

Victorian Electoral Commission 

**Submission to Victorian Parliament Inquiry
into Civics and Electoral Participation**

Terms of reference

That, under section 33 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, an inquiry into civics and electoral participation in Victorian state parliamentary elections be referred to the Electoral Matters Committee for consideration and report no later than 31 August 2018 and the Committee should specifically examine:

1. electoral and civics education, the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) community engagement programs and other best practice approaches used by the VEC, other Australian electoral commissions, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, to ensure that Victorian citizens are adequately informed and able to participate effectively in elections;
2. strategies to reduce informal voting at Victorian state elections which are not related to the voting system;
3. how the VEC employs and trains casual staff for Victorian state elections, this should involve discussion about methods to attract people to join the VEC's casual staffing roster for Victorian elections, the Committee should also examine the roles and responsibilities of the VEC's casual election staff in light of changing technological and societal demands; and
4. strategies to increase electoral participation amongst community groups that traditionally experience barriers to electoral participation, such as Victorians aged 18 to 24, Victorians from multicultural backgrounds, as well as Victorians who have recently become Australian citizens and are not familiar with Australia's electoral system.

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1. Introduction

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is pleased to respond to this Inquiry as it offers the opportunity to showcase the multitude of best practice, evidence-based activities it provides to Victorian electors in the area of civics education and inclusion and participation. The VEC uses both international and its own research to underpin a theory-driven approach to program design and results evaluation.

Having informed citizens actively participating in free and fair elections is fundamental to any healthy, functioning democracy. As the body responsible for conducting local and State elections in Victoria, a key part of the VEC's work is to ensure that all eligible Victorians are able to actively participate in the electoral process.

Apart from ensuring that elections are run smoothly, transparently and accessibly – the VEC has a statutory duty 'to promote public awareness of electoral matters that are in the general public interest by means of the conduct of education and information programs'.¹ This legislative mandate has empowered the VEC to focus on an inclusion and participation agenda, evident in the number and types of programs the VEC has conducted over the past decade.

Despite a compulsory voting environment, the VEC recognises – through electoral data, qualitative research and anecdotal evidence – that electoral participation is not equal across all Victorians who are eligible to vote. Providing inclusive electoral services - via an appropriately skilled election workforce, which reflects the diversity of the electorate and provides assistance in a culturally responsive manner, in line with societal expectations - is critical in ensuring that every eligible Victorian has the knowledge, skills and opportunity to participate in elections. As such, the VEC carries out its statutory responsibilities in the following ways:

- developing and delivering accessible electoral products and services
- running public information campaigns aimed at the general voting public at election time and
- conducting education and community engagement activities aimed at addressing barriers to participation for priority community groups.

¹ Under section 8(2)(f) of the *Electoral Act 2002*

Overview of the VEC's approach to civics and electoral participation

In order to inform its overall approach to encouraging electoral participation the VEC has developed an *Enduring Framework for the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Electoral Education and Awareness Programs (2014-2018)*. This framework covers the scope of the VEC's work on public awareness in the period prior to elections, in addition to its grassroots education and community engagement work.

The latter is further defined by a *Community Education and Electoral Inclusion Strategy 2017-2019* (the Strategy), which sits under the high level framework, and is designed to target, deliver and evaluate education and inclusion programs and services. The Strategy was developed using a 'program theory' approach² (see Appendix A) and is based on five objectives.

1. Increase informed electoral participation through the provision of electoral outreach and targeted information resources.
2. Encourage the early formation of positive voting behaviour by developing young people's civic knowledge and skills.
3. Gain access to priority communities by engaging in meaningful partnerships with relevant organisations.
4. Extend the reach of the VEC's electoral inclusion work by building capacity of community organisations and workers.
5. Create a culture of inclusion within the VEC by building staff capacity.

The strategy is based on a best practice public participation approach³, links the 'real world' to electoral participation through a civics education lens, and is supported by audience relevant information resources and targeted communication. Necessarily, it also includes a comprehensive performance monitoring and evaluation plan.

The delivery of the Strategy is based on election cycle implementation:

- **year round:** deep engagement via civics education and community capacity building

² A causal model that highlights the linkages between a program's efforts and its results, identifying how and why change occurs.

³ International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework and Victorian Auditor General's Office Best Practice Public Participation Guide

- **election-time:** electoral information through face-to-face outreach, supported by targeted, accessible and culturally responsive resources.

The strategy also employs the following underlying principles:

- citizen-centric
- culturally competent
- inclusive
- evidence-based
- outcome-focussed and
- partnership-focussed.

Priority communities targeted in the Strategy are those identified as being less likely to participate in the democratic process and include:

- young people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people living with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people experiencing homelessness and
- prisoners.

All activities in the Strategy are supported by a comprehensive research program, as the VEC is committed to best practice program design founded on research-based evidence. An active annual research program looks at electoral issues or existing programs/products/services in order to better understand voter characteristics, attitudes and behaviours, and to identify barriers to enrolling and voting.

This research program is supplemented by an 'action research' approach to the piloting of new initiatives and services, which also includes independent evaluation wherever possible. Further, the VEC financially supports and resources the Electoral Regulation Research Network (ERRN) to look at key electoral regulation issues such as convenience voting, early voting, electronic voting and changes to the Senate voting system.

Lastly, the VEC conducts literature reviews of Australian industry research on which to base its understanding.

This submission to the Electoral Matters Committee Inquiry into Civics and Electoral Participation will further detail this work - from electoral education to public awareness campaigns, research and provision of accessible electoral services – in response to the Inquiry's four key points of reference.

2. Electoral and Civics Education

The VEC's electoral education work is particularly focussed on engaging with young people. Australian Electoral Commission statistics show that just over one in four 18 year olds are not enrolled. Of those enrolled, the turnout rate for 18-24 year olds is typically lower than for other age segments.⁴

Young people may not be participating in formal politics or see voting as an effective way of getting their voice heard, but they are certainly participating in different ways. Young people are more likely to sign online petitions, boycott products or access party policies via the internet than older people.⁵ If young people perceive that formal political processes are not accessible and/or attractive for them, this can shape their attitudes for a lifetime, with potentially long-lasting negative impacts on a country's political culture.⁶ This is why opportunities need to be created for young people to have a voice and to experience ways they can influence decision-making.

