identified areas to minimise duplication in Victorian enrolment processing. (See page 34)
- Voters' rolls for 25 Local government elections were prepared in accordance with legislation. (See page 35)
- Consideration of 30 requests for enrolment information under section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002*. Of those 30 requests, the VEC approved 19 during the period. (See page 36)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Implement a follow-up mail-out to those electors who do not respond to the first VEC mail-out. (See page 34)
- Develop data sharing with the AEC to minimise duplication, and allow the AEC to initiate some targeted door knocking reviews. (See page 35)
- Prepare voters rolls for 54 local government elections. (See page 36)
- Engage a privacy specialist to review AEC and VEC legislation and practices in relation to the collection and release of enrolment information with the view to improving cooperation. (See page 41)

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: ENSURE THE ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, VALIDITY AND SECURITY OF THE REGISTER OF ELECTORS

Our democratic system assumes that eligible citizens value their right to vote and take seriously their legal responsibility to enrol and update their electoral enrolment. Ideally, this would mean that the electoral enrolment register would contain the up to date enrolment records of all eligible electors at any point in time.

In reality, the enrolment register is never complete or fully up to date. There is always a lag between people turning 18 and enrolling, and voters changing their address and notifying the VEC, while regrettably some people will never enrol to vote.

The enrolment register needs to be continuously updated so that accurate electoral products can be produced for parliamentary or local government elections and by-elections, as well as fulfilling statutory obligations to provide roll products to juries, registered political parties and members of Parliament. Roll and mapping products are also utilised in the analysis of local government electoral representation reviews.

The VEC is engaged in a number of activities to keep the enrolment register as up to date as possible.

JOINT ENROLMENT ARRANGEMENT

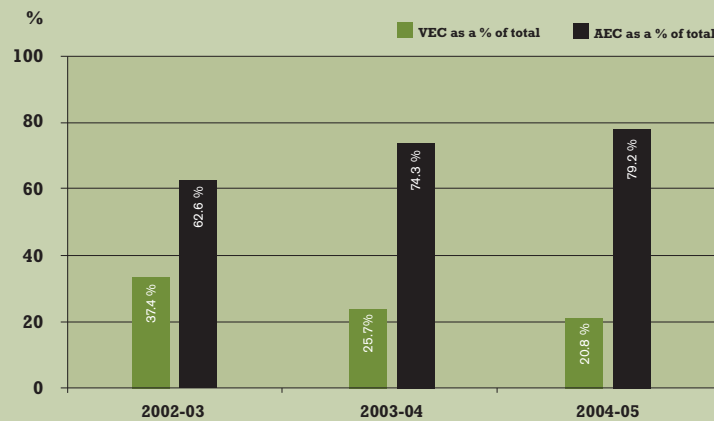
Since 1953 the Commonwealth and Victoria have co-operated in a joint approach to the management of electoral information. This joint approach is made possible through two related instruments known as the Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure and the Service Level Agreement (Agreement).

The Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure enables the AEC and the VEC to exchange enrolment information for the purpose of maintaining and updating the electoral rolls. This enrolment information results from direct enrolment of electors and responses to enrolment initiatives by the AEC and the VEC and ensures consistency between the Federal and State electoral rolls. It also enables an elector to complete an enrolment form to enrol to vote in Federal, State and local government elections.

The Service Level Agreement outlines the means by which enrolment information will be collected from electors, the arrangement for data exchange and the method by which annual costs are calculated.

	2003-04	2004-05
From VEC initiatives	117,611	112,566
VEC as a % of total	25.7%	20.8%
From AEC initiatives	339,997	429,476
AEC as a % of total	74.3%	79.2%
Total changes	457,608	542,033

Figures 11a & 11b – Number of enrolment forms received from Victorian electors



The VEC initiatives counted for 20.8% of updates to the Victorian enrolment register in 2004-05. While the performance was slightly lower than the 25% target, the VEC still considers this an acceptable performance as some of the VEC initiatives were suspended after the close of rolls for the Federal election, to prevent confusion.

VICTORIA'S CONTINUOUS ENROLMENT PROGRAM

The VEC has a range of strategic programs to help Victorians enrol or update their enrolment details and ensure that the enrolment register is accurate at any point in time. The VEC utilises a continuous roll update program (CRU), where Victorians are contacted directly via a mail-out when they are required to enrol or update their enrolment, as well as making enrolment forms available in key locations.

The VEC's continuous roll update program comprises the following programs:

Figure 12 – Continuous roll update program

Source data for enrolment programs	Recipients	2003-04 % Returned	2003-04 % of VEC enrolments	2004-05 % Returned	2004-05 % of enrolments
VicRoads	New licence holders and changes of address on licence and registration	19.7%	44.4%	18.2%	39.7%
VTAC	Students applying to a tertiary education institution	43.6%	3.2%	16.7%	1.1%
Rental bond	Tenants who have recently lodged tenancy bonds	18.0%	17.1%	14.4%	15.7%
VCAA	All year 11 and 12 students turning 17 who are registered to do VCE	30.5%	11.6%	32.2%	16.8%
TRU Energy (Gas & Electricity)	New connections	40.9%	3.2%	22.4%	2.0%
Enrolment confirmation card*	A card sent to electors to advise them of the electorates where they were enrolled to vote and to confirm their enrolment details	1.3%	-	0.4%	-
Total Mailout		21.6%	80.8%	19.2%	75.7%

VTAC – Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

VCAA – Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority

*In August and September 2002 the VEC sent an enrolment confirmation card to each of Victoria's 3.2 million voters.

The VEC also utilises a non mail-out program, where forms are made available at particular locations. These accounted for 24.3% of the total VEC enrolment forms. (See Figure 13)

Figure 13 – Non mail-out programs

Non mail-out program		2003-04 Number Returned	2003-04 % of VEC enrolments	2004-05 Number Returned	2004-05 % of VEC enrolments
Liquor Licensing	Young people applying for a Proof of Age card can simultaneously enrol	2,971	2.5%	1,748	1.7%
Coles Supermarkets	Enrolment forms are made available at Coles Supermarkets	1,254	1.1%	862	0.8%
Councils	Enrolment forms are available at some municipal council offices and mailed out in Welcome Kits	918	0.8%	2,733	2.6%
Direct Enrolment (Blue and Green Forms)	Forms are available to people upon request by contacting the VEC	14,507	12.3%	13,368	12.7%
VEC Internet	Forms can be downloaded from the VEC website	2,926	2.5%	6,801	6.5%
		22,576	19.2%	25,512	24.3%

During 2004-05 there was a slight increase on the share of enrolment forms that were received through the VEC non-strategic enrolment program. This is mainly due to the suspension of some of the strategic programs during the Federal election period, as well as an increase in the number of forms downloaded from the internet.

Figure 14 – Enrolment programs % of enrolments

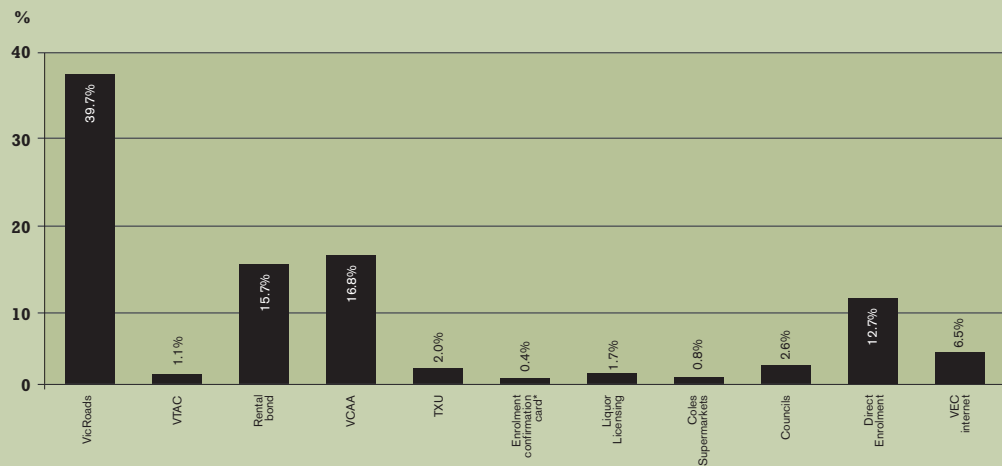


Figure 15 – Details of elector changes

		2003-04	2004-05
New Enrolments	Eligible electors enrol on the register of electors for the first time	141,226	105,391
Reinstatements	People who were previously on the roll, were not eligible for a period of time and now need to be re-instated. This includes people moving from interstate.	316,382 (this was reported as a single figure in 2003-04)	81,647
Change enrolment details	This predominantly relates to change of address, but may also be change of name.		354,995
Total elector initiated changes		457,608	542,033

In addition to changes received by the elector, Section 27 of the *Electoral Act 2002* requires the VEC to regularly review the register of electors and to ensure that the details of electors are accurate. This includes amendments that are not instigated by the electors themselves.

The VEC also removes electors from the register in certain circumstances. The VEC receives information from the AEC, the Office of Births Death and Marriages, Corrections Victoria and other sources.

An enrolment objection is a notice that requires a person to confirm that the address where they are enrolled is their principal place of residence or to confirm that they are entitled to be enrolled. In Victoria notices of objection are issued regularly by the AEC on behalf of the VEC, in accordance with the provisions of the *Electoral Act 2002* and the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Figure 16– Deletions and other changes to the Victorian electoral register

	2004-05
Amendments	41,814
Amendment/Deletion	15
Change/Deletion	25
Duplicates	1,656
Move interstate	26,208
Deceased	25,133
Objections	82,469
Prisoner	717

Strategy – Construct a framework for evaluating the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors

Recent sample fieldwork conducted by the AEC has provided some data as to the extent of completeness and accuracy of the Victorian enrolment register. The table below summarises their findings:

	Enrolment Completeness (Victorians on the Victorian electoral register) %	Enrolment Accuracy (Victorians on the electoral register for correct address) %
Victoria	95.0	91.0
National	95.1	89.5

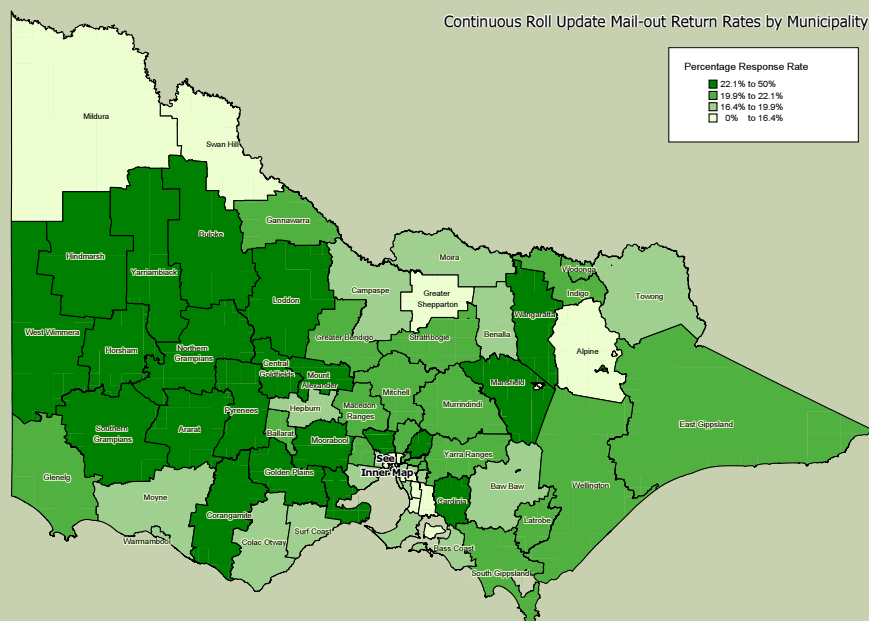
The results show a high level of completeness and accuracy of the Victorian electoral register and that Victoria’s roll is in line with the national level of accuracy and completeness.

Strategy – Continue to develop and implement enrolment strategies that encourage and assist eligible Victorians to enrol and maintain their enrolment

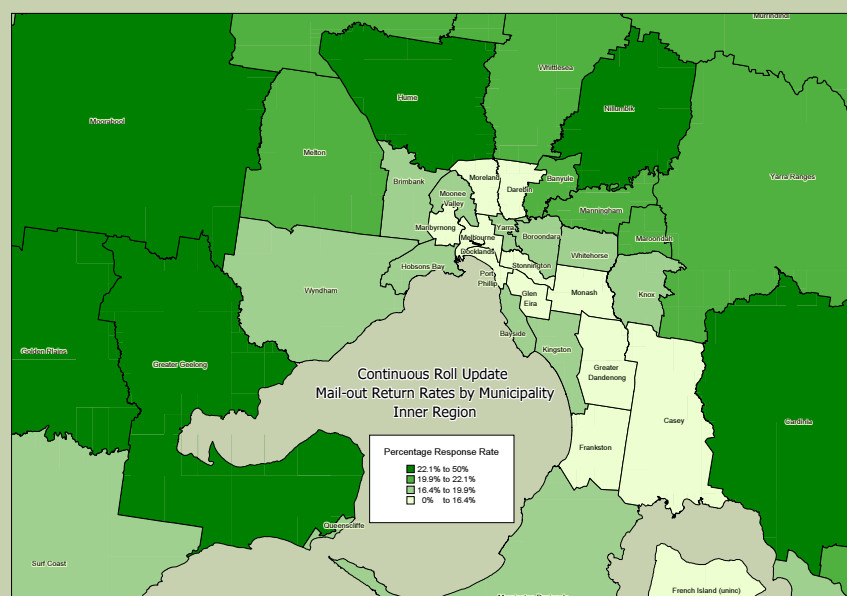
In 2004-05 the VEC undertook a review of the effectiveness of the current enrolment program using geographic and demographic data. The review found:

- The strategic mail-out program is well matched to the geographic population;
- Different areas of Victoria have a different response rate to the mail-out program; and (see map 1 and 2)
- Introducing a follow-up mail-out program is a cost effective way of increasing the number of enrolment forms returned from each target group. This means that those who do not respond to the first mail-out program will be sent a reminder enrolment form.

Map 1



Map 2



The mail-out program will also be enhanced with a redesign of the enrolment form. A design brief has been developed to ensure the new form is easily identified and easy to read for potential electors. The reminder form will also be redesigned to be consistent with the first, and to send a more urgent message to encourage a response. The new forms are expected to be in production in October 2005.

Strategy: Assess and process enrolment information and identify and implement opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of enrolment information

During 2004-05 the VEC and AEC identified that the VEC and AEC enrolment systems needed to be better aligned to minimise duplication and improve the follow up of electors who do not respond to the mail-out programs.

The inability to access data on the respective mail-out programs meant there was duplication of effort by both electoral commissions. The introduction of new data sources by both commissions meant there was a significant chance that an elector would receive an enrolment form from both the AEC and the VEC, resulting in duplication of effort and confusion for the elector.

The AEC's targeted fieldwork (this involves a review officer visiting an address) does not currently include electors who have not responded to a VEC mail-out. The advantage and effectiveness of targeted fieldwork, as opposed to universal fieldwork reviews, is that the AEC is aware that a change has occurred at that address, minimising the costs of visiting the majority of addresses where electors do not need to update their enrolment. By not having access to those who have not responded to the VEC programs, the AEC has not been able to include their details in the fieldwork.

To minimise duplication and improve the effectiveness of targeting electors who did not respond to the mail-out program in Victoria, a number of options were identified by the VEC and the AEC. The VEC and the AEC have agreed to exchange continuous roll update data. This will allow both organisations to avoid duplicate mail-outs. It will also enable the AEC to initiate targeted fieldwork at addresses targeted by the VEC where no response has been received.

To implement this new process, there is a need for system enhancements to the enrolment management systems at both electoral commissions. It is expected that it will take approximately six months to fully implement all the changes.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: DELIVER HIGH QUALITY ENROLMENT INFORMATION PRODUCTS, MAPPING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO STAKEHOLDERS

ELECTORAL ENROLMENT PRODUCTS

ROLLS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Where a council engages the VEC to conduct its election, the voters roll is prepared on behalf of the council by the VEC. The production of each roll is a complex process that requires the VEC to merge data from the State register of electors with data provided by the council (referred to as the Chief Executive Officer's list). The information contained on the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO's) list relates principally to people eligible to vote because they own property in the municipality but reside elsewhere; and typically comprises about 15% of the total roll for a council. Merging these data to form a roll for an election is made more difficult because data are provided in a number of different formats.

In 2004-05 voters' rolls were produced for the 25 local government elections conducted by the VEC. Roll preparation involves a preliminary process, which starts six months before election day. The preliminary process aims to identify and provide feedback to councils about any issues with their data, which would slow down final processing or cause problems with the completeness or accuracy of the final voters' rolls. The council roll data is merged with State roll data; deceased persons and duplicates are identified and removed and addresses standardised for mailing ballot papers and voter cards. In 2004 all rolls were ready for certification by councils' Chief Executive Officers by late October.

The City of Melbourne has a different roll production process from other councils, requiring special attention and software enhancements to the VEC's data processing modules. The City of Melbourne is the only council where the numbers on the CEO List exceed the number of State electors in the municipality.

Details of the number of enrolled voters are on page 21

In 2004-05 voters' rolls were also produced for the six local government by-elections conducted by the VEC (for details of by-elections see page 25).

These rolls were produced on time and met legislative requirements.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

The *Electoral Act 2002* requires the VEC to provide each Member of Parliament (MP) with the details of additions and deletions to the register of electors for that Member's electorate. This information is provided monthly (except December, during the holiday period and September, during council roll production) in the form of a complete electorate roll with changes made since the last update clearly identified. The VEC provided 1,188 enrolment extracts to MPs in 2004-05.

The three parliamentary political parties also receive an electronic copy of the register of electors every month, except December and September.

JURIES COMMISSIONER

The VEC provides the Juries Commissioner with rolls containing the names and addresses of electors randomly selected from the register of electors. From these rolls jury lists are prepared to select people for jury duty. Rolls are provided to the Juries Commission as required. In 2004-05 a total of 46 jury rolls were provided.

The VEC is also required to automatically record an exemption for each person selected for jury duty exempting them from being randomly selected again for further jury service for a specified, but variable, period. Exemption information is supplied by the Juries Commission and recorded by the VEC against the elector's record on the register of electors. Some 286,925 electors had exemptions from jury duty at the end of June 2005.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The VEC will prepare voters' rolls for the 54 councils conducting elections in November 2005. Amendments to the *Local Government Act 1989*, have meant that entitlement day (the close of rolls) is now closer to election day (for the November 2005 elections, entitlement day will be 57 days before election day, instead of about 90 days). Significant effort has been put into the development of new computer software to manage the changes required by the new legislation.

MAPPING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The VEC is responsible for producing local government boundary maps for electoral representation reviews, and maps of State electoral boundaries for the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

The production of any map is a complex process that involves combining and formatting a variety of data sources. The final maps that are produced are visual presentations of a multitude of pieces of data. The VEC receives these data, known as spatial data, about roads, parks, housing developments and property data, and builds a comprehensive map of the designated area that is easily understood by the general public.

For details on maps for local government electoral representation reviews see page 55.

The VEC prepares hardcopy maps for a number of internal and external purposes. In addition to those prepared for State and local government boundary reviews, maps are prepared to assist in the conduct of the State and municipal elections, including maps for information brochures, media releases, advertisements, candidate statements and the VEC website.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: MAXIMISE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE SECURITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION HELD BY THE VEC

Strategy - Ensure that the privacy of personal information held by the VEC is protected and that disclosures of enrolment information meet legislative requirements.

The register of electors contains personal enrolment information about the majority of Victorians, including name, address, date of birth and gender information. The confidence of voters in the privacy and integrity of the register of electors is essential in order for voters to continue to register and update their personal details with the VEC, as well as for public confidence in the electoral system generally. Protecting the privacy of voters' personal enrolment information is therefore of fundamental importance to the VEC.

MANDATORY PROVISION OF ENROLMENT INFORMATION

The *Electoral Act 2002* stipulates that specified enrolment information must be made available to the individuals and organisations, as follows:

- The list of Victorian electors (names and addresses only) must be made available for public inspection at the office of the VEC. Information can only be searched by name;
- The latest print of any electoral roll produced for an election (which contains name and address details only) must be made available for public inspection free of charge at locations and during times determined by the VEC;
- Enrolment information must be provided to registered political parties, members of Parliament and election candidates under section 33 of the *Electoral Act 2002*. This information must only be used for election-related purposes. Members of Parliament may also use this information to exercise their functions on behalf of their constituents. Severe penalties apply if this information is misused;
- Enrolment information must be provided to the Juries Commission to enable people to be called up for jury duty under section 19 of the *Juries Act 2000*; and
- Voters' rolls must be provided to municipal councils for elections under section 24 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

DISCRETIONARY PROVISION OF ENROLMENT INFORMATION

In exceptional circumstances, the VEC has the discretion, under section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, to release enrolment information to other individuals or organisations. Before releasing any enrolment information, the VEC must consult with the Victorian Privacy Commissioner and determine that the public interest in providing the requested information outweighs the public interest relating to protecting the privacy of that personal information. Strict conditions are applied if information is provided. If these conditions are not met and enrolment information is misused, then severe penalties will apply.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Section 35 of the *Electoral Act 2002* provides that the VEC must report annually to Parliament on the provision of any information under section 34 and on any finding made under that section during the reporting period.

Section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002* provides that the VEC must, on receipt of a request for electoral enrolment information under the section, make a finding as to whether or not the public interest in providing the requested information outweighs the public interest in protecting the privacy of personal information in the particular circumstances.

During the 2004-05 reporting period, the VEC considered 30 requests made under section 34. Of those 30 requests, the VEC approved 19 during the period. They are listed below.

Figure 17 – Requests for information approved during the current reporting period

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Ad-hoc Victoria Police requests	The VEC received twelve individual requests from Victoria Police during the reporting period. They were based on various operational needs.	Nine of these requests were approved on the basis that law enforcement requirements justified the release of personal information in the circumstances.
Barwon Health	Barwon Health made two requests. The first involved the names and addresses of 15,000 women aged 70+ living in the Geelong area. The second involved 8,500 women of the same age group living in the Mornington Peninsula. The information was required to conduct a study into the effects of Vitamin D on older women.	The first request was approved on 2 February 2005. The VEC was satisfied that the release of the information would offer a significant public health benefit that would outweigh the benefits of keeping the information private. The VEC determined that it would be most appropriate for the VEC to retain the information and to conduct Barwon Health's mail-out on behalf of the Organisation. The second request was approved on 2 May 2005 on the same grounds.
State Revenue Office (SRO)	The SRO requested name and address information of all persons who are on the VEC's register of electors in order to assist its assessment and collection of state taxes and duties pursuant to the taxation legislation administered by the SRO.	This request was approved because access to the information would assist the SRO in its assessment and collection of state taxes and duties. Access to the information would, therefore, offer significant public revenue benefit. The request was approved on 25 January 2005.
State Revenue Office (SRO)	The SRO requested date of birth information of all persons who are on the VEC's register of electors in order to assist its assessment and collection of state taxes and duties pursuant to the taxation legislation administered by the SRO.	This request was approved because provision of date of birth information would increase the SRO's ability to verify rights and entitlements accurately. The information is particularly relevant to the assessment of rights and entitlements under the <i>Land Tax Act 1958</i> . The request was approved on 27 May 2005.

