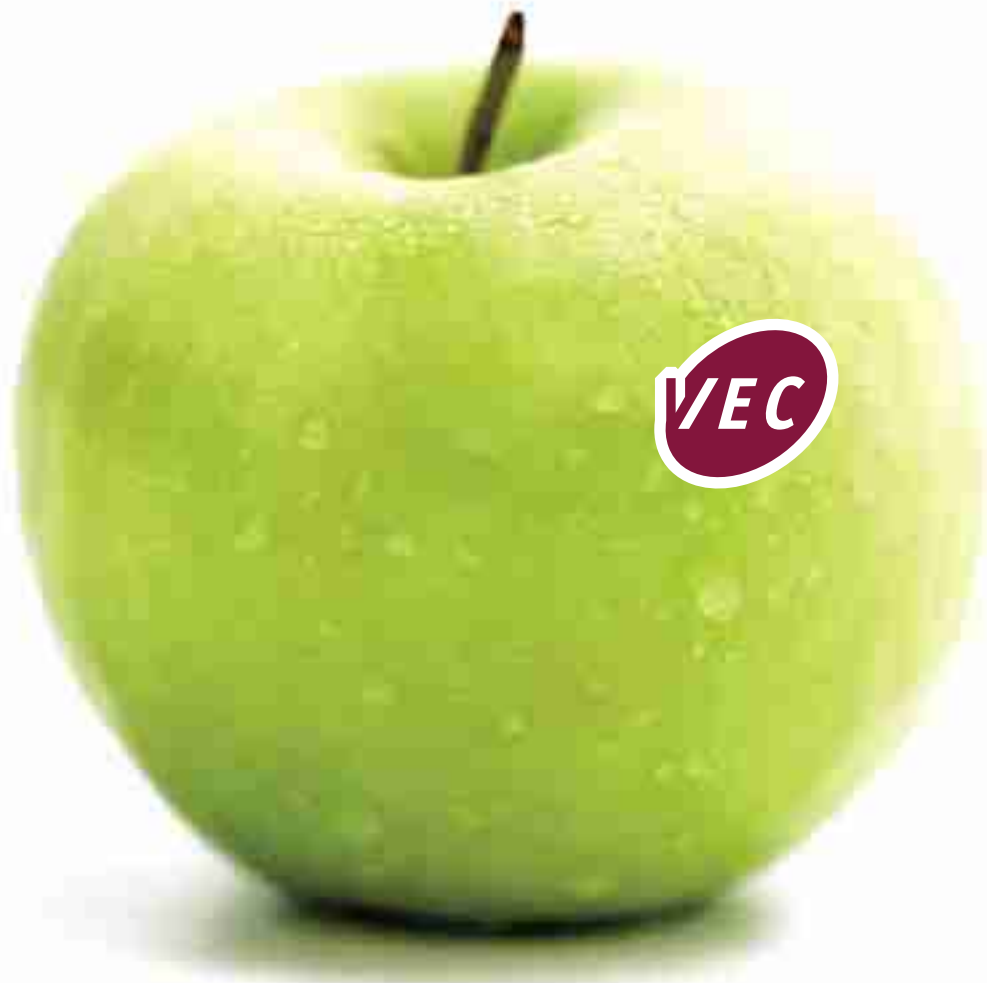


*An efficient electoral system
is the basis of a
healthy democracy*

VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2003 – 30 June 2004



The VEC at a glance

VEC HISTORY

Elections for the Victorian Parliament began when Victoria achieved independence from New South Wales in 1851. In 1910, Victoria's 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).

VEC LEGISLATION

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

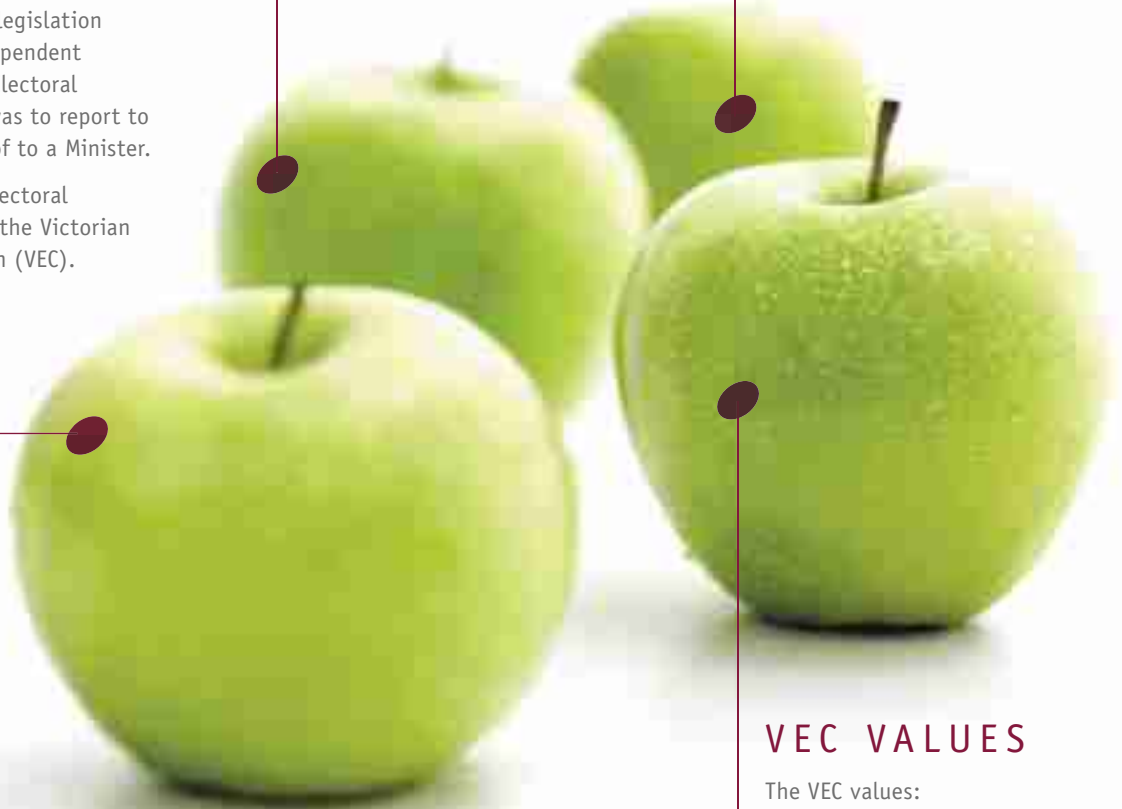
- *Electoral Act 2002*
- *Constitution Act 1975*
- *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act 1982*
- *Local Government Act 1989*

VEC 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.



VEC 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.

Year at a glance

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.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Summary of VEC activity	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Number of enrolled electors (as at 30 June)	3,153,132	3,197,890	3,251,836	3,265,948	3,281,336
Total enrolment changes	590,772	477,629	565,730	597,902	457,608
Changes from VEC enrolment initiatives	83,186	100,654	94,774	223,706	117,611
State elections	1	-	-	1	-
State by-elections	5	-	-	2	-
Local government elections	42	3	17	54	-
Local government by-elections	3	5	5	5	9
Statutory, commercial and community elections	16	22	55	38	97
Local government electoral representation reviews	-	-	-	-	10*
Staff numbers (as at 30 June)**		60	67.2	66.8	65.4
Total expenditure	\$33.9m	\$14.1m	\$21.5m	\$44.7m	\$13.8m

*Indicates new work arising from the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*

**Reported as full time equivalent

More information

For more information about the VEC please contact us at:

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505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
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Facsimile 03 9629 8632

Website
www.vec.vic.gov.au

Contents

6 October 2004

The Hon Rob Hulls, MP
Attorney-General
Level 1
55 St Andrews Place
Melbourne Vic. 3002

Dear Attorney

Victorian Electoral Commission Annual Report 2003-04

I am pleased to submit to you, for presentation to Parliament, the 2003-04 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 2003-04.

Yours sincerely



Doug Beecroft
Electoral Commissioner
(Acting)

The VEC at a glance

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The past year has been a period of consolidation and planning for the next State election.

4 About this report

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5 Year in review

A summary of our major achievements and a look at what lies ahead.

9 Part 1 – Corporate governance

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

17 Part 2 – Quality election services

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

27 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.

41 Part 4 – Community understanding and participation

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

47 Part 5 – Fair and equal representation

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

53 Part 6 – Organisational effectiveness

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

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Electoral Commissioner's report

The past year has been a period of consolidation and planning for the next State election; finalising the corporate plan and business plans for the next three years; reviewing the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC) budget in response to a decision of the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet (ERC); and the conduct of the first ten electoral representation reviews for municipal councils.

The VEC has responded to the changes to the State election environment by reviewing all operational procedures to streamline and modernise the State election infrastructure. Stakeholders will be consulted in the near future on various approaches that are under consideration.

We have now completed our corporate and business plans for the next three year period. The corporate plan will cover a full cycle of parliamentary and local government elections. It sets out five key result areas, thirteen objectives and provides strategies to deliver on the objectives. The business plans provide further details of specific projects, as well as funding and key performance targets for each project.

During the past year the VEC has commenced a new field of work in the area of conducting electoral representation reviews for municipal councils. Under the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, each council will be required to undertake an electoral representation review before every second general election (every eight years). The reviews require the VEC to report to the Minister for Local Government on the number of councillors and the electoral structure that best provides for fair and equitable representation for voters. Ten reviews have been completed and as at 30 June 2004 the Minister had accepted one review recommendation with the remaining nine under consideration. The reviews provide for an independent process to review councils' electoral structures. (Previously, councils undertook these reviews themselves and made a recommendation to the Minister).

As a result of a decision by the ERC, a review of the VEC's budget and forward estimates was undertaken by external consultants. The review provided the Government with confidence that the level of funding for the VEC was appropriate and provided value for money. The reviewers and the VEC identified areas where savings could be achieved. The VEC is confident that the savings to which it has agreed will not negatively impact on the service levels at the next State election.

The VEC and the independent reviewers identified that the "competitive tendering" provisions for the conduct of local government elections are not appropriate as the VEC is the sole provider of these election services to local government. I strongly recommend that the Government consider making the VEC responsible for all local government elections, including being responsible for determining the appropriate service levels. At present the responsibility for these elections is diffused between the council and the VEC. The VEC should be accountable to the Parliament for the conduct of these elections by being required to report to the Parliament. Once all local government elections are brought into line in 2008, the above recommended reforms would further strengthen the independence of the election process.

Finally, I wish to record my appreciation to the VEC staff for their dedication and commitment to electoral administration in Victoria. As this will be my final Annual Report as Electoral Commissioner, I wish to acknowledge that it has been an honour and privilege to serve the Parliament and the voters of Victoria over five State elections and seventeen years at the VEC.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Colin Barry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Colin Barry
Electoral Commissioner

About this report

Planning and Reporting Framework

This Annual Report has been structured around the five key result areas outlined in the VEC's Corporate Plan, 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2007. The plan had been developed prior to the reporting period, but was held over for publication due to the independent review of the VEC's budget (including its corporate plan and business plans) and for stakeholder consultation prior to publication in its present form. The draft plan formed the basis for the VEC's operations during 2003-04, and therefore provides the appropriate structure for this report.

The chart below shows the relationship between the VEC's corporate plan and the structure of this Annual Report.



Key Result Area: Quality election services

Objective	Major Achievements	Future Directions
<p>Continue to improve the quality of parliamentary, local government and commercial elections to ensure the integrity of democracy in Victoria.</p>	<p>Parliamentary elections</p> <p>The VEC commenced developing procedures to ensure that the designation of all its voting centres comply with Australian disability access standards. The VEC engaged a specialist company to develop an assessment form that meets relevant standards of access.</p> <p>A review of the current Disability Action Plan was commenced to improve access and equity to electoral and enrolment information for Victorians with a disability.</p> <p>The VEC has joined with the AEC in facilitating a Homeless Sector Workshop, and has developed a training session for service providers, field workers and individual homeless persons.</p> <p>(pages 18-19)</p>	<p>The new fixed-date elections provide an increased ability for planning and resource management. However, it also creates a higher level of expectation from the community for higher quality and more cost-efficient State election services.</p> <p>The VEC will develop its State election service delivery plan, which will include service improvements. The VEC will brief stakeholders on the key features of the plan.</p> <p>The introduction of a proportional representation system to elect members of the Legislative Council will require changes to election procedures and the introduction of a new computerised vote counting system.</p> <p>The VEC will review registered political parties under section 52 of the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>.</p> <p>(pages 18-19)</p>
	<p>Local government elections</p> <p>The VEC conducted all nine local government by-elections across the State, with 56,630 votes processed.</p> <p>In line with legislative amendments to the <i>Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003</i> the VEC amended practices and procedures and updated manuals, handbooks and other support material.</p> <p>Election services to municipal councils were standardised and the costing policy was revised to increase the recovery of direct costs. An upgrade to the VEC's election management and enrolment software was undertaken to accommodate the special electoral requirements for the City of Melbourne election.</p> <p>(pages 20-21)</p>	<p>The VEC will be responsible for conducting 25 Local Government elections in November 2004, including the Melbourne City Council for the first time.</p> <p>From November 2008 all local elections will be conducted simultaneously across Victoria on a four yearly basis.</p> <p>Improve penalty payment options for non-voters to enable penalty notices to be paid via Bpay and EFTpos facilities.</p> <p>(page 22)</p>
	<p>Statutory, commercial and community elections</p> <p>The VEC conducted 53 statutory and 44 community and commercial elections, with approximately 500,000 voters in these elections.</p> <p>The statutory elections included three liquor licensing polls, and four industry development polls. The VEC also conducted 39 concurrent elections for board members to community health centres.</p> <p>The VEC reviewed the conduct of commercial and community elections, and implemented a policy position establishing the conditions for the future conduct of these elections.</p> <p>(pages 22-26)</p>	<p>Commercial and community elections will be conducted in accordance with the VEC's policy to take into account the VEC's need to focus on its core business obligations.</p> <p>(page 26)</p>

Key Result Area: Timely and accurate enrolment services

Objective	Major Achievements	Future Directions
<p>To ensure the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors.</p>	<p>A new joint enrolment arrangement was negotiated with the Australian Electoral Commission, which recognised the significant contribution the VEC makes to the Victorian electoral enrolment register.</p> <p>117,611 enrolment changes were generated from VEC initiatives. The VEC achieved its Corporate Plan target of contributing 25% of enrolment to the Victorian enrolment register.</p> <p>(pages 28–33)</p>	<p>Working within the national context, the VEC will develop quantitative measures to assess the accuracy, completeness, security and validity of the enrolment register.</p> <p>(page 33)</p>
<p>Deliver high quality enrolment information products, mapping products and services to stakeholders.</p>	<p>Electoral roll products were provided for nine local government by-elections.</p> <p>The VEC has begun enhancing its election management and enrolment software to accommodate the changes required by the <i>Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003</i>. This legislation requires a new roll production process designed to provide for entitlement day (i.e. close of rolls) to be closer to election day (from 2005, entitlement day will be 57 days before election day, instead of about 90 days).</p> <p>1,452 enrolment extracts were provided to members of Parliament, and 51 jury lists were provided to the Juries Commissioner.</p> <p>(pages 34–36)</p>	<p>The VEC will assist with the merging and production of rolls for the 25 local government elections in November 2004.</p> <p>(page 37)</p>
<p>Maximise public confidence in the security of personal information held by the VEC.</p>	<p>Twenty-two requests for enrolment information were processed in line with the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i> and the <i>Information Privacy Act 2000</i>.</p> <p>Department of Human Services Adoption Information Services (AIS) was granted access for eligible parties to contact birth parents, adoptive parents and birth relatives.</p> <p>BreastScreen Victoria was granted access to information to assist in raising awareness of breast cancer in the community.</p> <p>The VEC worked closely with Victoria Police to develop a protocol that will balance public interest in legitimate policing with public interest in privacy and confidence in the electoral system.</p> <p>No complaints were received in relation to breaches of privacy.</p> <p>(pages 37–40)</p>	<p>The VEC will continue to consult with Victoria Police to finalise a protocol to enable access to enrolment information for criminal investigation purposes.</p> <p>(page 40)</p>

Key Result Area: Community understanding and participation

Objective	Major Achievements	Future Directions
Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2006 State election and any by-elections.	<p>Significant progress on revising the VEC website, incorporating up-to-date and accessible information, required to inform the public on all aspects of State and other elections.</p> <p>(page 42)</p>	<p>Plan and implement the communication campaign for the November 2006 State election, including voter cards to be distributed to all electors about the new Upper House arrangements.</p> <p>Finalise the update of all aspects of the VEC's website.</p> <p>Implement an internet look-up facility (through the VEC's website) for voters to check their enrolment details and voting entitlements at State and local government elections.</p> <p>(page 43)</p>
Maximise public understanding and participation at the 2004 and 2005 local government elections and any by-elections.	<p>Prepared and implemented communication campaigns for nine local government by-elections, increasing the level of participation by an average of 3%.</p> <p>Prepared communication campaigns for 25 local government elections in preparation for November 2004.</p> <p>(pages 43-44)</p>	<p>Implement communication campaigns for 25 municipal councils including the City of Melbourne, and increase voter participation.</p> <p>(page 44)</p>
Encourage a culture of democratic participation and community engagement, particularly among those whose participation is identified as lower than average.	<p>Formalised the Joint Electoral Education Agreement between the Australian Electoral Commission and the Victorian Electoral Commission through a signed Memorandum of Understanding in relation to improving the participation rate of the lowest participating groups.</p> <p>Developed a partnership with the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) that will deliver a Democratic Engagement Project at the CAE, with over 500 adult education students taking part.</p> <p>With the AEC, "Your Vote Counts" Program was delivered to 60 teachers from metropolitan and rural schools.</p> <p>The VEC was represented at the three day Herald Sun VCE Expo, the Melbourne Age Careers Expo, as well as the Victorian Parliament Open Day.</p> <p>(pages 45-46)</p>	<p>Implement and evaluate the pilot project at the Centre for Adult Education (CAE), to provide electoral education to adults with low literacy.</p> <p>Identify further appropriate opportunities for education programs to encourage electoral participation amongst those whose participation has been low in the past.</p> <p>(page 46)</p>
Demonstrate integrity, impartiality and accountability by reporting transparently to Parliament and communicating effectively with stakeholders.	<p>VEC received a bronze award for the 2002-03 Annual Report in the 54th Australasian Reporting Awards.</p> <p>(page 46)</p>	<p>Produce an issue of the VEC's newsletter, <i>Selections</i>, advising stakeholders of legislative changes and major forthcoming electoral events.</p> <p>(page 46)</p>