Past research has shown that in order to engage young people in politics, it has to be made relevant to them, and one way to address this is through investigation of issues that are relevant to young people⁷. Haste and Hogan comment that young peoples' motivation to engage politically or make his or her voice heard to seek change, comes often from a moral sensitivity which carries with it a sense of personal responsibility to act...⁸

A recent British study found that school-based political activities can have a positive and independent effect on electoral and political engagement among young people. The authors claim that "these effects were apparent even after the participants had left school and had become young adults, and above and beyond the effects of prior

⁴ Australian Electoral Commission, http://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Enrolment_stats/rate-div/index.htm and http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/research/Voter_Turnout_-_2016_House_of_Representatives_and_Senate_Elections_Figure_9, p. 14

⁵ Martin, A, *Young People and Politics: Political Engagement in the Anglo-American Democracies*, Routledge, 2012.

⁶ United Nations Development Program, *Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle*, January 2013, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/ENG_UN-Youth_Guide-LR.pdf

⁷ Beadle, S. 'The changing nature of civic engagement', in S. Beadle, R. Holdsworth and J. Wyn, *For we are young and...? Young people in a time of uncertainty*, Melbourne University Publishing, Melbourne, 2011

⁸ Haste, H., & Hogan, A. Beyond conventional civic participation, beyond the moral-political divide: Young people and contemporary debates about citizenship. *Journal of Moral Education*, 2006, 35(4) 473-493

dispositions or other known predictors (such as socio-economic status) that we included in the models as controls'.⁹ It is important to emphasise that findings of this study were based on education through citizenship, not education about citizenship. Learning about civics and citizenship through 'doing' – for example, participation in student councils or taking action on issues of importance - is an important factor when considering best practice education approaches.

The core tenets of the VEC's Passport to Democracy Program and work with the Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leaders Program were developed on this basis.

Passport to Democracy

Passport to Democracy (PTD) is an active citizenship education program, which provides humanities, Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and primary school students with a positive experience of democracy.¹⁰ It supports the electoral participation of young Victorians by engaging them to achieve positive change on a community issue they care about. Through this engagement, they are guided to appreciate and utilise formal and informal political processes, particularly voting. Through the program, the VEC provides teachers of school children and adolescents with access to resources, including online, downloadable and printed teaching tools, as well as physical election materials, and face-to-face visits to participating schools by VEC staff.

Examples of recently developed PTD program content heading into the late 2016 council election period include:

- *Partner Up*, a sequence of hands-on learning activities, launched in June 2016 in response to teacher demand for PTD activities aimed at senior students. It guides VCAL¹¹ students to form community-based partnerships. Students are prompted to contact and partner with local councils and community organisations, to jointly implement a community-

⁹ Keating, A. and Janmaat, J.G. (2016). 'Education through Citizenship at School: Do School Activities Have a Lasting Impact on Youth Political Engagement?' *Parliamentary Affairs*, 69 (2), 409-429. <https://germjanmaat.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/keating-and-janmaat-2016-pa.pdf>

¹⁰ The Youth Electoral Study (2009) found that students who experience politics positively at school are more likely to enrol and vote, and more politically aware.

¹¹ VCAL is a senior school certificate that is available as an alternative to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). VCAL's focus is on applied learning and it is offered at some schools, TAFEs, universities and in some community-based settings.

based project, and to understand electoral participation as a core principle of democratic citizenship.

- *Be the Change* (online game) - players select from a number of democratic actions to achieve positive change in their local community. Actions include raising awareness, consulting, standing for nomination in elections, and more. This gameplay aims to equip young players with knowledge of practical ways to participate in Victoria's democratic landscape, and particularly highlights how direct electoral involvement, including voting and engaging with (or becoming) representatives, shapes communities.

Overall, teachers from 185 separate education providers obtained one or more PTD resources in 2016, compared with 99 in 2015. Since the program's inception in 2008, the VEC estimates that the program has reached over 50,000 students across Victoria.

The PTD program's business plan and teaching materials were initially reviewed in 2010 by Professor Murray Print, co-author of the Australian Electoral Commission's Youth Electoral Study (YES).¹² This review found the program's aims and objectives to be consistent with YES findings on engaging young people, as well as the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008).¹³

PTD was also included in a review of civics and citizenship education conducted by parliamentary intern Duncan Wallace in 2012.¹⁴ The review found the program to be highly effective and recommended for its further extension of its role in civics education, endorsing the Electoral Matters Committee's 2009 finding that the program has 'clear potential to increase electoral enrolment and voter turnout'.¹⁵

Teacher and pre-service teacher professional development

The Passport Program is supplemented by civics and citizenship professional development, which is delivered to teachers and pre-service teachers through the

¹² http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/youth_study/

¹³ The Melbourne Declaration articulates nationally consistent future directions and aspirations for Australian schooling agreed by all Australian Education Ministers. It is the current overarching framework for educational policy across Australia. It consists of two goals, the second of which is that 'All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens'. <http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/nrosia2009/national-policy-context/educational-goals>

¹⁴ Wallace, D Learning How to vote: Civics and Citizenship Education in Victoria, Report prepared for Mr Lee Tarlamis MLC, June 2010.

¹⁵ Electoral Matters Committee Enquiry into Voter Participation, p126

Civics and Citizenship Network, the Victorian Applied Learning Association and the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria on an annual basis. It also includes networks such as Koori Education Coordinators and Local Learning and Employment Networks.

Burton and May assert that the ‘training of teachers in civics education would appear to be of fundamental importance if citizenship education is as prized as the politics around it suggest. With training comes understanding, confidence in subject matter and confidence in the teachers’ ability to interpret the subject matter for students, which in turn may translate into greater understanding and appreciation of the subject by the students.’¹⁶

Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leaders Program – Korin Gamadji Institute

For over seven years the VEC has been involved in direct delivery for the Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leaders (REAL) Program, delivered by the Richmond Football Club (and formerly the YMCA) at the Korin Gamadji Institute.

The REAL Program is specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 14 – 17 years. The program engages youth from Year 9 level, and works with the participants across a number of years to develop their leadership skills.

The REAL Programs are run as a four-day intensive during school holiday periods and aim to support the development of young Indigenous people into confident and proud community leaders. Students are initially nominated by their teacher for good school attendance and the student’s leadership potential.

The Program engages participants in interactive sessions that focus on:

- leadership
- active participation
- health and wellbeing
- personal and career pathways and
- cultural pride and affirmation.