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
BreastScreen Victoria	BreastScreen Victoria requested name, address and date of birth information of all women aged 50 to 69 in order to write to these women to inform them of the BreastScreen Victoria program.	This request was approved on 16 July 2003. The VEC was satisfied that the BreastScreen Victoria program raises awareness of breast cancer in the community, aids early detection, and therefore acts to lessen or prevent a serious threat to public health or welfare in Victoria. Continued provision of this information was approved on 28 February 2005.
Victorian Department of Human Services, Adoptions Information Service (AIS)	AIS requested a copy of the full register of electors in order to assist it to search, on behalf of eligible parties, for adopted persons, birth parents, birth relatives and adoptive parents. AIS perform these functions under the <i>Adoption Act 1984</i> .	This request was originally approved on 25 March 2004. The VEC was satisfied that the disclosure was consistent with Parliament's intention that eligible parties have the opportunity to contact birth parents, adoptive parents and birth relatives. Continued provision of this information was approved on 15 April 2005.
Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation	The Commission sought the address details of a gaming applicant. The request for details was authorised by the applicant.	This request was approved on the basis that the release of details was approved by the individual whose details were sought. The request was approved on 9 March 2005.
Department of Human Services	The Human Services Child Protection Unit sought information relating to the issue of two Protection Applications.	The Department sought this information to ensure the ongoing safety of children involved in the two matters. The request was approved on this basis, on 17 March 2005
Department for Victorian Communities	The Department sought details relating to an individual.	This request was approved on the basis that the public interest in providing the information outweighed the public interest in protecting the privacy of personal information. The request was approved on 28 February 2005.
Victoria Police: Ethical Standards Department (ESD); Records Services Division (RSD); Licensing Services Branch (LSB); State Intelligence Division (SID); Major Fraud Investigation Service (MFID)	Victoria Police requested a copy of the full register of electors in order to assist ESD, RSB, LSB, SID and MFID to perform its law enforcement functions by assisting it to verify or locate a person.	Provision of this information would assist Victoria Police in its law enforcement activities. The request was approved on this basis, on 4 April 2005. The approval was on the basis that the requested information would be available in the form of an online electoral enrolment Information look-up facility. The development of this facility is now being finalised.

The VEC refused nine requests during the period, one request was withdrawn and one request could not be satisfied. These requests are listed below.

Figure 18 – Requests for information refused during the current reporting period

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Ad-hoc Victoria Police requests	The VEC received twelve individual requests from Victoria Police during the reporting period. They were based on various operational needs.	Two of these requests were refused; one of these requests was refused on the basis that the details provided did not meet the VEC's requirements. One could not be satisfied because the information sought was not available to the VEC.
Chester Metcalfe & Co	The full record of an individual was subpoenaed in relation to a legal matter.	This request was withdrawn on 4 May 2005 following settlement of the matter involved.
Department of Industrial Relations Queensland Government	The Department was conducting an investigation against an employer in Queensland. It sought details of an individual who was the previous company director.	This request was refused because the details provided by the Department did not meet the VEC's requirements. The request was refused on 17 June 2005.
Individual requests for relatives' details	Three requests sought details of various family members. Two requests were from individuals seeking information for tracing purposes. One was from a law firm representing an individual pursuing a family law matter.	These requests were refused because the details provided by the individuals did not meet the VEC's requirements. The requests were refused on 20 September 2004, 14 January 2005 and on 17 February 2005.
MacBeth Genealogical Services	The Organisation sought electoral enrolment information in order to trace beneficiaries to intestate estates.	This request was refused because the details provided did not meet the VEC's requirements. The request was refused on 23 March 2005.
Connex	Connex sought name and address information in order to assist authorised law enforcement officers conduct the legal processing of persons and or vehicles alleged to have committed offences against the provisions of the Transport Act 1983.	This request was refused because the details provided did not meet the VEC's requirements. This request was refused on 16 March 2005.

Two requests received by the VEC are still pending. These requests are listed below.

Figure 19 – Requests for information still pending

Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Ad-hoc Victoria Police requests	The VEC received twelve individual requests from Victoria Police during the reporting period. They were based on various operational needs.	One of these requests is pending.
Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help (VANISH).	VANISH requested a copy of the full register of electors in order to assist it to search, on behalf of eligible parties, for adopted persons, birth parents, birth relatives and adoptive parents.	This request is pending.

The VEC has provided or now provides enrolment information, under section 34 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, to the following organisations:

- Barwon Health;
- BreastScreen Victoria;
- Cancer Council Victoria;
- The State Revenue Office;
- The Victorian Department of Human Services, Adoptions Information Service and Adoption Information Services approved under the *Adoptions Act 1984* (Centacare, Uniting Care Connections and Anglicare Western)
- Victoria Police (on an ad-hoc basis); and
- Victoria Police (following development of the on-line look-up facility)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The VEC will remain committed to upholding the integrity of the electoral register in order to maximise public confidence and to encourage public enrolment, through assessing requests for electoral enrolment information in accordance with the legislative provisions. The VEC will continue to maintain a high privacy standard, and assess whether the ongoing provision of data is appropriate and justified by the recipients' continued compliance with agreed obligations.

In the next financial year the VEC will engage a privacy specialist to look more closely at how the AEC and VEC collect and release enrolment information. The review will lead to a greater understanding of the respective jurisdictions' legislation and practices. It will aim to identify ways to minimise duplication of effort and it may lead to the development of a level of consistency of practices between jurisdictions.



BALLARAT



BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL

The Ballarat City Council had nine contested elections across nine single councillor wards. Each ward election is a distinct election, and electors in each ward receive their own ballot material with their candidates statements attached, so as to ensure each elector receives the correct material.

COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATION

Engage and inform members of the community so that they are able to fully participate in the electoral process

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 15 of the 25 local council elections had increased voter participation from their previous election (See page 47)
- Significant Statewide media attention about the local government elections was achieved in *The Age*, *The Sunday Age*, *Herald Sun*, *Financial Review* and *MX*, as well as radio news on Fox FM, Triple M, 774 ABC Radio and 3AW (See page 45)
- Created a comprehensive campaign for the City of Melbourne with a specific design unique to the election. Voter participation increased from 62.0 % in 2001 to 65.1%. (See page 47)
- Enhancements were made to the useability and visual presentation of the VEC website. (See page 49)
- Introduced the Secondary Schools Democratic Engagement Grants Program, with the aim of providing grant funding to increase the enrolment and voting participation rates by young people in areas of low voter participation. (See page 50)
- The Democratic Engagement Program at the Centre for Adult Education resulted in a higher level of interest in the electoral system from those who participated. (See page 49)
- Prepared a detailed report to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee's enquiry into "electronic democracy". (See page 51)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The VEC will deliver a campaign to inform Victorian electors of the new structure and voting system for the Legislative Council. (See page 43)
- Comprehensive communication campaigns will be implemented at the 54 local government elections taking place in November 2005. (See page 49)
- The VEC will produce two new publications, one for provisionally enrolled (17 year old) electors, and one for other electors,

to explain the Federal, State and local government electoral systems in Victoria. (See page 49)

- The VEC will complete development of its new website for launching on 1 September 2005. (See page 49)
- The VEC will continue to expand its education services in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission. (See page 51)

FACILITATING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

A healthy democracy exists when eligible members of the community participate in the electoral system. Compulsory voting requires the VEC to provide services that enable all members of Victoria's diverse community to enrol and vote. The VEC has a responsibility to demonstrate the relevance of the democratic system to people's lives and their communities. As the electoral environment changes, the VEC must also provide specialised services to voters with special needs, and encourage Victorians to exercise their democratic right to actively participate in the electoral system.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: MAXIMISE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATION AT THE 2006 STATE ELECTION AND ANY BY-ELECTIONS

PREPARATION FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN FOR THE NOVEMBER 2006 STATE ELECTION

For the November 2006 State election, the VEC will again use the theme "Every vote will shape Victoria", illustrated by the use of clay models for television and press advertising.

There will also be a communication campaign to inform voters about Victoria's new Upper House voting system that will be in place at the 2006 State election. The campaign will include sending customised voter cards to each elector advising of their new Upper House region and details of the local voting arrangements in place in their electorates.

VOTER PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL VOTING AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Communications and education campaigns produced by the VEC at elections seek to maximise voter participation and reduce informal voting by providing Victorians with all the information they need to participate fully in an election.

Voter participation at the 2002 State election was 93.16%. This was comparable with the 93.23% recorded at the 1999 State election.

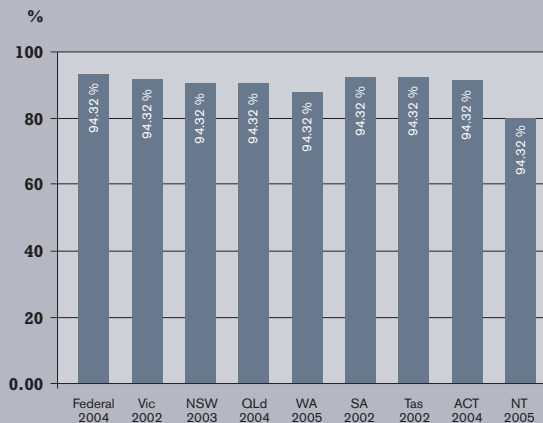


Figure 20 – Voter participation at Australian Parliamentary elections

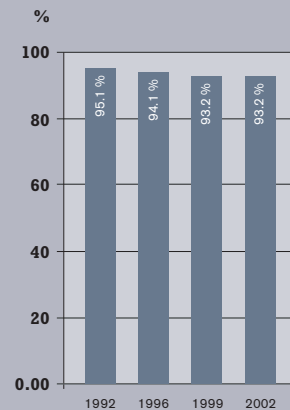


Figure 21 – Voter participation at Victorian State elections 1992-2002

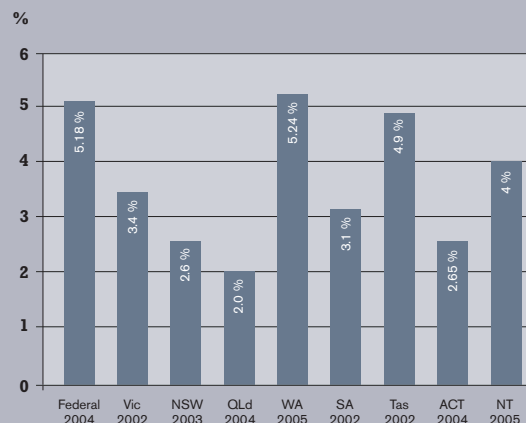


Figure 22 – Informal voting at Australian Parliamentary elections*

Full preferential voting is used in Federal, Vic, WA, SA and NT elections.

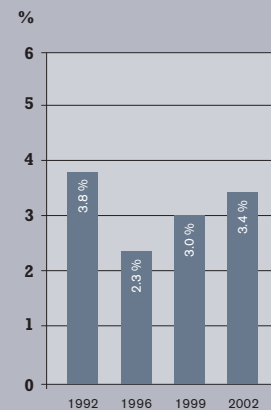


Figure 23 – Informal voting at Victorian State elections 1992-2002

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: MAXIMISE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATION AT THE 2004 AND 2005 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND ANY BY-ELECTIONS

Strategy - Work with municipal councils to develop and implement a co-ordinated communication campaigns at local government elections in 2004 and 2005.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Approximately 1.2 million Victorian voters were eligible to vote at the local government elections in November 2004, representing nearly one third of the entire state. The VEC developed information campaigns for each election, which aimed to raise voters' awareness of their rights, and obligations, maximise voter participation, and minimise the informal vote.

Unlike a State election, where one single communication campaign is developed, each local council has its own communication campaign, with councils provided a statutory service with optional services.



In developing and selecting these optional services, the VEC and councils took into account the method of election, the location and size of the municipality, available media coverage, the special needs of voters and the councils budget.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS ADVERTISING

Press advertisements formed the basis of the communication campaign for each local government election. These advertisements were published in the most widely circulating newspapers in each municipality and communicated key election messages. During the 2004 local government elections, the VEC placed 340 press advertisements in 55 newspapers across Victoria.

Councils in western and southern Victoria also participated in shared radio advertising. Shared radio advertising again proved a particularly cost effective method for councils to increase voter awareness. Voter participation either increased or remained higher than the state average for the councils participating in this advertising.

MEDIA SERVICES

Media releases formed an important part of the voter information campaign. Their content assisted journalists in providing factual and accurate information when reporting on the conduct of elections.

During the elections, media releases were distributed by the VEC, achieving coverage in all regional newspapers. The VEC received significant Statewide media attention, in *The Age*, *The Sunday Age*, *Herald Sun*, *Financial Review* and *MX*, as well news grabs in Fox FM, Triple M, 774 ABC Radio and 3AW.

Media releases were also accompanied by supporting media information, as well as a media briefing session attended by journalist from the *Herald Sun* and *Leader Newspapers*.

ELECTION INFORMATION TO VOTERS FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS AND SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

The VEC provided telephone numbers to enable non-English speaking voters to speak with a member of the VEC staff via an interpreter. Twelve languages were provided in total, with different councils utilising those languages more prominent in their municipality. The telephone numbers were advertised in VEC newspaper advertising, as well as in the EasyVote cards distributed to voters in attendance elections.

The VEC also aired radio advertising in seven community languages. There was a combined council campaign between Boroondara, Darebin, Greater Geelong, Hobsons Bay, Melbourne, Moreland, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra City Councils. A total of 196 advertisements went to air across five radio stations covering seven community languages. In addition, 48% of media releases distributed to the ethnic press were subsequently published in ethnic newspapers.

The VEC continued to provide vision and print impaired voters information through advertisements on Vision Australia's radio station 3RPH, and a large print file was also available for downloading from the VEC website.

A TTY telephone number is available throughout the year, and is advertised on all VEC publications.

VEC WEBSITE

The VEC provided a customised home page for each local government election on its website. Councils were invited to link their website to the elections home page on the VEC website to help ensure that the VEC was the primary source of on-line election information.

During the nomination period, candidate nominations were updated to the website every day. The website pages were the most popular during the nomination stage and during the publication of results.

TELEPHONE ENQUIRY SERVICES

Direct telephone lines to each returning officer's office were provided from Monday 18 October until Monday 29 November 2004, to answer enquiries from the public.

EASYVOTE CARDS

EasyVote cards were distributed to voters in the three attendance elections. An *EasyVote* card provides information to the voter on the ward they are enrolled in, the names of the candidates, steps on how to vote, and a tear off section with a map showing the closest voting centre.

Improvements were made to explain that voters should bring the *EasyVote* card with them to the voting centre to assist in voting. Feedback from the returning officers showed that the card made it considerably easier and more efficient to mark people off the roll when they had bought their card, as they could clearly see the name of the elector.

VOTER PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL VOTING AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Voter participation and informal voting rates are useful indicators of the health of an electoral system. It is important to note, however, that these may be affected by factors other than the services provided by an electoral authority including interest in the election, election issues, the geography and the demographic composition of the electorate, and even the weather on election day.

Communication and education campaigns produced by the VEC at elections seek to maximise voter participation and reduce informal voting by providing Victorians with all the information they need to participate fully in an election.

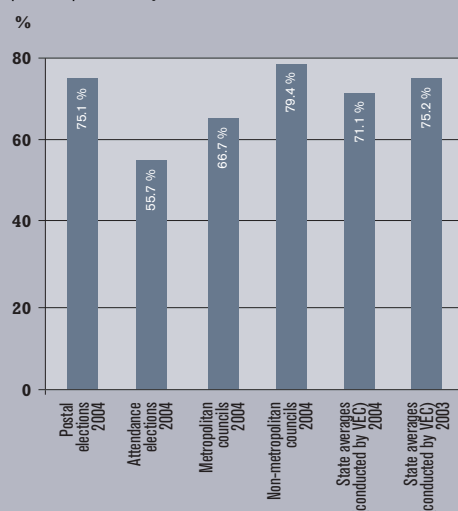


Figure 24 – Voter participation of local government elections conducted by the VEC in November 2004

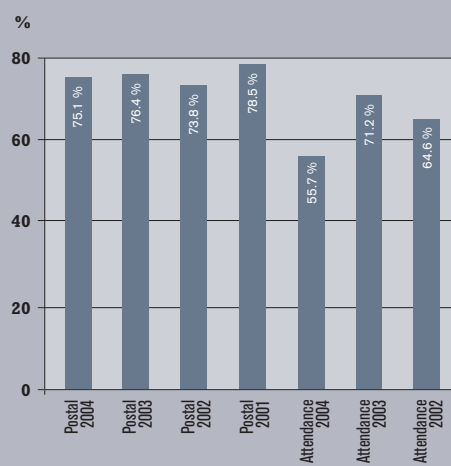


Figure 25 – Voter participation at postal and attendance elections 2001-2004

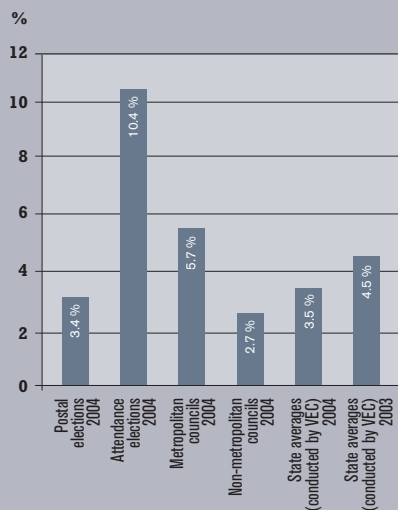


Figure 26 – Informal voting at local government elections conducted by the VEC in November 2004

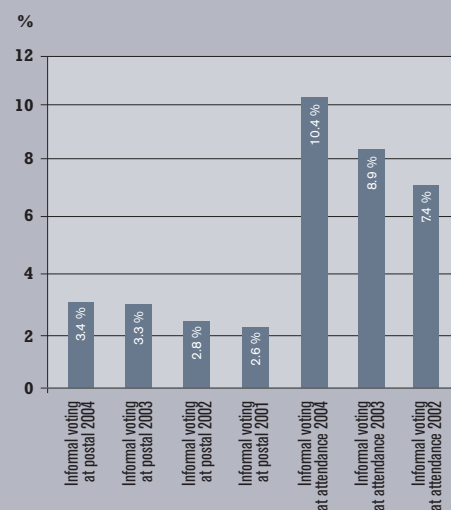


Figure 27 – Informal voting at postal and attendance elections 2001-2004



VOTER PARTICIPATION

Of the 25 local councils conducting elections in 2004-05, ten were in metropolitan areas. The voter participation for these elections averaged 66.7 percent. The VEC achieved increases in participation in six of the ten metropolitan elections.

Figure 28 – Voter participation at metropolitan local government elections in November 2004

Council	Performance	2004 Voter participation	2001/02 Turnout	Method of election
Boroondara City Council	↑	73.7	69.4	Postal
Darebin City Council	↑	73.0	71.6	Postal
Hobsons Bay City Council	↑	75.4	74.5	Postal
Melbourne City Council	↑	65.1	62.0*	Postal
Melton Shire Council	↓	71.2	73.7	Postal
Nillumbik Shire Council	↑	81.4	79.7	Postal
Stonington City Council	↑	65.3	63.2	Postal
Port Phillip City Council		52.4	*Data not available	Attendance
Moreland Council		64.0	*Data not available	Attendance
Yarra City Council	↓	52.6	54.4	Attendance

*indicates election was conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission.

CITY OF MELBOURNE PERFORMANCE

In November 2004 the VEC conducted the City of Melbourne's election for the first time. Voter participation increased significantly, from 62.0 per cent to 65.1 per cent.

The VEC worked with the City of Melbourne council to create an appealing campaign aimed at converting awareness into votes.

The City of Melbourne campaign included its own motivational theme of "Your Melbourne. Your Vote", which was used in media releases, and as a backdrop to posters distributed throughout Melbourne.

A new layout and design reduced the size of the ballot envelope and materials allowing an easy fit into standard size letterboxes. Inside the ballot envelope was a step-by-step instruction leaflet, with pictorial guides to assist voters to register their vote for both the Leadership Team and councillors.

The remaining 14 contested council elections were in regional areas. Participation increased in nine of the 14 regional council elections. (See figure 29)

Figure 29 – Voter participation at regional local government elections in November 2004

Council	Performance	2004 Voter turnout	2001/02 Turnout	Method of election
Ararat Rural City Council	↑	82.9	79.9*	Postal
Ballarat City Council	↓	78.3	80.1	Postal
Colac Otway Shire Council	↑	81.4	77.0	Postal
Corangamite Shire Council	↓	79.6	81.9	Postal
Glenelg Shire Council	↓	77.1	79.1	Postal
Golden Plains Shire Council	↑	78.4	76.3	Postal
Greater Bendigo City Council	↓	77.9	78.1	Postal
Greater Geelong City Council		79.3	79.3	Postal
Moorabool Shire Council	↑	79.1	77.8	Postal
Moyne Shire Council	↑	84.2	82.8	Postal
Pyrenees Shire Council	↑	80.3	74.1*	Postal
Southern Grampians Shire Council	↑	87.3	86.8	Postal
Surf Coast Shire Council	↑	74.0	72.9	Postal
Warrnambool City Council	↑	83.3	78.9	Postal

*indicates election conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission

INFORMAL VOTING

Informal voting is a broad indicator of people's understanding of the electoral system. Evidence suggests that informal voting may be affected by several factors, including the method of election, the number of non-English speaking voters in a municipality, and the number of candidates.

The VEC found that those councils where there was a large number of candidates in unsubdivided wards, or multi-councillor wards had a higher level of informal voting. Of the 20 local government elections which were conducted by the VEC in 2002 and 2005, ten had a reduction in the informal vote, resulting in an improved performance.

Figure 30 – Informal votes at local government elections in November 2004

Council	Performance	2004 Informal voting	2001/02 Informal voting	Method of election
Ararat Rural City Council	↑	2.8	3.0*	Postal
Ballarat City Council	↑	1.87	2.18	Postal
Boroondara City	↑	2.82	3.01	Postal
Colac Otway Shire Council	↑	1.26	1.60	Postal
Corangamite Shire Council	↓	1.61	1.33	Postal
Darebin City Council	↑	3.41	4.16	Postal
Glenelg Shire Council	↓	2.17	1.66	Postal
Golden Plains Shire Council	↑	2.20	2.42	Postal
Greater Bendigo City Council	↓	1.74	1.62	Postal
Greater Geelong City Council	↓	2.65	2.62	Postal
Hobsons Bay City Council	↑	2.16	8.47	Postal
Melbourne City Council	↓	8.20	4.9*	Postal
Melton Shire Council	↓	3.61	3.49	Postal
Moorabool Shire Council	↓	3.66	2.20	Postal
Moreland City Council	↓	13.9	6.9	Attendance
Moyne Shire Council	↑	1.09	1.49	Postal
Nillumbik Shire Council	↓	3.59	3.40	Postal
Pyrenees Shire Council	↓	1.71	1.5*	Postal
Southern Grampians Shire Council	↑	3.92	4.09	Postal
Stonnington City Council	↓	4.77	2.71	Postal
Surf Coast Shire Council	↓	6.19	2.10	Postal
Port Phillip City Council	↑	5.39	6.0*	Attendance
Yarra City Council	↓	7.94	5.99	Attendance
Warrnambool City Council	↓	4.43	1.25	Postal



Hobsons Bay changed from an attendance to postal election in 2004. The reduced informal voting rate from 8.47% to 2.26% is typical of the lower level of informal voting in postal elections.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Comprehensive communication campaigns will be implemented at the 54 local government elections taking place in November 2005.

In addition the VEC will produce two new publications, one for provisionally enrolled (17 year old) electors, and one for other electors, to explain the Federal, State and local government electoral systems in Victoria.

Strategy: Redevelopment of the VEC's website in order to provide current on-line information and services that meet the needs of all voters and stakeholders

Phase one of the VEC's web site re-development project was completed in time for the 2004 local government elections. The redevelopment of the website will be undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 introduced changes for the council elections whilst minimising the disruption to the remainder of the website.

The major development phase of the project, Phase 2 is currently underway and will provide for a modernised look and feel in line with the VEC's corporate branding, adherence to government requirements for accessibility standards, and improved navigation. The new web site is due for release on 1 September 2005.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: ENCOURAGE A CULTURE OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTICULARLY AMONG THOSE WHOSE PARTICIPATION IS IDENTIFIED AS LOWER THAN AVERAGE.

Strategy: In partnership with the AEC and other organisations implement an electoral education strategy to increase Victorians' engagement in and understanding of the electoral system

In 2004-05 the joint electoral education project with the AEC was further developed. Attention is being paid to a range of groups that research has identified as being under-represented.

PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS (CALD)

The Democratic Engagement Program at the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) has involved using electoral education material for adult literacy classes. There has been class contact with 292 students from 21 adult education classes in the Literacy and English as a Second Language Certificate courses.

Evaluation of the program at this stage has shown:

- An increase in the enrolment status of the students involved in the classes from 66 percent enrolled to 81 percent enrolled;
- A 23 percent increase in the proportion of students highly valuing the electoral system; and
- A 16 percent increase in the proportion of students highly valuing the importance of voting.