Key Result Area: Fair and equal representation

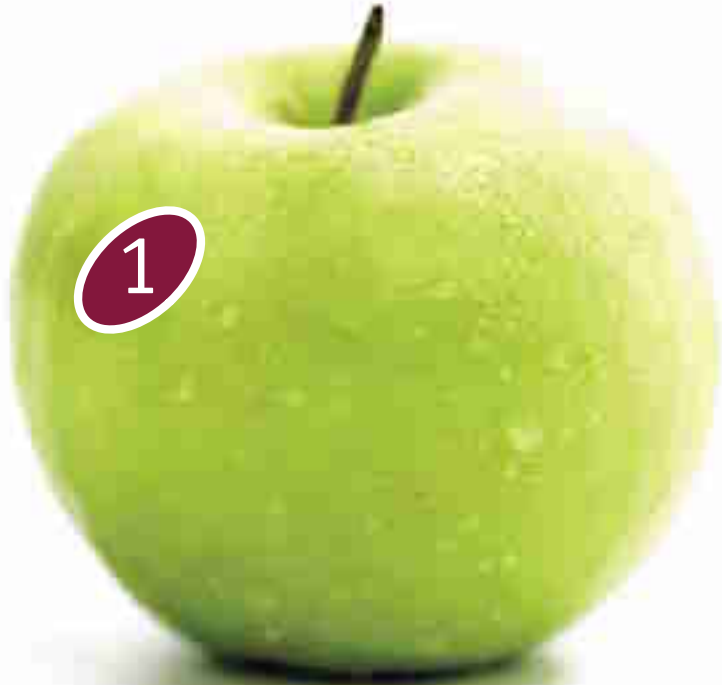
Objective	Major Achievements	Future Directions
Provision of high quality electoral representation review services to local government.	<p>The VEC developed a system for the conduct of electoral representation reviews. This involved allocating resources, sourcing information and developing appropriate expertise in the area.</p> <p>The VEC conducted electoral representation reviews for ten councils. This involved conducting information sessions, public hearings, and the review of over 1000 public submissions.</p> <p>(pages 48–51)</p>	<p>The VEC will be responsible for conducting 30 local government electoral representation reviews in 2004-05, and 39 in the lead-up to the 2008 Council elections.</p> <p>(page 49)</p>
Provision of high quality representation review services to Electoral Boundaries Commission.	<p>The Electoral Boundaries Commission did not meet in 2003-04.</p> <p>(page 52)</p>	<p>The VEC will provide full administrative and mapping services to support the Electoral Boundaries Commission in its redivision of Upper House electorates in 2005.</p> <p>(page 52)</p>

Key Result Area: Organisational effectiveness

Objective	Major Achievements	Future Directions
Ensure the receipt of funds, payment of expenses and maintenance of the VEC's operations within budget and according to legislation.	<p>A review was undertaken of the VEC's budget recommending savings over the next three financial years. The review made recommendations to be examined by the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) of Cabinet.</p> <p>(page 54)</p>	<p>Subject to the ERC's review of the budget recommendations, the VEC will need to implement savings over the next three financial years.</p> <p>Undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and develop an organisational risk management plan.</p> <p>(page 54)</p>
Ensure the availability of a skilled workforce needed by the organisation to deliver its corporate and legislative objectives.	<p>The new Victorian Public Sector career structure was implemented, and the VEC conducted 12 over grade reviews and 6 applications for work value reviews.</p> <p>Training and development was undertaken by 23 staff members in a variety of areas.</p> <p>A new work area was professionally redesigned and fitted to excellent occupational health and work safety standards.</p> <p>(pages 55–60)</p>	<p>Develop and implement a new work environment strategy to improve workplace health and safety of VEC staff and members of the public attending election offices and voting centres.</p> <p>The VEC will 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.</p> <p>(page 61)</p>
Ensure the VEC has an ongoing, effective and cost-efficient IT environment to conduct its business.	<p>Successful transition from outsourced information technology services to a new in-house Information Technology Branch.</p> <p>(page 62)</p>	<p>Release the VEC's Information Technology (IT) strategic plan for 2004-2007, as well as deploy and support all required IT solutions for the November 2004 municipal council elections and the 2006 State election.</p> <p>(page 62)</p>

Part

1



The VEC contributes to democracy in Victoria by ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and according to law.



A basis in legislation

The VEC's business is underpinned by legislation.

The *Electoral Act 2002* is Victoria's principal electoral legislation, 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.

A number of other Acts impose duties on the VEC. For example, the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* relates to the conduct of polls in Melbourne's 'dry areas' 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)(c) of the *Public Sector Management and Employment Act 1998*, the Electoral Commissioner has all the functions of a department head in relation to officers and employees of the VEC.

The Victorian Electoral Commission

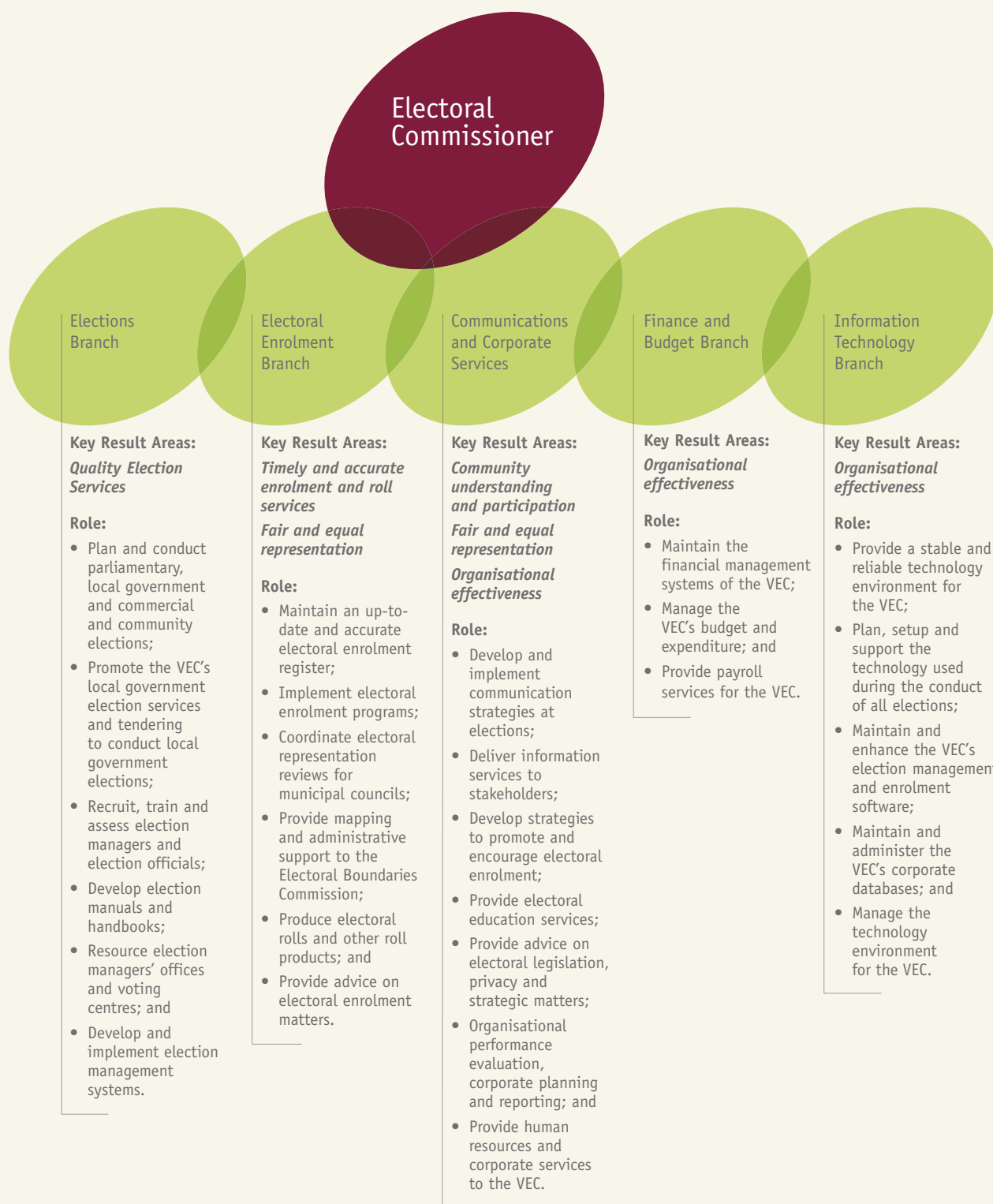
The VEC is the administrative agency through which the Electoral Commissioner's legislative obligations are exercised.

The VEC is divided into five branches. The responsibilities of each branch are listed in the organisational chart on page 11. The Information Technology Branch is a new branch created in recognition of the strategic importance of this area across all the VEC's business requirements.

Unlike many other government agencies, the VEC's workload fluctuates depending on election cycles. Recent 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.

Corporate structure



Executive Management Group

Electoral Commissioner

Colin Barry Dip T (Prim), BA, B Ed

Mr Barry was appointed Electoral Commissioner in 1999. He was previously the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, a position he had held since 1989, and the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer from 1988 to 1989. Mr Barry leaves his position as Electoral Commissioner in Victoria on 30 June 2004, taking a new position as Electoral Commissioner in New South Wales.

Acting Manager, Elections Branch

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, Electoral Enrolment Branch

Paul Strickland

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, covering the absence of Mr David Kelly who is Acting Manager, Elections Branch.

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

Manager, Communications and Corporate Services

Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner

Doug Beecroft BSc, BA, Dip Ed, Grad Dip App Soc Psych

Mr Beecroft joined the VEC in 1995 and manages the branch responsible for coordinating the VEC's communication strategies and corporate services. 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 during the absence of Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Ms Debra Byrne.

Key result areas: Community understanding and participation. Fair and equal representation. Organisational effectiveness.

Manager, Information Technology

Simon Hancock

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 in a range of industry sectors.

Key result area: Organisational effectiveness.

Manager, Finance and Budget Branch

David Clarke CPA

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.



(From left to right) Simon Hancock, David Clarke, David Kelly, Doug Beecroft, Paul Strickland and Colin Barry




The VEC's Audit Committee

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

The Audit Committee provides an 'arm's length' review of the VEC's operating practices and any proposed major projects.

In 2003-04 the Committee comprised:

- Mr Robert Yeo (Chairman), Partner, Hall Chadwick Chartered Accountants;
- Ms Elizabeth Reeves, accountant and senior election official;
- Mr Denis Rosenfeld, Senior Budget Analyst, Department of Justice (up to 4 September 2003); and
- Ms Alex Zavisic, Senior Analyst, Department of Treasury and Finance (from June 2004)



The audit committee provides an 'arm's length' review of the VEC's operating practices and any proposed major projects.

The Committee provides advice to the Electoral Commissioner and the Manager of Finance and Budget. In addition, the VEC's internal auditors regularly attend Audit Committee meetings.

In accordance with its charter, the VEC's Audit Committee met four times in 2003-04. Tasks included reviewing annual financial accounts and proposed budgets for 2005-08.

Following the resignation of Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants, as the VEC's internal auditors, the Audit Committee initiated a competitive tendering process and appointed WHK Day Neilson as its internal auditors as of May 2004.

The Committee also continued its program of internal audits. These included an audit of the security of the VicRoads data utilised by the VEC in the targeted mailout enrolment programs, as well as an audit of the VEC's compliance with the Financial Management Compliance Framework.

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 11).

The VEC develops comprehensive risk management strategies for all major 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, including infrastructure, communication strategies, recruitment, and information technology.

However, the VEC acknowledges that it has not to date developed an overarching risk management plan, and that such a plan is necessary in order to ensure that organisational risks are identified and that appropriate contingencies are in place. This matter has been raised by the VEC's Audit Committee as well as the reviewers of the VEC's organisational effectiveness in their report to the Government's Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet (ERC) in March 2004.

During 2004-05 the VEC will undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and develop a risk management plan.

Electoral Council of Australia

The Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) is a consultative forum with membership comprising Commonwealth, State and Territory Electoral Commissioners and Chief Electoral Officers.

As a member of this council, the Victorian Electoral Commissioner considers significant national issues in electoral administration and enrolment.

The Victorian Electoral Commissioner was the chair of the ECA for the twelve months up to 30 June 2004.

Matters considered by the ECA during the past year included:

- continuous enrolment programs;
- performance indicators monitoring improvements in enrolment management in Australia;
- the compatibility of electoral legislation across jurisdictions;
- partnerships in the management of the joint electoral roll and in the provision of roll products and electoral services;
- keeping abreast of electoral developments in Australia with a special emphasis on the provisions of facilities for persons with a disability;
- preparing public information on Australia-wide voting systems and representative structures;
- considering overseas developments in electronic voting; and
- considering themes and agendas for future electoral research conferences which involve academics and electoral commentators.



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 eight of this report.

The VEC did not receive any FOI requests for the 2003-04 financial year.

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 in order to fulfil its functions under legislation. 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 37-40);
- 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.

The VEC's Privacy Policy is available for public inspection. The VEC's website contains a summary of the policy.

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 freedom of information 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 2003-04.

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

Part

2



In a healthy democracy, particularly where voting is compulsory, it's important that election services are easy to use and accessible for all eligible voters. The VEC works to provide a quality service, which not only satisfies legislative requirements but also the expectations and needs of all Victorian voters.

David Kelly
Acting Manager, Elections Branch




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

Implementing changes to Victoria's electoral system

The *Constitution (Parliamentary Reform) Act 2003* made significant changes to the State electoral environment. These include:



This year has therefore been one of planning in preparation for the implementation of these major changes to Victoria's electoral system.

- barring exceptional circumstances, the next State election will be held on the last Saturday in November 2006, and every four years subsequently;
- the system for electing the Legislative Council will 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; and
- there is provision for referenda to alter entrenched parts of the State's Constitution.

These changes will have a significant impact on the management and conduct of State elections. Fixed-date elections provide an increased ability for planning and resource management. They also create a higher level of expectation from the community for high quality and cost efficient State election services.

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 required to efficiently administer 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.

This year has therefore been one of planning in preparation for the implementation of these major changes to Victoria's electoral system.

Planning for service improvements

The VEC has begun planning for changes in services and a more appropriate and cost-efficient infrastructure to conduct a State election under the new legislation. Over the next 12 months the VEC will finalise a comprehensive State election service delivery plan. Stakeholders will be briefed on the key features of the plan.

The plan will also provide for improvements to pre-election enrolment, the location of voting centres and the provision of specialised services to voters with a disability or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A fixed election date will also allow the VEC to provide improved training to senior election officials, and recruit and train election officials with certainty in advance of the election.

In response to a complaint to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in relation to access to a voting centre at the 2002 State election, the VEC undertook to ensure that the designation of all its voting centres complies with Australian disability access standards. During the year the VEC consulted with the complainant regarding the criteria used to assess access to voting centres, and engaged a specialist company to further review the criteria. This company has undertaken similar work for the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

The VEC has also begun to review its Disability Action Plan to ensure that it states clear aspirations linked to action steps, includes timeframes and responsible people, and a protocol for complaints. This review is expected to be completed by 30 October 2004, and will include a consultation process.

The VEC has joined with the AEC in facilitating a Homeless Sector Workshop in February 2004. It is estimated that there are at least 20,000 such persons in Victoria, and available evidence indicates a low rate of enrolment and voting by these citizens.

Representatives from the VEC, the AEC, the Bringing Home Democracy Project, the Council for Homeless Persons and the Homeless Persons Legal Clinic explored plans to make enrolment and voting more accessible for homeless persons at the workshop.

At a follow up workshop in May 2004 the VEC, the AEC and the Council for Homeless Persons developed a training session for service providers, field workers and individual homeless persons. This session is planned for July 2004.

Review of political parties

In the previous Annual Report, the VEC foreshadowed a review of the registered political parties under section 52 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, to determine whether parties were still entitled to be registered by virtue of having 500 members. However, the review was delayed as a result of developments at the Commonwealth level. The Democratic Labor Party had challenged the legality of similar provisions of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* in the High Court. The High Court's decision may have relevance to the VEC's review of registered political parties.

On 14 May 2004 the VEC de-registered the party "Phil Cleary – Independent Australia". The VEC was required to de-register the party under section 54 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, because it had not endorsed a candidate at any election in the past five years.



Local government election 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 conducted all local government elections in Victoria from March 2003. The VEC has now effectively become the sole provider of local government election services in Victoria.

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. Generally, metropolitan municipalities with large proportions of voters from non-English speaking backgrounds still favour attendance elections.

In December 2003 amendments were made to the *Local Government Act 1989* which introduced fixed 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 having elections in November 2005.

The VEC has introduced changes to practices and procedures to accommodate the changes to the *Local Government Act 1989*. These changes have been incorporated within revisions to manuals, handbooks and other support material.

Figure 1 - Local Government elections in Victoria, 2004-08



	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Local government election timetable	25	54	0	0	79

The VEC was the sole tenderer for the 25 local government elections to be held in 2004-05. All 25 municipalities had accepted the VEC's tender by 30 June 2004. Of these, the VEC had finalised 13 service contracts, with the remainder to be finalised by the end of September 2004.

In preparation for the November 2004 local government elections the VEC has standardised election services to councils and revised its costing policy to increase the recovery of direct costs. The November 2004 round of local council elections will include the City of Melbourne, whose elections have previously been conducted by the AEC. In preparation, the VEC has devised an improved ballot pack that will make the voting process considerably easier. The VEC has also completed an upgrade to its election management and enrolment software to accommodate the special electoral requirements for the City of Melbourne elections.

Local government by-elections

The VEC conducted nine by-elections for local government in 2003-04. By-elections occur when an elected councillor resigns or dies before the end of their term. All of these by-elections were conducted by postal ballot rather than by attendance voting. Figure 2 provides specific details of the nine by-elections.

Figure 2 – Local government by-elections

Local Government by-elections	Contested	Ward	Election Date	Voting Method	Voters
Casey City Council by-Election 2003	Yes	Strathard	19/07/03	Postal	12521
Ballarat City Council by-Election 2003	Yes	Nerrina	16/08/03	Postal	7999
Greater Bendigo City Council by-election 2003	Yes	Eaglehawk	1/11/03	Postal	9747
Golden Plains Shire Council by-election 2004	No	Forest	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
Indigo Shire Council by-Election 2004	Yes	Unsubdivided	7/02/04	Postal	11457
Warrnambool City Council by-Election 2004	Yes	Pertobe	21/02/04	Postal	3449
Strathbogie Shire Council by-election 2004	No	Goulburn Weir	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*
Southern Grampians Shire Council by-election 2004	Yes	Unsubdivided	29/05/04	Postal	11457
Yarriambiack Shire Council by-election 2004	No	Hopetoun	N/a*	N/a*	N/a*

* These by-elections were uncontested with the nominated candidate being elected unopposed.