¹⁶ Diana Burton and Stephanie May, “Citizenship Education in Secondary Schools in England”, in *Educational futures* (BESA e-journal), May Vol.7(1) January 2015 p. 89

The VEC delivers sessions on active participation and how young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can make a difference on an issue that is meaningful to them. The VEC component includes a particular focus on recognising the fight of Aboriginal elders to achieve recognition and the right to vote; a visit to Parliament House; encouragement to participate in Youth Parliament via a sponsored team (and create a bill for consideration); and opportunities for work at a real election (age-dependent). In total, participants are invited to return for a total of three camps over three or more years.

The Program was independently evaluated by Monash University in 2016¹⁷, and included focus groups and surveys of program participants and Aboriginal youth who had not been through the program. Participants reported being more engaged and empowered as a result of the program. Some 75.7% of REAL participants were 'somewhat confident' to 'highly confident' of their ability to recognise the connection between politics and their own local and broader community issues. Education and cultural identity were seen to be major enablers of active participation. REAL participants indicated much higher levels of understanding around the electoral and voting system processes and acknowledge the program for developing this understanding.

¹⁷ Monash University Faculty of Education, Evaluation of the Richmond Emerging Aboriginal Leader Program, June 2016, p.29

3. Reducing Informal Voting

Informal voting occurs where a ballot paper 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.

There are two categories of informal voting:

- **intentional:** where the voter has intentionally voted informally through either leaving the ballot paper blank, or the deliberate writing/marking of the ballot paper in a manner contrary to the directions on the ballot paper and
- **unintentional:** where the voter appears to have meant to cast a formal vote but has incorrectly marked the ballot paper, either through numbering errors or using a tick or cross instead of a number.

Over the last 30 years, the rate of informal voting in Victorian State elections for the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) has generally increased, whilst the Legislative Council (Upper House) has remained reasonably static.

Table 1: Rate of Informality at Victorian State Elections 1982 – 2014

ELECTION	LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
1982	2.61	3.13
1985	2.68 (+0.07)	3.01 (-0.12)
1988	3.89 (+1.21)	4.33 (+1.32)
1992	3.81 (-0.08)	4.11 (-0.22)
1996	2.3 (-1.61)	2.58 (-1.53)
1999	3.02 (+0.72)	3.37 (+0.79)
2002	3.42 (+0.4)	3.67 (+0.3)
2006	4.56 (+1.14)	4.28 (+0.61)
2010	4.96 (+0.4)	3.38 (-0.9)
2014	5.22 (+0.26)	3.43 (+0.05)

At the Federal level, a very similar picture is apparent.

Table 2: Rate of Informality at Commonwealth Elections 1983 – 2016

Informal Voting (%) in House of Representatives and Senate Elections 1983-2016 ¹⁸													
	1983	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016
House of Representatives	2.1	6.3	4.9	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.8	4.8	5.2	4.0	5.55	5.91	5.05
Senate	9.9	4.3	4.1	3.4	2.6	3.5	3.3	3.9	3.8	2.6	2.6	2.3	3.94

The Legislative Assembly (Lower House) informal voting rate has doubled over the past 32 years, and has increased at every election since 1996. However, the increase at each election has not been dramatic. The second largest increase was in 2006, when the introduction of a new Upper House voting system led to many voters mistakenly voting ‘1 only’ for the Lower House.

The Legislative Council (Upper House) informal voting rate has barely moved in 32 years. Until 2006, informal voting was slightly higher for the Upper House, possibly because voters regarded it as less important, or because voters continued a number sequence from their Lower House ballot paper. However, since the introduction of the new voting system in 2006 where voters could vote ‘1’ above the line, informal voting for the Upper House has been lower than for the Lower House. There was a slight increase when the new system was introduced in 2006, but after that informal voting dropped back as voters became accustomed to the system.

At each State election since 2006, the VEC has analysed informal votes across a sample of districts and regions. Part of the analysis of the 2014 State election included, for the first time, an analysis of informal votes for every electorate.

¹⁸ [Australian Electoral Commission publications](#)

Table 3: Categories used by the VEC in analysis of district ballot papers and the variation of results from 2010 to 2014

Category	2010 (%)	2014 (%)	Change 2010-2014 (Percentage Points)
Blank	25.10	30.30	+5.20
Numbers – 1 only	23.70	22.98	-0.72
Numbers – insufficient	7.40	9.80	+2.40
Numbers – apparently deliberate	6.55	6.65	+0.10
Numbers – other	12.44	6.44	-6.00
Total numbers	50.10	45.87	-4.23
Ticks/crosses - preference	6.47	8.10	+1.63
Ticks/crosses – apparently deliberate	3.04	4.01	+0.97
Ticks/crosses – other	0.65	0.90	+0.25
Total ticks/crosses	10.16	13.01	+2.85
Writing – apparently deliberate	12.83	8.47	-4.36
Writing – other	1.06	2.14	+1.08
Total writing	13.9	10.71	-3.19
Total apparently deliberate	22.43	19.23	-3.20
Total apparently deliberate including blank	47.53	49.52	+1.99
Total preferences	37.57	40.88	+3.31

Those categories considered to comprise intentional informality include blank; numbers – apparently deliberate; ticks/crosses – apparently deliberate; and writing – apparently deliberate. So overall, 49.52% of votes were deliberately cast as informal – a slight increase over 2010. The VEC is not aware of any research where voters who have intentionally voted informally have been asked their reasons for doing so. This is a valid area for further research given that one in every two voters who cast an informal vote did so deliberately.

The VEC has attempted to address intentional informal voting through a number of engagement strategies, based on research where possible. Examples of specific projects initiated prior to the 2014 State election are mentioned below.

2014 State election advertising campaign

Prior to the 2014 State election, the VEC moved to introduce a new advertising campaign. The campaign was obviously for all voters, but made particular efforts to engage young people through messaging and concepts derived from research. Research conducted for the VEC in 2013¹⁹ amongst young, disengaged voters highlighted the major attitudinal barrier that they are just one person – what difference can their one vote make? They were surprised to learn of the small number of votes that had determined a number of election outcomes over the years. Comments were that they thought they would now be less likely to leave their ballot papers blank.

As a result, the television advertising campaign produced for the 2014 State election (and which will be utilised again in 2018) included information about specific elections where the outcome was determined by a small number of votes and emphasised the value of every single vote.