The teaching materials being developed and delivered at the CAE are in the process of being compiled into a new electoral education resource. This resource will be further trialled at the CAE in the next year before being made available to other adult education settings to support teachers in raising the electoral education awareness level of their CALD students.

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18 TO 24 YEARS

Collaboration with the Department of Education and Training (DE&T) and the Catholic Education Office has seen the introduction of the Secondary Schools Democratic Engagement Grants Program. A key aim of this initiative is to increase the enrolment and voting participation rates of young people in areas of low voter participation. Following an open submission process, grants were awarded to support a range of formal and informal curriculum developments at the following schools.

- North Geelong Secondary College - \$25,000

A whole school curriculum redesign to promote Civics and Citizenship education as well as student leadership programs to foster active involvement in democratic processes.

- Braybrook College - \$5,000

Programs to create visual displays in a variety of languages that will promote enrolment and voting in municipal and State elections

- Wodonga High School - \$5,000

A Civics and Citizenship professional development program for teachers as well as a combined local schools' youth leadership program

- Kalianna Special School Bendigo - \$5,000

Programs to train senior students to be "election officials" at the school and in the community

- Wangaratta High School - \$3,000

Programs to support student and staff training and involvement in a regional Student Parliament activity

- Robinvale Secondary College - \$3,000

Programs to support Civics and Citizenship teacher professional development at the school as well as updating Civics and Citizenship class resources

- St Monica's College Epping - \$5,000

Programs to support a student-mentoring program involving community leaders as well as assistance with a regional schools' Civics and Citizenship conference

It is planned that these programs will be accessible by, and transferable to other schools throughout Victoria.

Programs have continued with Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) students in inner Melbourne. Classes on electoral education and the role of positive democratic practices have been delivered to 62 students in five class groups. These students are also being supported in developing media resources promoting appropriate civic behaviour for use with similar VCAL students. Twenty-six VCAL teachers participated in a professional development activity to promote the teaching of electoral education material to VCAL students.

The joint electoral education project with the AEC has seen an increased VEC involvement with the AEC's Electoral Education Centre (EEC). The provision of teacher professional development has been maintained in 2004-05. The "Your Vote Counts" Professional development program was delivered to 60 teachers from metropolitan adult education providers and metropolitan secondary schools. Both VEC and AEC staff from the EEC were facilitators at the sessions.

The EEC is contacting all schools in metropolitan areas characterised by research as being lower than average in terms of voter participation. VEC staff are assisting in this targeted approach to increasing community awareness through the provision of electoral education services.

The VEC was represented at the Melbourne Age Careers Expo in July 2004, the Victorian Commerce Teacher's Conference in November 2004 and the *Herald Sun* VCE Expo in March 2005. Over 7,000 students and 500 teachers from a range of government and non-government schools participated in these events. At the two VCE Expos over 700 enrolments were completed. This was a 12 percent increase over the enrolments completed in the previous year.

The VEC was a key contributor at the State Parliament Open Day on 19 June 2005. Over 3,500 people visited the VEC display. A voting centre was established to encourage young people to cast votes for a Best Exhibit Poll, 480 young people cast votes and assisted in the vote count. Other displays focused on new enrolments, assisted in enrolment enquiries, highlighted the Legislative Council redivision, and promoted participation at the November 2005 round of local government elections.

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A partnership with the Council for Homeless Persons has provided valuable research into the enrolment and voting habits of homeless persons. The joint project research involved 105 homeless persons in inner Melbourne. The key findings indicated that homeless people have a low desire to be enrolled for and vote at elections, and rated providing electoral information at homeless assistance centres as the best method to encourage enrolment.

This research will underpin a program that will provide practical assistance to homeless persons to enrol and vote formally at municipal elections in November 2005.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: DEMONSTRATE INTEGRITY, IMPARTIALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY BY REPORTING TRANSPARENTLY TO PARLIAMENT AND COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Strategy - Provide stakeholders with user-friendly comprehensive information about the VEC's role, organisational performance and cost effectiveness, and respond appropriately to all issues and enquiries.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

In 2005 the VEC entered the 2003-04 Annual Report in the 55th Australasian Reporting Awards. The Reporting Awards provide an excellent opportunity to benchmark reporting achievements with other organisations. The VEC received a Bronze award.

An edition of *Selections*, the VEC newsletter to key stakeholders, was released in March 2005 to the VEC's stakeholders. The edition provided an update on the Upper House boundary review, details of the 25 local government elections, as well as an introduction to the new Electoral Commissioner.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY

In October 2004, the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee re-opened an investigation into electronic democracy. The inquiry looked at various new technologies and how they might affect the democratic processes of government, including election processes. The VEC provided a substantial written submission to the Committee in January, and spoke before the Committee in February.

In its submission, the VEC explored various possible methods of electronic voting. The VEC considers that there are still too many concerns about the security and accuracy of widespread voting via the Internet or telephone. However, voting at computer terminals at voting centres could provide a number of advantages for people with various disabilities (especially visual and motor impairments) and for people with poor English language skills.

The Committee released its Final Report in May 2005, including 15 recommendations relating specifically to the VEC and its activities. These are currently under consideration by the Government.



PYRENEES



PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL

The Pyrenees Shire local government election was conducted as a postal election in November 2004. Pyrenees had the largest increase in participation from its past election, up by 6.3 per cent to 80.3 per cent.

FAIR AND EQUAL REPRESENTATION

Provide support services during electoral boundary reviews to help ensure fair and equal representation for Victorian electors

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Minister for Local Government endorsed the VEC's recommendations for reviews conducted in 2003-04. (See page 58)
- Completed 30 electoral representation reviews, which were all endorsed by the Minister for Local Government. (See page 56)
- Evaluation feedback from the electoral representation reviews showed that people found the information sessions and Guide for Submission document helpful in understanding the review process. (See page 57)
- Detailed maps were produced for the electoral representation reviews, and the Upper House boundary review. (See pages 55 and 59)
- Improved mapping software was developed which automated approximately 90% of the recoding of electors after an electoral representation review. (See page 55)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The preparation of a comprehensive report to the Minister for Local Government on the review process. (See page 59)
- Plan resources to conduct the remaining 39 local government representation reviews from November 2006 until May 2008. (See page 59)
- Continue to provide administrative and mapping support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission in its Legislative Council redivision. (See pages 59 and 71)

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES: PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW SERVICES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW SERVICES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 2004-05, the VEC conducted 30 electoral representation reviews for local government.

LEGISLATIVE BASIS

The *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), was passed by the Victorian Parliament in Spring 2003. The amendments included provisions for independent electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils. The first review a council is required to conduct in accordance with this new legislation is determined by the Minister for Local Government.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review.

The purpose of an electoral representation review is to recommend an electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council. Matters to be considered by the review are:

- a) the number of councillors;
- b) the electoral structure of the municipality (whether the municipality should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and, if the municipality is to be subdivided, the number of wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward); and
- c) if the recommendation is for the municipality to be divided into wards, boundaries for the wards that will:
 - i. provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and
 - ii. ensure equality of representation, through the number of voters represented by each councillor being within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors.

THE VEC AND ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEWS

The VEC has over ten years' experience in working on municipal ward boundaries, being contracted by councils prior to the introduction of the new legislation to prepare options for their consideration. VEC staff have also worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in State redivisions. In doing this work, the VEC has used sophisticated mapping software, conducted field research and has developed expertise in preparing electoral boundaries that both comply with legislative approximate equality requirements and also respect communities of interest.

The VEC engaged two consultants, Mr Vern Robson and Mr Terry Maher, to provide expertise and considerable knowledge in the field of local government during the conduct of the reviews.

THE ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW PROCESS

Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989* specifies that the purpose of an electoral representation review is to achieve "fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council." To achieve this, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

- 1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality;**
- 2: to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors; and**
- 3: to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.**

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors, including the following:

- Internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review;
- The VEC's experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- The VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and
- Careful consideration of all input from the public in both written and verbal submissions made during the course of the review.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. In reaching its recommendations, the VEC seeks to combine the information gathered through public submissions with its own research in order to achieve what it considers to be a fair and equitable result until the next review period. The VEC does not make its recommendations based on a "straw poll" of the number of submissions supporting a particular option.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The VEC informs the community about the electoral representation review through:

- advertising in newspapers;
- conducting an information session to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
- communicating with the community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- developing and issuing an information leaflet for residents;
- publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
- establishing a helpline for responding to community questions;
- distributing a Guide for Submissions documents;
- releasing a Preliminary Report and making the Report available at Council offices, at the VEC office and on the VEC website;
- publishing all submissions in response to the Preliminary Report on the VEC website; and
- conducting a public hearing.

MAPS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEWS

As part of the process of conducting local government electoral representation reviews, the VEC prepares a detailed map of the recommended option on behalf of the Local Government Victoria and Community Information Division of the Department for Victorian Communities.

This map describes the internal boundary structure of the municipality for which the review was conducted. If the Minister for Local Government accepts the recommended option of the VEC, the map is lodged at the Central Plan Office of the Department of Sustainability and Environment and becomes the official description of the internal structure of the municipality.

MAPPING TECHNOLOGY

The conduct of electoral representation reviews requires field work through municipalities in order to further understand communities of interest and assess the practicality of proposed boundaries. Inspecting proposed boundaries using paper maps was possible, but very cumbersome.

A solution to overcome the problems associated with the paper maps was to trial the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, in the form of a mobile mapper. The VEC acquired a GPS receiver and a hand held computer equipped with specialised software and electronic maps. Rather than tracking the car's position manually, the mobile mapper allows the real time tracking of its exact position on earth, which can be viewed simultaneously with maps of roads, ward boundaries, properties, and an electronic version of the Melways street directory.

SOFTWARE AND MAPPING DEVELOPMENT

When the Minister for Local Government has accepted a new local boundary structure, those electors who reside within the affected boundaries need to be recoded with the new boundary on the register of electors. In 2004-05 new software was developed to automate much of the recoding of these electors. While the development proved to be very involved, it has been extremely useful in the long run. The new software meant that approximately 90% of the recoding was done automatically, resulting in a significant resource saving to the VEC.

In the remaining 10% of cases, where electors cannot be automatically recoded, they are manually recoded using information from IntraMaps. IntraMaps is a web based mapping browser (a simplified form of mapping software). IntraMaps provides a map for enrolment officers to identify in which boundary a particular elector resides. The system is an essential source of information for recoding electors to various electoral and administrative boundaries, and has become integral in maintaining the accuracy of the register of electors. The use of automated recoding and IntraMaps has highlighted the importance of mapping at all stages of the electoral representation review, and has resulted in significant resource savings.

VEC RECOMMENDATIONS

Of the 30 reviews conducted in 2004-05, the Minister for Local Government accepted all of the VEC's recommendations.

Figure 31 – local government electoral representation reviews conducted in 2004-05

Council	Voters (at time of review)	Councilors	Prior to the conduct of review	VEC's Recommendation
			Structure	Councilors Structure
Alpine Shire Council	11,107	5	unsubdivided	7 unsubdivided
Brimbank City Council	119,937	9	single-councillor wards	11 3 three-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward
Cardinia Shire Council	38,646	7	single-councillor wards	7 1 three-councillor ward, 1 two-councillor ward & 2 single-councillor wards
Casey City Council	136,309	11	single-councillor wards	11 5 two-councillor wards & 1 single-councillor ward
Central Goldfields	11,450	5	single-councillor wards	7 3 single-councillor wards & 1 four-councillor ward
Frankston City Council	90,910	7	single-councillor wards	9 3 three-councillor wards
Glen Eira City Council	95,773	9	3 three-councillor wards	9 3 three-councillor wards
Greater Shepparton City Council	39,622	7	unsubdivided	7 unsubdivided
Hindmarsh Shire Council	5,364	6	3 two-councillor wards	6 3 two-councillor wards
Horsham Rural City Council	14,644	7	unsubdivided	7 unsubdivided
Hume City Council	99,644	9	single-councillor wards	9 3 two-councillor wards & 1 three-councillor ward
Indigo Shire Council	11,325	7	unsubdivided	7 unsubdivided
Loddon Shire Council	8,393	6	single-councillor ridings	5 3 single-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	30,386	9	single-councillor wards	9 3 three-councillor wards
Maribyrnong City Council	48,664	7	single-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards
Mildura Rural City Council	36,380	9	unsubdivided	9 unsubdivided
Mitchell Shire Council	22,274	7	5 single-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward	9 3 three-councillor wards
Monash City Council	121,962	8	single-councillor wards	11 3 three-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	137,483	9	single-councillor wards	11 single-councillor wards
Mount Alexander Shire Council	15,388	7	single-councillor wards	7 4 single-councillor wards & 1 three-councillor ward
South Gippsland Shire Council	28,669	9	7 single-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward	9 3 three-councillor wards
Strathbogie Shire Council	9,065	7	single-councillor wards	7 5 single-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward
Towong Shire council	5,218	5	unsubdivided	5 unsubdivided

Council	Voters (at time of review)	Councillors	Prior to the conduct of review	VEC's Recommendation	
			Structure	Councillors	Structure
Wangaratta Rural City Council	21,599	8	6 single-councillor wards & 1 two-councillor ward	7	unsubdivided
Wellington Shire Council	37,666	9	unsubdivided	9	unsubdivided
West Wimmera Shire Council	4,271	5	unsubdivided	5	unsubdivided
Whittlesea City Council	86,787	9	single-councillor wards	9	3 three-councillor wards
Wodonga City Council	23,542	5	unsubdivided	7	unsubdivided
Wyndham City Council	72,103	7	single-councillor wards	9	3 three-councillor wards
Yarriambiack Shire Council	7,216	9	3 single-councillor wards & 2 three-councillor wards	7	1 three-councillor ward & 2 two-councillor wards

Figure 32 – Summary of VEC recommendations for local government electoral representations reviews conducted in 2004-05

Councillors	
Decreased	3
Increased	9
No Change	18
Structure	
Changed	17
Not Changed	13
Unsubdivided	10
Single Councillor Wards	2
Multi Councillor Wards	12
Combination of single and multi councillor	6

FEEDBACK ON THE VEC PROCESS

In order to ascertain any suggestions for improvements in the conduct of the electoral representation reviews, the VEC introduced a series of surveys to send to people who were either in attendance at an information session or public hearing, or had sent a submission to the VEC.

The responses indicated that:

- 97% found the information sessions helpful in learning what the review would examine, and understanding how to make a submission;
- 95% found the “guide for submissions” document helpful in how to write a submission; and
- the majority of respondents found the clarity and layout of the report good to excellent.

PERFORMANCE IN PAST REVIEWS

In the 2003-04 year the VEC conducted electoral representation reviews for nine councils. In 2004-05 the Minister for Local Government endorsed the VEC's recommendations from these reviews

As noted, the VEC tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets during the course of a review will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due, a period of eight years.

This is achieved by taking account of likely future changes.

In regard to the VEC achieving this objective, it should be noted:

- as other factors are taken into consideration during the course of a review, it is not always possible to place a ward at its ideal deviation from the average;
- projected growth generated through housing development can be subject to variation as it is dependant on the progress of a number of factors including economic issues;
- the rate of growth in some areas cannot be contained within the constraints of a ward configuration.

As at 30 June 2005 the number of voters represented by each councillor, where a review was conducted in 2003-04, was within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality. The detailed statistics are at Appendix three, and demonstrate how the VEC is performing in achieving its objective of providing equitable representation from one review to the next.

SUBDIVISION REVIEWS

In circumstances where the average number of voters exceeds the equitable representation principle, the legislation provides for subdivision reviews to be conducted. These are to be conducted in the lead up to the election after a representation review.

A subdivision review is to consider only the location of the boundaries of the ward of the council so as to meet the equitable representation principle. It does not consider the number of councillors or the electoral structure as an electoral representation review does.

The subdivision review provisions apply to a council if the VEC considers that:

- a. the boundaries for the wards of a council are unlikely to meet the equitable representation principle at the time of the next election; and
- b. the council is not scheduled to conduct an electoral representation review before the next general election.

The VEC must notify the Minister for Local Government in writing of the councils to which it considers the subdivision review provisions apply, not later than two years before the council is to hold a general election. The Minister may then require those councils to conduct a subdivision review.

If a council is required to conduct a subdivision review, the council must appoint an electoral commission to conduct the review not later than 18 months before the general election, and the review is to be completed no later than six months before the general election.

Consideration will be given in late 2006 to whether subdivision review provisions apply to any of the 39 councils that have already conducted their first electoral representation review. Subdivision reviews can be conducted between May 2007 and May 2008, in the run-up to the November 2008 round of local government elections.

The VEC will commence planning for subdivision reviews after November 2006 once it is known to what extent the subdivision review provisions apply.

ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In the next financial year, a report will be prepared by the VEC for the Minister for Local Government on the electoral representation reviews. The report will provide a comprehensive overview of the review process, including issues and comments raised by local councils and will be prepared in consultation with the Corporate Governance group of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

Thirty-nine councils have now conducted their first review in accordance with the new provisions of the legislation. The next reviews for these councils are due in the run-up to the November 2012 council elections. The legislation specifies that the review is required before every second general election, and that it cannot be commenced until 2 years before that general election. The legislation also requires the review to be completed six months before the general election. This means the window of opportunity for conducting the reviews that are required in the run-up to the 2012 round of council elections is between November 2010 and May 2012.

For the remaining 39 councils yet to conduct a review in accordance with the new provisions of the legislation, the Minister for Local Government is required to specify a time for when these reviews will be conducted. It is expected that the Minister will require the remaining reviews to be conducted in the run-up to the 2008 round of council elections. The suggested time frame for conducting these reviews is between November 2006 and May 2008, the same time period that is used for conducting the review that is required before every second general election.

The VEC will begin planning for the conduct of the reviews for the remaining thirty-nine councils in the second part of 2006. The following is a list of the councils that have not yet conducted an electoral representation review:

Ararat Rural City	Colac Otway Shire	Knox City	Nillumbik Shire
Ballarat City	Darebin City	Latrobe City	Northern Grampians Shire
Banyule City	East Gippsland Shire	Manningham City	Port Phillip City
Bass Coast Shire	Gannawarra Shire	Mansfield Shire	Queenscliffe Borough
Baw Baw Shire	Glenelg Shire	Maroondah City	Southern Grampians Shire
Bayside City	Golden Plains Shire	Melton Shire	Surf Coast Shire*
Benalla Rural City	Greater Dandenong City	Moira Shire	Swan Hill Rural City
Boroondara City	Greater Geelong City	Moonee Valley City	Whitehorse City
Buloke Shire	Hepburn Shire	Moyne Shire	Yarra Ranges Shire
Campaspe Shire	Kingston City	Murrindindi Shire	

*In 2003-04 it was reported that a review was conducted of Surf Coast Shire. This review was done under terms of reference established by the Minister, but has not been conducted under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

(Note: Electoral representation review provisions of the *Local Government Act 1989* do not apply to the City of Melbourne.)

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY REPRESENTATION REVIEW SERVICES TO ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION.

The VEC provides the following assistance to the Electoral Boundaries Commission:

- Secretariat and administrative support;
- Mapping products; and
- Enrolment statistics.

For the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission see page 71.



SURF COAST



SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

Surf Coast was one of ten local government elections to be conducted with proportional representation. This was the first time that proportional representation had been conducted in local government elections in Victoria.

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Effective administration and a skilled workforce are crucial to the delivery of accessible, high-quality electoral services

ACHIEVEMENTS

FINANCE

- Determination of future budget forecasts to meet savings requirements recommended by Government. (See page 61)

HUMAN RESOURCES

- A total of 142 learning and development days (an average of over 2 days per employee) were completed by staff. (See page 65)
- Staff were able to utilise a variety of options available under the VEC's flexible work arrangements policy. (See page 65)
- A variety of initiatives were conducted to improve employee well-being throughout the year. (See page 67)
- The VEC was awarded with Waste Wise certification by EcoRecycle Victoria. (See page 69)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- A major project was conducted to enhance the VEC computer count application to handle the electronic calculation of proportional representation elections. (See page 69)
- Information technology infrastructure was provided to the Returning Officers, as well as the required infrastructure for the computer counts. (See page 69)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

FINANCE

- Determine budgets and resources for new election cycles. (See page 62)

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Aligning our staff capability to the newly established electoral cycles for State and local government elections and periodic work in conducting electoral representation reviews for Local Government. (See page 68)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- The VEC will provide the IT requirements for the November 2005 local government elections including twenty computer counts and improved remote access to the VEC's election management software. (See page 70)

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE:
ENSURE THE RECEIPT OF FUNDS, PAYMENT OF EXPENSES AND MAINTENANCE OF THE VEC'S OPERATIONS WITHIN BUDGET AND ACCORDING TO LEGISLATION

STRATEGY: EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE VEC'S FINANCIAL SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The VEC has established comprehensive budgeting, costing and reporting systems to manage and monitor operational and capital expenditure in line with approved Department of Treasury and Finance Appropriations.

Branch budgets are set annually with individual branch manager involvement, taking into account forthcoming election cycles and the priorities of the VEC's corporate and business plans. Annual budgets are prepared for the coming year and the following four years in advance, to advise Government of the VEC's likely future budget requirements. Budgets are detailed and incorporate the costs of the VEC's casual and fixed term human resources across election cycles. The recent introduction of fixed date State elections has assisted in enabling more accurate budget forward estimates for the VEC.

During 2004-05 the VEC was able to meet its current budget, and determine future budgets in accordance with the savings requirements recommended by the review of the organisational effectiveness and cost efficiency of the VEC in March 2004.

The management of branch budgets is supported by customised electronic reporting tools that enable managers to monitor and direct resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the VEC's priority outcomes. This has enabled the VEC to more accurately identify and report on the cost of individual elections.

In 2003, the government initiated a review of the VEC's budget. A recommendation from the review related to the VEC's level of charging for local government elections. Local government elections include a number of services where costs were not recovered or fully recovered.

At the time of preparing quotations for the November 2004 elections, the VEC had not received any direction from government on this issue. Consequently, to minimise the impact of including these further costs, the VEC capped price increases on these items at 20% for Councils conducting elections in 2004.

For consistency, the VEC has adopted the same pricing policy for the remaining Councils conducting elections in November 2005.

The VEC takes no advantage of what could be perceived as its market power and a significant subsidy of election services remains.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Determining achievable budgets and resources for the new election cycles, and for the 79 local government elections which will be held simultaneously for the first time.

OBJECTIVE: ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF A SKILLED WORKFORCE NEEDED BY THE ORGANISATION TO DELIVER ITS CORPORATE AND LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

Strategy: Ensure the VEC has a workforce that is able and ready to efficiently deliver accessible, high quality electoral service.

IDENTIFYING AND ATTRACTING PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

While the VEC has a core full time equivalent (FTE) staff of 37.6, additional staff are employed on a fixed term or casual basis in order to meet the requirements of preparing for and conducting State and local government elections. The complexity of providing local government election services and undertaking electoral representation reviews, as well as the additional work performed in updating the Victorian electoral roll, has meant that there was an increase in the number of core staff in 2004-05.