Figure 3 provides a summary and a comparison with the 2002-03 financial year.

Figure 3 – By-election yearly comparison

Local government by-elections conducted by the VEC	2002-03	2003-04
Attendance	1	0
Postal	4	9
Contested	4	6
Uncontested	1	3



Local government elections - future directions

The VEC is due to conduct 25 local government elections in November 2004, and is committed to continuous improvement in providing quality election services. For these local government elections the VEC will:

- Introduce service improvements for electors with special needs at attendance elections (revised process for review of wheelchair access at voting centres);
- Undertake a comprehensive training program for election officials to refresh skills, develop a thorough understanding of changes arising out of the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* and become proficient users of the VEC's Election Management System following system development;
- Invite public tenders for key election services including mail house services, manufacture and supply of cardboard furniture and material, printing of election materials (ballot papers, declaration envelopes and candidate handbooks) and cartage and courier services. In addition the VEC will negotiate a new service level agreement with Australia Post; and
- Improve penalty payment options for non-voters to enable penalty notices to be paid electronically via Bpay and EFTpos facilities.

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 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, and an increasing number of ballots to approve enterprise bargaining agreements. The VEC conducts these elections and polls following consideration of their public interest and the nature of the organisation. These elections and polls are conducted on a cost recovery basis.

In 2003-04 the VEC conducted 53 statutory elections and polls and 44 elections for commercial or community organisations.

Approximately 500,000 electors voted in these elections and all elections were conducted to the satisfaction of the VEC's clients.

Statutory elections and polls

In 2003-04 the VEC conducted 53 statutory elections including three liquor-licensing polls, 46 community health centre elections and four industry development polls. This was a significant increase on the 11 statutory elections conducted in 2002-03.

Figure 4 – Statutory elections conducted

Statutory elections conducted	2002-03	2003-04
Liquor Licensing Polls	1	3
Community Health Centres	8	46
Industry Development Polls	2	4
Total statutory elections	11	53
Total number of voters	27,914	15,869

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.

The VEC conducted three liquor licensing polls this year.

Figure 5 – Liquor Licensing Polls

Election Name	Poll Date	Voters	Turnout %
Box Hill Liquor Licensing Poll 2004	14/02/2004	693	64.50
Canterbury Liquor Licensing Poll 2004	19/06/2004	2016	72.17
Greythorn Liquor Licensing Poll 2004	19/06/2004	1561	76.68
		4270	71.12

The average voter turnout was very similar to the average of the previous three Liquor Licensing Polls which was 71.2%.

The current arrangements to conduct these polls are by attendance voting. Postal voting is considered to be a more effective means of conducting these polls and provides easier access for voters at generally lower costs. The VEC recommends that in the future these polls are conducted by post, and that the applicant meets the reasonable costs for these polls.

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 elections of five board members for each of Victoria's 39 community health centres during 2003-04. Of the 39 elections to be conducted, 20 were contested.

The 20 contested elections were conducted concurrently. Key election dates are below;

Figure 6 - Key election dates

	Date
Notice of closure of roll advertisement	Thursday, 8 April 2004
Close of roll	Monday, 19 April 2004
Notice of election mailed to all members	Tuesday, 27 April 2004
Close of nominations	Tuesday, 11 May 2004 (12.00 noon)
Draw for ballot paper positions	Tuesday, 11 May 2004 (2.00 pm)
Last day for lodgement of candidate statements and indication of preferences	Friday, 14 May 2004 (12.00 noon)
Mailout of ballot packs	Friday, 21 May 2004
Close of voting	Friday, 4 June 2004 (4.00 pm)

The VEC arranged for the printing and mailout of 7,757 ballot packs for the 20 elections. The ballot packs included a ballot paper, an information leaflet containing voting instructions and candidates' statements with indications of preferences, a multi-language voting instructions leaflet, a ballot paper envelope, a reply paid envelope and an envelope for despatch of the ballot material.





The VEC established a voting centre for the Box Hill Liquor Licensing poll in the office at Little Collins Street to make it convenient for residents to lodge their vote.

The number of reply paid return-addressed envelopes received at the close of voting was 3,282, a return rate of 42%.

The results were emailed to all community health centres on Saturday, 5 June 2004 with the Department of Human Services being notified on Monday, 7 June 2004. All members who submitted a nomination form were mailed the results for their community health centre.

This is in comparison to June and July 2001, when the VEC conducted the inaugural elections of board members. A total of 41 positions on boards were elected (11 were uncontested). In this situation 10,399 votes were processed, representing a return rate of 55.6%. The higher return rate may reflect the increased interest as they were inaugural elections.

The VEC was also engaged to conduct seven by-elections for board members for community health centres. Of these, two were contested, involving 893 voters representing a 40% turnout rate.

Industry development polls

The VEC was required to conduct four agricultural polls under the *Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990*. The Act establishes committees to promote marketing of agricultural commodities. These polls were conducted by post.

Figure 7 – Industry development polls

Election Name	Contested	Poll Date	Voters	Turnout %
Greater Victoria Wine Grape Industry Development Poll 2004	Yes	23/01/2004	1207	46.00
Murray Valley Citrus Industry Development Poll 2004	Yes	19/05/2004	248	45.60
Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Poll 2003	Yes	3/10/2003	1141	32.10
Victorian Potato Industry Development Poll 2003	Yes	28/11/2003	353	43.62

Commercial and community elections

The VEC conducted 44 commercial elections in 2003-04, almost double the number of similar elections conducted in 2002-03. There is no legal obligation on the VEC to conduct these elections.

Figure 8 – Commercial and community elections

	2002-03	2003-04
Commercial and community elections	27	44
Total number of voters	328,432	477,809

Some examples of these elections are in relation to enterprise bargaining agreement ballots, and superannuation funds. Specific details are available in Figure 9.

Figure 9 – Commercial and community elections and polls

Non-statutory Polls/Elections	Contested	Election Date	Voting method	Voters	Participation rate
Air New Zealand Enterprise Bargaining Agreement Variation Ballot 2003	Yes	30/07/03	Postal	89	60.67
Amcors Superannuation Fund Election 2004	Yes	25/06/04	Postal	1641	26.32
ARPANSA Certified Agreement Ballot 2004-07	Yes	17/06/04	Postal	120	85.83
Australian Citrus Growers Association Poll 2003	Yes	10/12/03	Postal	2205	30.52
Australian Crime Commission Certified Agreement Ballot 2003	Yes	23/12/03	Postal	262	66.03
Australian Universities Quality Agency Board Election	Yes	12/12/03	Postal	103	31.09
Bureau of Meteorology Certified Agreement Poll 2004	Yes	3/06/04	Postal	1469	60.38
Compass Recruitment Australia EBA Poll 2004	Yes	18/03/04	Attendance	419	80.42
Cryovac Australia Pty Ltd EBA Poll 2003	Yes	15/08/03	Postal	58	0.00
Dnister Ukrainian Credit Union Election 2003	Yes	25/11/03	Postal	5629	10.85
Equipsuper Election of Employer Directors 2003	Yes	12/01/04	Postal	269	30.48
Equipsuper Election of Members Directors 2003	Yes	5/12/03	Postal	21405	18.90
First Mildura Irrigation Trust Board Election 2004	Yes	24/06/04	Postal	1487	79.09
First Mildura Irrigation Trust Election 2004	Yes	9/01/04	Postal	1599	62.20
GE Capital Finance Certified Agreement Ballot	Yes	2/12/03	Attendance	423	83.21
Group 4 Correction Services Enterprise Agreement Poll 2004	Yes	22/01/04	Postal	352	51.42
Hewlett Packard Australia Pty Ltd	Yes	5/05/04	Postal	1467	70.48
La Trobe University Union Board & PEMS0 Elections 2004	Yes	6/05/04	Attendance	40000	2.12
Legal Practice Board 2003	No	11/11/03	Postal	4000	N/a
Mercure Hotel Group Non-Union Certified Agreement Ballot	Yes	12/01/04	Postal	170	40.00
Metropolitan Ambulance Service Certified Agreement Ballot 2003	Yes	8/07/03	Postal	76	68.42
MONSU Caulfield Inc. Student Council Elections 2003	Yes	11/09/03	Attendance	13000	9.36
MONSU Peninsula Inc. Student Council Elections 2003	Yes	25/09/03	Attendance	7000	2.27
Moonee Valley Racing Club Committee Election 2003	Yes	24/11/03	Postal	5885	33.67
National Gallery of Victoria Enterprise Agreement 2003	Yes	19/09/03	Postal	276	53.60
Police Association Credit Co-operative Limited Directors Election 2003	Yes	30/09/03	Postal	54324	16.10
Productivity Commission 2nd Certified Agreement Ballot 2003	Yes	16/12/03	Postal	179	65.90
Productivity Commission Certified Agreement Ballot 2003	Yes	31/10/03	Postal	177	77.40
RACV Metropolitan Patrol Services Certified Agreement (2) 2003-06	Yes	6/11/03	Postal	147	89.80
RACV Metropolitan Patrol Services Certified Agreement 2003-06	Yes	15/08/03	Postal	149	85.91
Robert Bosch Enterprise Bargaining Agreement Ballot	Yes	16/07/03	Attendance	1775	81.41
Socobell OEM Pty Ltd Enterprise Agreement 2004-07 Poll	Yes	30/03/04	Attendance	137	100.00
State Library of Victoria Enterprise Partnership Agreement	Yes	1/07/03	Attendance	366	58.74
The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Poll 2004	Yes	30/04/04	Postal	2463	20.00
The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Ballot 2003	Yes	11/09/03	Postal	2401	49.60
University of Melbourne Postgraduate Association Election 2003	Yes	26/09/03	Postal	9911	10.45
VicSuper Pty Ltd - Election of Member Directors 2004	No	21/06/04	Postal	180000	N/a
Victoria Racing Club Committee Election 2003	No	24/10/03	Postal	22000	N/a
Victoria Teachers Credit Union Election of Directors 2003	Yes	23/10/03	Postal	57981	6.90
Victorian Canine Association 2004	Yes	26/03/04	Postal	9362	11.35
Victorian Public Service Agreement 2004 Ballot	Yes	31/05/04	Postal	26570	40.07
Wilson Transformer Company Pty Ltd EBA 2003	Yes	7/08/03	Attendance	157	91.66
Wilson Transformer Company Pty Ltd EBA2 2003	Yes	20/08/03	Attendance	157	94.48
Wilson Transformer Company Pty Ltd EBA3 2003	Yes	21/01/04	Attendance	149	74.49



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.

Review of the VEC's involvement in conducting commercial and community elections

As part of the corporate and business planning process the VEC identified a need to develop a policy position outlining the terms and conditions in which the VEC will undertake this work. This policy was developed and adopted in June 2004.

Since 1995 the VEC has increasingly received requests from commercial and community organisations to conduct their elections and polls. In recent years the number of requests has increased significantly, and the size and type of elections has varied – for example in 2003-04 the number of voters involved ranged from 58 to 180,000.

Figure 10 – Elections over time

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Statutory elections	16	2	31	11	53
Commercial and community elections		20	24	27	44
Total	16	22	55	38	97

The new policy provides a rational basis for the VEC's future involvement in the conduct of commercial elections. It takes into account the need for the VEC to focus on its core business obligations, as well as certain advantages in its involvement in conducting commercial elections.

The conduct of commercial elections will now be based on a set of criteria including the timing of the election, sufficient lead times being available to the VEC, the existence of formal election rules, and voter numbers of 10,000 or more. This approach will enable the VEC to conduct a smaller number of larger commercial elections, which provide opportunities to train and engage the VEC's senior electoral officials.

It is anticipated that under the revised approach the VEC would conduct approximately eight commercial elections in a financial year, whilst continuing to conduct elections in line with statutory responsibilities. This will ensure that VEC staff can remain firmly focussed on the core election planning and implementation activities.

The plan also provides the VEC's full cost-recovering pricing policy for conducting commercial elections, and identifies alternative strategies that might be available to organisations should the VEC be no longer available to conduct their elections.

*Timely and accurate
enrolment and roll services*

Part

3



A healthy democracy is dependant on an accurate and up-to-date enrolment register. The enrolment register is the basis for Victorians to vote at Federal, State and local government elections. Our job is to help people to enrol and to update their enrolment to ensure rolls are accurate and complete when elections are conducted.

Paul Strickland
Acting Manager, Electoral Enrolment Branch



Corporate Objective: Ensure the accuracy, completeness, validity and security of the register of electors

Keeping the enrolment register up-to-date

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.

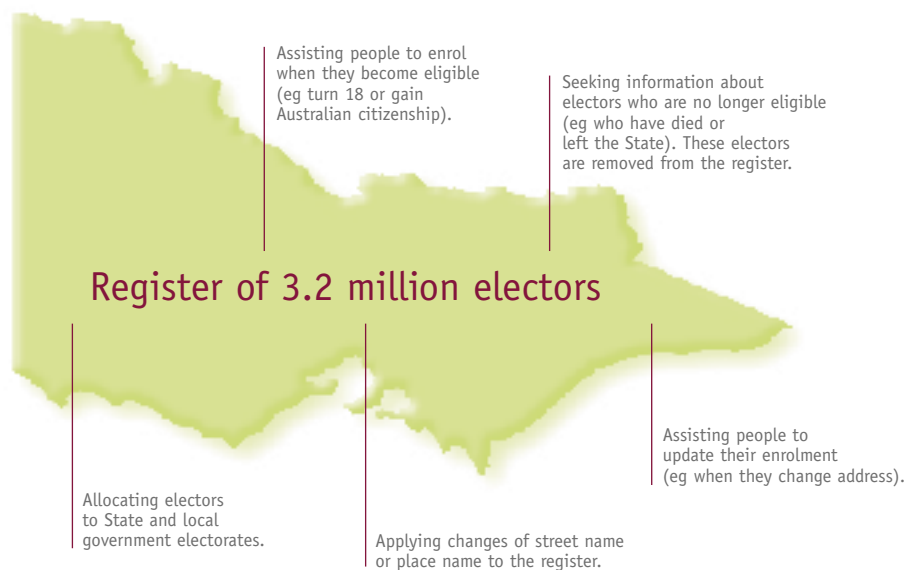
The enrolment register needs to be continuously updated so that accurate electoral products can be produced for parliamentary or local government elections and by-elections, as well as fulfilling statutory obligations to provide roll products to juries, registered political parties and members of Parliament.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

Advertising before major electoral events is an effective way to encourage electors to enrol or update their enrolment details so that they can vote. This leads to one-off improvements in the accuracy of the enrolment register. However, while the register may be at its most accurate at the time of an election, its accuracy quickly deteriorates thereafter.

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

Figure 11

The VEC's activities to keep the enrolment register up-to-date*



* The enrolment register is a database of all Victorian electors. An electoral roll is the list of electors eligible to vote in a particular election.

Joint enrolment arrangement

New 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 Enrolment Arrangement (Arrangement) and the Electoral Roll Data Supply Agreement (Agreement). Under the 'Arrangement' for a joint electoral enrolment procedure in Victoria, the VEC receives enrolment data from the AEC. This data results from direct enrolment by electors (often in response to election advertising) and responses to enrolment initiatives by the AEC and the VEC.

The Arrangement enables the Commonwealth and Victoria to exchange enrolment information for the purpose of maintaining and updating the electoral rolls. The Arrangement outlines the means by which enrolment information will be collected from electors, arrangements for data exchange and the method by which annual costs are calculated. The joint enrolment Arrangement ensures consistency between the Federal and State electoral rolls. When an elector completes an enrolment form they are enrolling to vote in Federal, State and local government elections.

On 27 May 2004, the Commonwealth and the Victorian governments entered into a new Arrangement for a joint electoral enrolment procedure in Victoria. The new Arrangement replaces the previous Arrangement put in place in 1995, which was predicated on enrolment practices that were no longer relevant.

The new Arrangement removes the day-to-day administrative detail (including costs). This detail will now be included in the Agreement made between the VEC and the AEC under this Arrangement. Future improvements in work practices and/or changes in business requirements will not require the revision of the Arrangement; instead these changes will be reflected in revisions to the Agreement between the VEC and the AEC.

The costs associated to the previous Arrangement, where Victoria paid the Commonwealth some \$2.18 million annually, were not favourable to Victoria. Since 1995 the VEC has introduced enrolment related initiatives that have generated increased levels of electoral enrolment transactions and greatly improved the quality of the roll. This contribution was not recognised under the previous Arrangement. Negotiations between the VEC and the AEC for a new Agreement are well advanced and are in the final stages. An in-principle Agreement has been reached on a revised fee.

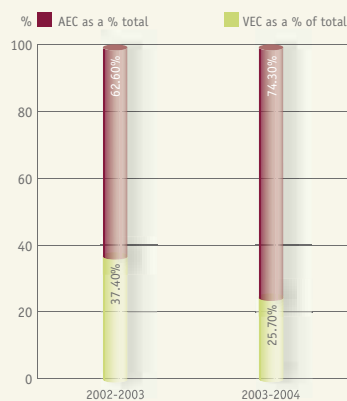
Figure 12 illustrates the significant contribution from Victorian initiatives, which accounted for 25.7% of all updates to the Victorian enrolment register in 2003-04.

Figure 12 – Contributions to the Victorian enrolment register

	2002-03	2003-04
From VEC initiative	223,706	117,611
VEC as a % of total	37.4%	25.7%
Total AEC:	374,196	339,997
AEC as a % total	62.6%	74.3%
Total Enrolment Changes	597,902	457,608



**Figure 13 –
VEC initiatives
and AEC initiatives**



The larger proportion in enrolments resulting from VEC initiatives in 2002-03 can largely be explained by the State election conducted in November 2002, as traditionally electors update their enrolment details close to elections. Despite the decrease the VEC was still in line with the 25% target outlined in the VEC's Corporate Plan.

Victoria's strategic enrolment programs

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. The VEC contacts Victorians directly when they are required to enrol or update their enrolment, sending enrolment brochures to:

- Victorians when they turn 17 and become eligible to provisionally enrol; and
 - electors who have changed their address and need to update their enrolment details.
- Sending an enrolment brochure to electors prompts people who might otherwise be inclined to delay enrolling or updating their enrolment until an election is called.

Five targeted mailout enrolment programs operated in conjunction with partner organisations in 2003-04. These five programs are utilised due to the validity of the data and the response rate. Enrolments were also received from mailouts concluding in 2002-03. The VEC collected 95,035 new enrolments and enrolment updates through these programs. This was a significant increase on the 2002-03 figure of 41,800.

The figure below highlights the number of forms returned, as well as the rate of return. The largest mailout was from the VicRoads data, which includes licence holders amending their address details.