Other advertisements produced for the campaign, which appeared across television, print and radio included taglines and key messaging to ensure a focus on participation and voting correctly:

- Your vote could make a difference this Saturday – make sure you vote correctly.
- Do you need assistance to vote? Election staff can help.
- Do you need language assistance when you vote? (this appeared in 13 different languages in ethnic media)
- It's important that you vote correctly this Saturday.

The above-the-line advertising campaign was complemented by a personally addressed EasyVote Guide sent to every elector on the roll approximately two weeks prior to election day. The guide contained the address of the early voting centre and every election day voting centre within the elector's district and included accessibility ratings for every centre. The Guide also contained:

- information on how to vote if the elector couldn't vote on election day (if they were ill, interstate/overseas)

¹⁹ Testing of informational materials for the 2014 State election, Empirica Research

- the fact that six accessibility supercentres were available to assist people with special needs (Auslan interpreters and hearing loops were available at each of these centres during opening hours)
- an electronic voting service for electors who were blind or had low vision, information on how to vote correctly and
- language assistance options.

The VEC also piloted a voting reminder registration service for those who felt they may be inclined to accidentally forget to vote.

A total of 249 community information outreach sessions were delivered to priority community groups and 30 enrolment sessions were delivered to homelessness agencies and mobile voting services were conducted at 20 community outreach venues.

The targeting of outreach sessions, mobile voting and locations for the VEC's roadshow were based on electorates with the lowest participation and highest informality at the previous state election.

Election Question 2014

An online youth engagement project – Election Question 2014 (EQ14) – particularly targeted first-time voters. The aim was to help young voters make the connection between issues they cared about and politics, through a positive experience of community participation. The project leveraged popular social media networks to drive active engagement on issues relevant to young people with regard to the State election. First-time voters could ask questions of candidates standing in their district in an online forum. Although many candidates elected not to participate – resulting in a decision not to run the project again given this is a key requirement -the exercise evaluation indicated that it was still a worthwhile initiative.

EQ14 attracted 4,600 unique visitors and 1,200 participants. Participants were surveyed at the conclusion of the project and the survey found:

- 36% of respondents were more engaged in electoral matters and the Victorian State election
- 50% simply felt more engaged as a result of participating

- 9% felt less engaged and
- 4% weren't sure if they were more engaged.

Driving Votes Roadshow

A 2014 State election roadshow targeted areas with typically poorer electoral results (low turnout and high informality) and areas of high foot traffic. The campaign was designed to engage youth and culturally and linguistically diverse audiences around the importance of enrolling and participating in the election, and where possible, assist with elector enrolment.

The Driving Votes campaign consisted of a number of components – a mobile presence with a 1.5 tonne van wrapped with the 2014 campaign creative, a number of static site activities, capitalising on the larger footprint available utilising elements from the existing set from the 2010 campaign, and a website created specifically for the 2014 campaign with a competition to drive people to the website.

Driving Votes resulted in over 27,000 general engagements with the public, with 2,002 of these being in-depth conversations, exceeding the target of 10,000 direct interactions with electors.

Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, praising the convenience factor and the VEC's willingness to put a public face on the electoral process.

"I saw you last week in St Kilda. Good to see you're still at it. I went home and we actually discussed the election and who we were going to vote for because of you guys." – Young attendee

The VEC also conducts electoral information outreach sessions for priority community groups, with an emphasis on those areas with poor participation/high informality wherever possible. These sessions focus on teaching participants about the three levels of government and the role of each level, how to enrol and how to vote correctly (practice ballot paper completion). Easy English Guides are provided to reinforce the message and support those with literacy or English language difficulties. This work is discussed in more detail in section 5 of this submission.

4. Employing and Training Casual Staff for Victorian State Elections

Casual staff employed by the VEC for State elections fall into two distinct groups. The first group is that of election officials and casuals employed to undertake a short-term role for the election. The bulk of this employment involves work in voting centres on election day and requires approximately 16,500 election officials for a State election. Other available casual roles may involve office work in the lead-up to election day and vote counting in the post-election period, which included approximately 3,200 casuals at the 2014 State election. The second group of casual staff is that of Senior Election Officials (SEOs). These are people appointed to management positions for a full-time role of approximately nine weeks. The VEC has around 300 SEOs available for appointment at any point in time. The methods used to attract and train SEOs and other casual staff differ.

Election officials and casuals

The VEC maintains a database of people interested in working casually at election time. Currently there are just over 30,000 people registered on this database. Many of these people have a history of working for elections and that history is maintained within the personnel database. They are assessed each time they undertake a role and this assessment forms part of their work history. Conversely there is a high turnover in election staff due to the intermittent nature of the work; approximately one third of all staff for a major election event would be new. The database is populated from an online registration process and personal details are managed by each registrant via their own self-service portal. Offers of work, appointment letters and pay advice documents are all communicated electronically through each person's self-service portal. A Personnel Helpline is available year round during business hours for any staff requiring assistance with using or accessing their portal.

In the period prior to each election event, the VEC determines the extent to which a campaign to attract additional numbers or particular staff demographics is required. For the 2018 State election approximately 25,000 people will be required in election casual and official roles.

Campaigning to increase the numbers within the casual database takes two main forms. Head office campaign activities may be ongoing and are often supported by the

work of the Education and Inclusion Team - targeting specific demographics or communities. The work of this team has a focus on priority communities, such as people for whom English is not their first language, people living with disabilities, and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Appointments to VEC roles are merit-based and consider previous performance and the skills required for particular roles. The VEC principles for employing staff are outlined for Election Managers and include the following guidelines:

- staffing should reflect the demographics of the electorate
- inclusiveness and diversity should be employment considerations and
- appointment of staff from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities is strongly encouraged.

An analysis of staff employed at the 2016 Local Government elections identified the need to attract and employ more young people under the age of 25. A project, *Election Millennials@VEC*, has commenced to ensure more young people register on the database and that Election Managers are trained and encouraged to employ staff from this particular demographic.

A survey (2016 Local Government all election staff survey) revealed 100% of under 25 year olds were interested in future election work and were the only age group to find out about working for the VEC via Facebook. Some 77% of 18-24 year olds who have worked for the VEC have encouraged another young person to register for election work (Election Millennials@ VEC survey 2017). This encouragement was without any specific suggestion from the VEC to do so - suggesting they are the VEC's best advocates for increasing youth employment in elections.