Figure 33 – VEC Head Office Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing profile over the last four years

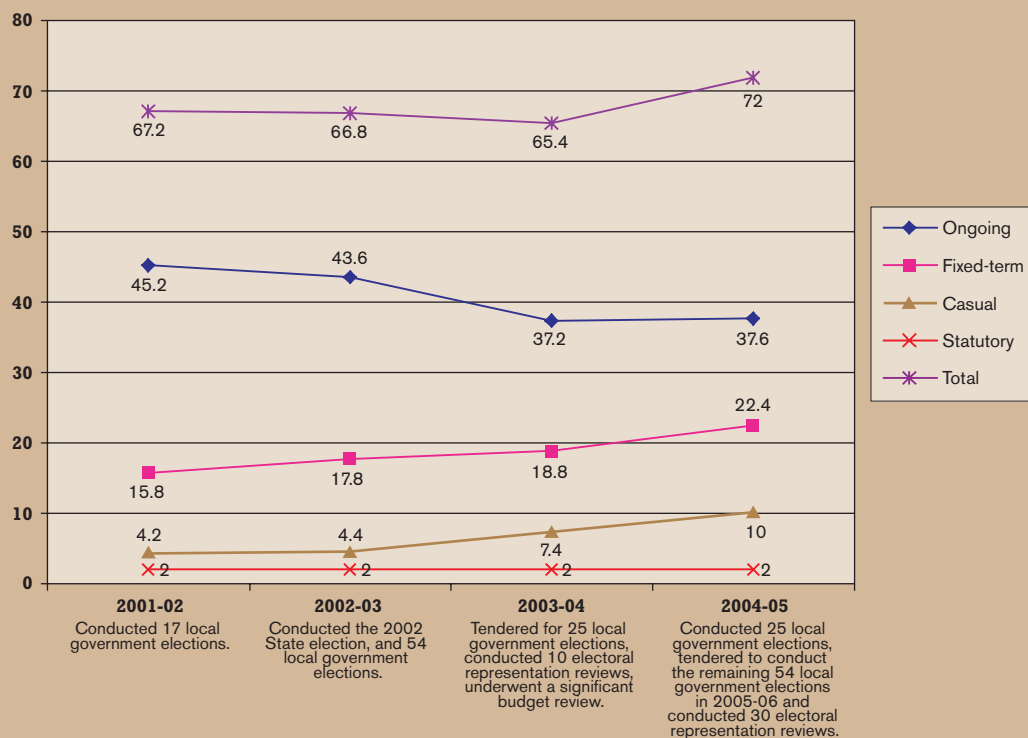


Figure 34 - VEC Head Office Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing profile as at 30 June 2005

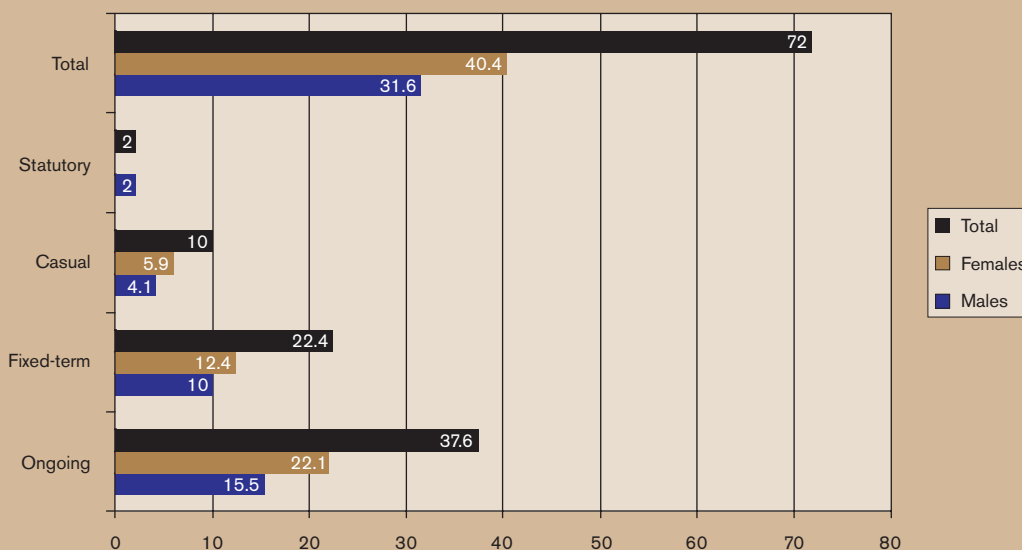
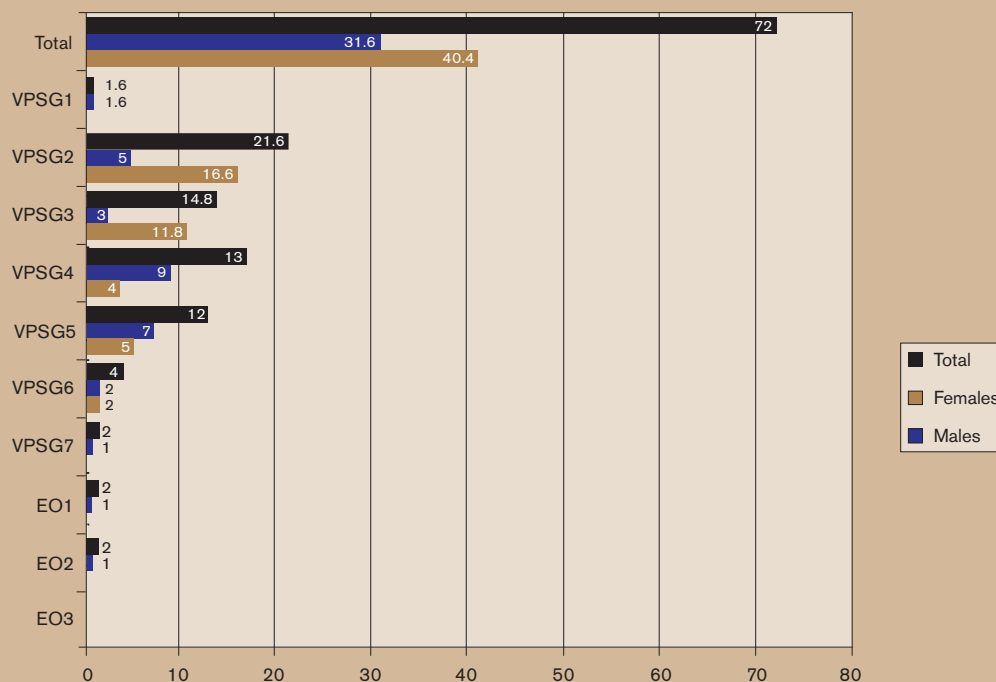


Figure 35 - FTE VPS levels of VEC Head Office staff as at 30 June 2005



In addition to those employed at the VEC head office, the VEC has 234 Senior Election Officials (SEOs) who are trained and available for appointment as election managers during State elections, and as returning officers or deputy returning officers during local government elections. All Senior Election Officials participate in extensive training programs prior to these elections.

In order to conduct the local government elections in November 2004, twenty-five SEOs were appointed as Returning Officers and approximately 30 SEOs were appointed in the supporting role of Deputy Returning Officer.

The VEC also relies heavily on casual staff during elections. Casual staff are appointed and trained to work as administrative staff, election officials at voting centres and to count votes. Because many of these people are only appointed for election day, the VEC maintains a database to assist with the recruitment and training of election casuals. For example, the VEC appointed 2,238 casual staff to assist with the conduct of the 2004 local government elections.

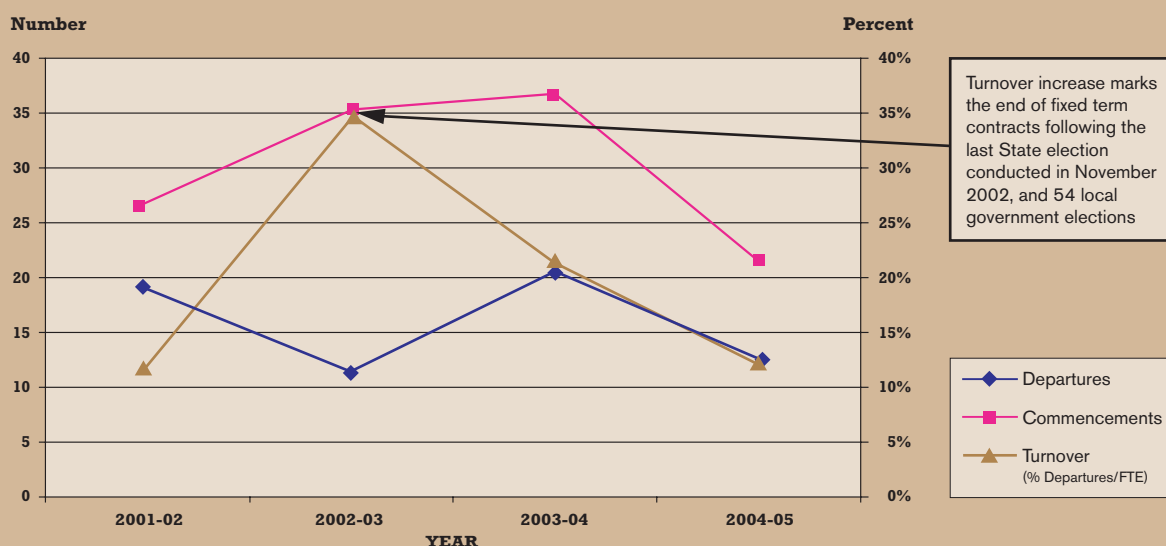
SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

The VEC recognises that a highly motivated and skilled workforce contributes to a healthy democracy. The VEC aims to employ and develop people who represent the diversity of the Victorian community, demonstrate impartiality and integrity, and are committed to delivering the highest standard of professional and effective electoral services.

Thirteen vacancies, including two ongoing and 11 fixed term positions have been filled in the lead up to the local government elections taking place in November 2005, two of which were filled through Employment Futures, the employment division of Scope (Vic) Ltd which provides services to people with disabilities.

Four vacancies were exempt from advertisement. Exemptions were granted in cases where there was no infringement of merit and equity principles as the vacancy had duties and requirements of a specialised nature peculiar to the VEC.

Figure 36 - Recruitment and departures



Under the directions on public sector employment, employees may lodge a grievance application if they believe there were deficiencies in the recruitment process that prevented selection on merit. No grievances were lodged during the reporting period.

IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The VEC's performance management and progression system is designed to provide an equitable progression system, where employees progress by "meeting the progression criteria".

Each Victorian Public Service (VPS) grade has a set of value ranges, which are clearly defined by a set of work 'descriptors'. The ranges within a grade are in recognition of the changing nature of work and effort, and the structure allows for jobs and employees to grow within a grade. Progression is not automatic but rather recognises the performance of value-adding activities.

The VEC Performance Management and Progression System is designed to:

- Clearly link the achievement of individual Performance Management and Progression Plans to the success of the overall Corporate Plan.
- Provide tangible guidance to staff on the conduct and values that are important to exhibit when undertaking their duties.
- Facilitate a comprehensive learning and development strategy which supports current and future job and career needs.

Individualised performance plans were developed as at 1 September 2004 for all VEC staff employed for a period of three months or more.

Staff training undertaken during 2004-05 was a result of the learning and development needs identified during the performance planning process.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A total of 142 learning and development days (an average of over 2 days per employee) were completed by staff who participated in programs which included project management, leadership development, team management, time management, negotiation skills, Occupational Health and Safety management, research and analysis, communications, business writing skills, website design, and mapping software.

All staff were given access to computer training to enable them to maintain their level of skill when using updated software. Staff also attended seminars conducted by the Institute of Public Administration Australia.

This is the first time this data has been collected and will be used to chart progress against corporate targets for the next financial year.

CREATING A WORKING ENVIRONMENT THAT IS SAFE, SUPPORTING AND FREE FROM DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR

The VEC's staffing and work practices are determined and guided by:

- the *Public Administration Act 2004*;
- Victorian Public Service (Non-Executive Staff) Agreement 2004; and
- the VEC's human resource policies and procedures; and
- the VPS Code of Conduct.

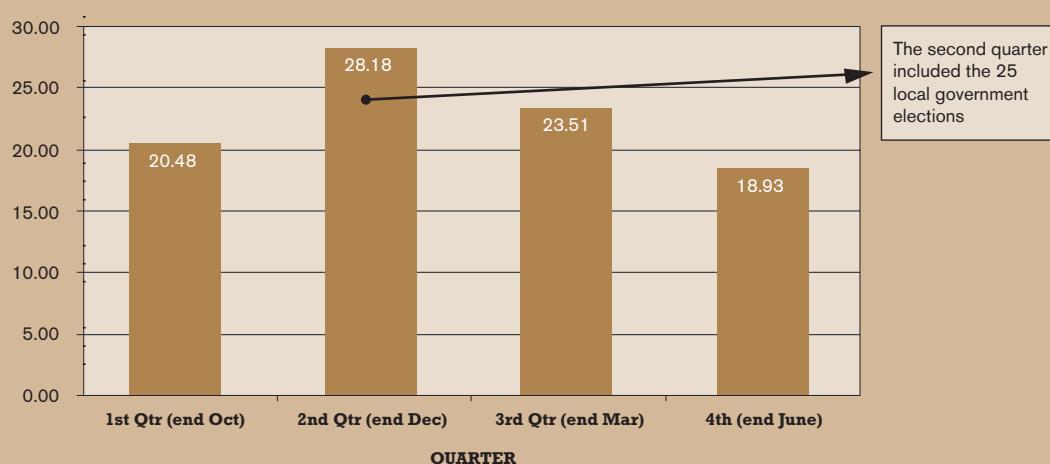
Staff are kept informed of the VEC's organisational priorities and human resource systems through a handbook, its quarterly newsletter, Staff Notes and staff meetings.

PROVIDING FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Staff are able to utilise a variety of options available under the VEC's flexible work arrangements policy. During 2004-05, management and staff used the following options to effectively manage their work, personal and family commitments:

Flexible working hours	Variable daily start and finish times (see figure 37).
Make up time	Time taken off during working hours may be made up after the event.
Telecommuting/ Working from home	Regular performance of work related tasks in a home-based office, using telecommunications technology to communicate with the primary office. Telecommuting is often referred to as working from home but is actually a more structured arrangement.
Seasonal variation to working hours	Working extra hours during peak seasons and less hours during lower workloads (see figure 37).
Part time employment and job sharing	Two or more people share one full-time job, each working part-time on a regular basis.
Parental leave at half pay	Paid maternity, adoption or paternity leave is taken at half pay or a period on full pay with a period of half pay is combined.
Career breaks	Unpaid leave for up to seven years.

Figure 37 - Average flex time accrued by Grades 1-4 in 2004-05



The VEC has a small core ongoing staffing level, and during election time it is often necessary for staff to work hours outside their normal requirements. Staff therefore have the opportunity to accrue flexi time that may be taken as leave in times of lower activity. The VEC finds this is an effective strategy to manage fluctuating work requirements, as well as providing a highly skilled workforce. However the flexi time is carefully managed within a policy framework that places limits on the level of hours that may be accrued, so that staff well-being remains a priority to the organisation. The VEC's management monitor the flexi hours monthly.

VALUING WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

The VEC supports people management, which recognises and values individual differences in the workplace, and is consistent with merit and equity principles. The VEC recognises diversity as individual or group differences. It can relate to either personal characteristics, some of which may be age, gender, disability, sexual preference, race and cultural background, or other factors such as thinking and working styles, education, profession, life experience and skill levels.

MERIT AND EQUITY

The VEC's principles of merit and equity also means that organisational functions are delivered in a fair and equitable manner, where employees and stakeholders are not subject to discrimination or harassment.

The merit principle occurs when decisions in employment such as appointment, promotion and career development are based on the most competent person being selected. It ensures that decisions relating to individuals are made without discrimination or harassment.

The equity principle is about giving people a "fair go". It is applied to remove discrimination and its effects from the workplace and ensure that all individuals are treated fairly, reasonably and their differences are respected.

PERSONAL GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT

The VEC has issue resolution processes covering the maintenance of healthy and productive working relationships. The VEC is committed to ensuring that principles of merit and equity are applied throughout the VEC, and work related complaints are resolved quickly, confidentially and without prejudice.

The VEC did not receive any grievance applications during the reporting period.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

The VEC has an obligation to staff and visitors to provide a safe work environment that meets legislative requirements and is consistent with the duty of care provisions under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985*.

The VEC's work environment strategy has a focus on workplace safety and creating and maintaining a work environment that is safe, inclusive and one which enhances employee well-being.

The VEC has a Consultative Committee comprising representatives from each branch, a management group representative and the Human Resources Coordinator. The Committee provides a forum for representatives to address the needs of both employees and management. Members of the Consultative Committee also act as OH&S representatives.

The role of the Committee is to contribute to the on-going enhancement of the organisational culture and working environment and to actively support the well being of all employees, by:

- providing effective mechanisms for communication flow between management and employees on major people management issues;
- enabling consultations that represents employee and management perspectives;
- providing options for management to consider regarding people management issues; and
- providing measures to improve the quality of working life for all employees.

Initiatives that have been implemented through the Consultative Committee over the last financial year to improve employee well being include:

- **Raise awareness of community issues by inviting staff to participate in activities such as:**
 - The Metropolitan Ambulance Service – The Four Steps for Life community CPR training program.
 - Celebration of International Women's Day.
 - Australia's Biggest Morning Tea to raise funds for the Cancer Council Australia.
 - Attending information seminars conducted by the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), a source of information on public sector policy, innovation and reform.
- **Training:**
 - Members of the OH&S Committee participated in a one-day workshop on OH&S Management.
 - Two of the VEC's First Aid Officers participated in First Aid refresher courses to renew their certificates.
 - Front desk and Voting Services team members participated in a workshop on 'how to deal with difficult behaviour'.
 - All VEC staff were invited to have an influenza immunisation, and 22 staff were immunised.
- **Hazard control and risk management**
 - The conduct of regular workplace inspections resulted in risk assessments and the development of strategies to eliminate or minimize the risks in consultation with staff, managers and the Consultative Committee. Examples include:
 - Assessing and managing the risk of manual handling in the office and the warehouse.
 - Assessing and managing the risk of front desk and voter services staff dealing with difficult behaviour.

All VEC staff continue to have access to the Department of Justice's employee assistance program, including a staff counselling service.

CLAIMS FOR WORKCOVER

The VEC received two claims for WorkCover in 2004-05, resulting in the loss of 13.33 working days.

Figure 38 - Claims received

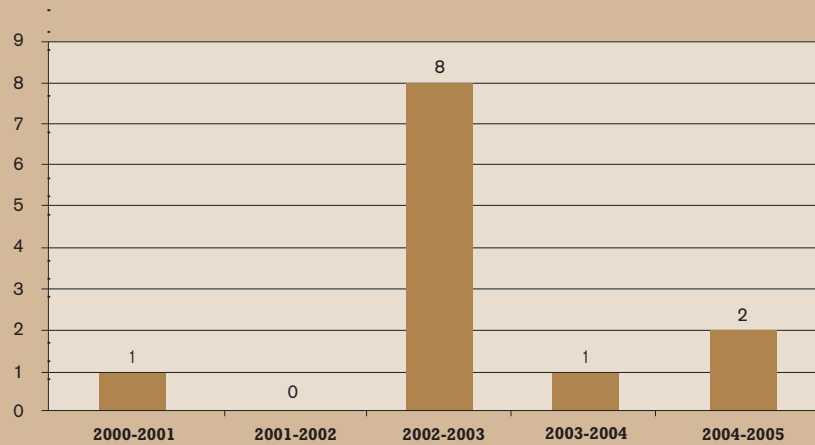
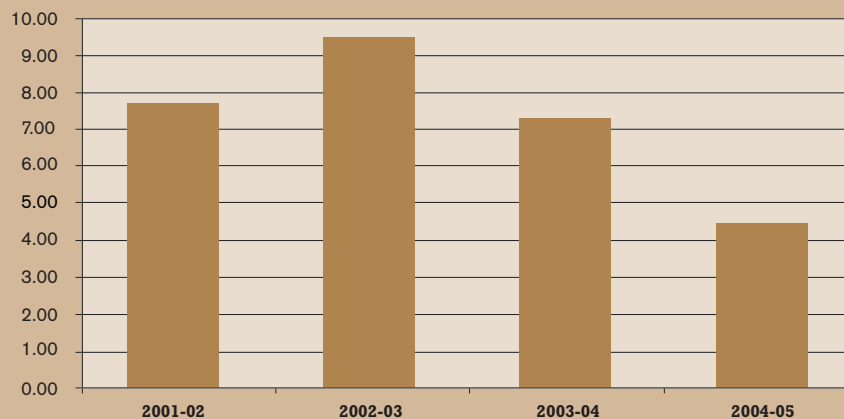


Figure 39 - Sick leave days average per head



EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

During 2004-2005 there were no major industrial relations issues raised within the VEC. No time was lost due to industrial disputes in 2004-2005.

FUTURE DIRECTION

Over the next financial year the VEC will focus on the following staffing and work practice priorities:

IDENTIFYING AND ATTRACTING PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Recruit quality senior election officials in appropriate locations to adequately support the conduct of Parliamentary and local government elections and by-elections for the next three years.

The VEC will continue to align the staff capability to the newly established electoral cycles for State and local government elections and periodic work in conducting electoral representation reviews.

DEVELOPING AND RETAINING A DYNAMIC AND HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

- Develop and implement a strategy to ensure continuity of key skills.
- Implement a performance management and progression system that clearly links the achievement of individual Performance Management and Progression Plans to the success of the overall Corporate Plan.
- Facilitate a comprehensive learning and development strategy which supports current and future job and career needs.

CREATING A WORKING ENVIRONMENT THAT IS SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND FREE FROM DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR

The VEC will continue to improve the workplace health and safety and well-being of VEC staff and members of the public attending election offices and voting centres.

INTERNAL STAFF NEWSLETTERS AND STAFF MEETINGS

During 2004-05, the VEC distributed a quarterly staff internal newsletter, Staff Notes as well as holding regular staff meetings with all staff. The sessions were an opportunity to explain and showcase different areas of the office, and to encourage collaboration amongst different branches.

The staff newsletter provided an opportunity to also keep Senior Election Officials, and the staff at the warehouse informed of activities at head office, and a way to introduce new staff members.

INTRODUCTION OF WASTE WISE POLICY

On 8 June 2005 the VEC was awarded with Waste Wise certification by EcoRecycle Victoria.

Certification as a "Waste Wise" organisation means that the VEC has developed an action plan that targets the reduction of waste to landfill and outlines the organisation's commitment to the principles of reusing and recycling.

The action plan included an initial review of the VEC's practices, and found that over half of the waste going to landfill could have been recycled. During 2004-05 the VEC introduced a new recycling system, which included glass bottles, cans and other plastics, as well as a commitment to a reduction in paper usage through double sided printing.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: ENSURE THE VEC HAS AN ONGOING, EFFECTIVE AND COST-EFFICIENT IT ENVIRONMENT TO CONDUCT ITS BUSINESS

During 2004-05 the VEC provided the necessary IT technology to conduct the 25 local government elections in Victoria. This included the use of the VEC's election management software to manage and administer the elections and the enrolment register in the production of the rolls.

The introduction of legislative amendments in the lead up to the November 2004 local government elections had a significant impact on the VEC election management software. The most significant of these amendments, was the introduction of proportional representation in multi-councillor ward and unsubdivided councils.

The VEC's IT development team was required to undertake a major project to enhance the VEC's computer count application to handle the electronic calculation of proportional representation elections. This was also used to calculate the results of the City of Melbourne elections and will be used at the 2006 State election to conduct the new Upper House election count.

In addition the introduction of a countback, in the case of a vacancy in a unsubdivided council or multi-councillor ward, has required the development of the countback module to electronically calculate the filling of a vacancy for proportional representation elections. Other amendments were required to improve the processing of municipal voter's rolls and general improvements in support of the elections.



The VEC also provided the information technology infrastructure for the election managers' offices, as well as for the computer counts held across Victoria. This involves a complex logistical operation to configure the hardware, as well as providing a help desk throughout the election period.

The VEC continued on a program of improvement projects in support of the local government and State elections. These included a major program to upgrade the building services in the VEC's central computer room, the upgrading of the VEC's networking hardware and replacement of older servers.

Significant work was achieved on the development of a computer IT Strategy throughout the year. This was recommended in the review of the VEC's organisation effectiveness and cost efficiency undertaken in March 2004. Work was conducted in the following areas of the plan:

- Conducted an analysis of the future enhancements required to the election management system and the website;
- A review of the current use of software, including rationalisation strategies and budgets;
- Development of a strategy for the upgrade of hardware and the associated projects and budgets;
- Development of a strategy for the upgrade of the server software including operating systems; and
- Review of how the VEC deliver technology to remote Election Manager offices.

The IT Strategy Plan is due to be released within the first quarter of next year, with all current projects conducted in line with the VEC's Corporate and Business Plans.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The VEC will focus on IT solutions for the November 2005 local government elections including computer counts and improved remote access to the VEC's election management software. Development projects will focus on the enhancements required for the 2006 State election, including the changes as a result of the new Upper House requirements.

REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

The Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) is constituted under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982* to divide Victoria into State parliamentary electorates. The EBC must establish and maintain electorates of approximately equal enrolment (that is, not varying by more than ten per cent from the average for each House of Parliament) for the conduct of parliamentary elections.

The members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission during 2004-05 were:

- His Honour Chief Judge Michael Rozenes QC, Chief Judge of the County Court (Chairman);
- Mr Doug Beecroft, Acting Electoral Commissioner (1 July 2004 to 23 January 2005);
- Mr Steve Tully, Electoral Commissioner (appointed 24 January 2005);
- Mr John Tulloch, Surveyor General.

Dr Paul Thornton-Smith is the secretary to the EBC, and Mr Paul Strickland is the EBC's senior research officer. The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) provides administrative and technical support to the EBC.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REDIVISION

The EBC's major task during 2004-05 was to conduct a redivision of Victoria's Legislative Council electoral boundaries.

The *Constitution (Parliamentary Reform) Act 2003* changed the size and structure of the Legislative Council. Currently, the Legislative Council comprises 44 members, elected from 22 electoral provinces. The Act provided that, from the 2006 State election, the Legislative Council will comprise 40 members, elected from eight electoral regions. The Act also required the EBC to conduct a redivision of Victoria between 1 January and 30 November 2005 to establish the eight electoral regions.

On 21 February 2005 the EBC met to commence the redivision. The EBC decided that it was not necessary to conduct a redivision of the Legislative Assembly electoral districts at this time.

The EBC held a preliminary public hearing on 7 March 2005 to set out the redivision process. At a second public hearing, on 23 March, the EBC took expert evidence from Ms Anita Davids of the Office of Geographic Place Names on place-naming principles, and from Mr Paul Strickland of the VEC on the statistics to be used as the basis for the redivision. The redivision is based on electoral enrolment statistics for each district as at 1 March 2005, and on projected enrolments as at 7 November 2006.

The EBC invited submissions from the public through advertisements in metropolitan and regional newspapers from 10-12 March 2005. Ten written submissions were received by the deadline of 22 April 2005. The EBC invited those who had made written submissions to make an oral submission as well, and heard a total of six oral submissions on 23 and 24 May 2005.

The EBC released proposed boundaries for the electoral regions on 7 July 2005. Following a period for written suggestions and objections about the proposed boundaries, the EBC intends to publish final boundaries in mid-October 2005.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Substantial legislative changes, made in the *Electoral Legislation (Amendment) Act 2004*, have affected the work of the EBC. The amendments, which were largely based on recommendations made by the EBC at previous redivisions, were designed to clarify the conditions for a redivision and to make the redivision process more open and transparent.

The following amendments are in operation for the current Legislative Council redivision:

- Suggestions or objections to the EBC about proposed boundaries have become public documents, available for public inspection. Previously, suggestions or objections were not public documents;
- There is provision for oral submissions about proposed boundaries, to be heard and transcribed at public hearings;
- The EBC instead of the Minister is now responsible for distributing the statement of the final boundaries to Parliament, the Central Plan Office, members of Parliament and the VEC; and
- The EBC instead of the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment is now responsible for publishing a Gazette notice about the statement of the final boundaries.

The following amendments will come into operation from the 2006 State election:

- Before commencing a redivision, the EBC must publish a Gazette notice specifying the commencement date, the condition or trigger requiring the EBC to conduct the redivision, and the quota to be used as the basis of the redivision (The quota is the number determined by dividing the total number of Victorian electors as at the last day of the month preceding the Gazette notice by the number of electoral districts for the Legislative Assembly redivision, and by the number of electoral regions for the Legislative Council redivision.);
- The EBC will be required to conduct a redivision if any of the following conditions apply in the period of 18-24 months before the next scheduled State election:
 - Enrolments for more than 30 per cent of the districts or regions have been more than 10 percent outside the average for two months;
 - Enrolments for more than 25 per cent of the districts or regions have been outside the 10 percent tolerance **and** more than 5 per cent of the districts or regions have been more than 20 percent outside the average for two months;
 - There have been two State elections since the previous redivision;
 - The number of districts or regions has changed.
- Section 5 of the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982*, which includes the above provisions, will become entrenched, requiring a referendum for amendment; and
- References in the Act to "provinces" are replaced by "regions".

THE VEC'S FINANCIAL YEAR IN REVIEW

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: ENSURE THE RECEIPT OF FUNDS, PAYMENTS OF EXPENSES AND MAINTENANCE OF THE VEC'S OPERATIONS WITHIN BUDGET AND ACCORDING TO REGISTRATION.

The annual expenditure of the VEC fluctuates due to the cyclical nature of conducting State elections, council elections, by-elections, electoral representation reviews and commercial elections.

The VEC's revenue and expenditure increased in 2004-05 due to the VEC conducting 25 local government elections and 30 electoral representation reviews. This will increase further in 2005-06 with the remaining 54 local government elections occurring, and increase further still in 2006-07 with the VEC conducting the State election. This will then reduce dramatically in 2007-08, when there will be no major electoral activity and then fluctuate with local government and State elections being held every four years.

A COMPARISON OF PRIOR YEARS' SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ILLUSTRATES THE FLUCTUATION.

Summary of Financial Performance	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	\$000'	\$000'	\$000'	\$000'	\$000'
	(Includes council elections)	(Includes council elections)	(Includes State and council elections)	(Includes council elections)	(Includes council elections)
Revenue from Ordinary Activity*					
Special Appropriations	14,184	17,841	47,934	15,136	16,995
Other	35	93	366	6	0
Total Revenue from Ordinary Activities	14,219	17,934	48,300	15,142	16,995
Previously unrecognised non-current assets				5121	
Total Revenue	14,219	17,934	53,421	15,142	16,995
Total Expenditure from Ordinary Activities	14,057	21,524	44,737	13,844	28,241
Net Profit / (Loss)	162	(3,590)	8,684	1,298	(11,246)

The VEC's financial performance and position is prepared in accordance with the State Government reporting requirements, which reports revenue and receivables from charges for local government and commercial elections as being excluded from the VEC main financial statements, and instead included as a note to the accounts (refer note 22).

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

The VEC financial reports only recognise annual Government Special Appropriation to fund operating expenses. This revenue has increased slightly due to the conduct of 25 local government elections in November 2004.

Other revenue, such as fees collected for conducting local government and commercial elections, by-elections and electoral representation reviews is recognised as administered revenue. These fees are collected and controlled by the VEC, but are forwarded to the Department of Treasury and Finance as consolidated revenue and are not included in the VEC's Statement of Financial Performance. They are detailed in note 22 of the financial statements.

The VEC's expenditure has also increased from \$13.8m to a total of \$28.2m. The expenditure includes \$18.7m for ordinary activities, and \$9.4m being a correction of fundamental error in recording prior years contributed capital as ordinary activity revenue (further details are in note 4 of the financial notes).

Major items of expenditure to increase during the reporting period include:

- Employee costs increased by \$2.4m, as the VEC employed 2,238 casuals to assist with the conduct of the 2004 local government elections
- Supplies and services increased by \$2.3m. This increase is a result of the additional cost associated with additional premises, information technology and other resources necessary for the conduct of the council elections.

The VEC's net result for the reporting period was a loss of \$11.2m.

ASSETS

The current assets of the VEC include minor receivables, prepayments of expenditure, and inventory. Sufficient inventory is kept to enable minor elections to occur, with the balance substantially increasing during a major election. The VEC's inventory has been kept high due to the large number of municipal elections to be held in November 2005.

The non-current assets of the VEC include plant and equipment and computer software development for the electoral rolls and conducting of elections. The decrease in non-current assets is due to the annual depreciation being greater than spending on new assets.

LIABILITIES

Except for the provisions for employee annual leave and long service leave, the current and non-current liabilities of the VEC are small. They include payables for goods and services, motor vehicle finance leases, and bank balance.

The increase in liabilities is mainly in employee provisions due to the increase in accrued annual leave for fixed term employees, employed to assist with the council elections.

EQUITY

The equity of the VEC is split into contributed capital and accumulated surplus/(loss). The contributed capital represents the amount of funding contributed by the Government of Victoria for the purchase and development of VEC non current assets. The accumulated surplus/(loss) represents the accumulated result from ordinary activities of the VEC. An adjustment of \$9.4m has been made to correctly reflect prior years contributed capital, which was recognised as ordinary activity revenue.

04-05

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
For the year ended 30 June 2005

	Notes	2005	2004
		\$'000	\$'000
Revenue from Ordinary Activity			
Special appropriations	1d,2	16,995	15,136
Proceeds from sale of assets		-	6
Total Revenues		<u>16,995</u>	<u>15,142</u>
Expenses from Ordinary Activities			
Employee benefits	1o,3	6,619	4,148
Supplies and services	3	9,409	7,072
Depreciation and amortisation	1h,3	2,004	1,800
Written down value of assets disposed		-	27
Other expenses from ordinary activities	3	751	797
Borrowing costs	3	2	-
Correction of fundamental error	1j,4	9,456	-
Total Expenses		<u>28,241</u>	<u>13,844</u>
Result from Ordinary Activities	14(b)	<u>(11,246)</u>	<u>1,298</u>
Total changes in equity other than those resulting from transactions with the Victorian State Government in its capacity as owner on behalf of the Crown		<u>(11,246)</u>	<u>1,298</u>

The above statement of financial performance should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 30 June 2005

	Notes	2005 \$'000	2004 \$'000
Current assets			
Cash assets	5,15	1	2
Bonds	6,15	-	8
Receivables	15	293	45
Prepayments		307	178
Inventories	1f,7	1,018	934
Total current assets		1,619	1,167
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	2,011	2,211
Intangible assets	9	9,910	11,052
Total non-current assets		11,921	13,263
Total assets		13,540	14,430
Current liabilities			
Bank overdraft	10,15	51	71
Payables	11,15	388	280
Provisions	13	474	372
Interest bearing liabilities	1j,12	9	3
Total current liabilities		922	726
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	13	488	465
Interest bearing liabilities	12	51	26
Total non-current liabilities		539	491
Total liabilities		1,461	1,217
Net assets		12,079	13,213
Equity			
Contributed Capital	1q,14	18,917	8,805
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	14	(6,838)	4,408
Total equity		12,079	13,213

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the year ended 30 June 2005

	Notes	2005	2004
		\$'000	\$'000
Cash flows in operating activities			
<i>Receipts:</i>			
Receipts from Government		16,995	15,136
User charges, bonds, fines and fees		-	32
Goods and services tax recovered from the ATO		1,054	927
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		18,049	16,095
 <i>Payments:</i>			
Capital asset charge		(144)	-
Employee costs		(6,494)	(4,511)
Supplies, services and other expenses		(11,396)	(11,303)
Trust fund payments		-	(100)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		(18,034)	(15,914)
 Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities	 24	<hr/>	<hr/>
		15	181
 Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for purchase of non-current assets		(656)	(1,445)
Proceeds received from sale of non-current assets		-	6
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash inflow / (outflow) in investing activities		(656)	(1,439)
 Cash flows from financing activities			
Proceeds from capital contribution by State Government		656	1,445
Repayment of finance leases		5	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from financing activities		661	1,445
 Net increase / (decrease) in cash held			
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		(71)	(58)
Adjustment for administered trust funds		-	(200)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash at the end of the financial year	10	(51)	(71)

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30 June 2005

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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This general purpose financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, Australian Accounting Standards, Statements of Accounting Concepts and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, and Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views.

It is prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention. The accounting policies adopted, and the classification and presentation of items, are consistent with those of the previous year, except where a change is required to comply with an Australian Accounting Standard or Urgent Issues Group Consensus View, or an alternative accounting policy permitted by an Australian accounting standard is adopted to improve the relevance and reliability of the financial report. Where practicable, comparative amounts are presented and classified on a basis consistent with the current year.

For annual reporting periods ended on or ending after 30 June 2005, AASB 1047 *Disclosing the Impacts of Adopting Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (A-IFRS)* requires disclosure of any known or reliably estimable information about the impacts on the financial report had it been prepared using the A-IFRS or if the impacts are not known or reliably estimable, a statement to that effect. Refer to Note 27 for further information.

(a) Reporting entity

The financial statements include all the controlled activities of the Victorian Electoral Commission

Administered resources

The Commission administers but does not control certain resources on behalf of the Victorian Government. It is accountable for the transactions involving those administered resources, but does not have the discretion to deploy the resources for achievement of the Commission's objectives. For these resources, the Commission acts only on behalf of the Victorian Government. Administered resources are accounted for using the accrual basis of accounting.

Transactions and balances relating to these administered resources are not recognised as Commission revenues, expenses, assets or liabilities within the body of the financial statements, but are disclosed in the applicable output schedules (see note 22).

Other administered activities on behalf of parties external to the Victorian Government

The Commission has responsibility for transactions and balances relating to administered funds on behalf of third parties external to the Victorian Government. Revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities administered on behalf of third parties are not recognised in these financial statements as they are administered on a fiduciary and custodial basis, and therefore not controlled by the Commission.

Non-current assets

All non-current assets controlled by the Commission are reported in the statement of financial position. Non-current assets which the Commission administers on behalf of the Victorian Government are reported as administered resources.

Trust funds

The Commission has received monies in a trustee capacity for various trusts as set out in note 22.

(b) Objectives and funding

The Commission's objective is to provide election services to State and local governments, as well as conducting various commercial elections.

The Commission is funded by cash-based special appropriations for the provision of outputs. It provides on a fee for service basis election services for local government and commercial elections.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(c) Acquisitions of assets

The cost method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets controlled by the Commission. Cost is measured as the fair value of the assets given up or liabilities assumed at the date of acquisition plus incidental costs directly attributable to the acquisition.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised at their fair value at the date of acquisition.

(d) Revenue recognition

All revenue received by the Commission is generally required to be paid into the Consolidated Fund.

Revenue becomes controlled by the Commission when it is appropriated from the Consolidated Fund by the Victorian Parliament and applied to the purposes defined under the relevant appropriations act.

Amounts disclosed as revenue are, where applicable, net of returns, allowances and duties and taxes.

User charges, fines and fees

The Commission does not have control over assets arising from charges, fines and fees, and collects these amounts on behalf of the Crown. Accordingly, the amounts are disclosed as revenues in the schedule of administered revenues and expenses (see note 22).

(e) Receivables

The Commission has responsibility for the issue and collection of debts for Local government and commercial elections. This is administered on behalf of the Victorian Government, and are not recognised in these financial statements, but are disclosed in the applicable output schedules (see note 22).

Collectability of debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. A provision for doubtful debts is raised when some doubt as to collection exists.

(f) Inventories

The basis of valuation for inventory is at lower of cost and net realisable value. Cost is based on first-in, first-out principle and includes expenditure incurred in acquiring the inventories and bringing them to their existing condition. Net realisable value is determined on the basis of the Commission's normal usage pattern.

(g) Revaluations of non-current assets

The Commission controls plant and equipment, furniture and fittings, motor vehicles, computer development and leasehold improvements which are measured at cost, and are not subject to revaluation.

(h) Depreciation of property, plant and equipment

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis to write off the net cost of each item over its expected useful life to the Commission. Estimates of remaining useful lives for all assets are reviewed at least annually. The expected useful lives and depreciation rates for plant and equipment have remained unchanged from the previous year. For the financial years ended 30 June 2005 and 30 June 2004, the expected useful lives for the following assets are:

Leased motor vehicles	3 years
Plant & equipment	2 to 10 years
Furniture & fittings	5 to 14 years
Computer equipment	2 to 3 years

Where items of plant and equipment have separately identifiable components which are subject to regular replacement, those components are assigned useful lives distinct from the item of plant and equipment to which they relate.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(i) Leasehold improvements

The cost of improvements to or on leasehold properties is amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement to the Commission, whichever is the shorter. Leasehold improvements held at the reporting date are being amortised over 8 years. (2004: 8 years)

(j) Leased non-current assets

A distinction is made between finance leases which effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to ownership of the leased non-current assets, and operating leases under which the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits.

Finance leases are capitalised. A non current lease asset and liability are established at the present value of minimum lease payments using the interest rate implicit in the lease. Lease payments are allocated between the principal component of the lease liability and the interest expense.

The lease asset is amortised on a straight line basis over the term of the lease, or where it is likely that the Commission will obtain ownership of the asset, the expected useful life of the asset to the Commission. Motor vehicles held by the Commission under finance leases are being amortised over a period of 3 years.

Lease payments are allocated between interest and reduction of the liability.

Operating lease payments are charged to the statement of financial performance in the periods in which they are incurred, as this represents the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets.

(k) Intangible assets

Costs associated with the development of computer software relating to the Election Management and Roll Management System totalling \$0.5 million or more are capitalised and amortised on a straight line basis over a twelve year (three State election periods) being the period in which the related benefits are expected to be realised. Costs associated with the acquisition or development of computer software which are less than \$0.5 million are charged as expenses in the period in which they are incurred.

(l) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Commission prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

(m) Maintenance and repairs

Plant of the Commission is required to be overhauled on a regular basis. This is managed as part of an ongoing major cyclical maintenance program. The costs of this maintenance are charged as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a component of an asset, in which case the costs are capitalised and depreciated in accordance with note 1(h). Other routine operating maintenance, repair costs and minor renewals are also charged as expenses as incurred.

(n) Goods and services tax systems changes

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable, in which case it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or part of an item of expense. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is included as part of receivables or payables in the statement of financial position. The GST component of a receipt or payment is recognised on a gross basis in the statement of cash flows in accordance with Accounting Standard AAS 28 *Statement of Cash Flows*.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(o) Employee benefits

(i) Wages and salaries, annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and accumulating sick leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date and are measured as the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. Liabilities for non-accumulating sick leave are recognised when the leave is taken and measured at the rates paid or payable.

(ii) Long service leave

The liability for long service leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date is recognised as a provision for employee benefits and is measured in accordance with (i) above. The liability for long service leave expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date is recognised as a provision for employee benefits and measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using interest rates on national Government guaranteed securities with terms to maturity that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

(iii) Superannuation

The amount charged to the statement of financial performance in respect of superannuation represents the contributions made or payable by the Commission to the superannuation fund in respect of current Commission staff.

(iv) Employee benefit on-costs

Employee benefit on-costs, including payroll tax, are recognised and included in employee benefit liabilities and costs when the employee benefits to which they relate are recognised as liabilities.

(p) Capital asset charge

The capital asset charge is imposed by the Department of Treasury and Finance and represents the opportunity cost of capital invested in the non-current physical assets used in the provision of outputs. The charge is calculated on the carrying amount of non-current physical assets (excluding Whole of Government Motor Vehicle finance leases, and intangible assets) and is recognised as an expense in the statement of financial performance.

(q) Contributed capital

Consistent with UIG Abstract 38 *Contributions by Owners Made to Wholly-Owned Public Sector Entities*, and Financial Reporting Direction 2 "Contributed Capital", contributed capital and appropriations for additions to net assets have been designated as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions or distributions have also been designated as contributed capital.

(r) Rounding of amounts

Amounts in the financial report have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
2. REVENUE		
Special appropriations	16,995	15,136
	16,995	15,136
3. RESULT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		
Expenses		
Employee benefits		
Salary and wages	5,518	3,585
Departure packages	145	258
Superannuation	474	320
Annual leave and long service leave expense	125	(253)
Other oncosts (fringe benefits tax, payroll tax and workcover levy)	357	238
Total employee benefits	6,619	4,148
Depreciation		
Furniture and fittings	47	13
Plant and equipment	785	666
Total depreciation	832	679
Amortisation		
Leasehold improvements	26	1
Plant and equipment under finance lease	4	1
Software	1,142	1,119
Total amortisation	1,172	1,121
Total depreciation and amortisation	2,004	1,800
Supplies and Services		
Computer requisites	336	519
Data processing - external	1,737	1,703
Other supplies and services	4,893	2,681
Professional services	2,101	1,883
Telephones, facsimile	342	286
	9,409	7,072
Borrowing costs		
Interest and finance charges paid / payable	2	-
Other expenses		
Rental expense relating to operating leases	736	783
Auditor's remuneration - Victorian Auditor-General's Office	15	14
	751	797

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

4. CORRECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL ERROR

An adjustment has been made in the Statement of Financial Performance to reflect appropriations which were previously recognised as income instead of capital contribution. The error had the affect of over-stating revenue from ordinary activity and retained earnings in 2002 and 2003 as listed below.

	\$'000
Year ended 30 June 2002	232
Year ended 30 June 2003	9,224
	9,456

The affect of correcting the above error in 2004 / 2005 financial year was to increase the deficit by \$9,456 million. The restated financial information is presented below to show the position in 2002 and 2003 financial reports had the errors not been made.

	2003 \$'000 (Restated)	2002 \$'000 (Restated)
Revenue from Ordinary Activity		
Special appropriations	31,487	15,158
Municipal grant revenue	5,956	2,099
Other revenue	1,633	445
Total Revenues from Ordinary Activities	39,076	17,702
Recognition of previously unrecognised non-current assets	5,121	-
Total Revenue	44,197	-
Expenses from Ordinary Activity		
Employee benefits	13,523	4,102
Supplies and services	18,664	13,379
Depreciation and amortisation	1,233	862
Municipal elections	6,963	2,107
Written down value of assets disposed	3,484	720
Other expenses from ordinary activities	870	354
Total Expenses	44,737	21,524
Result from Ordinary Activities	(540)	(3,822)
Restatement of accumulated surplus (deficit)		
Previously reported accumulated surplus/(deficit) at the end of the previous financial year	5,094	(3,590)
Correction of fundamental error - 2002	(232)	(232)
Correction of fundamental error - 2003	(9,224)	-
Restated accumulated surplus at the end of the financial year	(4,362)	(3,822)
Restatement of contributed capital		
Balance at the end of the financial year as previously reported	7,360	6,356
Correction of fundamental error - 2002	232	232
Correction of fundamental error - 2003	9,224	-
Restated balance at the end of the financial year	16,816	6,588

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
5. CASH ASSETS		
Cash at bank and on hand	1	2
	1	2

Cash at Bank

Due to the State of Victoria's government funding arrangements, government departments generally do not hold a large cash reserve in their bank accounts. Cash received by the Commission from the generation of revenue is generally paid into the State's bank account, known as the Public Account. Similarly, any Commission expenditure, including those in the form of cheques drawn by the Commission for the payment of goods and services to its suppliers and creditors are made via the Public Account. The process is such that, the Public Account would remit to the Commission the cash required for the amount drawn on the cheques. This remittance by the Public Account occurs upon the presentation of the cheques by the Commission's suppliers or creditors.

The above funding arrangements often result in the Commission having a notional shortfall in cash at bank required for payment of unrepresented cheques at the reporting date.

At 30 June 2005, cash at bank include the amount of a notional shortfall for the payment of unrepresented cheques of \$51,430 (2004 - \$71,000)

6. BONDS

Rent Bonds for Returning Officers Offices	-	8
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7. INVENTORIES

Supplies and consumables - at cost	1,018	934
Aggregate carrying amount of inventories		
Current	1,018	934
Non-current	-	-
	1,018	934

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
8. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Plant & equipment		
At Cost	4,452	3,793
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,758)	(2,021)
	<u>1,694</u>	<u>1,772</u>
Plant and equipment under finance lease (at cost)	63	29
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(4)	(1)
	<u>59</u>	<u>28</u>
Total plant and equipment	<u>1,753</u>	<u>1,800</u>
Furniture & fittings		
At Cost	201	142
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(136)	(89)
	<u>65</u>	<u>53</u>
Leasehold Improvements		
Leasehold Improvements - at cost	224	34
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(31)	(4)
	<u>193</u>	<u>30</u>
Work in Progress		
Leasehold Improvements	-	328
	<u>-</u>	<u>328</u>
Total buildings	<u>193</u>	<u>358</u>
Total property, plant and equipment	<u>2,011</u>	<u>2,211</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

8. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (continued)

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of each class of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current and previous financial year are set out below.