Figure 14 – Targeted mailout program details

Targeted mailout enrolment programs	Recipients	2003-04 Mailout total	2003-04 Number Returned	2003-04 % Returned	2003-04 % of VEC enrolments
VicRoads	New licence holders and changes of address on licence and registration	264,704	52,170	19.7%	44.4%
VTAC	Students applying to a tertiary education institution	8,750	3,817	43.6%	3.2%
Rental bond	Tenants who have recently lodged tenancy bonds	111,638	20,062	18.0%	17.1%
VCAA	All year 11 and 12 students turning 17 who are registered to do VCE	44,865	13,663	30.5%	11.6%
TXU	New connections	9,056	3,706	40.9%	3.2%
Yarra Valley Water*	New connections		33		0.0%
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		1,584		1.3%
Total Mailout		439,013	95,035	21.6%	80.8%

VTAC – Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
VCAA – Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority

* No mailouts occurred utilising Yarra Valley Water – however 33 were returned from previous mailouts

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

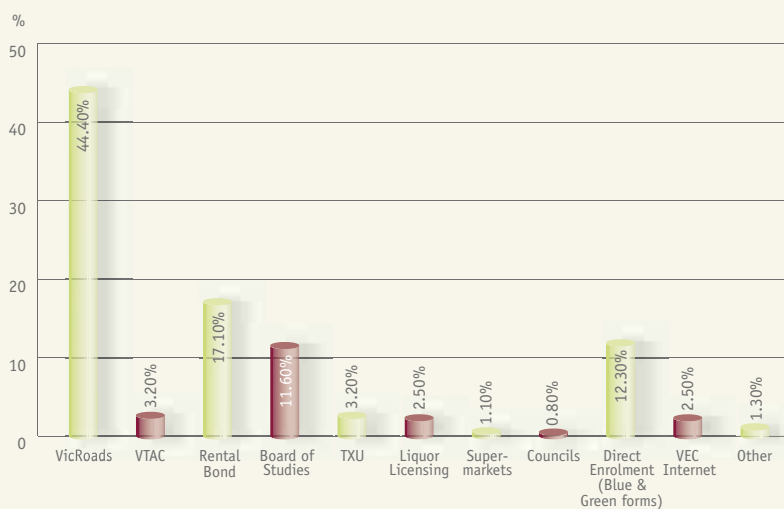
The VEC also utilises a non-mailout program, where forms are made available at particular locations. These accounted for 19.2% of enrolment forms.

Figure 15 – Non mailout program

Non mailout program		2003-04 Number Returned	2003-04 % of VEC enrolments
Liquor Licensing	Young people applying for a Proof of Age card can simultaneously enrol	2,971	2.5%
Supermarkets	Enrolment forms are made available at Coles Supermarkets	1,254	1.1%
Councils	Enrolment forms are available at some municipal council offices and mailed out in Welcome Kits	918	0.8%
Direct Enrolment	Forms are available to people upon request by contacting the VEC	14,507	12.3%
VEC Internet	Forms can be downloaded from the VEC website	2,926	2.5%
Total		22,576	19.2%

The VEC initiatives contributed 117,611 of the 457,608 Victorian enrolment changes received from the Australian Electoral Commission as part of the Joint Roll Arrangement. These updates include new enrolments, re-instatements and updates.

Figure 16 – Enrolments resulting from VEC enrolment initiatives



The figure below shows the details of the enrolment changes for 2003-04.

Figure 17 – Enrolment types

	2003-04
New enrolments	141,226
Updates and re-instatements	316,382
Total enrolment amendments	457,608





Staff from the Electoral Enrolment Branch collect enrolment forms from the VEC's strategic enrolment program. The Joint Roll Arrangement means that electors' details are updated for Federal, State and local government elections.

New enrolments

New enrolments include provisional electors, young electors and other electors not previously enrolled (eg recently naturalized Australian citizens).

It is compulsory for Australian citizens who are aged 18 years or over and have lived at their current address in Victoria for at least one month to enrol. In addition, when eligible citizens turn 17 they may provisionally enrol so that when they turn 18 they are automatically eligible to vote at an election.

Re-instatements

Re-instatements are those who were previously on the roll, were not eligible for a period of time and who now need to be re-instated on the roll. These enrolments are distinguished from new enrolments so as to ensure there are no duplicate records.

Updates

Update enrolments are made by electors who are already currently enrolled. This may be a change in any detail, such as name or a change in address. The most common amendment the VEC receives is a person's amended address details. Electors are required to update their enrolment once they have lived at a new address for one month. If an elector has not notified of their change of address within three months of an election day, they will not be entitled to vote.

Overseas electors

An elector who is going overseas for six years or less can apply to be an overseas elector either before leaving Australia, or while overseas. In 2003-04 1,837 Victorians applied to be registered as overseas electors.

Deletions from the enrolment register

The VEC removes electors from the register in certain circumstances described in the figure below. These transactions are known as enrolment deletions. The VEC receives information from the AEC, the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the Office of Corrections and other sources that enable deletions to be made.

For the 12 months ending 30 June 2004 the VEC removed 128,641 electors from the register of electors.

Figure 18 – Deletions from enrolment register

	2003-04
Deceased	14,511
Imprisoned	479
AEC instructed	113,386
Other	265
Net deletions	128,641

Other enrolment amendments

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. During 2003-04 the VEC amended an additional 56,004 enrolment details that were not via an enrolment form. These were mainly in relation to amendments to property details due to the census collector district recode.

Objections to enrolment

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*.

The VEC also receives objections from electors who believe that another elector is not entitled to be on the enrolment register. The VEC received two objections regarding candidates contesting local government elections in 2003. The response to one of these objections led to the VEC taking legal action.

In May 2004, a councillor for the City of Casey was served with a summons to answer a charge under section 148(1) of the *Electoral Act 2002*, alleging that he provided in writing false or misleading information under the *Electoral Act 2002* to the Victorian Electoral Commissioner, as to his principal place of residence.

Future directions

While the VEC has confidence in the degree to which the register is up-to-date and accurate, working within the national context the VEC will develop a formal evaluation framework in order to ensure the integrity of the register, to promote voter confidence in the quality of the register of electors and to inform the development strategies that assist electors to enrol and update their enrolment. The evaluation framework will be based on:

- Accuracy – the register contains correct and up-to-date information about electors;
- Completeness – the register includes all people who are eligible;
- Validity – the register does not include people who are ineligible; and
- Security – the register is secure and protected from unauthorised access.

The VEC will implement quantifiable measures and targets to transparently report to stakeholders.

In 2004-05 there will be 25 local council elections and a Federal election. It may be confusing to Victorian voters if they are encouraged to enrol and update their enrolment during the election period (as the close of rolls for elections will have passed). The Victorian strategic enrolment program will therefore be suspended during these periods. This will provide an opportunity for the VEC to review the VEC's enrolment program, evaluate the effectiveness of each strategy, rationalise existing strategies where necessary and to develop new strategies that will augment and strengthen the existing program.

Building on the new Joint Roll Arrangement negotiated in 2003-04, the VEC will be afforded significant cost savings as well as the ability to exercise greater administrative control over enrolment related processes. The VEC will therefore implement the initiatives arising out of the Joint Arrangement and the Service Level Agreement. These initiatives will include the alignment of the address database and where possible, the calibration of data held by both electoral commissions.



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

Electoral enrolment products

Local government boundary reviews

Under section 220 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, municipal councils were required to review their ward or riding boundaries every six years, to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within ten per cent of the average number of voters.

The *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989*, was passed in Spring 2003. The amendments included provisions for independent electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils. The VEC assisted with ten electoral representation reviews in 2003-04. Further details see pages 47-51.

Prior to the amendments in the *Local Government Act 1989* the VEC provided assistance to the Melton Shire Council in the review of its ward boundaries.



The new legislation requires a new roll production process designed to provide for entitlement day to be closer to election day.

Rolls for local government elections

The VEC produces voters' rolls for local government elections. The production of each roll is a complex process that requires the VEC to merge data from the State enrolment register 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. Merging these data to form a roll for an election is made more difficult because councils provide data in varying formats.

In 2003-04 voters' rolls were produced for the nine local government by-elections conducted by the VEC (details on page 21). These rolls were produced on time and met legislative requirements

The VEC has embarked on an enhancement to its election management and enrolment software to manage the changes required by the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*. The new legislation requires a new roll production process designed to provide for entitlement day (i.e. the date of the close of rolls) to be closer to election day. From 2005, entitlement day will be 57 days before election day, instead of about 90 days.

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 enrolment register for that member's electorate. This information is provided monthly in the form of a complete electorate roll with changes made since the last update clearly identified. The VEC provided 1,452 enrolment extracts to MPs in 2003-04.

The three parliamentary political parties also receive an electronic copy of the enrolment register every month.

In addition, the VEC responds to one-off requests from members of Parliament, registered political parties and others for enrolment information.

Juries Commissioner

The VEC provides the Juries Commissioner with lists of electors randomly selected from the enrolment register. From this information jury lists are prepared to select people for jury duty. Lists of electors are provided to the Juries Commission as required. In 2003-04 a total of 51 lists were provided.

As part of the process of preparing jury lists, the VEC is required to record an exemption for each person selected for jury duty exempting them from further jury service for a specified period. Exemption information is supplied by the Juries Commission and recorded by the VEC against the elector's name on the enrolment register. Some 244,498 electors had exemptions from jury duty at the end of June 2004.

Figure 19 – Services to Juries Commissioner

Services to Juries Commissioner	2002-03 actual	2003-04 target	2003-04 actual
Number of jury lists provided	42	60	51
Exemptions from jury duty recorded	186,533	N/a	244,498

Despite the increase in jury lists for 2003-04, this was lower than the anticipated target (as published in the 2003-04 State budget papers). However, the lower level of lists provided was a result of a lower level of requests than anticipated, and all requests received during the financial year were satisfied.

Mapping services

The VEC is responsible for the production of electoral boundary maps and providing the mapping and administrative support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission to enable the drafting of electoral boundaries for Victoria on a state level.

In 2003-04 the VEC became responsible for conducting electoral representation reviews as a result of The *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989*. The legislation requires municipal councils to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. The conduct of the reviews often requires the drafting of internal ward boundary models for municipal councils (see pages 47-51).



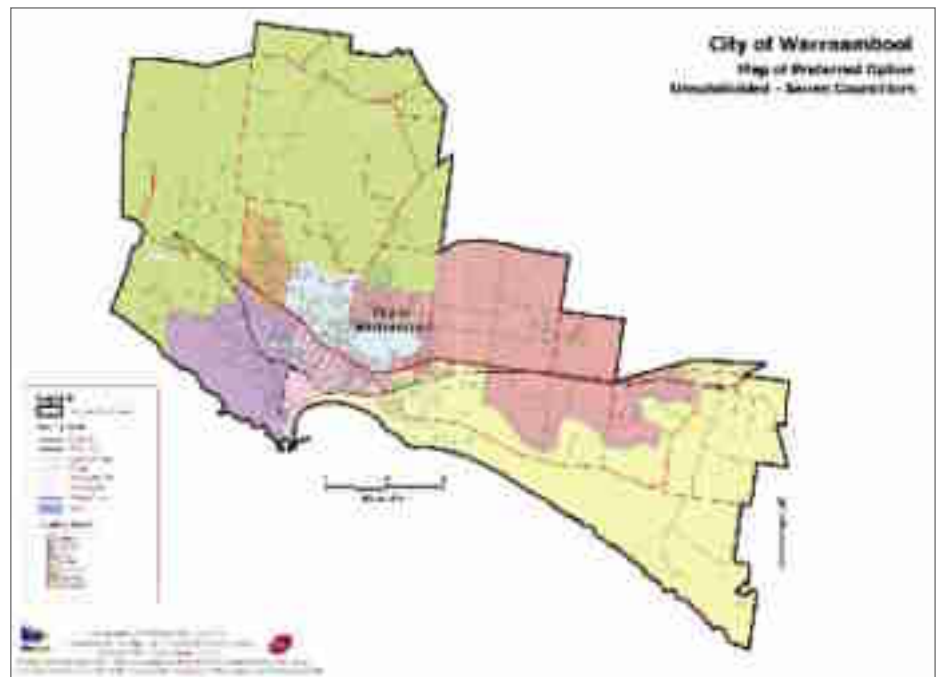
The application of mapping services to the conduct of local government electoral representation reviews

The VEC's mapping system contains up-to-date enrolment figures by census collector districts and spatial data to enable the mapping of draft internal ward boundaries within each of Victoria's municipalities. The system can also calculate the number of electors and the deviation from the average in each ward.

This work is fundamental to the VEC's conduct of electoral representation reviews for local government. The VEC drafts boundary models and creates maps for publication in reports (released to the public in hard copy and on the VEC website) as well as for leaflets, advertisements and media releases.

At the end of each of the VEC's electoral representation reviews, the electoral structure is described in a detailed map that labels all the internal ward boundaries of the municipality. If the structure recommended by the Electoral Commissioner is subsequently approved by the Minister for Local Government, this map becomes the official description of the new boundaries for that municipality,

Figure 20 - An example of an electoral representation review map



Future directions

The VEC will assist with the merging and production of rolls for the 25 local council elections in November 2004.

Legislative amendments have reduced the time available to the VEC to produce rolls for State and local government elections. The roll for State elections will now close seven days after the issue of the writ (previously three days), and there will be significant pressure to produce rolls in the shorter timeframe immediately following the close of roll to meet legislative requirements for election processes to get underway. The time available for the production of rolls for local government elections will require the VEC to develop new production strategies to ensure timely and accurate production of rolls.

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

The enrolment register and information privacy

The register of electors contains personal enrolment information about the vast 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 public or to other persons and organisations, as follows:

- The list of Victorian electors (names and addresses only) must be made available for inspection by members of the public under section 32(2) of the *Electoral Act 2002*, but only at the offices of the VEC. Information can be searched only 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 any place and during times determined by the VEC under section 32(3) of the *Electoral Act 2002*;
- Enrolment information must be made available for 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
- Enrolment information must be provided to municipal councils for elections under section 21 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 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.

The VEC's activities during the reporting period regarding requests for information under section 34 have related mainly to requests initiated in the previous reporting period and requests from organisations that had previously been provided enrolment information on an ongoing basis, but that are not expressly entitled to receive this information under the *Electoral Act 2002* or any other legislation.

Reporting requirements

Under section 35 of the *Electoral Act 2002*, 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.

In total, the VEC dealt with 22 requests for enrolment information under section 34 during the reporting period. Seven of these requests related to requests made in the previous reporting period. Figure 21 summarises the requests received.

Figure 21 - Requests for enrolment information 2003-04

	Approved	Refused	Pending	Discontinued
Organisations with requests from the previous reporting period	2*		2	3**
Organisations submitting new requests		2	1	
Individuals		4		
Requests from Victoria Police about specific individuals***	7	1		
Total	9	7	3	3

* Victorian Department of Human Services, Adoptions Information Services (including Centacare, Uniting Care Connections and Anglicare Western) and BreastScreen Victoria. Both requests were commenced in the previous reporting period.

** These organisations did not pursue requests to completion. All three requests were commenced in the previous reporting period.

*** The VEC provides Victoria Police with enrolment information if the request is made in writing by a senior police officer and is for law enforcement purposes.

A total of 15 new requests for enrolment information under section 34 were received by the VEC during the 2003-04 reporting period.

Of these requests, four were received from individuals who were seeking the contact details of another individual. All such requests were refused on the grounds that the public interest in providing the information did not outweigh the interest in maintaining the privacy of individuals' enrolment information.

Eight individual requests were received from Victoria Police, and a further three requests for enrolment information were received from a variety of organisations. In addition, the VEC dealt with seven requests received from organisations in the previous reporting period. Three of these requests were discontinued, two are pending and two were approved during the reporting period. The requests received from organisations are summarised in the following figure.

Figure 22 – Organisations making requests for information

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.	Request granted 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.
Department of Primary Industries, Special Investigations Group (SIG)	SIG requested a copy of the full register of electors in order to assist it to perform its law enforcement functions by assisting it to verify or locate a person's address.	SIG did not pursue its request to completion.
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.	SRO did not pursue its request to completion.
Transport Accident Commission (TAC)	TAC requested a copy of the full register of electors in order to assist it to perform its law enforcement functions under the <i>Transport Accident Act 1986</i> , as well as to protect the viability of the transport accident compensation scheme more generally, by assisting it to verify or locate a person's address.	TAC did not pursue its request to completion.
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 performs these functions under the <i>Adoption Act 1984</i> .	Request granted 25 March 2004. The VEC was satisfied that disclosure of enrolment information to AIS was consistent with Parliament's intention that eligible parties have the opportunity to contact birth parents, adoptive parents and birth relatives.
Victoria Police: Ethical Standards Department (ESD); Records Services Branch (RSB); 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.	Pending*



Organisation	Nature of request	Status of request
Vietnamese Community in Australia	The Vietnamese Community in Australia requested a copy of the full register of electors for purposes related to the organisation's bi-annual election for its executive committee.	Request refused 24 July 2003.
Cancer Epidemiology Centre of The Cancer Council Victoria (CEC)	CEC requested the names and addresses of people aged 53 and above for the purposes of locating and tracking participants in the Melbourne Collaborative Cohort Study (also known as Health 2000-20). This study is a longitudinal study that commenced in 1990.	Pending*
New South Wales Office of State Revenue (NSWOSR)	NSWOSR requested a copy of the full register of electors for purposes of reuniting approximately 3000 Victorian residents with unclaimed funds.	Request refused 9 January 2004. However the VEC offered to contact the relevant Victorian residents on behalf of NSWOSR. This offer was not taken up by NSWOSR.
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.	Pending

* Indicates that the consultation with the Privacy Commissioner has taken place under section 34(1)(b) of the *Electoral Act 2002*.