Promotional material via targeted youth events and relevant social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) will encourage young people to register for work. The promotional material has a focus on peer-to-peer encouragement via word-of-mouth and social media sharing. Direct quotes from young people who have worked for the VEC are utilised in promotional material:

"Working with the VEC is a great experience and [it's] good to see that our democracy is in good hands." – Duong (age 19, Noble Park).

"A fun and unique experience. Makes you appreciate the system a lot more."
– Jessica (age 18, Hillside).

As part of the Election Millennials@VEC project, a pilot program will be trialled with the Greater Geelong City Council election in October 2017. The Returning Officer, who holds accountability for staff appointments for that election, will be trained and supported to source a pre-determined minimum percentage of staff under 25. As well as offering employment to this demographic, there will be a focus on the promotion and leadership opportunities available to younger staff. It is envisaged at this stage that a video case study following the employment of some younger staff at the Greater Geelong City Council election will be used to promote opportunities to under 25s, as well as to train our Senior Election Officials in the benefits of employing staff from this demographic. Anecdotal evidence from election staff suggests that younger staff are more willing and better able to engage with the changing technologies used to deliver elections, such as, electronic roll mark-off, tablets for looking up voter address details and the VEC's Election Management System.

"Younger people are good with setting up, packing up and the use of electronic devices. Older citizens tend to have more experience and are valuable at organising and processing votes." – Jessica (21), Rosebud

Employment of people from priority communities (traditionally those who experience barriers to enrolling and voting) provides an avenue for these groups to have a positive experience of the democratic process. They function as unofficial role models and become advocates for their particular community. Some 88% of respondents aged 18-24 who have worked for the VEC said they have encouraged a young person to vote (Election Millennials@ VEC survey 2017). Training and manuals for all casual election staff includes material on customer service that has a focus on inclusivity. Election staff instructions advise staff on best practice for assisting voters living with a disability, language barrier or cultural barrier.

Statistics on people employed at the 2016 Local Government elections who identified as having a disability are shown in the table on the next page. This represents 3% of the total election staff employed.

Table 4: 2016 Local Government Elections, Election Staff Disability Identification

Category	SEOs	Head Office election casuals	Election office casuals	Total
Acquired Brain Injury	-	-	2	2
Autism Spectrum Disorder	-	1	3	4
Hearing Impairment	-	-	20	20
Neurological Impairment	-	-	7	7
Other	1	1	71	73
Physical Impairment	1	1	43	45
Psychiatric Impairment	-	-	4	4
Vision Impairment	-	-	15	15
Total	2	3	165	170

Prior to the 2018 State election, election offices will be set up in each of the 88 districts within Victoria. Election Managers for each district are responsible for hiring casual staff and they may also encourage additional people to register for work, using local campaigning. This may occur in particular areas where there are insufficient people registered and available to cover the roles/demographics required. Organisations such as local universities, schools or community groups may be targeted and supplied with VEC recruitment leaflets or posters.

The roles available within this area of election casuals and officials are shown in Appendix C – Summary of election staff roles.

Further details outlining the detailed position description for each role can be provided, if required, in the VEC's *Employment Guide for Election Casuals and Officials*.

Training of election casuals and officials

Election staff training varies from role to role. In general, each person employed would be provided with a manual outlining the procedures for their role and be expected to read the manual and undertake the relevant training. Training solutions take the form of online modules, face-to-face training sessions and on-the-job coaching. Depending on the complexity of the role, a person may undertake any or all of the solutions mentioned. For example, at the 2014 State election, all election officials employed at a voting centre were sent a manual and introductory video, and were required to complete online training relevant to their role. In addition, Voting Centre Managers,

Assistant Voting Centre Managers, Declaration Issuing Officers and Election Liaison Officers attended a face-to-face training session at their local election office.

Election casuals and officials are invited to participate in an online survey in relation to their experience working for the VEC after each major election event. Their satisfaction with the training and support provided is measured to assist with continuous improvement. After the 2016 Local Government elections, 40% of staff responded to the survey. The table below outlines their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of each training component with regard to preparing them for their role (where 5 is extremely satisfied and 1 is extremely dissatisfied).

Table 5: Staff Satisfaction with Training Methods 2014 – 2016

Training method	2016 rating	2014 rating	Rating change
Supervisor support	4.32	4.17	+ 0.15
Manual	4.18	4.20	- 0.02
Online training	4.17	3.80	+ 0.37
On-the-job instruction	4.15	4.12	+ 0.03
Face to face training	4.10	3.96	+ 0.14
Overall	4.18	4.05	+ 0.13

Table 6: Completion Rates for Staff Training 2014 – 2016

Online training status	2016	2014	Rating improvement
Completed	93%	85%	+8%
In progress	4%	8%	-4%
Not started	3%	7%	-4%
Overall	100%	100%	-

Training of election officials considers the role that each person will be undertaking and what capabilities are required to perform that role. Whilst some roles involve simple processes, such as the manual counting of votes, there are a number of roles requiring a higher level of capability in the use of electronic systems. Election Officials using electronic roll mark-off (which has occurred at early voting centres and some election day voting centres), Computer Count Team Leaders and Data Entry Operators are examples of roles where comfort, skill or experience with using computer systems is required to successfully perform the role. In these instances, the selection and training of staff must target appropriate skill sets matched to the role. Appendix E outlines the training for each role that was undertaken in 2016.

In particular instances where specialist technical skills are required, e.g. Data Entry Operator staff for computer counts, the VEC may engage recruitment agencies to provide the number of suitably skilled staff.

Senior Election Officials (SEOs)

The VEC maintains a pool of approximately 300 senior election officials to be appointed to management roles during an election. At the 2018 State election, the roles of Election Manager, Assistant Election Manager, Region Coordinator, Assistant Region Coordinator and Election Support Officer will be appointed from the SEO pool. An election office will be set up in each of the 88 districts with an Election Manager and Assistant Election Manager responsible for the operation of the election within that district. These roles will operate full-time for up to nine weeks and will also undertake intermittent responsibilities in the lead-up to the election, including reviewing proposed voting centres and sourcing an election office location.

Traditionally applicants for SEO positions have come from people in semi-retirement or those who have the flexibility to balance their ongoing work/business with periods of employment for the VEC. Efforts have also been made to attract young professional parents who are having a career break due to child-minding responsibilities. This has been successful in ensuring a greater mix of people within the SEO pool.