	Plant & equipment \$'000	Furniture & fittings \$'000	Leasehold improve- ments \$'000	Work in Progress \$'000	Plant & equipment under finance lease \$'000	Total \$'000
2005						
Carrying amount at start of year	1,772	53	30	328	28	2,211
Additions	629	13	3	-	35	680
Transfers	78	46	186	(310)	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	(18)	-	(18)
Depreciation/amortisation expense (note 3)	(785)	(47)	(26)	-	(4)	(862)
Carrying amount at end of year	1,694	65	193	-	59	2,011
2004						
Carrying amount at start of year	1,617	64	30	-	-	1,711
Additions	848	2	1	328	29	1,208
Disposals	(27)	-	-	-	-	(27)
	(666)	(13)	(1)	-	(1)	(681)
Carrying amount at end of year	1,772	53	30	328	28	2,211

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Notes	2005 \$'000	2004 \$'000
9. INTANGIBLE ASSETS			
Software - at cost		13,684	13,684
Less: Accumulated amortisation		(3,774)	(2,632)
		<u>9,910</u>	<u>11,052</u>
10. BANK OVERDRAFT			
Bank - Operating Account		51	71
		<u>51</u>	<u>71</u>
11. PAYABLES			
Employee benefits		230	91
Supplies and services		158	-
Other		-	189
		<u>388</u>	<u>280</u>
12. INTEREST BEARING LIABILITIES			
Current			
Lease liabilities	20 (a iii)	9	3
		<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>
Non-current			
Lease liabilities	20 (a iii)	51	26
		<u>51</u>	<u>26</u>
Aggregate carrying amount of interest bearing liabilities			
Current		9	3
Non-current		51	26
		<u>60</u>	<u>29</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Notes	2005 \$'000	2004 \$'000
13. PROVISIONS			
Current			
Employee benefits	21	474	372
		474	372
Non-current			
Employee benefits	21	488	465
		488	465
Aggregate carrying amount of provisions			
Current		474	372
Non-current		488	465
		962	837
14. EQUITY AND MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY			
(a) Contributed Capital			
Balance 1 July		8,805	7,360
Capital contribution during the year by Victorian State Government		656	1,445
Correction of fundamental errors		9,456	-
		18,917	8,805
(b) Accumulated Surplus / (Deficit)			
Accumulated surplus at the beginning of the financial year		4,408	5,094
Adjustment for Administered Items		-	(1,984)
Net result for the reporting period		(11,246)	1,298
		(6,838)	4,408
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit) at the end of the financial year			
		12,079	13,213
Total Equity at the end of the financial year			

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

15. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The following methods and assumptions are used to determine the net fair values of financial assets and liabilities:

Cash: The carrying amount approximates fair value because of their short-term to maturity.

Receivables and Payables: The carrying amount approximates fair value because of their short-term to maturity.

(a) Credit Risk Exposure

The Commission's credit risk on financial assets which have been recognised on the statement of financial position is generally the carrying amount, net of any provisions for doubtful debts. The Commissions' credit risk in relation to receivables is minimised by regular application of commercial credit practices (and by undertaking transactions with many customers within specified industries).

Credit risk in receivables is managed by applying commercial payment terms with all customers, regular review of doubtful debts provisions, timely recognition and write-off of bad debts.

(b) Interest Rate Risk

The Commission's exposure to interest rate risk for financial assets and liabilities, both recognised and unrecognised at balance date are:

Financial Instruments	Weighted average effective interest rate %	Floating interest rate \$'000	1 year or less \$'000	Over 1 to 5 years \$'000	More than 5 years \$'000	Non-interest bearing \$'000	Total \$'000
2005							
Financial Assets							
Cash	n/a	-	-	-	-	1	1
Receivables	n/a	-	-	-	-	293	293
Total	-	-	-	-	-	294	294
Financial Liabilities							
Bank overdraft	-	-	-	-	-	51	51
Accounts Payable	n/a	-	-	-	-	388	388
Finance Lease	6.3	-	12	53	-	-	65
Total	-	-	12	53	-	439	504
2004							
Financial Assets							
Cash	n/a	-	-	-	-	2	2
Bonds	n/a	-	-	-	-	8	8
Receivables	n/a	-	-	-	-	45	45
Total	-	-	-	-	-	55	55
Financial Liabilities							
Bank	-	-	-	-	-	71	71
Accounts Payable	n/a	-	-	-	-	280	280
Finance Lease	6.5	-	3	26	-	-	29
Total	-	-	3	26	-	351	380

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

15. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)

(c) Net Fair Values

The net fair value of cash and cash equivalents and non interest bearing monetary financial assets and financial liabilities of the Commission approximates their carrying amounts. The aggregate net fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities, both recognised and unrecognised at balance date are:

Financial Instruments	2005		2004	
	Carrying Amount \$'000	Net Fair Value \$'000	Carrying Amount \$'000	Net Fair Value \$'000
On-balance sheet				
Financial Assets				
Cash	1	1	2	2
Bonds	-	-	8	8
Receivables	293	293	45	45
Total	294	294	55	55
Financial Liabilities				
Bank	51	51	71	71
Accounts Payable	388	388	280	280
Finance Lease	65	65	29	29
Total	504	504	380	380
Off-balance sheet				
Financial Assets				
Cash	311	311	51	51
Receivables	957	957	298	298
Total	1,268	1,268	349	349
Financial Liabilities				
Candidates Deposits	1	1	3	3
Accounts Payable	186	186	-	-
Total	187	187	3	3

Net fair value is exclusive of costs which would be incurred on realisation of an asset, and inclusive of costs which would be incurred on settlement of a liability.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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16. RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Minister for Finance under the Financial Management Act 1994, the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names

The persons who held the positions of Accountable Officers in the Commission are as follows:

Acting Electoral Commissioner	Mr Doug Beecroft	1 July 2004 to 23 January 2005
Electoral Commissioner	Mr Steven Tully	24 January 2005 to 30 June 2005

Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officers in connection with the management of the Commission during the reporting period was in the range:

\$140,000 - \$149,000
 \$200,000 - \$209,000 (\$140,000 - \$149,000 in 2004)

17. REMUNERATION OF EXECUTIVES

The number of executive officers, other than Responsible Persons, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the first two columns in the table below in the relevant income bands. The base remuneration of executive officers is shown in the third and fourth columns. Base remuneration is exclusive of bonus payments, long-service leave payments, redundancy payments and retirement benefits.

Total remuneration received, or due and receivable, (including salary, superannuation contributions and other benefits) by Executives from the Victorian Electoral Commission for the financial year ended 30 June 2005

	Total Remuneration		Base Remuneration	
	2005	2004	2005	2004
\$ 50,000 to \$ 59,000	1	-	2	-
\$100,000 to \$109,999	-	1	-	1
\$110,000 to \$119,999	-	1	-	1
\$120,000 to \$129,999	-	-	-	-
\$170,000 to \$179,999	1	-	-	-
Total numbers	2	2	2	2
Total amount	232	220	246	220

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18. REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

Audit fees paid or payable to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office for audit of the Commission's financial report:

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
Paid as at 30 June 2005	-	5
Payable as at 30 June 2005	15	9
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	15	14

19. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

Details and estimates of contingent liabilities are as follows:

<hr/>	<hr/>
-	-
<hr/>	<hr/>

A contingent liability exists for legal action in relation to Electoral Act decisions and offences. However, as at 30 June 2005, there is no reliable estimate of the liability. There were no contingent assets as at 30 June 2005.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
20. COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE		
a.i) Lease commitments		
Commitments in relation to leases contracted for at the reporting date but not recognised as liabilities, payable:		
Within one year	781	780
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	3,323	2,399
Later than 5 years	441	946
	<u>4,545</u>	<u>4,125</u>
Representing:		
Non cancellable property leases	4,545	4,125
	<u>4,545</u>	<u>4,125</u>
a.ii) Operating leases		
Commitments for minimum lease payments in relation to non-cancellable operating leases are payable as follows:		
Within one year	54	382
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	-	227
Later than 5 years	-	-
	<u>54</u>	<u>609</u>
Commitments not recognised in the financial statements	54	609
	<u>54</u>	<u>609</u>
The Commission leases certain plant and equipment and office equipment under operating leases. Leases of plant and equipment generally provide the Commission with a right of renewal at which time all terms are renegotiated.		
a.iii) Finance leases		
Commitments in relation to finance leases are payable as follows:		
Within one year	12	4
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	53	29
Later than 5 years	-	-
Minimum lease payments	<u>65</u>	<u>33</u>
Less: Future finance charges	5	4
Recognised as a liability	<u>60</u>	<u>29</u>
Representing lease liabilities		
Current	9	3
Non-current	51	26
	<u>60</u>	<u>29</u>
The finance leases relate to motor vehicles leased through the Department of Justice.		
(b) Expenditure commitments		
Expenditure commitments contracted for:		
Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure	8,788	6,020
Information Technology Services	-	107
	<u>8,788</u>	<u>6,127</u>
Payable:		
Not later than one year	1,765	2,035
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	7,023	4,092
	<u>8,788</u>	<u>6,127</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
21. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
Provision for employee benefits		
Current		
Annual leave	420	320
Long service leave	54	52
	474	372
Non-current		
Long service leave	488	465
	488	465
	962	837
Aggregate employee benefit liability		
	962	837
Employee numbers		
Average number of employees during the financial year	No. 72	No. 60
The following assumptions were adopted in measuring present values:		
(a) Long service leave	%	%
Weighted average rates of increase in annual employee entitlements to settlement of the liabilities	4.75	4.5
Weighted average discount rates	5.1	5.6

Government Employees' Superannuation Fund

No liability is recognised in the statement of financial position for the Commission's share of the State's unfunded superannuation liability. The State's unfunded superannuation liability has been reflected in the financial statements of the Department of Treasury and Finance.

However, superannuation contributions for the reporting period are included as part of salaries and associated costs in the statement of financial performance.

The name and details of the major employees superannuation funds and contributions made by the Commission are as follows:

Fund	Contribution for the year	Contribution for the year	Contribution Outstanding at Year end	Contribution Outstanding at Year End
	2005	2004	2005	2004
State Superannuation Schemes (<i>Defined benefit scheme</i>)	96	111	-	-
Vic Super (<i>Accumulation scheme</i>)	332	205	-	6
Other Complying Funds	44	4	-	-

The bases for contribution are determined by the various schemes.

All employees of the Commission are entitled to benefits on retirement, disability or death from the Government Employees' Superannuation Fund. This Fund provides defined lump sum benefits based on years of service and the final average salary.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

22. ADMINISTERED ITEMS

In addition to the specific Commission operations which are included in the statement of financial position, statement of financial performance and statement of cash flows, the Commission administers or manages activities on behalf of the State and Councils. The transactions relating to these activities are reported as administered items in this note.

Administered transactions give rise to revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities and are determined on an accrual basis.

Administered revenues include fees and fines and candidate deposits.

Administered liabilities include expenses incurred but yet to be paid.

Administered assets include revenues earned but yet to be collected.

	2005	2004	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	State		Councils	
Administered revenue				
Fees	5,655	1,559	-	-
Fines	6	-	1,398	-
Candidates deposits	-	-	218	7
Total	<u>5,661</u>	<u>1,559</u>	<u>1,616</u>	<u>7</u>
Administered expenses				
Fees	5,206	3,198	-	-
Fines	-	-	1,117	-
Candidates deposits	-	-	220	5
Total	<u>5,206</u>	<u>3,198</u>	<u>1,337</u>	<u>5</u>
Revenue less expenses	<u>455</u>	<u>(1,639)</u>	<u>279</u>	<u>2</u>
Administered assets				
Bank	29	48	282	3
Receivables	957	298	-	-
Total	<u>986</u>	<u>346</u>	<u>282</u>	<u>3</u>
Administered liabilities				
Candidates deposits	-	-	1	3
Compulsory voting fines	-	-	281	-
Payables	186	-	-	-
Total	<u>186</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>282</u>	<u>3</u>

23. EVENTS OCCURRING AFTER THE REPORTING DATE

To the best of the Commissions' knowledge, there have been no events occurring after the reporting date which relate to or may have a material financial effect on the Commission's statements.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2005	2004
	\$'000	\$'000
24. RECONCILIATION OF NET RESULTS FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net result for the reporting period	(11,246)	1,298
Depreciation and amortisation	2,004	1,800
(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	1	21
Correction of fundamental error	9,456	-
Adjustment to controlled receivables	19	-
Change in operating assets and liabilities		
Decrease (increase) in receivables	(248)	2
Decrease (increase) in inventories	(84)	(13)
Decrease (increase) in other operating assets	(120)	27
Increase (Decrease) in trade creditors	108	(2,702)
Increase (Decrease) in other provisions	125	(252)
	11,261	(1,117)
Net cash inflow (outflow) from operating activities	15	181

25. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related-party transactions for the financial year ended 30 June 2005 other than those already disclosed in Note 16, (2004 : \$ Nil)

26. RESOURCES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE

The Commission did not receive (utilise) any free-of-charge resources in the 2004/05 financial year, (2003/04 : \$ Nil).

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. IMPACTS OF ADOPTING AUSTRALIAN EQUIVALENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS

Following the adoption of Australian equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (A-IFRS), the Commission will report for the first time in compliance with A-IFRS when results for the financial year ended 30 June 2006 are released.

It should be noted that under A-IFRS, there are requirements that apply specifically to not-for-profit entities that are not consistent with IFRS requirements. The Commission is established to achieve the objectives of government in providing services free of charge or at prices significantly below their cost of production for the collective consumption by the community, which is incompatible with generating profit as a principal objective. Consequently, where appropriate, the Commission applies those paragraphs in accounting standards applicable to not-for-profit entities.

An A-IFRS compliant financial report will comprise a new statement of changes in equity in addition to the three existing financial statements, which will be renamed. The Statement of Financial Performance will be renamed as the Operating Statement, the Statement of Financial Position will revert to its previous title as the Balance Sheet and the Statement of Cash Flows will be simplified as the Cash Flow Statement. However, for the purpose of disclosing the impact of adopting A-IFRS in the 2004-05 financial report, which is prepared under existing accounting standards, existing titles and terminologies have been retained.

With certain exceptions, an entity that has adopted A-IFRS must record transactions that are reported in the financial report as though A-IFRS had always applied. This requirement also extends to any comparative information included within the financial report. Most accounting policy adjustments to apply A-IFRS retrospectively will be made against accumulated funds at the 1 July 2004 opening balance sheet date for the comparative period. The exceptions include deferral until 1 July 2005 of the application and adjustments for:

- AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Disclosure and Presentation;
- AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement;
- AASB 4 Insurance Contracts;
- AASB 1023 General Insurance Contracts (revised July 2004); and
- AASB 1038 Life Insurance Contracts (revised July 2004)

The comparative information for transactions affected by these standards will be accounted for in accordance with existing accounting standards.

The Commission has taken the following steps in managing the transition to A-IFRS and has achieved the following scheduled milestones:

- Established a steering committee to oversee the transition to and implementation of the A-IFRS;
- Established an A-IFRS project team to review the new accounting standards to identify key issues and the likely impacts resulting from the adoption of A-IFRS and any relevant Financial Reporting Directions as issued by the Minister for Finance;
- Participated in an education and training process to raise awareness of the changes in reporting requirements and the processes to be undertaken; and
- Initiated reconfiguration and testing of user systems and processes to meet new requirements.

This financial report has been prepared in accordance with current Australian accounting standards and other financial reporting requirements (Australian GAAP). A number of differences between Australian GAAP and A-IFRS have been identified as potentially having a material impact on the Commission's financial position and financial performance following the adoption of A-IFRS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. IMPACTS OF ADOPTING AUSTRALIAN EQUIVALENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS (continued)

The following tables outline the estimated significant impacts on the financial position of the Commission as at 30 June 2005 and the likely impact on the current year result had the financial statements been prepared using A-IFRS.

The estimates disclosed below are the Commission's best estimates of the significant quantitative impact of the changes as at the date of preparing the 30 June 2005 financial report. The actual effects of transition to A-IFRS may differ from the estimates disclosed due to:

- change in facts and circumstances;
- ongoing work being undertaken by the A-IFRS project team;
- potential amendments to A-IFRS and Interpretations; and
- emerging accepted practice in the interpretation and application of A-IFRS and UIG Interpretations.

Table 1: Reconciliation of net result as presented under Australian GAAP and that under A-IFRS

	Note	Year ended 30 June 2005 \$'000
Net result as reported under Australian GAAP		(11,246)
Estimated A-IFRS impact on revenue		-
Other income		-
Estimated A-IFRS impact on expenses		
Employee benefits	3	-
Impairment expenses	1	-
Other expenses		-
Total estimated A-IFRS impact on net result		-
Net result under A-IFRS		<u>(11,246)</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. IMPACTS OF ADOPTING AUSTRALIAN EQUIVALENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS (continued)

Table 2: Reconciliation of total assets and total liabilities as presented under Australian GAAP and that under A-IFRS

	Note	Year ended 30 June 2005 \$'000
Total assets under Australian GAAP		13,540
Estimated A-IFRS impact on assets		
Inventories	5	-
Property, plant and equipment	2	-
Intangible assets	6	-
Total estimated A-IFRS impact on assets		0
Total assets under A-IFRS		13,540
Total liabilities under Australian GAAP		(1,461)
Estimated A-IFRS impact on liabilities		
Contingent liability	2	-
Total estimated A-IFRS impact on liabilities		-
Total liabilities under A-IFRS		(1,461)

Table 3: Reconciliation of equity as presented under Australian GAAP and that under A-IFRS

	Note	Year ended 30 June 2005 \$'000
Total equity under Australian GAAP		12,079
Estimated A-IFRS impact on equity		
Contributed capital		-
Accumulated fund		-
Total estimated A-IFRS impact on equity		-
Total equity under A-IFRS		12,079

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. IMPACTS OF ADOPTING AUSTRALIAN EQUIVALENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS (continued)

Explanatory Notes:

1 Impairment of assets: AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* requires assets to be assessed for indicators of impairment each year. This standard applies to all assets, other than inventories, financial assets and assets arising from construction contracts, regardless of whether they are measured on a cost or fair value basis. If indicators of impairment exist, the carrying value of an asset will need to be tested to ensure that the carrying value does not exceed its recoverable amount, which is the higher of its value-in-use and fair value less costs to sell.

An impairment test was conducted on transition date, 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005, which indicated no impairment loss. It is not practicable to determine the impact of the change in accounting policy for future financial reports, as any impairment or reversal thereof will be affected by future conditions.

2 Property, plant and equipment: When an asset is initially recognised, AASB 116 *Property, Plant and Equipment* requires the capitalisation of costs of dismantling and removing an asset and restoring the site on which the asset was created, together with the recognition of a provision at present value in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*. These costs (and the related provisions) are not recognised under Australian GAAP and the Commission currently expenses such costs as they are incurred. As a consequence, there will be an increase in depreciation expense as a result of the increase in the carrying amounts of assets and also an interest expense will be incurred as the present value discount on the dismantling provision unwinds.

As the Commission has been unable to reliably estimate such costs as at 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005, the Commission will need to disclose the fact that it has such an obligation as part of its contingent liability in its financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2006.

3 Employee Benefits: Under the existing Australian accounting standards, employee benefits such as wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave are required to be measured at their nominal amount regardless of whether they are expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date. On adoption of A-IFRS, a distinction is made between short-term and long-term employee benefits and AASB 119 *Employee Benefits* requires liabilities for short-term employee benefits to be measured at nominal amounts and liabilities for long-term employee benefits to be measured at present value. AASB 119 defines short-term employee benefits as employee benefits that fall due wholly within twelve months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service. Therefore, liabilities for employee benefits such as wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave are required to be measured at present value where they are not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date.

The effect of the above requirement on the Commission's Statement of Financial Position as at 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005 was considered immaterial for reporting.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

27. IMPACTS OF ADOPTING AUSTRALIAN EQUIVALENTS TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS (continued)

4 Finance leases: Existing Australian accounting standards require a lessee of a finance lease to recognise a lease asset and a lease liability equal to the present value of minimum lease payments at the beginning of the lease term. On adoption of A-IFRS, the lease asset and lease liability recognised will be equal to the lower of the present value of minimum lease payments and fair value of the leased asset which, in those cases where the present value of minimum lease payments exceeds the fair value of the leased asset, will require an adjustment to the Commission's lease assets and liabilities at the date of transition. In addition, the guidance on whether a lease is a finance or operating lease is less prescriptive under A-IFRS, and there is a greater emphasis on the substance of the transaction when making such a judgement. As a consequence, there may be instances where leases that have previously been classified as operating leases under Australian GAAP may be reclassified as finance leases under A-IFRS.

The impact of this change in accounting policy is expected to result in no material increase to the Commission's lease assets and lease liabilities as at 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005, with no resulting changes to the Statement of Financial Performance.

5 Inventories held for distribution: Under existing accounting policies, costs of goods and services to be distributed for no consideration or at a nominal amount are currently expensed when incurred. The new standard on inventories requires such costs to be capitalised as inventories held for distribution and expensed when distributed. Inventories held for distribution will be measured at the lower of cost and current replacement cost. Inventories held for distribution which are on hand as at transition date will need to be recognised with the resulting adjustment against accumulated funds. Inventories other than inventories held for distribution will continue to be measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

The Commission holds inventories for use in Council, Commercial and State elections, and are regarded as being held for sale, and are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

6 Intangible Assets: Current accounting standards permit costs incurred on research and development projects to be deferred to future periods to the extent that they are expected beyond reasonable doubt to be recoverable. Under AASB 138 *Intangible Assets*, costs incurred in the research phase are not permitted to be recognised as an asset and are expensed when incurred. Only expenditure incurred in the development phase are permitted to be recognised as an asset to the extent that they satisfy the criteria of AASB 138. Accordingly, research costs previously capitalised as intangible assets will be derecognised at the date of transition with the resulting adjustment made against accumulated funds. Intangible assets are also subject to annual impairment tests under AASB 138.

There is no effect from the above requirement on the Statement of Financial Position as at 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005.

7 Financial instruments: The Commission has elected to apply the first-time adoption exemption available under AASB 1 *First-time adoption of Australian Equivalent to International Financial Reporting Standard* to defer the date of transition of AASB 139 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement* until 1 July 2005. Accordingly, there will be no quantitative impacts on the financial positions as at 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005 and the financial performance for the year ended 30 June 2005.

With the exception of receivables and payables, the majority of financial assets and liabilities held by the Commission are valued on the Statement of Financial Position at market value with changes in value taken to the Statement of Financial Performance.

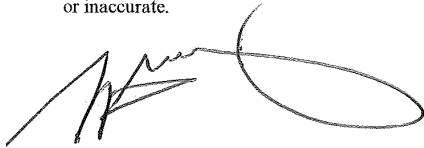
VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

**Electoral Commissioner and chief finance and
accounting officer's declaration**

We certify that the attached financial statements for the Victorian Electoral Commission have been prepared in accordance with Standing Direction 4.2 of the Financial Management Act 1994, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian accounting standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and notes to and forming part of the financial statements, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2005 and financial position of the Commission as at 30 June 2005.

We are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



Steven Tully
Electoral Commissioner
Victorian Electoral Commission

Melbourne
30th August 2005



David Clarke
Manager Finance and Budget
Victorian Electoral Commission

Melbourne
30th August 2005



AUDITOR GENERAL
VICTORIA

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

Victorian Electoral Commission

To the Members of the Parliament of Victoria and the Member of the Victorian Electoral Commission

Scope

The Financial Report

The accompanying financial report for the year ended 30 June 2005 of the Victorian Electoral Commission consists of the statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows, notes to and forming part of the financial report, and the supporting declaration.

Electoral Commissioners' Responsibility

The Electoral Commissioner is responsible for:

- the preparation and presentation of the financial report and the information it contains, including accounting policies and accounting estimates
- the maintenance of adequate accounting records and internal controls that are designed to record its transactions and affairs, and prevent and detect fraud and errors.

Audit Approach

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, an independent audit has been carried out in order to express an opinion on the financial report. The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial report is free of material misstatement.

The audit procedures included:

- examining information on a test basis to provide evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial report
- assessing the appropriateness of the accounting policies and disclosures used, and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Electoral Commissioner
- obtaining written confirmation regarding the material representations made in conjunction with the audit
- reviewing the overall presentation of information in the financial report.