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

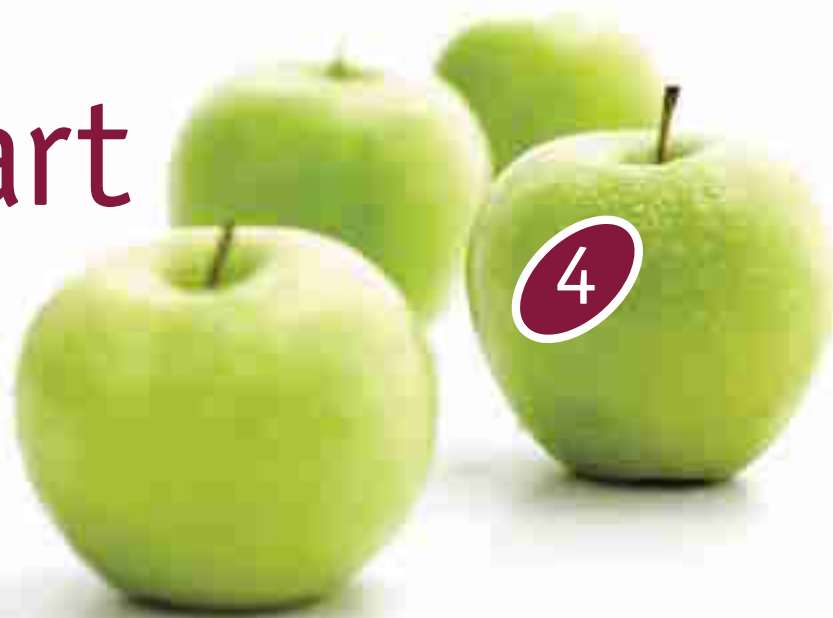
- Cancer Council Victoria (for the PapScreen Victoria program);
- BreastScreen Victoria; and
- Victorian Department of Human Services, Adoptions Information Service and Adoption Information Services approved under the *Adoptions Act 1984* (Centacare, Uniting Care Connections and Anglicare Western)

Future directions

The VEC will continue to consult with Victoria Police to finalise a protocol to enable access to enrolment information for criminal investigation purposes. The VEC is proposing the development of an on-line application that will meet most of the law enforcement needs of Victoria Police while ensuring that the privacy interests of Victorian electors are respected.

Community understanding and participation

Part



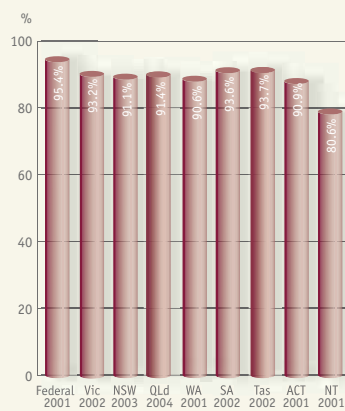
In a healthy democracy citizens understand and exercise their electoral rights and obligations. The VEC's challenge is to engage all Victorians in the electoral process, particularly those who have traditionally not been involved.

Doug Beecroft

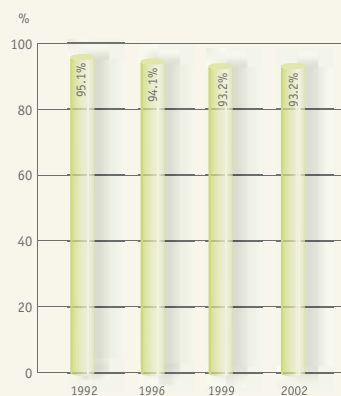
Manager, Communications and Corporate Services



**Figure 23 –
Voter participation
at Australian
parliamentary
elections**



**Figure 24 –
Voter participation
at Victorian State
elections 1992-2002**



Facilitating democratic participation

An indicator of a healthy democracy is the degree to which 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 those who choose not 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

This work will begin in 2004-05 and preparation completed in 2005-06. The communication campaign for the November 2006 State election 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 VEC plans to send 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.

Redevelopment of the VEC's website

During 2003-04 the VEC commenced the re-development of the website in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve interaction with the VEC's corporate databases, thereby reducing the need for manual checking and intervention;
- Improve the website's look, feel and navigation;
- Review and update all content in view of changes to legislation and subsequent changes to the elections environment and the VEC's business;
- Enable an on-line look-up of elector-specific enrolment and election information;
- Improve accessibility for key stakeholders and users with special needs; and
- Improve the VEC's capacity to evaluate and monitor use of the website.

The VEC engaged a consulting company to undertake this work, and the process includes comprehensive consultation and review. The VEC is seeking to implement the project in two phases.

Phase 1 is to provide a number of key improvements, primarily for the council elections, whilst minimising the changes to the existing website. Phase 1 will include a new home page, revised structure and content for pages dealing with local government elections, legislative updates to State election pages and an Internet look-up facility for voters to check their enrolment details for State and local government elections.

Phase 2 will complete the re-development project. The key elements will be the introduction of a user-friendly content management system and the further development of the on-line enrolment look-up facility to provide elector-specific information at the time of major electoral events.

Voter participation and informal voting

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.

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

Future directions

The VEC will need to review the communication strategy that was utilised at the 2002 State election. This will include taking into account recent legislative changes and evolving practices and developments in communications. The review will identify effective means to inform the community about the new Legislative Council electoral system, provide information to sections of the community whose electoral participation is low and to provide information on voting centre locations and services.

The VEC will finalise the redevelopment of the VEC's website, with improved content, navigation and accessibility, and the facility for voters to check their enrolment details and voting entitlements at State and local government elections.

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

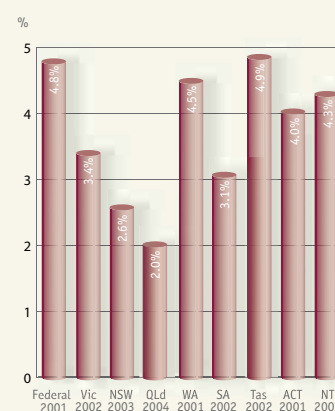
Local Government elections

During 2003-04 the VEC worked with the 25 municipal councils that will be holding elections in November 2004, to develop individual communication campaigns to raise voters' awareness of their rights and obligations, maximise voter turnout, and minimise the informal vote.

In developing communications campaigns for local government elections, the VEC gives consideration to the method of election (postal or attendance voting), the location and size of each municipality, available media coverage, the special needs of voters and each council's budget.

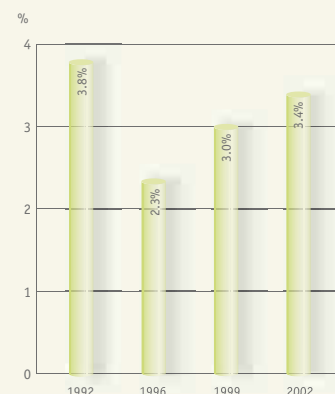
The VEC offers core communications campaigns that meet statutory requirements and additional options to improve the reach of the campaign. Communications services include newspaper and radio advertising (including advertising in ethnic newspapers and on ethnic radio stations), print products such as enrolment leaflets and voter cards to be posted to all voters (for attendance elections only), media relations services, and the publishing of detailed election information on the VEC website. Councils are also provided with services for vision and print impaired, such as large-print file material for the website, and the use of Vision

**Figure 25 –
Informal voting
at Australian
Parliamentary
elections***



* full preferential voting is used in Federal, Vic, WA, SA and NT elections

**Figure 26 –
Informal voting
at Victorian State
elections 1992-2002**





The VEC reception staff answer calls received from the VEC hotline service that enables Victorians to phone the VEC to check their enrolment details.

Australia's Print Radio (RPH) to publicise the elections. A text telephone (TTY) service has also been installed at the VEC to provide electoral information about municipal elections to people with hearing and speech impairments.

The VEC has encouraged councils to participate in coordinated advertising campaigns with other councils. So far some councils have joined printed media campaigns, and regional councils have expressed an interest in joint radio advertising.

Local Government by-elections

In 2003-04 nine by-elections were conducted by the VEC. Each of these was conducted by post.

Figure 27 shows the individual participation rates and informal rates for the contested by-elections, (non contested elections have been removed).

Figure 27 – Local government by-elections

Local Government by-elections	Ward	Voters	Participation Rate %	Informal Voting rate %
Casey City Council by-election 2003	Strathard	12526	77.43	3.75
Ballarat City Council by-election 2003	Nerrina	7999	77.50	1.74
Greater Bendigo City Council by-election 2003	Eaglehawk	9747	76.79	1.43
Indigo Shire Council by-election 2004	Unsubdivided	11457	82.73	2.27
Warrnambool City Council by-election 2004	Pertobe	3449	70.95	2.49
Southern Grampians Shire Council by-election 2004	Unsubdivided	11457	84.00	1.31
Average			78.23	2.17

The contested by-elections for 2003-04 were all in regional Victoria. A comparison with the last three years of by-elections in regional Victoria (seven in total) show that the participation rate was 3% higher than the 75.35% average, and that the rate of informal voting was on par with the informal average of 2.16%.

Future directions

Campaigns for 25 local council elections to be held in November 2004 will be fully implemented. This will involve a comprehensive communications campaign for the City of Melbourne. The VEC has not conducted elections for this Council previously and is seeking ways to reach the City's diverse target audiences and encourage an improved voter participation.

The scheduling of 25 simultaneous local government elections in November 2004, 54 elections in November 2005, and all 79 local government elections in November 2008 presents the VEC with the opportunity to work with municipal councils to develop and implement improved coordinated communication campaigns in the most cost effective manner.

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

The VEC has a legislative responsibility to provide education programs that increase Victorians' understanding of the electoral system.

In line with the recommendations in the 2002-03 Annual Report, a joint approach has been established between the VEC and the AEC. The business plan for this initiative identifies the need to encourage a culture of democratic participation and community engagement with special emphasis on a range of under-represented groups. Both electoral commissioners have signed off on the Memorandum of Understanding that governs this joint project. A new position at the VEC, Electoral Education Facilitator, was created in March 2004 to undertake the implementation of this joint approach.

From the perspective of the electoral commissions, the provision of electoral education programs provides an excellent opportunity for Federal and State electoral authorities to provide a seamless service through co-operative ventures. Duplication and confusion can be avoided through a co-ordinated and strategic approach that draws on the respective strengths of the organisations involved. These administrative efficiencies can ensure that a significant investment in resources can be spread over a wider base and have a wider reach.

Under the co-operative approach, the AEC's Electoral Education Centre in Melbourne will use better targeting to achieve a higher impact on voter participation, and certain AEC divisional staff and VEC senior election officials will be trained for specialist work in areas where participation is low.

During 2003-04 extensive consultation has been undertaken with peak bodies such as the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Justice, the Centre for Adult Education, the Adult Multicultural Education Services and the Council for Homeless People, to explore new approaches to fostering heightened levels of democratic engagement. A partnership between the VEC/AEC and the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) has been established that will deliver a Democratic Engagement Project at CAE. It is planned that over 500 adult education students will take part in this innovated trial program through July – December 2004. The program will be delivered to students with low levels of literacy and students from non- English speaking backgrounds. Both these groups fall within the target group for the joint AEC /VEC partnership.

The provision of teacher professional development has been included under the framework of the joint approach. Both VEC and AEC staff have delivered the "Your Vote Counts" Program to 60 teachers from metropolitan and rural schools. The VEC has worked closely with the AEC's Electoral Education Centre to target specific community groups from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Discussions with government education agencies such as Northern and Western Metropolitan Regions, government school groups such as the Inner Port Phillip Innovations and Excellence Cluster and local government bodies such as the City of Port Phillip have laid the basis for planned trial electoral education programs for over 1000 students and young people that will target under represented groups in a range of settings and localities.

The VEC was represented at the three day Herald-Sun VCE Expo in March and the Melbourne Age three day Careers Expo in May. Over 6000 students from a range of government and non-government schools participated in these events.



Shane O'Connor (middle), the VEC Electoral Education Facilitator, regularly meets with AEC staff Trisha Collinson (left) and Jan Williams (right) at the Electoral Education Centre to share information, develop resources and minimise duplication.





Over 500 formal votes were cast at the polling centre at the VEC "Best Exhibit Poll" at Parliament Open Day. The key focus was to encourage children to have their first "real" experience as voters.

Parliament Open Day

On Saturday, 21 June 2004, the Parliament of Victoria held its annual Open Day. Over 5000 visitors wandered through Parliament House, and inspected areas not usually open to the public. The VEC was one of a number of parliamentary affiliated agencies that took the opportunity to exhibit their work during the day.

The VEC organised a Best Exhibit Poll as part of the display and visitors were invited to lodge a vote for their favourite exhibit. The VEC display also included a general enquiries desk, where the public could check their enrolment details, arrange enrolments and have specific questions about enrolment eligibility answered.

Future directions

During 2004-05 the VEC will implement and evaluate the pilot project at the Centre for Adult Education (CAE), which will provide electoral education to adults with low literacy.

The VEC will also identify further appropriate opportunities for education programs to encourage electoral participation amongst those whose participation has been low in the past. These opportunities will be assessed in terms of the joint VEC/AEC business plan to ensure that they meet the objectives of the plan in terms of target audiences and cost-effectiveness.

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

Corporate Communications

In 2004 the VEC entered the 2002-03 Annual Report in the 54th Australasian Reporting Awards. The reporting awards provide an excellent opportunity to benchmark reporting achievements with other organisations. The VEC received a Bronze award.

Future directions

In early 2005 the VEC will produce an issue of its newsletter, *Selections*, advising stakeholders of legislative changes and arrangements for major forthcoming electoral events, including the November 2005 local government elections and the November 2006 State election.

Fair and equal representation

Part



Fair and equal representation is a fundamental principle of a healthy democracy. The VEC is conducting electoral representation reviews to make sure each vote in a municipality has equal value and that community representation is fair.

Colin Barry
Electoral Commissioner



Corporate Objectives: Provision of high quality electoral representation review services to local government

Electoral representation review services to local government

In 2003-04, the VEC began a new challenge – implementing independent electoral representation reviews of Victorian councils. An electoral representation review examines the electoral structure of a local council. The purpose of a review is to achieve “fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.”

In conducting the reviews, the VEC draws on a range of information including: its own research into the review that is being carried out; its experience from working with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections; its expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and input from the public. In implementing the review, the VEC maintains a state-wide perspective.

The VEC had previously assisted councils with ward boundary reviews and had also provided support to the Electoral Boundaries Commission with State electoral boundary redivisions. Now the VEC has responsibility not only for ward boundary reviews but also for making recommendations as to the number of councillors and the electoral structure in a given municipality. The VEC recognises its statutory responsibility for this completely new area of work and has committed a strong team to the process. The VEC has involved a wide range of people from within the organisation with relevant experience and expertise, and has engaged highly experienced consultants to provide expertise in the field of local government.

The VEC recognises the importance of the electoral representation reviews and is conscious of their sensitive nature. The VEC acknowledges that electoral representation reviews can have major implications for the governance of local councils and that residents can feel passionate about such matters. The VEC is aware that the reviews also tend to excite keen interest on the part of local media.

History of the reviews

During the restructures of the 1990s, councils underwent an extensive process of amalgamation. Commissioners appointed for each council were required, with no state-wide reference available to them, to determine electoral structures for their respective councils. The electoral structures which emerged were very disparate. From that point, councils conducted their own reviews.

The legislative background

In Spring 2003, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989*. The amendments provided for electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils.

Under the *Local Government Act*, a review must be conducted before every second council election. When the Minister for Local Government notifies that the review is to take place, the council in question must appoint an electoral commission to undertake the review. Councils are free to appoint any electoral commission. In 2003-04, all councils appointed the VEC.

VEC activities

By mid-2004, the VEC had completed reviews for ten of Victoria’s 79 local councils. (The Minister for Local Government approved the VEC’s recommendations for the Surf Coast Shire by 30 June 2004, with a further nine review recommendations under consideration.) At that stage, the VEC was in the process of reviewing 12 more councils.

In carrying out the reviews, the VEC operates independently of local councils and the State government. The VEC advertises the reviews in newspapers, seeks and considers public input, hears oral evidence from members of the community and produces Preliminary and Final Reports containing its recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

In addition to satisfying all legislative requirements the VEC implements further strategies aimed at encouraging an open and transparent process. These include:

- Providing voters or households (in most councils) with an information leaflet about the review;
- Advertising the reviews in a State-wide newspaper;
- Sending news releases to local media in order to supplement the paid advertising;
- Publishing all submissions received and the Preliminary and Final Reports on the VEC website; and
- Organising a public hearing at which every person or group who has made a response submission may speak to that submission if they have requested to do so.

Figure 28 provides some details in relation to the ten electoral representation reviews for 2003-04. Any person or group, including the Council, may make a submission. The figure illustrates the keen interest the community can have in a review, as shown by the number of submissions.

Figure 28 – Electoral representation review details

Reviews	Preliminary Submissions	Submission in response to preliminary report
1 Corangamite Shire Council	9	35
2 Greater Bendigo City Council	13	13
3 Hobsons Bay City Council	104	297
4 Moorabool Shire Council	23	152
5 Moreland City Council	49	84
6 Pyrenees Shire Council	7	43
7 Stonnington City Council	23	100
8 Surf Coast Shire Council	28	14
9 Warrnambool City Council	19	8
10 Yarra City Council	15	31
Total	290	777

Future directions

In 2004-05 the VEC will review 30 councils, leaving 39 to be reviewed in the lead-up to the 2008 council elections. The timetables of these reviews are determined by legislation, with specific dates to be determined by the Minister for Local Government.

This presents a significant challenge for the organisation in terms of planning of resources. The 30 reviews in 2004-05 are required to be completed by 26 May 2005, meaning there will be several reviews overlapping. The process established to conduct a complete review takes approximately four months. As several of the reviews will be conducted over the Christmas period, the VEC has also extended the period during which people may provide submissions to ensure all those that wish to contribute have the opportunity during that time.

The 39 reviews in the lead up to the 2008 Council elections will need to be completed in the 18 months between November 2006 - May 2008.



CASE STUDY – CITY OF YARRA

1 15 Dec 2003

The Minister for Local Government announces that a review of the City of Yarra will take place.
The notice appears in the *Victoria Government Gazette*.

2 20 Jan 2004

The City of Yarra appoints the VEC to conduct the review.
At this stage, Yarra has five wards with four two-councillor wards and one single-councillor ward.

3 13 Feb 2004

A general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews including the City of Yarra review appears in the *Melbourne Herald Sun*.

4 16 Feb 2004

A public notice of the representation review appears in the *Melbourne Yarra Leader*.
An information leaflet is posted to all City of Yarra electors.

5 18 Feb 2004

A public notice of the representation review appears in the *Melbourne Times*.
Media releases regarding the City of Yarra review are distributed to the *Melbourne Times* and to the *Melbourne Yarra Leader*.

6 24 Feb 2004

The VEC conducts an information session at the Richmond Town Hall to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community.
The VEC releases a Guide for Submissions. The Guide outlines the review process and calls for preliminary submissions.
The VEC begins posting submissions received on the VEC website. This encourages an open and transparent process and increases public awareness of the review.



12 17 May 2004

The VEC releases its Final Report.

The Final Report recommends that the City of Yarra consist of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards. In light of information provided in public submissions, the VEC adopts the ward boundaries suggested in its first alternative option, with slight adjustments made.

The report also recommended alternative name changes to the ward boundaries from public submissions. The boundaries were named Nicholls, Langridge and Melba



11 6 May 2004

The VEC conducts a public hearing at the Richmond Town Hall in order to provide those people who requested to speak to their response submissions, with an opportunity to do so.

The hearing is open to the public and 22 people (10 of whom choose to speak) attend.