Applicants undergo a rigorous recruitment and selection process in order to be included in the SEO pool. The recruitment process targets people with high level project management and people management skills that can be utilised within the election environment. Increasingly the SEO pool is required to be highly adaptable in using new technology and systems. The recruitment process, which is currently underway in preparation for the 2018 State election, focusses on testing applicants for learning agility, particularly with the use of new computer systems.

SEO applicants must address the key selection criteria for the role, and short-listed applicants are invited to undertake a half-day interview process to assess their suitability. The final stage of the recruitment process involves four days of face-to-face orientation training on all aspects of election management. At the conclusion of the orientation training applicants are assessed again to determine final acceptance into the SEO pool. Those accepted join the VEC's experienced SEOs and will be considered for appointment to management roles for the next scheduled election.

SEOs are appointed to management roles for each specific election; these appointments are not ongoing. Once appointed, further election specific training occurs in the lead up to the election. For the 2018 State election, it is anticipated that each SEO appointed to a management role will undertake a training program consisting of a minimum of three days face-to-face training, three days systems training within the election office environment, and a range of online preparation activities.

The Election Manager Position Description is provided in Appendix D to provide clarity on the responsibilities of those appointed from the SEO pool.

Election Support

During the election period the VEC maintains head office support and oversight of each election via a team of Election Support Officers (ESOs). ESOs are experienced election practitioners drawn either from head office staff or from the SEO pool. ESOs provide procedural guidance to each Election Manager on a daily basis. In addition, a Helpdesk operates to provide any technical and system support for Election Managers and their teams. The ongoing VEC Personnel Helpline, which assists casual staff in the use of their self-service portal, is scaled up during election events and manages staff enquiries relating to accepting job offers, accessing pay advice or maintaining their personal and financial details.

Evaluation of casual staff

Regardless of their role, all election staff are assessed by their supervisor and those ratings are used to guide future offers of employment. For election casuals and officials, performance ratings are held within the VEC's personnel system. SEOs undergo a more detailed performance review, which involves providing their own evidence against Key Performance Indicators. They are assessed by their supervising Election Support Officers and this information is held within the VEC's central record management system (HPRM). Future developments to the VEC's personnel system will assist in moving all election staff performance ratings into the one database. This will enable greater visibility and tracking of staff appointments, performance and training all in the one place.

5. Increasing Electoral Participation Amongst Community Groups Traditionally Experiencing Barriers to Electoral Participation

Electoral participation – an overview

Increasing participation is high on the agenda of not only every Australian electoral commission, but arguably most of those around the world. In Australia's favour, compulsory voting drives a high level of turnout (the percentage of enrolled electors who vote). However, trends in Australia and overseas indicate a continuing decline in turnout. This is thought to be due to a variety of factors such as safe electorates, major party convergence, gaps in the policy debate or an increasing interest in political channels other than voting (e.g. boycotts, direct contact, social media campaigns).

Interestingly, and no doubt in some measure a response to all of the work the VEC has contributed to this area, the VEC is *the only* commission in Australia to have an increase in turnout over the last two elections (2010 and 2014). In fact, the VEC has had successive increases in turnout at every State election since 2006, bucking the national and international trends.

Table 7: State and Federal Lower House turnout for each of last two election cycles:

Electoral jurisdictions	Last election	Last election turnout	Second to last election	Second to last turnout
Victoria	2014	93.02%	2010	92.96%
Commonwealth	2016	91.01%	2013	93.23%
NSW	2015	90.49%	2011	92.6%
South Australia	2014	91.94%	2010	92.78%
Queensland	2015	89.89%	2012	90.99%
Western Australia	2017	86.90%	2013	89.21%
ACT	2016	88.45%	2012	89.26%
Northern Territory	2016	74.02%	2012	76.91%
Tasmania	2014	93.49%	2010	93.85%

Further, youth (18-25 years) turnout between the last two State elections – typically the most difficult cohort to encourage to participate - jumped by a significant 6.75%, from 82.14% in 2010 to 88.87% in 2014. The VEC attributes this jump to initiatives already mentioned including the 2014 State election advertising campaign, Election Question 2014 and Driving Votes roadshow combined, in addition to the potential longitudinal impact of the VEC's Passport to Democracy Program.

The VEC's Education and Electoral Inclusion strategy defines electoral participation as:

- **enrolment participation** - the enrolment rate of eligible citizens in Victoria
- **voter turnout** - the voter turnout rate of those people enrolled to vote
- **voting correctly** - the number of people casting formal ballots
- **informed voting** - the level of understanding electors have regarding the impact of their vote on the election result.

Factors influencing electoral participation

There are many and varied factors influencing electoral participation. The available evidence suggests that, in addition to the youth cohort, there are specific groups which have significantly lower levels of electoral participation; or are not participating in an active, informed way due to a combination of procedural, circumstantial and attitudinal factors.

Circumstances such as financial position, social status, environmental and socio-political events can provide motivation or deter people from participating in formal political processes. A perception of the effectiveness of representative democracy as a political system can influence how and when people choose to participate. Other reasons for non-participation can be lack of interest, lack of reward to participate, lack of perceived influence e.g. one vote will not change anything, and dissatisfaction with the political style of candidates or current representatives. In addition to this, cultural and/or physical barriers may prevent or influence levels of political participation.

It is impossible for the VEC to be able to impact on all of these factors. The VEC has identified the following areas, explored in more detail below, on which it can have an impact:

- political literacy
- access to information
- access to voting centres
- English language literacy and
- social disadvantage.

Political literacy as a barrier

One common barrier for many people is the lack of political literacy, which prevents community members from fully engaging and participating. Zaller (1992) defines political literacy as individuals' comprehensions regarding a political event and their political awareness.²⁰ In terms of electoral events, this would include knowing about the electoral process (requirements for enrolling and voting, how to vote) and the electoral system (political parties, candidates and how votes translate into seats). A politically literate citizen is an active participant in social events, regarding her/his own issues (Fyfe, 2007).²¹

Access to information

Lack of access to information about elections poses a further barrier to participation for particular community groups. Access to information is a particular challenge for people experiencing homelessness. Research on homeless participation in elections conducted by Swinburne University in 2004, showed that 64% of participants expressed a desire to vote, indicating that the reason they did not vote was that they did not know how to engage with the system and therefore found it easier to stay off the electoral roll.²² This is confirmed through a study conducted by Hanover (short-stay crisis accommodation provider) in 2006, who surveyed the clients in Victoria about their voting intention: 90% of survey participants were eligible to vote in an election, but 63% of those who were eligible did not vote because they were not enrolled.²³

Access to voting centres

Transport is a barrier for people experiencing homelessness and people living with disabilities. People experiencing homelessness may not have adequate

²⁰ Cited in Kus, Z Political Literacy Status of Pre-Service Social Studies Teacher, *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences* 177 , 2015, pp. 197–202

²¹ ibid

²² Darlo, G. Australian Electoral Commission, *Electoral Engagement the Homeless*, AEC. February 2005.