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether the financial report is presented in all material respects fairly in accordance with Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and the financial reporting requirements of the *Financial Management Act 1994*, so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the Commission's financial position, and its financial performance and cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.



AUDITOR GENERAL
VICTORIA

Independent Audit Report (continued)

Independence

The Auditor-General's independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. The Auditor-General is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which his powers are to be exercised. The Auditor-General and his staff and delegates comply with all applicable independence requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and the financial reporting requirements of the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the financial position of the Victorian Electoral Commission as at 30 June 2005 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

MELBOURNE
31 August 2005


Sir JW CAMERON
Auditor-General

: 04-05

APPENDIX 1

LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE WORK OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER AND THE VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Constitution Act 1975

Electoral Act 2002

LEGISLATION IMPOSING CERTAIN DUTIES ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990

City of Melbourne Act 2001

Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982

Essential Services Act 1958

Health Services Act 1988

Juries Act 2000

Legal Practice Act 1996

Liquor Control Reform Act 1998

Local Government Act 1989

Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Act 1989

Senate Elections Act 1958

Shop Trading Reform Act 1996

Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001

Vital State Projects Act 1976

RELEVANT REGULATIONS

City of Melbourne (Elections) Regulations 2001

Electoral Regulations 2002

Health Services (Community Health Centre Elections) Regulations 2001

Liquor Control Reform Regulations 1999

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2005

Shop Trading Reform (Polls) Regulations 1996

Victorian Institute of Teaching (Elections) Regulations 2002

APPENDIX 2

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Selections – Victorian Electoral Commission Newsletter, Number 10 April 2005 ^

Victorian Electoral Commission Annual Report 2003-2004* ^

Victorian Electoral Commission: Corporate Plan 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2007 ^

Your opinion counts – young people and voting ^

Locality Finder, December 2004 ^

* Available from Information Victoria, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000

^ Available on-line at www.vec.vic.gov.au

APPENDIX 3 ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEWS CONDUCTED IN 2003-04

The below statistics detail the estimated number of voters at the time of the review, currently and at the next election. The projected estimate for the next election is based on enrolment trends between the date of the council's last election and 13 July 2005. These projections will change over time as enrolment trends change. Current statistics include the number of electors within the municipality currently enrolled on the State roll and the number of council electors enrolled as at the date of the council's last election (November 2004).

Municipality Name	Ward Name	Councillors	Electoral Representation Review Statistics 31 January 2004				Statistics 13-Jul-05			Next Election Estimate November 2008		
			Council Voters	Legislative Assembly Voters	Total Voters	Deviation	Council Voters (as at last election)	Legislative Assembly Voters	Total Voters	Deviation	Total Voters	Deviation
Corangamite Shire	Central	3	608	5437	6045	+0.86%	521	5381	5902	-0.89%	6223	+0.57%
	Coastal	1	313	1515	1828	-8.50%	381	1471	1852	-6.70%	1981	-3.95%
	North	1	465	1601	2066	+3.41%	468	1595	2063	+3.93%	2141	+3.80%
	South-Central	1	205	1868	2073	+3.76%	231	1862	2093	+5.44%	2077	+0.70%
	South-West	1	200	1773	1973	-1.24%	237	1748	1985	+0.00%	2016	-2.26%
Total		7	1791	12194	13985		1838	12057	13895		14438	
Average			256	1742	1998			1985			2063	

**Final Report Released 10-May-2004
Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004**

Greater Bendigo City	Eaglehawk	1	912	8032	8944	+4.15%	1037	8146	9183	+4.61%	10049	+8.02%
	Eppalock	1	2827	5941	8768	+2.10%	2918	6153	9071	+3.34%	9859	+5.98%
	Epsom	1	1018	7032	8050	-6.26%	1140	7187	8327	-5.14%	8943	-3.87%
	Flora Hill	1	1480	7517	8997	+4.76%	1523	7479	9002	+2.55%	8994	-3.32%
	Golden Square	1	1294	8007	9301	+8.30%	1347	8053	9400	+7.09%	10121	+8.79%
	Kangaroo Flat	1	865	7391	8256	-3.86%	956	7503	8459	-3.63%	8973	-3.55%
	North West Plains	1	1398	6753	8151	-5.09%	1491	7032	8523	-2.90%	9342	+0.42%
	Sandhurst	1	1712	7400	9112	+6.10%	1824	7067	8891	+1.29%	8601	-7.54%
	Strathfieldsaye	1	888	6824	7712	-10.20%	860	7282	8142	-7.25%	8844	-4.93
Total		9	12394	64897	77291		13096	65902	78998		83726	
Average			1377	7211	8588			8778			9303	

**Final Report Released 3-May-2004
Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004**

Hobsons Bay City	Altona	1	1014	8781	9795	+8.49%	1075	8387	9462	+4.59%	8944	-0.67%
	Altona Meadows	1	838	7974	8812	-2.39%	979	7779	8758	-3.19%	8468	-5.96%
	Altona North	1	1367	7960	9327	+3.31%	1482	7671	9153	+1.17%	8890	-1.27%
	Seabrook	1	967	7894	8861	-1.85%	1229	7929	9158	+1.23%	9358	+3.92%
	Spotswood	1	1147	7347	8494	-5.92%	1343	7164	8507	-5.97%	8754	-2.78%
	Williamstown	1	1076	7885	8961	-0.74%	1183	7874	9057	+0.11%	9296	+3.23%
	Williamstown North	1	1346	7601	8947	-0.90%	1523	7714	9237	+2.10%	9323	+3.53%
	Total		7	7755	55442	63197		8814	54518	63332		63033
Average			1108	7920	9028			9047			9005	

**Final Report Released 24-May-2004
Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004**

Municipality Name	Ward Name	Councillors	Electoral Representation Review Statistics 31 January 2004				Statistics 13-Jul-05			Next Election Estimate November 2008		
			Council Voters	Legislative Assembly Voters	Total Voters	Deviation	Council Voters (as at last election)	Legislative Assembly Voters	Total Voters	Deviation	Total Voters	Deviation
Moorabool Shire												
	Bungal	1	723	2279	3002	+3.06%	752	2433	3185	+8.96%	3440	+10.45%
	East Moorabool	4	1117	10288	11405	-2.12%	934	10450	11384	-2.63%	12333	-1.00%
	West Moorabool	1	575	2444	3019	+3.64%	548	2285	2833	-3.08%	2845	-8.65%
	Woodlands	1	977	1988	2965	+1.79%	1008	2050	3058	+4.62%	3183	+2.20%
Total		7	3392	16999	20391		3242	17218	20460		21801	
Average			485	2428	2913				2923		3114	
Final Report Released 3-May-2004 Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004												
Moreland City												
	North-East	4	6377	31807	38184	-2.85%	5848	31654	37502	-3.85%	38729	-4.17%
	North-West	4	4570	33920	38490	-2.08%	4316	33778	38094	-2.33%	39149	-3.13%
	South	3	7185	24233	31418	+6.58%	6924	24739	31663	+8.24%	33259	+9.73%
Total		#	18132	89960	108092		17088	90171	107259		111137	
Average			1648	8178	9827				9751		10103	
Final Report Released 24-May-2004 Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004												
Pyrenees Shire												
	Avoca	1	369	1102	1471	+1.81%	315	1079	1394	-2.38%	1316	-8.99%
	Beaufort	1	313	1137	1450	+0.36%	329	1184	1513	+5.95%	1501	+3.80%
	Goldsmith	1	384	1056	1440	-0.33%	372	1027	1399	-2.03%	1489	+2.97%
	Mitchell	1	494	923	1417	-1.92%	484	894	1378	-3.50%	1417	-2.01%
	Warrenmang	1	725	721	1446	+0.08%	755	701	1456	+1.96%	1507	+4.22%
Total		5	2285	4939	7224		2255	4885	7140		7230	
Average			457	988	1445				1428		1446	
Final Report Released 3-May-2004 Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004												
Stonnington City												
	East	3	4116	22434	26550	+1.28%	3833	22432	26265	+0.61%	26826	-1.43%
	North	3	6980	19468	26448	+0.89%	6671	19963	26634	+2.02%	28555	+4.92%
	South	3	6407	19237	25644	-2.17%	6141	19276	25417	-2.64%	26264	-3.49%
Total		9	17503	61139	78642		16645	61671	78316		81645	
Average			1945	6793	8738				8702		9072	
Final Report Released 17-May-2004 Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004												
Warrnambool City												
	Warrnambool City	7	3316	20958	24274	+0.00%	1780	21155	22935	+0.01%	23719	+0.00%
Total		7	3316	20958	24274		1780	21155	22935		23719	
Average			474	2994	3468				3276		3388	
Final Report Released 10-May-2004 Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004												
Yarra City												
	Langridge	3	4197	14913	19110	-4.60%	4230	15735	19965	-3.97%	21439	-2.74%
	Melba	3	5032	16579	21611	+7.88%	5006	17311	22317	+7.34%	23348	+5.93%
	Nicholls	3	4389	14987	19376	-3.28%	4367	15717	20084	-3.40%	21339	-3.19%
Total		9	13618	46479	60097		13603	48763	62366		66126	
Average			1513	5164	6677				6930		7347	
Final Report Released 17-May-2004 Boundaries Effective 8-Jul-2004												

APPENDIX 4

DISTRICT AND PROVINCE ENROLMENTS AS AT 30 JUNE 2005

Province Enrolments as at 30 June 2005

<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Electors</u>	<u>Deviation</u>
Ballarat	158,346	4.36
Central Highlands	150,069	-1.09
Chelsea	151,043	-0.45
Doutta Galla	153,874	1.42
East Yarra	150,147	-1.04
Eumemmerring	153,119	0.92
Geelong	160,905	6.05
Gippsland	151,997	0.18
Higinbotham	149,903	-1.20
Jika Jika	149,793	-1.27
Koonung	152,002	0.18
Melbourne	154,185	1.62
Melbourne North	153,008	0.85
Melbourne West	155,652	2.59
Monash	156,657	3.25
North Eastern	144,515	-4.75
North Western	147,718	-2.64
Silvan	150,949	-0.51
Templestowe	146,493	-3.45
Waverley	139,812	-7.85
Western	156,483	3.14
Western Port	151,276	-0.30
Total number of electorates:	22	
Total number of electors:	3,337,946	
Average number of electors:	151,724	

District Enrolments as at 30 June 2005

<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Electors</u>	<u>Deviation</u>			
Lyndhurst	35,798	-5.62			
Macedon	41,963	10.63			
Malvern	37,171	-2.00			
Melbourne	37,660	-0.71			
Melton	37,808	-0.32			
Mildura	36,650	-3.38			
Mill Park	38,234	0.80			
Mitcham	36,485	-3.81			
Monbulk	36,442	-3.93			
Mordialloc	39,283	3.56			
Mornington	36,430	-3.96			
Morwell	37,008	-2.43			
Mount Waverley	36,768	-3.07			
Mulgrave	34,117	-10.06			
Murray Valley	36,552	-3.64			
Narracan	38,422	1.29			
Narre Warren North	36,963	-2.55			
Narre Warren South	43,977	15.94			
Nepean	36,818	-2.93			
Niddrie	36,542	-3.66			
Northcote	38,351	1.11			
Oakleigh	34,859	-8.10			
Pascoe Vale	38,254	0.85			
Polwarth	40,229	6.06			
Prahran	38,752	2.16			
Preston	37,848	-0.22			
Richmond	39,212	3.38			
Ripon	36,507	-3.75			
Rodney	35,839	-5.52			
Sandringham	36,441	-3.93			
Scoresby	38,088	0.41			
Seymour	37,873	-0.15			
Shepparton	36,494	-3.79			
South Barwon	41,706	9.95			
South-West Coast	41,184	8.58			
Swan Hill	34,473	-9.12			
Tarneit	40,505	6.79			
Thomastown	37,370	-1.48			
Warrandyte	39,579	4.34			
Williamstown	37,387	-1.43			
Yan Yean	38,558	1.65			
Yuroke	39,987	5.42			
Total number of electorates:	88				
Total number of electors:	3,337,946				
Average number of electors:	37,931				
Albert Park	43,501	14.68			
Altona	40,085	5.68			
Ballarat East	37,472	-1.21			
Ballarat West	41,103	8.36			
Bass	38,262	0.87			
Bayswater	36,615	-3.47			
Bellarine	40,109	5.74			
Benalla	35,883	-5.40			
Benambra	35,630	-6.07			
Bendigo East	37,161	-2.03			
Bendigo West	39,434	3.96			
Bentleigh	37,259	-1.77			
Box Hill	37,928	-0.01			
Brighton	36,920	-2.67			
Broadmeadows	37,397	-1.41			
Brunswick	39,517	4.18			
Bulleen	34,968	-7.81			
Bundoora	35,360	-6.78			
Burwood	38,243	0.82			
Carrum	40,087	5.68			
Caulfield	37,233	-1.84			
Clayton	34,068	-10.18			
Cranbourne	38,857	2.44			
Dandenong	34,924	-7.93			
Derrimut	35,737	-5.78			
Doncaster	35,693	-5.90			
Eltham	38,383	1.19			
Essendon	37,796	-0.36			
Evelyn	37,755	-0.46			
Ferntree Gully	40,297	6.24			
Footscray	37,675	-0.67			
Forest Hill	37,132	-2.11			
Frankston	36,301	-4.30			
Geelong	39,090	3.06			
Gembrook	37,255	-1.78			
Gippsland East	39,100	3.08 69			
Gippsland South	37,467	-1.22			
Hastings	39,766	4.84			
Hawthorn	37,917	0.04			
Ivanhoe	37,449	-1.27			
Keilor	43,823	15.53			
Kew	36,059	-4.94			
Kilsyth	38,313	1.01			
Kororoit	37,772	-0.42			
Lara	40,000	5.45			
Lowan	38,563	1.67			

APPENDIX 5

VICTORIAN REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES AS AT 30 JUNE 2005

Political party	Registered Officer
Democrats (Victorian Division)	Mr R Stone Registered Officer G1 Eastbourne House 62 Wellington Parade East Melbourne Vic. 3002
Australian Labor Party—Victorian Branch	Mr Stephen Newnham State Secretary 360 King Street West Melbourne Vic. 3003
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	Mr K Cook Registered Officer PO Box 9 Doveton Vic 3177
Citizens Electoral Council (Victorian Division)	Ms Gabrielle Marie Peut Registered Officer PO Box 376 Coburg Vic. 3058
Democratic Labor Party (DLP) of Australia	Mr J V Mulholland Registered Officer PO Box 8118 Monash University Clayton 3168
Hope Party Victoria ethics equality ecology	Mr Timothy Petherbridge 39-41 Bemboka Road Warranwood Vic. 3134
Liberal Party of Australia—Victorian Division	Mr Julian Sheezel State Director 104 Exhibition Street Melbourne 3000
National Party of Australia—Victoria	Mr Luke O'Sullivan State Director Level 7 24 Collins Street Melbourne Vic. 3000
Socialist Alliance (Victoria)	Mr Karl Miller Registered Officer PO Box 12427 A'Beckett Street Vic 8066
The Australian Greens—Victoria	Mr Gurmeet Sekhon Registered Officer GPO Box 4589 Melbourne Vic. 3001

APPENDIX 6

OUTCOMES OF APPLICATIONS TO THE MUNICIPAL ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL

Council	Details	Status
Moreland North West Ward	It was alleged that: a voting centre ran out of ballot papers; there were technical problems with the conduct of the preference distribution; and some ballot papers were printed on white paper instead of blue.	A directions hearing was held on 1 March 2005. The application was withdrawn on 9 March 2005.
Moreland North West Ward	The application included a number of allegations in regard to the distribution of how-to-vote cards, prevention of candidate helpers canvassing for votes, denial of a request for a recount, making a declaration of the result not in accordance with the Act, discrepancies between the results on Saturday 27 November and Sunday 28 March, and ballot papers being incorrectly determined as informal.	A directions hearing was held on 1 March 2005. The tribunal ordered the inspection of informal ballot papers which took place on 7 June. The matter was scheduled to be heard at the Magistrates Court on August 8, 9 and 10, 2005.
Hobsons Bay Altona North Ward	It was alleged that a successful candidate's election material contained deceptive and misleading statements in breach of section 55(5) of the Act.	A directions hearing was held on 1 March. A further directions hearing was scheduled for 14 July 2005 and the matter listed for hearing on 24 August 2005.

APPENDIX 7

PECUNIARY INTEREST DECLARATION

The Electoral Commissioner, Mr S Tully, and the Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Mr D Beecroft have completed declarations of pecuniary interests.

APPENDIX 8

CONSULTANTS ENGAGED: 1 JULY 2003 TO 30 JUNE 2004

Consultancy engagements over \$100,000

Nil

Consultancy engagements under \$100,000

Four consultancies \$117,583

Total **\$117,583**

APPENDIX 9

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: PART 2 STATEMENT

DECISION-MAKING POWERS

Decision-making powers and other powers affecting members of the public are found in the legislation administered by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), particularly the Electoral Act 2002.

CATEGORIES OF DOCUMENTS

Description of record-keeping system

The VEC maintains its registry on Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000. Registry files group material according to subject areas. Each file relates to a separate subject. The subject may be very broad, such as the general file on an election, or it may be an individual transaction with an external party, an election manager, or within the VEC. Files contain correspondence and internal documents in chronological order.

Electoral Boundaries Commission files are maintained on Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000, in a separate system from the VEC registry.

OTHER RECORDS

An up-to-date list of the names and addresses of electors is available for inspection at the VEC without charge.

A register of political parties is available for public inspection.

FOI ARRANGEMENTS

Requests for access

Requests for access to VEC records are dealt with by the Office's FOI Manager:

Mr Doug Beecroft - FOI Manager

Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne Vic. 3000
Tel: 9299 0520

You can request to inspect a document, to obtain a copy, or both to see it and obtain a copy. Also, other forms of access can be granted depending on the nature of your request and the type of document, for example producing a printed document containing information held on computer equipment.

Requests should be made in writing, and should be accompanied by a \$20 application fee. Publications available for sale from Information Victoria or the VEC are not available under FOI.

IDENTIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS

FOI requests should be as specific as possible to enable the VEC to identify documents. Where the terms of a request are vague, the VEC will attempt to assist applicants to identify the documents sought.

RESPONSE TO REQUESTS

Once the VEC has received sufficient information to identify the document requested, you will be notified in writing within 45 days whether the document is available.

Sometimes the VEC cannot grant full access to documents. The classes of documents that are exempt from release are detailed in Part IV of the Act. It is the responsibility of the FOI Manager to identify any such documents and to set out to you, in writing, the reasons for their exempt status. You will be advised, as required under the Act, how you can seek an internal review of any decision to claim an exemption for any document(s), or part of any document(s).

CHARGES UNDER THE ACT

In summary, charges for access to documents as set out in the Freedom of Information (Access Charges) Regulations 1993 are:

- application fee: \$20.00;
- search fees: where the VEC has to identify and locate the documents—maximum of \$20.00 per hour;
- supervision fees: where a document is inspected at the VEC by the applicant under the supervision of an officer—\$5.00 per 15 minutes;
- photocopy fees: 20 cents per A4 page, non-coloured photocopy;
- other fees: the actual costs incurred by the VEC in producing a copy can be charged, for example a microfiche of a file, or the retrieval of information from a computer file; and
- deposits: where charges will be substantial, a deposit of \$25.00 may be requested before the VEC will grant access.

Some or all of these charges will be waived if the applicant cannot afford to pay, and in certain other circumstances.

APPENDIX 10

VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION PROCEDURES UNDER THE WHISTLEBLOWERS PROTECTION ACT 2001

1. STATEMENT OF SUPPORT TO WHISTLEBLOWERS

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is committed to the aims and objectives of the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001* (the Act). It does not tolerate improper conduct by its employees, officers or members, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

The VEC recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices, and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

The VEC will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. It will also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure.

2. PURPOSE OF THESE PROCEDURES

These procedures establish a system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the VEC or its employees. The system enables such disclosures to be made to the protected disclosure coordinator or to one of the nominated protected disclosure officers. Disclosures may be made by employees or by members of the public.

These procedures are designed to complement normal communication channels between supervisors and employees. Employees are encouraged to continue to raise appropriate matters at any time with their supervisors. As an alternative, employees may make a disclosure of improper conduct or detrimental action under the Act in accordance with these procedures.

3. OBJECTS OF THE ACT

The *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001* commenced operation on 1 January 2002. The purpose of the Act is to encourage and facilitate the making of disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act provides protection to whistleblowers who make disclosures in accordance with the Act, and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken. The Victorian Electoral Commissioner is one of the few public officers who is exempt from the Act.

4. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Three key concepts in the reporting system are improper conduct, corrupt conduct and detrimental action. Definitions of these terms are set out below.

4.1 Improper conduct

A disclosure may be made about improper conduct by a public body or public official. Improper conduct means conduct that is corrupt, a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving substantial risk to public health or safety or to the environment. The conduct must be serious enough to constitute, if proved, a criminal offence or reasonable grounds for dismissal.

Improper conduct includes corrupt conduct such as:

- Conduct of any person (whether or not a public official) that adversely affects the honest performance of a public officer's or public body's functions;
- The performance of a public officer's functions dishonestly or with inappropriate partiality;
- Conduct of a public officer, former public officer or a public body that amounts to a breach of public trust;
- Conduct by a public officer, former public officer or a public body that amounts to the misuse of information or material acquired in the course of the performance of their official functions; or
- A conspiracy or attempt to engage in the above conduct.

Examples

A VEC employee falsifies an election result.

A VEC employee takes a bribe or receives a payment other than his or her wages or salary in exchange for the discharge of a public duty.

A VEC employee favours unmeritorious applications for jobs.

A VEC employee sells confidential information.

4.3 Detrimental action

The Act makes it an offence for a person to take detrimental action against a person in reprisal for a protected disclosure. Detrimental action includes:

- Action causing injury, loss or damage;
- Intimidation or harassment; and

Discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to a person's employment, career, profession, trade or business, including the taking of disciplinary action.

Examples

The VEC refuses a deserved promotion of a person who makes a disclosure.

The VEC transfers or isolates in the workplace or changes the duties of a whistleblower due to the making of a disclosure.

A person threatens, abuses or carries out other forms of harassment directly or indirectly against a whistleblower who has made a disclosure against a VEC employee, his or her family or friends.

The VEC discriminates against the whistleblower or his or her family and associates in subsequent applications for jobs, permits or tenders.

5. THE REPORTING SYSTEM

5.1 Contact persons within the VEC

Disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by VEC or its employees may be made to the protected disclosure coordinator or to a protected disclosure officer. Where a person is contemplating making a disclosure and is concerned about approaching the protected disclosure coordinator or a protected disclosure officer in the workplace, he or she can call the relevant officer and request a meeting in a discreet location away from the workplace.

The protected disclosure coordinator

The protected disclosure coordinator oversees the internal reporting system. He or she will receive and assess all disclosures made under the Act, including all correspondence, phone calls and e-mails from external whistleblowers, and will report directly to the Electoral Commissioner. See paragraph 6.1 below for more details about the role of the protected disclosure coordinator.

Protected disclosure officer

The protected disclosure officer is available to all VEC staff and to members of the public as an initial point of contact about whistleblower matters. He or she will give general advice about making a disclosure under the Act and may receive this disclosure verbally or in writing. All disclosures will be forwarded to the protected disclosure coordinator for assessment. See paragraph 6.2 below for more details about the role of the protected disclosure officers.

The protected disclosure coordinator and officer for the VEC is:

Mr Doug Beecroft

Manager, Public Information and Corporate Communications Branch
Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
Telephone: 9629 0730
Email: doug.beecroft@vec.vic.gov.au

5.2 Alternative contact persons

A disclosure about improper conduct or detrimental action by the VEC or its employees, may also be made directly to the Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman Victoria

Level 22, 459 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: 9613 6222 Toll Free: 1800 806 314
Email: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au
Internet: ombudsman.vic.gov.au

DISCLOSURES CONCERNING PUBLIC BODIES OTHER THAN THE VEC

The following table sets out where disclosures about persons other than employees of the VEC should be made. A contact list for the public bodies listed in the table below can be found in Attachment A. Alternatively, a person wishing to make a disclosure about another public body may call Information Victoria on 1300 366 356 to be referred to the correct contact person. A guide to making a disclosure under the Act can be found in Attachment B.