10 26 April 2004

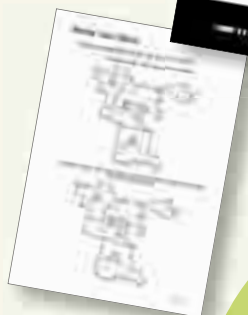
Close of response submissions.

The VEC receives a total of 31 response submissions.



9 7 April 2004

A notice of the Preliminary Report appears in the *Melbourne Times*.



8 5 April 2004

The VEC releases its Preliminary Report.

The Report is available at the City of Yarra Council offices, at the VEC offices and on the VEC website.

The Report contains three options for the City of Yarra:

Preferred Option: Nine councillors to be elected from three-three councillor wards

Alternative 1: Nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards (boundaries different to the preferred option)

Alternative 2: Nine councillors to be elected from four two-councillor wards and one single-councillor ward

A notice of the Preliminary Report appears in the *Melbourne Yarra Leader*.

Media releases regarding the Preliminary Report are distributed to the *Melbourne Times* and to the *Melbourne Yarra Leader*.

7 15 March 2004

Close of preliminary submissions.

The VEC receives a total of 15 preliminary submissions.



**Corporate Objective:
Provision of high quality representation review
services to Electoral Boundaries Commission.**

Under recent legislative change, the Legislative Council will, from the 2006 State election, comprise 40 members elected from eight electoral regions (rather than the current 44 members elected from 22 electoral provinces). This will require the Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) to conduct a redivision, which cannot begin until 2005.

The VEC will provide full administrative and mapping services to support the EBC in this work.

Part



The VEC is contributing to a healthy democracy by providing a highly motivated and skilled workforce, using appropriate technology and delivering services which represent value for money to the Victorian community.

Gill Bray
Human Resources Coordinator



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

Independent review of the organisational effectiveness and cost efficiency of the VEC

In November 2003 the VEC requested MGI Meyrick Webster to conduct a review of its operations and to make recommendations towards achieving savings targets set by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet (ERC). The Review team included MGI Meyrick Webster and Mr Des O'Shea, former Electoral Commissioner for Queensland. Extensive assistance was provided by the Victorian Electoral Commissioner, the Executive Team and senior staff of the VEC.

The review found that the functions of electoral commissions vary significantly amongst the different states, territories and the Federal government, and therefore meaningful comparison and benchmarking of jurisdictions is not possible.

The primary objective of the review was to achieve a savings target of \$13.5 million over the next three financial years from 2004-05 through to 2006-07. Recommended savings met the review target, with the Electoral Commissioner having serious reservations about \$1.2 million of the savings required to meet the target.

A proposal that the VEC achieve savings by no longer contributing to updating the enrolment register was considered by the review and rejected on the basis that the VEC has made a significant investment in the electoral enrolment register. The review found it to be a valuable asset to the State, and the VEC would be reliant upon the AEC at a close of roll for a State election. (The AEC would not be able to meet the turnaround on enrolment processing following a roll close, and the critical checking of the eligibility of nominations in the days that followed could not be undertaken).

The charging of the costs of local government elections was also considered, and the review recommended that only the full direct costs of VEC operations be passed on to local government. This is on the basis that the majority of activity associated with the VEC's role relates to conducting state elections and that capacity exists within the current infrastructure to meet local government needs.

The review report recommendations will be considered by ERC in the near future.

Future directions

The VEC acknowledges that it has not to date developed an overarching risk management plan and that such a plan is necessary in order to ensure that organisational risks are identified and that appropriate contingencies are in place. During 2004-05 the VEC will undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and develop a risk management plan (see page 15 of this report).

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

Identifying and attracting people with the skills and knowledge required

In 2003 the Victorian Parliament passed legislation to introduce fixed four-year terms for both houses of Parliament, with the next State election to be held in November 2006. In addition, the Minister for Local Government announced major changes to the timing of local government elections in Victoria. As a result of these changes 25 local government elections will be conducted in November 2004, 54 local government elections conducted in November 2005, leading up to all 79 local government elections being held concurrently in November 2008. These reforms have had a major impact on the VEC regarding electoral activity in the short and longer term, as the gap between elections will be fixed and longer.

The VEC conducted a corporate and business planning process in order to determine its business priorities and identify the strategies required to conduct the next State election and local government elections over the next four years. As a result, changes to the VEC's core (ongoing) organisational structure were identified and implemented, to align its workforce with its business needs.

The VEC now has a structure that meets its staffing requirements. While the VEC has a core full time equivalent (FTE) staff of 41.2, 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.

Figure 29 – Full Time Equivalent (FTE) VEC staffing profile as at 30 June 2004

	Males	Females	Total
Ongoing	16.5	21.7	38.2
Statutory	2.0	1.0	3.0
Core staff	18.5	22.7	41.2
Fixed-term	8.0	8.8	16.8
Casual	0.7	6.7	7.4
Total	27.2	38.2	65.4

Figure 30 – FTE VPS levels of VEC staff as at 30 June 2004

	Males	Females	Total
EO 1	0.0	0.0	0.0
EO 2	1.0	0.0	1.0
EO 3	1.0	1.0	2.0
VPSG 6	4.0	2.6	6.6
VPSG 5	7.0	6.0	13.0
VPSG 4	6.0	2.2	8.2
VPSG 3	5.0	14.8	19.8
VPSG 2	3.2	11.6	14.8
VPSG 1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	27.2	38.2	65.4



In addition, the VEC has 172 senior election officials 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.

The VEC also relies heavily on casual staff during elections. Casual staff are employed and trained to work as administrative staff, election officials at voting centres and to count votes. As many of these people are employed only on election day the VEC maintains a database to assist with the recruitment and training of election casuals. For example, the VEC employed some 16,000 casual staff to assist with the conduct of the 2002 State election and 4,000 staff during the 2003 local government elections.

Selection and recruitment

The Victorian public sector's principles of merit and equity underpin all the VEC's selection and recruitment processes.

Although there has not been a State or any local government elections held this financial year, the VEC has conducted nine by-elections and is busy preparing for the 25 local government elections being conducted in November 2004. Eight ongoing and 15.8 fixed-term positions were filled in the lead up to the local government elections taking place in November 2004, one of which was exempt from advertisement. The exemption was granted as there was no infringement of merit and equity principles as the vacancy had duties and requirements of a specialised nature peculiar to the VEC.

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 the new Victorian public sector (VPS) career structure

On 1 November 2003 a new career structure was implemented across the Victorian public sector. The career structure for non-executive staff in the VPS was developed to meet the commitment made in the 2001 Industrial Agreement between the Government and Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and was implemented in accordance with an Australian Industrial Relations Commission Order.

The structure has been designed to:

- Foster career development and job growth;
- Provide greater accountability and consistency; and
- Achieve a professional, responsive, flexible Public Service.

Within the VEC, the new career structure has provided an opportunity to further reinforce the alignment of the capabilities and goals of our staff to those of the organisation. It has also assisted with the creation of a work environment where:

- Eligible employees are in jobs that are classified and paid consistently, through translation to the new structure;
- Effective communication and feedback is fostered and practiced, where managers and employees have a partnership that ensures growth in individual and organisational capability, through the new Performance Management and Progression System; and
- The provision of greater transparency in classification and career development decisions. Using the simple English "descriptors" developed to establish classification decisions, and clear and transparent progression criteria has increased the VEC's capacity to attract, retain, motivate and support high quality employees.

The over-grade review process

Translation to the new structure was based on staff's former classification and salary and was effective as of 1 November 2003. Staff whose salary was greater than the top of the equivalent grade in the new structure were subject to an "over-grade review". The over-grade review process involved an analysis of an employee's duties and responsibilities against the new VPS grade and value range descriptors to determine the correct work value of their position.

Figure 31 - The VEC conducted 12 over-grade reviews

Previous Classification	New VPS Grade	No of Positions
VPS 5	VPS Grade 6	3
VPS 4	VPS Grade 5	8
VPS 3	VPS Grade 4	1
Total over-grade reviews conducted		12

The process gave managers and employees a valuable opportunity to review position descriptions to ensure they were current and reflected the needs of the organisation, and to ensure that staff undergoing a review were appropriately classified. The process resulted in all 12 positions being confirmed at the higher grade, effective from 1 November 2003. All reviews were completed by 31 March 2004, in accordance with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission Order.

The work value review process

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission Order also provided employees with the opportunity to have their grade level reviewed where they considered that the work value of their job met the criteria for a higher grade.

The objective of a work value review is to assess whether the grade the staff member translated to is appropriate to the work they are required to undertake. Applications for work value reviews under this process had to be lodged by staff between 1 April 2004 and 30 June 2004.

The VEC received six applications for work value reviews:

Figure 32 – work value reviews

Previous Classification	New VPS Grade	Number of applications for reclassification	Number reclassified
VPS 4	VPS Grade 5	1	1
VPS 3	VPS Grade 4	4	3
VPS 2	VPS Grade 3	1	1
Total work value assessments conducted		6	5

This process gave managers and employees an opportunity to understand the actual level of responsibility required of a position and ensure the description correctly reflects the work value of the position. The process resulted in five positions being assessed at the higher grade. These were declared exempt from advertising on the basis that the incumbents were satisfactorily performing specialist roles that were reclassified in accordance with a significant shift in work value and that it was considered unlikely that advertising the vacancy would attract a more suitable applicant.

All assessments were completed by 30 June 2004, in accordance with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission Order.



Implementing an effective performance management system

The new career structure eliminated the old overlapping salary bands, replacing them with seven grades, incorporating value ranges with career progression within and between value ranges, as well as between grades.

In accordance with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission Order, the VEC has implemented a Performance Management and Progression System that:

- links individual Performance Management and Progression Plans with the VEC's corporate plan;
- Provides guidance to staff on the conduct and values expected by the VEC; and
- Facilitates a professional development strategy that supports staff and the VEC's needs.

Professional development

Training and development was undertaken by 23 staff members in areas including: project management; leadership development; research and analysis; communications; business writing skills; forklift driving and mapping software. All staff also had access to computer training to enable them to keep their skills up-to-date.

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 Sector Management and Employment Act 1998*;
- Victorian Public Service (Non-Executive Staff) Agreement 2001;
- the VPS Code of Conduct; and
- guidelines provided by the Office of Public Employment (OPE).

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. The VEC has a consultative committee comprising of representatives from each branch, a management representative and the Human Resources Coordinator. It provides a forum for representatives to address the needs of both employees and management.

The role of the committee is to:

- Provide a mechanism for effective communication on major people management issues that affect staff members;
- Enable staff members to be consulted and contribute to major people management issues affecting the work environment of the VEC; and
- Consider measures to increase the quality of working life for all staff members.

Flexible working arrangements

Staff are able to utilise a variety of options available under the VEC's flexible work arrangements policy. During 2003-04 management and staff used the following options to effectively manage their work, personal and family commitments:

Figure 33

Flexible working hours	Variable daily start and finish times.
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.
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.

Personal grievance management

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

The VEC has issue resolution processes covering the maintenance of healthy and productive working relationships. The VEC is committed to ensuring that:

- employee issues are resolved in line with the directions issued by the Commissioner for Public Employment in the People Management Strategy;
- principles of merit and equity are applied throughout the VEC; and
- work related complaints are resolved quickly, confidentially and without prejudice.

Occupational health and safety

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 received one claim for WorkCover in 2003-04, resulting in the loss of 201 working days.

Figure 34

Year	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Claims received	2	1	0	8	1



The VEC is implementing a work environment strategy, the focus of which is workplace safety and creating and maintaining a work environment that is safe, inclusive and one which enhances employee well-being. In addition, an occupational health and safety audit will be conducted to identify ways to improve the VEC's occupational health and safety systems performance, both at head office and in the election offices and voting centres.

Initiatives that have been implemented over the last financial year to improve employee well-being in a safe working environment include:

- Consultation with staff through the VEC consultative committee and a workplace inspection identified the VEC's project work area as being an inefficient use of space and a potential safety risk. As a consequence the work area was re-evaluated to control the risks and meet the requirements of the business and its staff. The area has now been professionally redesigned and fitted out to include:
 - A secure area for VEC staff to issue votes to the public during election periods and receive payments for failure to vote in the post election period.
 - A flexible work area that includes up to 24 workstations. This area will be partitioned during election periods so as to segregate half the workstations into a discrete area.
 - A training room/staff meeting area that can comfortably accommodate up to 50 people. This area has been designed to receive natural light and includes provision for audio-visual presentations.
 - A new lunch area for VEC staff. This area can accommodate up to 12 people and includes two tables, chairs, bench space and amenities area.
- All VEC staff were invited to have an influenza immunisation and 22 staff were immunised.
- All VEC staff continued to have access to the Department of Justice's employee assistance program, including a staff counselling service.

Employee relations

During 2003-04 there were no major industrial relations issues raised within the VEC. No time was lost due to industrial disputes.

The Victorian Public Service (Non-Executive Staff) Agreement 2004 was successfully implemented and will remain in force until 1 June 2007.

Future directions

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 State and local government elections and by-elections for the next three years.

Developing and retaining a dynamic and highly skilled workforce

- Develop and implement a strategy to ensure continuity of key skills.
- Implement and review staff feedback surveys to ensure quality outcomes from the VEC's HR policies and procedures.
- Review and continuous improvement of the VEC induction program to meet and reflect the VEC's requirements and environment.

Creating a working environment that is safe, supportive and free from discriminatory behaviour

Develop and implement a new work environment strategy to improve workplace health and safety of VEC staff and members of the public attending election offices and voting centres.



The new training area, equipped with modern facilities, enables staff to conduct training in a safe and convenient environment with up-to-date technology.



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

During 2003-04 the VEC deployed and supported Information Technology (IT) services for the conduct of the nine municipal council by-elections in Victoria.

As a result of the independent budget review of the VEC, the VEC has had to re-structure its IT service delivery. This has resulted in the formation of an IT Branch, and the in-sourcing of both the software development and system administration functions. These major changes have been achieved without any disruption to normal VEC operations.

As part of the corporate planning process the IT Branch has detailed a series of important infrastructure projects to prepare for the council and State elections over the next three years. A number of these projects have been completed during the past year.

The IT branch has undertaken a number of enhancements to the VEC's election management and enrolment software in preparation for the November 2004 council elections.

In addition the security of the VEC website and network was the subject of a major review. Subsequently an improved security model and solutions, with a particular emphasis on preparing the VEC for on-line web initiatives, were implemented. Two independent security scans were undertaken and a small number of issues were recorded and the appropriate mitigation action was taken.

A major achievement has been work on the re-development of the VEC's website, which will improve access to information; better comply with accessibility and other relevant standards; and to position the VEC for on-line initiatives.

Future directions

During 2004-05 the VEC will release its Information Technology Strategic Plan for 2004-07. The plan will outline the continuing enhancements to the VEC's election management and enrolment software over this period. The next coming year will require IT solutions for the November 2004 municipal council elections including applications required for the conduct of the elections for the Melbourne City Council.

Key projects will include the continued enhancement of the website, the VEC's election management and enrolment software, and a review and upgrade of the VEC's wide area network and computer room facilities.

Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission



With legislative changes to Victoria's Legislative Council, the EBC will need to conduct a redivision to divide the State into eight new electoral regions.



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

The members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission during 2003-04 were:

- His Honour Chief Judge Michael Rozenes QC, Chief Judge of the County Court (Chairman);
- Mr Colin Barry, Electoral Commissioner; and
- Mr Keith Bell, Surveyor-General (retired 7/7/03)
- Mr John Tulloch (appointed Surveyor General 25/8/03)

The EBC did not meet in 2003-04.

Under *The Constitution (Parliamentary Reform) Act 2003* passed in April 2003, the Legislative Council will, from the 2006 State election, comprise 40 members (rather than the current 44). This will require the EBC to conduct a redivision of electoral boundaries to divide the State into eight electoral regions. (Five members will be elected from each region.) Under legislation the redivision cannot begin until 2005.

Financial Statements

The VEC's financial year in review

The annual financial performance of the VEC fluctuates as State, council, by-elections, electoral representation reviews and commercial elections affect the level of expenditure during each year. As foreshadowed in the 2002-03 Annual Report, the VEC's grant revenue and expenditure have reduced for 2003-04. This will increase in 2004-05 due to the VEC conducting 25 council elections and further electoral representation reviews. It will increase further in 2005-06 with the remaining 54 council elections occurring, and increase further still in 2006-07 with the VEC conducting the State election.

This will then reduce dramatically in 2007-08, and then fluctuate with council and State elections being held every four years, and the in between years only being by-elections.

In addition, the VEC's financial performance and position have been adjusted to comply with the State Government reporting requirements, with administered revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities, which are detailed below, being excluded from the VEC main financial statements, and instead included as a note to the accounts (refer note 20).

A comparison of prior years Summary of Financial Performance illustrates the fluctuation.

Summary of Financial Performance	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
	\$'000 (Includes council elections)	\$'000 (Includes council elections)	\$'000 (Includes council elections)	\$'000 (Includes State and council elections)	\$'000 (Includes council elections)
Revenue from Ordinary Activity*					
Annual Grant Revenue	32,770	14,184	17,841	39,980	15,136
Other	433	35	93	8,320	6
Total Revenue from Ordinary Activities	33,203	14,219	17,934	48,300	15,142
Previously unrecognised non-current assets				5,121	
Total Revenue	33,203	14,219	17,934	53,421	15,142
Total Expenditure from Ordinary Activities	33,948	14,057	21,524	44,737	13,844
Net Profit/(Loss)	(745)	162	(3,590)	8,684	1,298

Revenue and Expenses

The VEC financial reports only recognise annual government grant revenue to fund operating expenses. The grant revenue in 2002-03 included funding for the State election, and dropped from \$40m to \$15.1m in 2003-04. Other revenue, such as fees collected for conducting council and commercial elections, by-elections and electoral representative 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 20 of the financial statements.

Similarly the VEC's expenditure has also reduced from \$44.7 to \$13.8m due to a lower level of key electoral activity, as can be seen in the summary of key activities on page 1.

Major items of expenditure to decrease during the reporting period included:

- Employee costs of \$4.1m (\$16.5m in 2002-03). More than 19,500 additional staff were employed to assist with the conduct of the State and local government elections in 2002-03.
- Supplies and services of \$7.1m (\$18.7m in 2002-03). This decrease is a result of the 2002-03 additional cost associated with additional premises, information technology and other resources necessary for the conduct of the State election.

The VEC's net result for the reporting period was \$1.3m

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 2004.

The non current assets of the VEC include plant and equipment and computer software development for the conducting of elections.

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, a motor vehicle finance lease, and bank balance.

The decrease in liabilities is due to the encouraged usage of the payment of goods and services by electronic funds transfer, and the decrease in employee provisions as a result of a number of employees accepting a voluntary departure package following a review of the VEC organisation and efficiency.