²³ Hanover Welfare Services, *Hanover View*, Autumn 2007, http://hanover.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/hanoverview_march_07.pdf

financial means to travel to voting centres, especially if these are not situated in the vicinity of the public transport hubs.

Similarly, if a person with a disability needs assistance to access the voting centre, they need to have access to carer support systems. An important insight provided by the VEC's Electoral Access Advisory Group after the 2014 State election was that the accessibility rating system of voting centres was deficient. The perceived deficiency was the lack of information as to the voting centre accessibility rating. It was pointed out that an aspect which warranted the VEC to rate a centre a certain way may not in fact be an impediment to someone with a disability – in particular – if they used a wheelchair. As a result of advice from the Group, the VEC now includes all relevant information for voting centre accessibility ratings on its website, so that voters can make that determination for themselves e.g. a person in a wheelchair who lives within walking distance of a voting centre may not require an accessible carpark.

English literacy as a barrier

Some voters are casting an informal vote due to a lack of understanding as to how to vote correctly (e.g. they are placing numbers and crosses, thinking this is the correct way of voting) and there are those who are intentionally voting informally. Increases in unintentional informal voting across some districts can be mapped against the increase in migration to these areas over a period of several State elections. The VEC's 2014 State election report suggest that districts with high proportions of ballot papers incorrectly marked with ticks and crosses correlates to high proportions of residents speaking languages other than English - perhaps a reflection of the method of voting in the countries of origin of many residents²⁴.

Although some migrants and refugees wish to participate, their lack of English literacy may result in incorrect completion of the ballot paper and an informal vote. This is evidenced by research into barriers to enrolment and voting in the Chinese and Vietnamese communities²⁵, which recommended in-language electoral literacy seminars in the lead up to the election, due to considerable variation amongst community in their understanding of how to indicate their preferences on a ballot paper.

²⁴ Victorian Electoral Commission, *2014 State Election Report*, State of Victoria, 2016, p.56.

²⁵ Victorian Electoral Commission, *Barriers to Enrolment and Voting Within the Chinese and Vietnamese Communities*, February 2009, <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/Publications/ResearchAndPositionPapers.html>

Social disadvantage

The link between poverty and civic participation (or lack thereof) has been well documented. Over 10 years ago the United Kingdom Electoral Commission published research which draws a line between electoral participation and social exclusion: 'those suffering from social deprivation tend to be the most politically excluded in society and political disengagement can itself be a form of social exclusion'.²⁶

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also makes a connection between poverty and the right to vote, stating:

Lack of political rights and freedoms is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Socially and politically excluded people are more likely to fall into poverty, and the poor are more vulnerable to social exclusion and political marginalization.²⁷

Social disadvantage intersects across a number of demographic community profiles. Lack of electoral access becomes particularly acute for people who do not have a permanent home address or for whom safe and secure housing is an issue.

People in prison (around 4,000 are estimated to be eligible to enrol and vote) are among the most marginalised groups in our community and overwhelmingly come from a background of poverty and social exclusion.²⁸ They face a myriad of barriers when it comes to participation in the electoral system, which are further exacerbated by incarceration. Research by the VEC has found that while people serving a sentence of less than five years are entitled to enrol and vote, only one in four of them were actually enrolled.

Priority community groups

Drawing on the above it is clear that there are certain groups in the community which face multiple barriers when it comes to electoral participation. As such, the VEC's

²⁶ The Electoral Commission, *Social exclusion and political engagement*, London, 2005, p3.

²⁷ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Draft Guidelines: a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies*, 2002, p48.

²⁸ The Brotherhood of St Laurence defines social exclusion to be 'when someone experiences multiple, overlapping problems, such as unemployment, poor health and inadequate education, which stop them fully participating in society'. *Brotherhood of St Laurence Social Exclusion Monitor* <https://www.bsl.org.au/knowledge/social-exclusion-monitor/>, accessed 21 March 2016.

Education and Electoral Inclusion Strategy identifies the following priority communities for the VEC to focus its education and outreach efforts on:

1. young people
2. people living with a disability
3. people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
5. people experiencing homelessness and
6. people in prison.

The remainder of this submission will outline VEC initiatives aimed specifically at addressing barriers to participation facing these target populations in relation to the factors identified above. Many of these initiatives have been developed through a combination of community partnerships, co-design and community engagement.

Young people

As detailed earlier in this submission, the VEC's primary approach to engaging young people in elections is through its active citizenship program *Passport to Democracy*. This approach is complemented by election time initiatives such as the pilot Election Question 2014 and a specific youth focus in the VEC's State Election advertising campaign. The Millennials@VEC project outlined in section 4 of this submission is an exciting development in changing the age profile of the VEC's election casual workforce which will contribute to a positive first-time electoral experience for many young voters.

Young people are a focus for the VEC across all of the priority communities identified in its Education and Electoral Inclusion Strategy. For example, the VEC has recently established a partnership with the Centre for Multicultural Youth to work with young people from new and emerging migrant communities.

Other strategies the VEC employs to increase youth electoral participation are its 17th birthday card and a program of direct enrolment. The birthday card is a VEC initiative first delivered more than a decade ago (also a first within Australia). Upon receiving information from the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, the VEC mails a birthday card to young people on their 17th birthday, when they are eligible to provisionally enrol. This means that once they turn 18, they are automatically included on the roll for any electoral events. Although the response rates have declined

somewhat over the decade, the response rate averages 25% (down from 30% plus when first launched).

The VEC introduced direct enrolment in 2010. Initially, young people were directly enrolled once they turned 18 years of age upon data being provided to the VEC from the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) and this picked up many who had not responded to the birthday card. Over the last couple of years, the direct enrolment through VCAA was temporarily halted, primarily due to major electoral activity at the Federal and State level. The VCAA direct enrolment commences again this year; typically it is actioned at the end of the scholastic year in November.