Person who is the subject of the disclosure

Employee of a public body
 Member of Parliament (Legislative Assembly)
 Member of Parliament (Legislative Council)
 Councillors
 Chief Commissioner of Police
 Member of the police force

Person/body to whom the disclosure must be made

That public body or the Ombudsman
 Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
 President of the Legislative Council
 The Ombudsman
 The Ombudsman or Deputy Ombudsman
 The Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman or Chief Commissioner of Police

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**6.1 Protected disclosure coordinator**

The protected disclosure coordinator has a central 'clearing house' role in the internal reporting system. He or she will:

- Receive all disclosures forwarded from the protected disclosure officers;
- Receive all phone calls, e-mails and letters from members of the public or employees seeking to make a disclosure;
- Impartially assess each disclosure to determine whether it comes under the Act and is a public interest disclosure;
- Refer all public interest disclosures to the Ombudsman;
- Ensure that matters which do not meet the definition of a public interest disclosure are dealt with appropriately, after consultation with the person who made the allegation or report;
- Be responsible for carrying out, or appointing an investigator to carry out, an investigation referred to the public body by the Ombudsman;
- Be responsible for overseeing and coordinating an investigation where an investigator has been appointed;
- Appoint a welfare manager to support the whistleblower and to protect him or her from any reprisals;
- Advise the whistleblower of the progress of an investigation into the disclosed matter;
- Establish and manage a confidential filing system;
- Collate and publish statistics on disclosures made;
- Take all necessary steps to ensure the identity of the whistleblower and the identity of the person who is the subject of the disclosure are kept confidential; and
- Liaise with the Electoral Commissioner.

6.2 Protected disclosure officers

Protected disclosure officers will:

- Be a contact point for general advice about the operation of the Act for any person wishing to make a disclosure about improper conduct or detrimental action;
- Make arrangements for a disclosure to be made privately and discreetly and, if necessary, away from the workplace;
- Receive any disclosure made verbally or in writing (from internal and external whistleblowers);
- Commit to writing any disclosure made verbally;
- Impartially assess the allegation, in consultation with the protected disclosure coordinator, and advise the person making the disclosure whether the disclosure comes Part 2 of the Act;
- Take all necessary steps to ensure the identity of the whistleblower and the identity of the person who is the subject of the disclosure are kept confidential; and
- Forward all disclosures and supporting evidence to the protected disclosure coordinator.

6.3 Employees

Employees are encouraged to report known or suspected incidences of improper conduct or detrimental action in accordance with these procedures. All employees of the VEC have an important role to play in supporting those who have made a legitimate disclosure. They must refrain from any activity that is, or could be perceived to be, victimisation or harassment of a person who makes a disclosure. Furthermore, they should protect and maintain the confidentiality of a person they know or suspect to have made a disclosure.

6.4 Investigator

The investigator will be responsible for carrying out an internal investigation into a disclosure where the Ombudsman has referred a matter to the public body. The VEC may appoint a person from within the VEC or engage a consultant for that purpose.

6.5 Welfare manager

The welfare manager is responsible for looking after the general welfare of the whistleblower. The welfare manager will:

- Examine the immediate welfare and protection needs of a whistleblower who has made a disclosure and seek to foster a supportive work environment;
- Inform the whistleblower of the legislative and administrative protections available to him or her;
- Listen and respond to any concerns of harassment, intimidation or victimisation in reprisal for making disclosure; and
- Discuss with the whistleblower what would be a realistic expectation for the outcome of an investigation of the disclosure.

The welfare manager for the VEC is:

Ms Gill Bray - HR Officer
 Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street
 Melbourne 3000
 Telephone: 9629 0736
 Email: gill.bray@vec.vic.gov.au

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

The VEC will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the whistleblower. Maintaining confidentiality is crucial in ensuring reprisals are not made against a whistleblower.

The Act requires any person who receives information due to the handling or investigation of a protected disclosure, not to disclose that information except in certain limited circumstances. Disclosure of information in breach of section 22 constitutes an offence that is punishable by a maximum fine of 60 penalty units (\$6288.60) or six months imprisonment or both.

The circumstances in which a person may disclose information obtained about a protected disclosure include:

Where exercising the functions of the public body under the Act;
 When making a report or recommendation under the Act;
 When publishing statistics in the annual report of a public body; and
 In criminal proceedings for certain offences in the Act.

However, the Act prohibits the inclusion of particulars in any report or recommendation that is likely to lead to the identification of the whistleblower. The Act also prohibits the identification of the person who is the subject of the disclosure in any particulars included in an annual report.

The VEC will ensure all files, whether paper or electronic, are kept in a secure room and can only be accessed by the protected disclosure coordinator and the investigator. All printed material will be kept in files that are clearly marked as a Whistleblower Protection Act matter, and warn of the criminal penalties that apply to any unauthorised divulging information concerning a protected disclosure.

All electronic files will be produced and stored on a stand-alone computer and be given password protection. Backup files will be kept on floppy disc. All materials relevant to an investigation, such as tapes from interviews, will also be stored securely with the whistleblower files.

The VEC will not email documents relevant to a whistleblower matter and will ensure all phone calls and meetings are conducted in private.

8. COLLATING AND PUBLISHING STATISTICS

The protected disclosure coordinator will establish a secure register to record the information required to be published in the annual report, and to generally keep account of the status of whistleblower disclosures. The register will be confidential and will not record any information that may identify the whistleblower.

The register will contain the following information:

The number and types of disclosures made to the VEC during the year;

- The number of disclosures referred to the Ombudsman for determination as to whether they are public interest disclosures;
- The number and types of disclosed matters referred to the VEC by the Ombudsman for investigation;
- The number and types of disclosures referred by the VEC to the Ombudsman for investigation;

- The number and types of investigations taken over from the VEC by the Ombudsman;
- The number of requests made by a whistleblower to the Ombudsman to take over an investigation by the VEC;
- The number and types of disclosed matters that the VEC has declined to investigate;
- The number and types of disclosed matters that were substantiated upon investigation and the action taken on completion of the investigation; and
- Any recommendations made by the Ombudsman that relate to the VEC.

9. RECEIVING AND ASSESSING DISCLOSURES

9.1 Has the disclosure been made in accordance with Part 2 of the Act?

Where a disclosure has been received by the protected disclosure officer or by the protected disclosure coordinator, he or she will assess whether the disclosure has been made in accordance with Part 2 of the Act and is, therefore, a protected disclosure.

9.1.1 Has the disclosure been made to the appropriate person?

For the disclosure to be responded to by the VEC, it must concern an employee, member or officer of the VEC. If the disclosure concerns an employee, officer or member of another public body, the person who has made the disclosure will be advised of the correct person or body to whom the disclosure should be directed. (See the table in 5.2). If the disclosure has been made anonymously, it will be referred to the Ombudsman.

9.1.2 Does the disclosure contain the essential elements of a protected disclosure?

To be a protected disclosure, a disclosure must satisfy the following criteria:

Did a natural person (that is, an individual person rather than a corporation) make the disclosure?

Does the disclosure relate to conduct of a public body or public officer acting in their official capacity?

Is the alleged conduct either improper conduct or detrimental action taken against a person in reprisal for making a protected disclosure?

Does the person making a disclosure have reasonable grounds for believing the alleged conduct has occurred?

Where a disclosure is assessed to be a protected disclosure, the protected disclosure coordinator will then determine whether the disclosure is a public interest disclosure (see 9.2).

Where a disclosure is assessed not to be a protected disclosure, the matter does not need to be dealt with under the Act. The protected disclosure coordinator will decide how the matter should be responded to. The whistleblower will be consulted before the matter is dealt with under any other VEC policy or referred to any other person or body.

9.2 Is the disclosure a public interest disclosure?

Where the protected disclosure officer or coordinator has received a disclosure that has been assessed to be a protected disclosure, the protected disclosure coordinator will determine whether the disclosure amounts to a public interest disclosure. This assessment will be made within 45 days of the receipt of the disclosure.

In reaching a conclusion as to whether a protected disclosure is a public interest disclosure, the protected disclosure coordinator will consider whether the disclosure shows, or tends to show, that the public officer to whom the disclosure relates:

Has engaged, is engaging or proposes to engage in improper conduct in his or her capacity as a public officer; or

Has taken, is taking or proposes to take detrimental action in reprisal for the making of the protected disclosure.

Improper conduct means conduct that is corrupt, a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving substantial risk to public health or safety or to the environment. The conduct must be serious enough to constitute, if proved, a criminal offence or reasonable grounds for dismissal.

The Act makes it an offence for a person to take detrimental action against a person in reprisal for a protected disclosure. Detrimental action includes:

- Action causing injury, loss or damage;
- Intimidation or harassment; and
- Discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to a person's employment, career, profession, trade or business, including the taking of disciplinary action.

Where the protected disclosure coordinator concludes that the disclosure amounts to a public interest disclosure, he or she will:

- Notify the person who made the disclosure of that conclusion; and
- Refer the disclosure to the Ombudsman for formal determination as to whether it is indeed a public interest disclosure.
- Where the protected disclosure coordinator concludes that the disclosure is not a public interest disclosure, he or she will:
- Notify the person who made the disclosure of that conclusion; and
- Advise that person that he or she may request the public body to refer the disclosure to the Ombudsman for a formal determination as to whether the disclosure is a public interest disclosure, and that this request must be made within 28 days of the notification.

In either case, the protected disclosure coordinator will make the notification and the referral within 14 days of the conclusion being reached by the public body. Notification to the whistleblower is not necessary where the disclosure has been made anonymously.

10. INVESTIGATIONS

10.1 Introduction

Where the Ombudsman refers a protected disclosure to the VEC for investigation, the protected disclosure coordinator will appoint an investigator to carry out the investigation.

The objectives of an investigation will be to:

- collate information relating to the allegation as quickly as possible. This may involve taking steps to protect or preserve documents, materials and equipment;
- consider the information collected and to draw conclusions objectively and impartially;
- maintain procedural fairness in the treatment of witnesses and the person who is the subject of the disclosure; and to
- make recommendations arising from the conclusions drawn concerning remedial or other appropriate action.

10.2 Terms of reference

Before commencing an investigation, the protected disclosure coordinator will draw up terms of reference and obtain authorisation for those terms by the Electoral Commissioner. The terms of reference will set a date by which the investigation report is to be concluded, and will describe the resources available to the investigator to complete the investigation within the time set. The protected disclosure coordinator may approve, if reasonable, an extension of time requested by the investigator. The terms of reference will require the investigator to make regular reports to the protected disclosure coordinator who, in turn, is to keep the Ombudsman informed of general progress.

10.3 Investigation plan

The investigator will prepare an investigation plan for approval by the protected disclosure coordinator. The plan will list the issues to be substantiated and describe the avenue of inquiry. It will address the following issues:

What is being alleged?

What are the possible findings or offences?

What are the facts in issue?

How is the inquiry to be conducted?

What resources are required?

At the commencement of the investigation, the whistleblower should be:

- Notified by the investigator that he or she has been appointed to conduct the investigation;
- Asked to clarify any matters; and
- Provide any additional material he or she might have.

The investigator will be sensitive to the whistleblower's possible fear of reprisals and will be aware of the statutory protections provided to the whistleblower.

10.4 Natural justice

The principles of natural justice will be followed in any investigation of a public interest disclosure. The principles of natural justice concern procedural fairness and ensure a fair decision is reached by an objective decision maker. Maintaining procedural fairness protects the rights of individuals and enhances public confidence in the process.

The VEC will have regard to the following issues in ensuring procedural fairness:

- The person who is the subject of the disclosure is entitled to know the allegations made against him or her and must be given the right to respond. (This does not mean the person must be advised of the allegation as soon as the disclosure is received or the investigation has commenced);
- If the investigator is contemplating making a report adverse to the interests of any person, that person should be given the opportunity to put forward further material that may influence the outcome of the report and that person's defence should be fairly set out in the report;
- All relevant parties to a matter should be heard and all submissions should be considered;
- A decision should not be made until all reasonable inquiries have been made;
- The investigator or any decision maker should not have a personal or direct interest in the matter being investigated;
- All proceedings must be carried out fairly and without bias. Care should be taken to exclude perceived bias from the process; and
- The investigator must be impartial in assessing the credibility of the whistleblowers and any witnesses. Where appropriate, conclusions as to credibility should be included in the investigation report.

10.5 Conduct of the investigation

The investigator will make contemporaneous notes of all discussions and phone calls, and all interviews with witnesses will be taped. All information gathered in an investigation will be stored securely. Interviews will be conducted in private and the investigator will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the whistleblower. Where disclosure of the identity of the whistleblower cannot be avoided, due to the nature of the allegations, the investigator will warn the whistleblower and his or her welfare manager of this probability.

It is in the discretion of the investigator to allow any witness to have legal or other representation or support during an interview. If a witness has a special need for legal representation or support, permission should be granted.

10.6 Referral of an investigation to the Ombudsman

The protected disclosure coordinator will make a decision regarding the referral of an investigation to the Ombudsman where, on the advice of the investigator:

- The investigation is being obstructed by, for example, the non-cooperation of key witnesses; or
- The investigation has revealed conduct that may constitute a criminal offence.

10.7 Reporting requirements

The protected disclosure coordinator will ensure the whistleblower is kept regularly informed concerning the handling of a protected disclosure and an investigation.

The protected disclosure coordinator will report to the Ombudsman about the progress of an investigation. Where the Ombudsman or the whistleblower requests information about the progress of an investigation, that information will be provided within 28 days of the date of the request.

11. ACTION TAKEN AFTER AN INVESTIGATION

11.1 Investigator's final report

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will submit a written report of his or her findings to the protected disclosure coordinator. The report will contain:

The allegation/s:

- An account of all relevant information received and, if the investigator has rejected evidence as being unreliable, the reasons for this opinion being formed;
- The conclusions reached and the basis for them; and
- Any recommendations arising from the conclusions.

Where the investigator has found that the conduct disclosed by the whistleblower has occurred, recommendations made by the investigator will include:

- The steps that need to be taken by the VEC to prevent the conduct from continuing or occurring in the future; and
- Any action that should be taken by the VEC to remedy any harm or loss arising from the conduct. This action may include bringing disciplinary proceedings against the person responsible for the conduct, and referring the matter to an appropriate authority for further consideration.

The report will be accompanied by:

- The transcript or other record of any oral evidence taken, including tape recordings; and
- All documents, statements or other exhibits received by the officer and accepted as evidence during the course of the investigation.

Where the investigator's report is to include an adverse comment against any person, that person will be given the opportunity to respond and his or her defence will be fairly included in the report. The report will not disclose particulars likely to lead to the identification of the whistleblower.

11.2 Action to be taken

If the protected disclosure coordinator is satisfied that the investigation has found that the disclosed conduct has occurred, he or she will recommend to the Electoral Commissioner the action that must be taken to prevent the conduct from continuing or occurring in the future. The protected disclosure coordinator may also recommend that action be taken to remedy any harm or loss arising from the conduct.

The protected disclosure coordinator will provide a written report to the Attorney-General, the Ombudsman and the whistleblower setting out the findings of the investigation and any remedial steps taken.

Where the investigation concludes that the disclosed conduct did not occur, the protected disclosure coordinator will report these findings to the Ombudsman and to the whistleblower.

12. MANAGING THE WELFARE OF THE WHISTLEBLOWER

12.1 Commitment to protecting whistleblowers

The VEC is committed to the protection of genuine whistleblowers against detrimental action taken in reprisal for the making of protected disclosures. The protected disclosure coordinator is responsible for ensuring whistleblowers are protected from direct and indirect detrimental action, and that the culture of the workplace is supportive of protected disclosures being made.

The protected disclosure coordinator will appoint a welfare manager to all whistleblowers who have made a protected disclosure. The welfare manager will:

- Examine the immediate welfare and protection needs of a whistleblower who has made a disclosure and, where the whistleblower is an employee, seek to foster a supportive work environment;
- Inform the whistleblower of the legislative and administrative protections available to him or her;
- Listen and respond to any concerns of harassment, intimidation or victimisation in reprisal for making disclosure;
- Keep a contemporaneous record of all aspects of the case management of the whistleblower including all contact and follow-up action; and
- Discuss with the whistleblower what would be a realistic expectation for the outcome of an investigation of the disclosure.

All employees will be advised that it is an offence for a person to take detrimental action in reprisal for a protected disclosure. The maximum penalty is a fine of 240 penalty units (\$25,154.40) or two years imprisonment or both. The taking of detrimental action in breach of this provision can also be grounds for making a disclosure under the Act and can result in an investigation.

Detrimental action includes:

- Causing injury, loss or damage;
- Intimidation or harassment; and
- Discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to a person's employment, career, profession, trade or business (including the taking of disciplinary action).

12.2 Keeping the whistleblower informed

The protected disclosure coordinator will ensure the whistleblower is kept informed of action taken in relation to his or her disclosure, and the time frames that apply. The whistleblower will be informed of the objectives of an investigation, the findings of an investigation, and the steps taken by the VEC to address any improper conduct that has been found to have occurred. The whistleblower will be given reasons for decisions made by the VEC in relation to a protected disclosure. All communication with the whistleblower will be in plain English.

12.3 Occurrence of detrimental action

If a whistleblower reports an incident of harassment, discrimination or adverse treatment that would amount to detrimental action taken in reprisal for the making of the disclosure, the welfare manager will:

- Record details of the incident;
- Inform the whistleblower of his or her rights under the Act; and
- Advise the protected disclosure coordinator of the detrimental action.

The taking of detrimental action in reprisal for the making of a disclosure can be an offence against the Act as well as grounds for making a further disclosure. Where such detrimental action is reported, the protected disclosure coordinator will assess the report as a new disclosure under the Act. Where the protected disclosure coordinator is satisfied that the disclosure is a public interest disclosure, he or she will refer it to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman subsequently determines the matter to be a public interest disclosure, the Ombudsman may investigate the matter or refer it to another body for investigation as outlined in the Act.

12.4 Whistleblowers implicated in improper conduct

Where a person who makes a disclosure is implicated in misconduct, the VEC will handle the disclosure and protect the whistleblower from reprisals in accordance with the Act, the Ombudsman's guidelines and these procedures. The VEC acknowledges that the act of whistleblowing should not shield whistleblowers from the reasonable consequences flowing from any involvement in improper conduct. Section 17 of the Act specifically provides that a person's liability for his or her own conduct is not affected by the person's disclosure of that conduct under the Act. However, in some circumstances, an admission may be a mitigating factor when considering disciplinary or other action.

The Electoral Commissioner will make the final decision on the advice of the protected disclosure coordinator as to whether disciplinary or other action will be taken against a whistleblower. Where disciplinary or other action relates to conduct that is the subject of the whistleblower's disclosure, the disciplinary or other action will only be taken after the disclosed matter has been appropriately dealt with.

In all cases where disciplinary or other action is being contemplated, the Electoral Commissioner must be satisfied that it has been clearly demonstrated that:

- The intention to proceed with disciplinary action is not causally connected to the making of the disclosure (as opposed to the content of the disclosure or other available information);
- There are good and sufficient grounds that would fully justify action against any non-whistleblower in the same circumstances; and
- There are good and sufficient grounds that justify exercising any discretion to institute disciplinary or other action.

The protected disclosure coordinator will thoroughly document the process including recording the reasons why the disciplinary or other action is being taken, and the reasons why the action is not in retribution for the making of the disclosure. The protected disclosure coordinator will clearly advise the whistleblower of the proposed action to be taken, and of any mitigating factors that have been taken into account.

13. MANAGEMENT OF THE PERSON AGAINST WHOM A DISCLOSURE HAS BEEN MADE

The VEC recognises that employees against whom disclosures are made must also be supported during the handling and investigation of disclosures. The VEC will take all reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the person who is the subject of the disclosure during the assessment and investigation process. Where investigations do not substantiate disclosures, the fact that the investigation has been carried out, the results of the investigation, and the identity of the person who is the subject of the disclosure will remain confidential.

The protected disclosure coordinator will ensure the person who is the subject of any disclosure investigated by or on behalf of a public body is:

- Informed as to the substance of the allegations;
- Given the opportunity to answer the allegations before a final decision is made;
- Informed as to the substance of any adverse comment that may be included in any report arising from the investigation; and has
- His or her defence set out fairly in any report.

Where the allegations in a disclosure have been investigated, and the person who is the subject of the disclosure is aware of the allegations or the fact of the investigation, the protected disclosure coordinator will formally advise the person who is the subject of the disclosure of the outcome of the investigation.

The VEC will give its full support to a person who is the subject of a disclosure where the allegations contained in a disclosure are clearly wrong or unsubstantiated. If the matter has been publicly disclosed, the chief executive officer of the VEC will consider any request by that person to issue a statement of support setting out that the allegations were clearly wrong or unsubstantiated.

14. CRIMINAL OFFENCES

The VEC will ensure officers appointed to handle protected disclosures and all other employees are aware of the following offences created by the Act:

It is an offence for a person to take detrimental action against a person in reprisal for a protected disclosure being made. The Act provides a maximum penalty of a fine of 240 penalty units (\$25,154.40) or two years imprisonment or both.

It is an offence for a person to divulge information obtained as a result of the handling or investigation of a protected disclosure without legislative authority. The Act provides a maximum penalty of 60 penalty units (\$6,288.60) or six months imprisonment or both.

It is an offence for a person to obstruct the Ombudsman in performing his responsibilities under the Act. The Act provides a maximum penalty of 240 penalty units (\$25,154.40) or two years imprisonment or both.

It is an offence for a person to knowingly provide false information under the Act with the intention that it be acted on as a disclosed matter. The Act provides a maximum penalty of 240 penalty units (\$25,154.40) or two years imprisonment or both.

15. REVIEW

These procedures will be reviewed annually to ensure they meet the objectives of the Act and accord with the Ombudsman's guidelines.

GLOSSARY

Ballot

A method of secret voting.

By-election

A by-election is an election in a single electorate to fill a casual vacancy caused by the departure of sitting Member of Parliament or local government councillor before the term expires.

Candidate

A candidate is an eligible elector who nominates for election.

Compulsory enrolment

All Australian citizens 18 years and over are required by law to enrol.

Compulsory voting

All enrolled electors must vote at State and local elections (except for those over 70 and non-resident voters).

Contested election

A contested election is an election where there are more candidates than vacancies.

Councillor

An elected member of a municipality.

District

One of the 88 Legislative Assembly electorates.

Election

The choosing of representatives by the voters.

Election Day

The date voters cast their votes.

Elector

A person whose name appears on the register of electors and who is entitled to vote in elections.

Electoral Commissioner

The statutory officer appointed by the Governor-in-Council with responsibility for the proper conduct of Parliamentary, local and statutory elections.

Electoral enrolment register

The VEC's database of all Victorian electors.

Electoral Roll

A list of names of all the people who are entitled to vote in an election.

Enrolment

The placement of one's name and address on the register of electors. You cannot vote at an election unless you are enrolled.

Informal voting

A ballot paper that is either left blank or is incorrectly marked. These ballot papers are excluded from the count and therefore do not contribute to the election of a candidate.

Legislative Assembly

One of the two houses in State Parliament. There are 88 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), one from each district. The party or coalition of parties that wins majority support in this House forms the Government.

Legislative Council

One of the two houses of State Parliament. It is often called the 'house of review' as this is one of its major functions. There are 44 Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs), two from each Province within Victoria. From the 2006 state election, there will be 40 MLC's, five from each region.

Preferential voting

A vote for all candidates in order of preference. If no candidate has an absolute majority or first preference votes, preferences are distributed until one candidate has an absolute majority.

Proportional representation

A system of voting designed to elect representatives in proportion to the amount of support each has in the electorate.

Province

One of the 22 Legislative Council electorates. Each province contains four electoral districts.

Redivision

The redrawing of electoral boundaries to ensure that there are, as near as possible, equal numbers of voters in each electorate within Victoria.

Senior election Officials

A trained electoral official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election. The Election Manager for an election is the front-line manager for that election.

Voter participation

The percentage of enrolled electors who voted.

Voting centre

A place at which electors can vote in an election. There are three types in State elections:

- Early voting centres
- Mobile voting centres
- Election day voting centres

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005

ISSN 1327-6727

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