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 to the purchase and development of VEC non current assets. The Accumulated surplus/(loss) represents the accumulated result from ordinary activities of the VEC.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

for the year ended 30 June 2004

	Notes	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Revenues from Ordinary Activity			
Annual grants revenue	1d,2	15,136	39,980
Proceeds from sale of assets		6	990
Administered Items		-	7,330
Total Revenues from Ordinary Activities		15,142	48,300
Recognition of previously unrecognised Non-Current Assets			5,121
Total Revenues		15,142	53,421
Expenses from Ordinary Activity			
Employee benefits	1p,3	4,148	16,456
Supplies and services	3	7,072	18,664
Depreciation	1i,3	1,800	1,233
Written down value of assets disposed		27	527
Other	3	797	3,484
Administered Items	1a	-	4,373
Total expenses		13,844	44,737
Results from ordinary activities		1,298	8,684
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	11	1,298	8,684

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 30 June 2004

	Notes	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Current assets			
Cash assets	4,12	2	2
Bonds	5,12	8	40
Trust Funds		-	200
Receivables	1f,12	45	1,883
Prepayments		178	173
Inventory	1g,6	934	921
Total current assets		1,167	3,219
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	7	13,263	13,618
Total non-current assets		13,263	13,618
Total assets		14,430	16,837
Current liabilities			
Bank	1m,8,12	71	258
Payables	9,12	280	3,036
Provisions	10	372	504
Finance lease	1n,17	3	-
Total current liabilities		726	3,798
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	10	465	585
Finance Lease	17	26	-
Total non-current liabilities		491	585
Total liabilities		1,217	4,383
Net assets		13,213	12,454
Equity			
Contributed Capital	11	8,805	7,360
Accumulated Surplus/(Loss)	11	4,408	5,094
Total equity		13,213	12,454

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

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 30 June 2004

	Notes	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Cash flows in operating activities			
<i>Receipts:</i>			
Receipts from Government		15,136	40,711
User charges, bonds, fines and fees		32	284
Goods and Services Tax recovered from the ATO		927	-
Trust fund receipts		-	391
Municipal Elections		-	4,529
		<hr/> 16,095	<hr/> 45,915
<i>Payments:</i>			
Employee Costs		(4,511)	(13,447)
Supplies, services and other expenses		(11,303)	(22,360)
Trust fund payments		(100)	(343)
Municipal Elections		-	(6,963)
		<hr/> (15,914)	<hr/> (43,113)
Net cash used from operating activities	23	<hr/> 181	<hr/> 2,802
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for purchase of non-current assets		(1,445)	(5,107)
Proceeds received from sale of non-current assets		6	990
Net cash inflow/(outflow) in investing activities		<hr/> (1,439)	<hr/> (4,117)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Proceeds of Capital contribution from Dept of Justice		1,445	1,004
		<hr/> 1,445	<hr/> 1,004
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		187	(311)
Cash at 1 July 2003		(58)	253
Adjustment for administered trust funds		(200)	-
Cash at 30 June 2004	4,8	<hr/> (71)	<hr/> (58)

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

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

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NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This general purpose financial report of the Victorian Electoral Commission 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 View.

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.

(a) The reporting entity

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

Non-current assets

All non-current assets controlled by the Commission are reported in the statement of financial position.

Trust funds

The Commission has received monies in a trustee capacity for various trusts as set out in note 20.

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 20).

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. These were included in the financial statements in prior years.

(b) Objectives and funding

The Commission's objective is to provide election services for the State and Local Governments, as well as some 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.

(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 undertaken 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 granted by the Department of Justice.

User charges, fines and fees

User charges, fines and fees collected by the Commission as part of administered transactions are transferred to the Consolidated Fund.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

(e) Contributed capital

Consistent with UIG Abstract 38 Contributions by Owners Made to Wholly-Owned Public Sector Entities, 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.

(f) Receivables

The Commission has responsibility for the issue and collection of debtors 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 20). These were included in the financial statements in prior years.

(g) Inventory

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.

(h) 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 not subject to revaluation.

(i) Depreciation of non-current assets

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property over its expected useful life to the Commission. Estimates of remaining useful lives are made on a regular basis for all assets, with annual reassessments for major items. The depreciation rates used for each class of assets are:

<i>Class of non-current assets</i>	<i>Depreciation rates</i>
Plant & Equipment	10.00% to 50.00%
Furniture & Fittings	7.00% to 20.00%
Computer Equipment	33.33% to 50.00%
Computer Software*	8.33%

* The Commission has developed its own software (Election Management System 2000) to run elections and it is anticipated that the useful life to the Commission will be three to four elections over a twelve year period. Depreciation has therefore been calculated at 8.33% per annum which will be re-assessed annually.

(j) 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 of the Commission, whichever is the shorter. Leasehold improvements held at the reporting date are being amortised over 8 Years

(k) 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 incident to ownership of leased non-current assets, and operating leases under which the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits. Finance leases are capitalised. A lease asset and liability are established at the present value of minimum lease payments. 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. A motor vehicle held by the Commission is under a finance lease and is being amortised over a period of 3 years. Lease payments are allocated between interest and reduction of the liability.

(l) Intangible assets

Costs associated with the development of computer software relating to the Election Management and Roll Management System are capitalised and amortised on a straight line basis over a twelve year period being the period in which the related benefits are expected to be realised.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

(m) 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.

(n) 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(i). Other routine operating maintenance, repair costs and minor renewals are also charged as expenses as incurred.

(o) 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 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*.

(p) Employee entitlements

(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 in the 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 in the provision for employee benefits and measured as 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 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 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.

(q) Rounding of amounts

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

(r) The impacts of adopting AASB equivalents to IASB standards

For interim annual reporting periods ending on or after 30 June 2004, AASB 1047 *Disclosing the Impacts of Adopting AASB Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards* requires narrative disclosure of how the transition process is being managed and an explanation of the key differences in accounting policies that are expected to arise from the transition to AASB equivalents to IASB pronouncements. Refer to Note 26 for further details.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

2. REVENUE

	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Annual grants revenue	15,136	39,980
	15,136	39,980

3. RESULT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES

Expenses

Employee benefits

Salary and wages	3,585	14,528
Departure packages	258	-
Superannuation	320	842
Annual leave and long service leave expense	(253)	99
Other oncosts	238	987
Total employee benefits	4,148	16,456

Depreciation

Furniture and Fittings	13	13
Plant and Equipment	666	862
Total depreciation	679	875

Amortisation

Leasehold improvements	1	1
Motor vehicle under finance lease	1	-
Software	1,119	357
Total amortisation	1,121	358
Total depreciation and amortisation	1,800	1,233

Supplies and Services

Computer Requisites	519	378
Data Processing - External	1,703	1,954
Other Supplies and Services	2,681	10,616
Professional Services	1,883	4,262
Telephones, Facsimile	286	1,454
	7,072	18,664

Other Expenses

Rental expense relating to operating leases	783	3,468
Auditor's remuneration - Victorian Auditor-General's Office	14	16
	797	3,484

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

4. CASH ASSETS

	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Cash at bank and on hand	2	2
	2	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 the cash at bank required for payment of unrepresented cheques at the reporting date.

At 30 June 2004, cash at bank includes the amount of a notional shortfall for the payment of unrepresented cheques of \$51,000 (2003 - \$571,000)

For purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash includes cash deposits which are readily convertible to cash on hand and which are used in the cash management function. Cash at the end of the reporting period as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the statement of financial position.

5. BONDS

Rent Bonds for Returning Officers Offices	8	40
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6. INVENTORIES

Supplies and consumables	934	921
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NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

7. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Plant & Equipment		
At Cost	3,793	3,634
	<hr/> 3,793	<hr/> 3,634
Less: Accumulated depreciation		
Depreciation	(2,021)	(2,017)
	<hr/> 1,772	<hr/> 1,617
Furniture & Fittings		
At Cost	142	140
	<hr/> 142	<hr/> 140
Less: Accumulated depreciation		
Depreciation	(89)	(76)
	<hr/> 53	<hr/> 64
Intangible Assets		
Capitalised computer development expenditure - at cost	13,684	4,285
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,632)	(1,515)
	<hr/> 11,052	<hr/> 2,770
Leasehold Improvements		
Leasehold Improvements - at cost	34	33
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(4)	(3)
	<hr/> 30	<hr/> 30
Leased Motor Vehicle		
Motor Vehicle	29	-
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(1)	-
	<hr/> 28	<hr/> -
Work in Progress		
Leasehold Improvements	328	-
Software Construction - at cost	-	9,137
	<hr/> 328	<hr/> 9,137
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	<hr/> 13,263	<hr/> 13,618

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

7. NON-CURRENT ASSETS – 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	Furniture & fittings	Capitalised computer development expenditure	Leasehold improvements	Work in Progress	Motor Vehicle	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000			\$'000
2004							
Carrying amount at start of year	1,617	64	2,770	30	9,137		13,618
Additions	848	2	9,401	1	328	29	10,609
Disposals	(27)	-	-	-	(9,137)	-	(9,164)
Depreciation/amortisation expense (note 3)	(666)	(13)	(1,119)	(1)	-	(1)	(1,800)
Carrying amount at end of year	1,772	53	11,052	30	328	28	13,263
2003							
Carrying amount at start of year	1,941	79	3,127	3			5,150
Additions	1,063	-	-	28	9137		10,228
Disposals	(525)	(2)	-	-			(527)
Depreciation/amortisation expense (note 3)	(862)	(13)	(357)	(1)			(1,233)
Carrying amount at end of year	1,617	64	2,770	30	9,137		13,618

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

8. CURRENT LIABILITIES - Bank

	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Bank - Operating Account	71	258
	<u>71</u>	<u>258</u>

9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Employee benefits	91	230
Supplies and services	-	2,012
Administered Items	-	152
Other	189	642
	<u>280</u>	<u>3,036</u>

10. PROVISIONS

Current Liabilities

Provision for recreation leave	320	439
Provision for long service leave	52	65
	<u>372</u>	<u>504</u>

Non-current Liabilities

Provision for long service leave	465	585
	<u>465</u>	<u>585</u>

11. EQUITY AND MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY

(a) Contributed Capital

Balance 1 July	7,360	6,356
Capital contribution during the year by Victorian State Government	1,445	1,004
Balance 30 June	<u>8,805</u>	<u>7,360</u>

(b) Accumulated Surplus

Accumulated surplus at the beginning of the financial year	5,094	(3,590)
Adjustment for Administered Items	(1,984)	-
Net result for the reporting period	1,298	8,684
Accumulated Surplus/(Loss) at the end of the financial year	<u>4,408</u>	<u>5,094</u>
Total Equity	<u>13,213</u>	<u>12,454</u>

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

12. 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	1 year or less	Over 1 to 5 years	More than 5 years	Non-interest bearing	Total
2004	%	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
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			3	26		-	29
Total		-	3	26	-	351	380
2003							
Financial Instruments	Weighted average effective interest rate	Floating interest rate	1 year or less	Over 1 to 5 years	More than 5 years	Non-interest bearing	Total
2003	%	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial Assets							
Cash	N/a					202	202
Bonds	N/a					40	40
Receivables	N/a					1,883	1,883
Total						2,125	2,125
Financial Liabilities							
Bank						258	258
Accounts Payable	N/a					3,035	3,035
Total		-	-	-	-	3,293	3,293

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

12. 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	2004 Carry Amount	Aggregate Net Fair Value	2003 Carry Amount	Aggregate Net Fair Value
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<i>On-balance sheet Financial Assets</i>				
Cash	2	2	202	202
Bonds	8	8	40	40
Receivables	-	-	1,883	1,883
Total	10	10	2,125	2,125
<i>Financial Liabilities</i>				
Bank	26	26	258	258
Accounts Payable	280	280	3,035	3,035
Finance Lease	29	29	-	-
Total	335	335	3,293	3,293
<i>Off-balance sheet Financial Assets</i>				
Cash	51	51	-	-
Bonds	-	-	-	-
Receivables	298	298	-	-
Total	349	349	-	-
<i>Financial Liabilities</i>				
Bank	-	-	-	-
Candidates Deposits	3	3	-	-
Accounts Payable	-	-	-	-
Total	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.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

12. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)

(d) Terms, Conditions and Accounting Policies

Accounting policies including the terms and conditions of each class of financial asset, liability and equity instrument, both recognised and unrecognised at balance date, are as follows:

Financial Instrument	Note Ref.	Accounting Policy	Terms and Conditions
<i>Financial Assets</i>			
Cash	4	Imprest amounts for cash on hand are recognised upon establishment and when increased.	Not applicable - internal transaction only.
Bonds	5	Payments for rental bonds of premises etc are recognised as assets upon establishment.	Bonds are refunded to the VEC upon the surrender of premises etc in good order.
Receivables		Debtors are carried at the nominal amounts due less any provision for doubtful debts. A doubtful debt provision is made for any amounts considered unlikely to be collectable.	Payment is required thirty days from the end of the month following the date of invoice.
<i>Financial Liabilities</i>			
Bank	8	Deficit of bank funds are included as at balance date. This deficit is generated by unrepresented cheques. The Department of Justice electronically reimburses the VEC's bank account as and when needed on a daily basis.	Not applicable - internal transaction only.
Accounts Payable	9	Creditors and accruals are recognised for future amounts to be paid in respect of goods and services received, whether or not billed to the VEC.	Settlement of creditors is usually by the end of the month following the month invoiced.

13. RESPONSIBLE PERSONS REMUNERATION

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.

The persons who held the positions of Responsible Persons during the financial year are as follows:

	Total Remuneration		Base Remuneration	
	2004	2003	2004	2003
Electoral Commissioner - Mr Colin Barry*				
1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004	270	145	145	145
Total remuneration of Responsible Persons (including salary, superannuation contributions and other benefits):	270	145	145	145

*Due to the Electoral Commissioners resignation, the total remuneration includes the payout of all benefits

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

14. 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 2004

	Total Remuneration		Base Remuneration	
	2004	2003	2004	2003
\$100,000 to \$109,999	1	-	1	-
\$110,000 to \$119,999	1	1	1	1
\$120,000 to \$129,999		-		-
\$130,000 to \$139,999		-		-
\$140,000 to \$149,999				
Total numbers	2	1	2	1
Total amount	220	116	220	116

2004
\$'000

2003
\$'000

15. REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

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

Paid as at 30 June 2004

5 -

Payable as at 30 June 2004

9 16

14 16

16. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

Details and estimates of contingent liabilities are as follows:

Claims for damages were settled during the year against the Commission in relation to the breach of the Constitution Act Amendment Act and the Court of Disputed Returns - Petition of Mr. Ford

- 16

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

17. COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE

	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Lease commitments		
Commitments in relation to leases contracted for at the reporting date but not recognised as liabilities, payable:		
Within one year	780	750
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	2,399	2,581
Later than 5 years	946	1,290
	4,125	4,621
Representing:		
Non cancellable property leases	4,125	4,621
	4,125	4,621
Operating leases		
Commitments for minimum lease payments in relation to non-cancellable operating leases are payable as follows:		
Within one year	382	1,050
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	227	791
Later than 5 years	-	-
Commitments not recognised in the financial statements	609	1,841
	609	1,841
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.		
Finance leases		
Commitments in relation to finance leases are payable as follows:		
Within one year	4	-
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	29	-
Later than 5 years	-	-
Minimum lease payments	33	-
Less: Future finance charges	4	-
Total lease liabilities	29	-
Representing lease liabilities		
Current	3	-
Non-current	26	-
	29	-

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

17. COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE (continued)	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
(b) Expenditure commitments		
<i>Expenditure commitments contracted for:</i>		
Joint Electoral Enrolment Procedure	6,020	8,200
Information Technology Services	107	1,177
Election Services	-	337
Financial Management Services	-	111
	6,127	9,825
<i>Payable:</i>		
Not later than one year	2,035	2,980
Later than one year and not later than 2 years	4,092	1,925
Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	-	4,920
	6,127	9,825

18. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Provision for employee benefits

Current

Provision for recreation leave	320	439
Provision for long service leave	52	65
	372	504

Non-current

Provision for long service leave	465	585
	465	585

Aggregate employee benefit liability	837	1,089
--------------------------------------	-----	-------

Employee numbers

	No.	No.
Average number of employees during the financial year	60	56

As explained in notes, the amounts for long service leave and superannuation are measured at their present values. The following assumptions were adopted in measuring present values:

(a) Long service leave	%	%
Long service leave is calculated at net present value using the ratios supplied by the Department of Treasury and Finance. The average rates are as follows:		
Average rates of increase in annual employee entitlements to settlement of the liabilities	4.5	4.8
Average discount rates	5.6	4.7

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

19. SUPERANNUATION FUNDS

No liability is recognised in the statement of financial position or the Commissions' 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 of the Commission.

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

Fund	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution	Contribution
	for the year	for the year	Outstanding at Year End	Outstanding at Year End
	2004	2003	2004	2003
State Superannuation Schemes (<i>Defined benefit scheme</i>)	111	117	0	-
Vic Super (<i>Accumulation scheme</i>)	205	591	6	24
Other Complying Funds	4	134	-	-

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 final average salary.

The above amounts were measured as at 30 June of each year, or in the case of employer contributions they relate to the years ended 30 June.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

20. 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.

Administered liabilities include expenses incurred but yet to be paid.

Administered assets include revenues earned but yet to be collected.

	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
	State		Councils	
Administered revenue				
Election Entitlements		6,743		
Fees	1,559			
Fines		1,187		
Candidates Deposits			7	402
Total	1,559	7,930	7	402
Administered expenses				
Election Entitlements		6,648		
Election Entitlements - Independents		95		
Fees	3,198			
Fines		1,331		
Candidates Deposits			5	379
Total	3,198	8,074	5	379
Revenue less expenses	(1,639)	(144)	2	23
Administered assets				
Bank	48	199	3	36
Receivables	298			
Total	346	199	3	36
Administered liabilities				
Candidates Deposits			3	
Total	0	0	3	0

21. EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS

The Commission made the following ex-gratia payments.

Ex-gratia payments of \$7,000 were paid to members of the Commissions Audit Committee in 2004. (2003 \$8,000)

22. EVENTS OCCURRING AFTER REPORTING DATE

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

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

23. RECONCILIATION OF RESULTS FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2004 \$'000	2003 \$'000
Net result for the reporting period	1,298	8,684
Depreciation and amortisation	1,800	1,233
(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	21	(463)
Recognition of previously unrecognised non-current assets	-	(5,121)
<i>Change in operating assets and liabilities</i>		
Decrease (increase) in receivables	2	(1,395)
Decrease (increase) in inventories	(13)	(32)
Decrease (increase) in other operating assets	27	(69)
Increase (decrease) in trade creditors	(2,702)	(134)
Increase (decrease) in other provisions	(252)	99
	(1,117)	(5,882)
Net cash inflow from operating activities	181	2,802

24. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related-party transactions for the financial year ended 30 June 2004, (2003 : \$ Nil)

25. RESOURCES RECEIVED FREE-OF-CHARGE

The Commission did not utilise any free-of-charge resources in the 2003/04 financial year, (2002/03 : \$ Nil).

26. IMPACTS OF ADOPTING AASB EQUIVALENTS TO IASB STANDARDS

For reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2005, all Australian reporting entities are required to adopt the financial reporting requirements of the Australian equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). This requirement also extends to any comparative financial information included within the report. The first day of the comparative period 1 July 2004, effectively becomes the transition date for the Commission. Any adjustments arising from changes in the recognition or measurement of assets and liabilities at the transition date arising from the adoption of IFRS will be made against accumulated funds at the transition date.

The Commission has taken the following steps in managing the transition to Australian equivalents to IFRS:

- involving the Audit Committee and Internal Audit for the oversight of the transition to and implementation of the Australian equivalents to IFRS;
- reviewing the Commission's current accounting policies and the proposed new standards to identify key issues and the likely impacts resulting from the adoption of Australian equivalents to IFRS;
- commenced an education and training process for all stakeholders 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.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

The Commission has identified a number of changes to the existing accounting policies that may have a material impact on the Commission's future financial position and performance following the adoption of the requirements of Australian equivalents to IFRS (the new standards). These include:

- **Valuation of assets**

In accordance with the Victorian Government Policy - Revaluation of Non-Current Physical Assets, the Commission is to measure its non-current physical assets, plant equipment and vehicles on a cost basis. The new standard continues to offer a choice for measuring each class of non-current physical assets either at cost or at fair value. The Victorian government has not yet concluded whether it will make any changes to the valuation basis of any class of asset or the methodology or frequency at which revaluations are performed. The financial effects of any such changes are unknown.

- **Impairment of assets**

Under the new standards, an asset will be required to be assessed for impairment each year. If indicators of impairment exist, the carrying value of an asset will need to be assessed 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. For the Commission value-in-use of an asset is its depreciated replacement cost. Other than inventories, financial assets and assets arising from construction contracts, impairment testing will apply to all assets regardless of whether they are measured on a cost or fair value basis. Where the carrying value of an asset exceeds its recoverable amount, the difference will be written-off as an impairment loss to the statement of financial performance except to the extent that the write-down can be debited to an asset revaluation reserve amount applicable to that asset. Any impairment losses at transition date will be adjusted against the accumulated funds.

- **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. Under the new standard on leases, the asset and liability recognised would be equal to the lower of the present value of minimum lease payments and fair value of the leased asset. This may result in a write down of the Commission's lease assets and liabilities at the date of transition if the present value of minimum lease payments exceeds the fair value of the leased asset with the resulting adjustment made against accumulated funds. In addition, the guidance on whether a lease is a finance or operating lease is less prescriptive and there is a greater emphasis on the substance of the transaction when making a judgement.

- **Inventories held for distribution**

Under existing accounting policies, costs incurred on goods and services distributed for no consideration or at a nominal amount are currently expensed. The new standard on inventories requires such costs be capitalised as inventories held for distribution. 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. Other inventories, other than inventories held for distribution, will continue to be measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

- **Intangible assets**

There are currently no specific Australian accounting standards on intangible assets except for the standard on accounting for development costs. On adoption of IFRS, there will be a specific standard on intangible assets with strict recognition and measurement requirements. Under existing requirements, costs of development activities could either be treated as an expense or be deferred to future periods to the extent that they are expected beyond reasonable doubt to be recoverable. Under the new standard, costs incurred in the research phase are not permitted to be recognised as an asset and should be recognised as an expense when incurred. Only expenditures incurred in the development phase are permitted to be recognised as an asset to the extent that they satisfy the criteria of the standard. Research costs previously capitalised as intangible assets will be derecognised at the date of transition with the resulting adjustment made against accumulated funds. The new standard permits a class of intangible assets to be measured at cost or revaluation basis subsequent to initial recognition, however, the revaluation basis may only be used if an active market exists for the asset. Intangible assets will also be subject to amortisation and impairment tests.

- In addition, there may be a number of other changes in requirements which may lead to changes in methodology or processes, increased disclosures and possibly changes in measurement of assets or liabilities. The changes are not expected to have a material impact.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement by the Electoral Commissioner and Chief Finance and Accounting Officer

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 2004 and financial position of the Commission as at 30 June 2004.

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



Doug Beecroft
Electoral Commissioner (Acting)
30th August 2004



David W Clarke
Manager Finance and Budget
30th August 2004

Melbourne



AUDITOR GENERAL
VICTORIA

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

To the Members of the Parliament of Victoria, responsible Ministers and Members of the Victorian Electoral Commission

Matters relating to the electronic presentation of the Audited Financial Report

This audit report relates to the financial report of Victorian Electoral Commission for the financial year ended 30 June 2004 included on its web site. The Electoral Commissioner is responsible for the integrity of the web site. I have not been engaged to report on the integrity of the web site. The audit report refers only to the statements named below. An opinion is not provided on any other information which may have been hyperlinked to or from these statements. If users of this report are concerned with the inherent risks arising from electronic data communications they are advised to refer to the hard copy of the audited financial report to confirm the information included in the audited financial report presented on this web site.

Audit Scope

The accompanying financial report of the Victorian Electoral Commission for the financial year ended 30 June 2004, comprising statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, has been audited. The Electoral Commissioner is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial report and the information it contains. An independent audit of the financial report has been carried out in order to express an opinion on it to the Members of the Parliament of Victoria, responsible Ministers and the Electoral Commissioner as required by the *Audit Act* 1994.


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 an examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented 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.

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 2004 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

MELBOURNE
30 August 2004



EDWARD M. HAY
Acting Auditor-General

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Level 34, 140 William Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone (03) 8601 7000 Facsimile (03) 8601 7010 Email comments@audit.vic.gov.au Website www.audit.vic.gov.au

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Legislation governing the work of the Victorian Electoral Commission

Constitution Act 1975

Electoral Act 2002

Legislation imposing certain duties on the Electoral Commissioner

Agricultural Industry Development Act 1990

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

Electoral Regulations 2002

Health Services (Community Health Centre Elections) Regulations 2001

Liquor Control Reform Regulations 1999

Local Government (Elections) Regulations 1995

Shop Trading Reform (Polls) Regulations 1996

Victorian Institute of Teaching (Elections) Regulations 2002

APPENDIX 2

Recent publications

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

Victorian Electoral Commission: Annual Report 2002-03^{*^}

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Corangamite Shire Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Greater Bendigo City Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Hobsons Bay City Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Moorabool Shire Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Moreland City Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Pyrenees Shire Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Stonnington City Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Surf Coast Shire Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Warrnambool City Council[^]

Final Report Electoral Representation Review Yarra City Council[^]

Your opinion counts – young people and voting[^]

e-volution not revolution – electronic voting status report[^]

List of Streets Victoria (2002)

Selections – Victorian Electoral Commission newsletter, number 9, July 2002^{*^}

Unless otherwise indicated, the above publications are available from:

Victorian Electoral Commission

Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street

Melbourne Vic. 3000

Tel 13 18 32

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

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

APPENDIX 3

District and province enrolments as at 30 June 2004

District enrolments as at 30 June 2004

Electorate	Electors	Deviation
Albert Park District	40,747	+9.28%
Altona District	38,182	+2.40%
Ballarat East District	37,015	-0.73%
Ballarat West District	40,632	+8.97%
Bass District	36,783	-1.35%
Bayswater District	36,427	-2.31%
Bellarine District	39,428	+5.74%
Benalla District	35,287	-5.37%
Benambra District	34,840	-6.57%
Bendigo East District	36,283	-2.70%
Bendigo West District	38,908	+4.34%
Bentleigh District	36,923	-0.98%
Box Hill District	37,739	+1.21%
Brighton District	36,521	-2.06%
Broadmeadows District	37,259	-0.08%
Brunswick District	38,624	+3.58%
Bulleen District	34,782	-6.72%
Bundoora District	34,964	-6.23%
Burwood District	38,108	+2.20%
Carrum District	40,116	+7.58%
Caulfield District	36,201	-2.92%
Clayton District	34,264	-8.11%
Cranbourne District	37,061	-0.61%
Dandenong District	35,080	-5.92%
Derrimut District	34,993	-6.15%
Doncaster District	35,627	-4.45%
Eltham District	38,276	+2.65%
Essendon District	37,292	+0.01%
Evelyn District	37,311	+0.06%
Ferntree Gully District	39,550	+6.07%
Footscray District	37,170	-0.32%
Forest Hill District	37,272	-0.04%
Frankston District	35,851	-3.85%
Geelong District	38,837	+4.15%
Gembrook District	35,946	-3.60%
Gippsland East District	38,342	+2.83%
Gippsland South District	37,020	-0.72%
Hastings District	38,351	+2.85%
Hawthorn District	37,334	+0.12%
Ivanhoe District	37,331	+0.12%
Keilor District	41,103	+10.23%
Kew District	35,848	-3.86%
Kilsyth District	38,027	+1.98%

Kororoit District	36,587	-1.88%
Lara District	39,130	+4.94%
Lowan District	38,355	+2.86%
Lyndhurst District	35,790	-4.02%
Macedon District	40,427	+8.42%
Malvern District	37,060	-0.61%
Melbourne District	35,471	-4.87%
Melton District	36,631	-1.76%
Mildura District	36,187	-2.95%
Mill Park District	37,132	-0.42%
Mitcham District	36,539	-2.01%
Monbulk District	36,222	-2.86%
Mordialloc District	38,968	+4.51%
Mornington District	35,513	-4.76%
Morwell District	36,428	-2.31%
Mount Waverley District	36,605	-1.83%
Mulgrave District	34,067	-8.64%
Murray Valley District	35,874	-3.79%
Narracan District	37,879	+1.58%
Narre Warren North District	35,934	-3.63%
Narre Warren South District	41,138	+10.33%
Nepean District	36,385	-2.42%
Niddrie District	36,543	-2.00%
Northcote District	38,145	+2.30%
Oakleigh District	34,727	-6.87%
Pascoe Vale District	38,012	+1.94%
Polwarth District	39,852	+6.88%
Prahran District	37,832	+1.46%
Preston District	38,241	+2.56%
Richmond District	37,558	+0.72%
Ripon District	36,363	-2.48%
Rodney District	35,510	-4.77%
Sandringham District	36,235	-2.82%
Scoresby District	38,069	+2.09%
Seymour District	36,645	-1.72%
Shepparton District	36,212	-2.89%
South Barwon District	40,570	+8.80%
South-West Coast District	40,738	+9.25%
Swan Hill District	34,523	-7.42%
Tarneit District	38,680	+3.73%
Thomastown District	37,715	+1.15%
Warrandyte District	39,272	+5.32%
Williamstown District	37,418	+0.35%
Yan Yean District	36,825	-1.24%
Yuroke District	37,674	+1.04%
District Total	3,281,336	
District Average	37,288	

Province Enrolments as at 30 June 2004

Ballarat Province	154,705	+3.72%
Central Highlands Province	146,068	-2.07%
Chelsea Province	148,818	-0.22%
Doutta Galla Province	149,226	+0.05%
East Yarra Province	149,029	-0.08%
Eumemmerring Province	148,098	-0.71%
Geelong Province	157,965	+5.91%
Gippsland Province	149,669	+0.35%
Higinbotham Province	148,647	-0.34%
Jika Jika Province	148,482	-0.45%
Koonung Province	151,430	+1.53%
Melbourne North Province	150,660	+1.01%
Melbourne Province	148,945	-0.14%
Melbourne West Province	151,450	+1.54%
Monash Province	151,840	+1.80%
North Eastern Province	142,436	-4.50%
North Western Province	145,901	-2.18%
Silvan Province	149,948	+0.53%
Templestowe Province	146,016	-2.10%
Waverley Province	139,663	-6.36%
Western Port Province	147,032	-1.42%
Western Province	155,308	+4.13%

Province Total **3,281,336**

Province Average **149,152**

APPENDIX 4

Victorian registered political parties as at 30 June 2004

Political party	Registered Officer
Abolish Child Support and Family Court	Nevil J Brewer Registered Officer 8 Paulette Court, Scoresby Vic. 3179
Australian Democrats (Victorian Division)	Mr R Stone Registered Officer G1 Eastbourne House 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne Vic. 3002 PO Box 135, East Melbourne Vic. 8002
Australian Labor Party—Victorian Branch	Mr Erik Locke State Secretary 360 King Street, West Melbourne Vic. 3003
Australian Reform Party	Ms D M Worrell Registered Officer Lot 1, Lewis Road, Upper Beaconsfield Vic. 3808
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 855, Mulgrave Vic 3170
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 Vic. 3000
National Party of Australia—Victoria	Ms Meredith Dickie State Director Level 7, 24 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000
One Nation (Victoria)	Mr Patrick Taylor Vice President and Registered Officer 14 The Grove, Boronia Vic. 3155
Shooters' Party (Vic)	Mr Russell A Pearson Registered Officer PO Box 234, Somerville Vic. 3912
Socialist Alliance (Victoria)	Mr Graham Mathews Registered Officer 1/77 Pender Street, Thornbury Vic. 3071
The Australian Greens—Victoria	Mr Gurmeet Sekhon Registered Officer GPO Box 4589, Melbourne Vic. 3001

APPENDIX 5

Outcomes of applications to the Municipal Electoral Tribunal

Council	Details	Status
Hepburn Shire Birch Ward (Election day: March 15 2003)	It was alleged that the personal collection of mail by the returning officer might have affected the outcome of the election.	Hearing and Decision on 17 October 2003. Application was dismissed with no order as to costs.
Hume City Ningulabul Ward (Election day: March 15 2003)	It was alleged that a successful candidate's election material contained false and defamatory statements and was in breach of Section 57 of the Local Government Act 1989.	Matter was heard on 19 August 2003 and decision was handed down on 17 October 2003. Application was dismissed. Applicant was ordered to pay costs of \$3,500 to the successful candidate.
Hume City Shankland Ward (Election day: March 15 2003)	It was alleged that a successful candidate's election material contained misleading statements (in breach of Section 55(5) of the Local Government Act 1989) and that the material was not correctly authorised in accordance with Section 55(2) of the Local Government Act 1989.	Matter was heard on 21 August 2003 and decision was handed down on 17 October 2003. Application in relation to Section 55(5) was dismissed. The successful candidate was fined \$500 for a breach of Section 55(2). There was no order as to costs.

APPENDIX 6

Pecuniary interest declaration

The Electoral Commissioner, Mr C A Barry, the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Ms D Byrne, and the Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Mr D Beecroft have completed declarations of pecuniary interests.

APPENDIX 7

Consultants engaged: 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004

Consultancy engagements over \$100,000

Nil

Consultancy engagements under \$100,000

5 consultancies	\$104,037.34
Total	\$104,037.34

APPENDIX 8

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 9

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.

4.2 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.

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Victorian Electoral Commission procedures under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

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, Communications and Corporate Services
L 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 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
L 22, 459 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Tel: 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 figure 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 figure 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	Person/body to whom the disclosure must be made
Employee of a public body	That public body or the Ombudsman
Member of Parliament (Legislative Assembly)	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Member of Parliament (Legislative Council)	President of the Legislative Council
Councillors	The Ombudsman
Chief Commissioner of Police	The Ombudsman or Deputy Ombudsman
Member of the police force	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.

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Victorian Electoral Commission procedures under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

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 Co-ordinator
L 8, 505 Little Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 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 (\$6000) 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;

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Victorian Electoral Commission procedures under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

- 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 figure 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.

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Victorian Electoral Commission procedures under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

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:

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Victorian Electoral Commission procedures under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

- 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 (\$24,000) 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.

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Victorian Electoral Commission procedures under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001*

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 (\$24,000) 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 (\$6,000) 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 (\$24,000) 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 (\$24,000) 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

Attendance election

An attendance election is one in which most people vote at polling places or voting centres on election day.

Pre-poll and postal voting services are available for people who wish to vote before election day.

Ballot

A method of secret voting.

Boundary review

A review of a council's ward boundaries.

By-election

A by-election is an election in a single electorate to fill a casual vacancy caused by the departure of a sitting Member of Parliament or Local Government councillor before the term expires.

Candidate

A candidate is an eligible elector who nominates for election.

Census Collector District

Census collector districts are designed for use in census years for the collection and dissemination of Population Census data. In non-census years, census collector districts are undefined. In aggregate, Census collector districts cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

The traditional concept of a Census collector district is that it defines an area that one census collector can cover, delivering and collecting census forms, in about a ten-day period.

Close of roll

Date at which the voters roll closes for State elections.

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 in local elections).

Contested election

A contested election is an election where there are more candidates than vacancies to be filled, requiring people to vote.

Councillor

An elected member of a municipality.

District

One of the 88 Legislative Assembly electorates.

Election

The choosing of representatives by the voters.

Election Date

The date voters cast their votes.

Electoral Representation review

A review of a council's electoral structure, including the number of councillors and ward boundaries.

Entitlement date

Date at which the voters roll closes for council elections.

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. People cannot vote at an election unless they 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 (Lower House)

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 (Upper House)

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.

Nomination date

That date at which nominations close for an election.

Poll

Where electors have to vote for alternatives, rather than representatives.

Polling Place

A place at which electors can vote in an attendance municipal election.

Postal election

A postal election is an election conducted entirely by post.

Voters are mailed ballot packs containing their ballot papers and information about the candidates. Voters cast their votes by returning the ballot papers in the mail.

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.

Provisionally enrolled

A 17 year old Australian citizen may apply for provisional enrolment to enable him or her to vote if they attain the age of 18 in the period between the close of rolls and election day.

Redivision

The redrawing of electoral boundaries to ensure that there are, as near as possible, equal numbers of voters in each electorate within Victoria.

Region

One of the new 8 Legislative council electorates, to take effect at the 2006 State election.

Registered political party

A group of people with similar ideas or aims, some of whose members nominate as candidates at elections in the hope that they will be elected to parliament. A political party can register with the Victorian Electoral Commission for state elections. This enables party names to appear on the ballot paper, and facilitates nominations and registration of how-to-vote cards.

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.

Spatial Data

Spatial data, sometimes called land information or geographic information, spatial data is information about the location and attributes of geographical features. This data can be classified and stored electronically as point, line, polygon, grid cell or object data.

Voter participation

The percentage of enrolled electors who voted.

Voting centre

A place at which electors can vote in a State election. There are three types in State elections:

- Early voting centres
- Mobile voting centres
- Election day voting centres

Ward or Riding Boundaries

Describes the internal boundaries of a municipal council.

VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

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