People living with a disability

Electoral Access Advisory Group

The VEC is fortunate to have a very active Electoral Access Advisory Group (EAAG), whose task is to advise the VEC on issues and strategies to ensure people with disabilities are empowered and able to enrol and vote. Members consist of representatives of disability agencies and also individuals living with a disability. Draft service plans (plans detailing what services and products will be available for election events) are provided to the EAAG members for comment and feedback.

The EAAG members are also invited to review and revise the VEC's Disability Action Plan each major electoral cycle.

Disability Action Plan

The Disability Action Plan has a four-year electoral cycle outlook and details initiatives aimed at removing potential barriers to enrolling and voting for people living with a disability. The Plan is registered with the Human Rights Commission and has six key strategies:

1. improve physical access to enrolment and voting
2. develop partnerships with people and peak bodies to facilitate improved access to enrolment and voting
3. improve the accessibility and clarity of information on enrolment and voting
4. provide for more Victorians to have a secret, independent vote
5. improve staff awareness and assistance to people living with a disability and
6. improve the VEC's capacity to employ and appropriately task people living with a disability.

All of the following initiatives outlined for people living with a disability have originated from the VEC's Disability Action Plan.

Voting centre lookup

The VEC has offered a voting centre lookup facility on its website for several State elections and an app version for both the 2010 and 2014 State elections.

The purpose of the service was to enable voters to find their nearest early or election-day voting centres, using either address-based or map-based information. The voter merely enters an address in a search bar on the website or uses the GPS location facility in their smartphone to locate the nearest three venues. Accessibility ratings for every voting centre were provided to help voters with mobility issues to determine the nearest accessible voting centre.

Extra access information was made available for all voting centres used for the six councils that conducted attendance elections in 2016, in line with the Advisory Group feedback. Improvements for the 2018 State election include direction capability and the ability to provide alerts for particular voting centres if necessary e.g. *This voting centre is closed due to flooding.*

Electronic voting

Since 2006 the VEC has delivered a supervised electronic voting solution for people who are blind or have low vision, those with motor impairments, and those with English language or literacy difficulties. Feedback from the EAAG, the public and via inquiries into the conduct of recent State elections has caused the VEC to consider a remote voting option such as the New South Wales Electoral Commission's iVote internet voting system. As a result of its recent Inquiry into Electronic Voting, the Victorian Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee (EMC) has supported in principle the provision of a system of remote voting at Victorian State elections, restricted to certain categories of voters. The VEC is awaiting the Government's response.

Carers project

A core commitment in the VEC's Disability Action Plan was to develop a capacity building module for community guardians. In addition, through the delivery of the VEC's Disability Education Program, VEC staff had collected anecdotal evidence that some carers of people with a disability believe that the person in their care shouldn't be voting, due to the fact that they have a disability. Often this belief is not based on a medical assessment of the person's capacity to make a choice, but on the carer's own

beliefs about the importance of voting, politics, and voting requirements and the carer's lack of understanding of voting options available to people with disabilities.

This partnership project with Carers Victoria was designed to address the gap in carers' understanding of the voting rights of people with disabilities through the provision of online and face-to-face training. A co-design approach was taken to determine the structure and content of the face-to-face sessions with carers, members of the VEC's Electoral Access Advisory Group and Inclusion Melbourne, a disability support service with an interest in developing best practice examples for support workers in civic participation.

Face-to-face sessions were delivered across regional and metro areas, targeting areas of high informality and poor voter turnout. An unexpected and unintended consequence of the project was the positive response of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) carers groups to the project. Nearly half of the carer support groups were CALD groups, who tended to lack understanding of the electoral process (including how to assist people to vote). These groups' positive response has been a major contributor to the positive outcome of the sessions.

In addition, an independent evaluation by Roberts Brown Pty Ltd²⁹ recommended that the VEC use the 'agency model' to reach other hard-to-reach populations.

Disability outreach sessions

The VEC works with the disability sector to deliver electoral information sessions via disability day centres, group homes, self-advocacy groups and other disability organisations. While outreach services are offered to all disability groups, the primary focus is to work with people who have intellectual disabilities or acquired brain injuries. Session participants explore the idea of decision making about their lives, the three levels of government, how to enrol to vote and how elections work. They also have the opportunity to participate in a mock election.

Voting is For Everyone

In 2009 the VEC produced the *Voting is for Everyone* resource for people living with disability, their families and carers. The resource, which features a DVD and accompanying facilitation guide, was developed in partnership with Scope support workers and clients. The resource explains the process of enrolling and voting in clear, easy steps; aims to dispel the myths around disability and voting and looks at why it is

²⁹ David Roberts Pty Ltd, Evaluation Report 'Voting is for Everyone', December 2016, p.6

important for people with disability to vote. The resource was distributed to over 1,000 disability residential and day services across Yooralla, Scope and Department of Health and Human Services service providers in the lead up to both the 2010 and 2014 State elections. In 2010 the resource received a Scope Community Partnerships award.

Easy English materials

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures³⁰ show that almost half (47%) of all readers in Australia are only capable to Literacy Levels 1 & 2. Level 3 is considered to be the minimum for today's literacy needs. Those people likely to be operating at Literacy Levels 1 & 2 include people who left school early, people from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, people with an acquired disability (after a stroke or car accident), intellectual or physical impairment (acquired or otherwise) who can still understand the concept of voting, people with dyslexia or people with mental health issues.

Easy English is a proven method for taking complex language and making it as simple as possible without changing the meaning.

The VEC has a set of Easy English Guides available (hardcopy and online) and includes:

- Vote in the Local Council Postal Elections
- Vote in the Local Council Attendance Elections
- Vote in the Melbourne City Council Postal Elections
- Vote in the Victorian State Election
- Running Your Own Election – First-Past-the-Post

The VEC is the only Australian electoral commission to enable key information on its website pages to be converted to Easy English upon pressing the icon.

The VEC's website was also the first to include an option to change the text to dyslexic font.

³⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4228.0 - Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, Australia, 2011-12, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4228.0>

Voters Voice

Voters Voice is a free iPad application designed to assist voters with complex communication difficulties to participate in Victorian elections; specifically voting in person at a voting centre. The application includes text-to-voice software customised for use with election terminology.

The application's creation was based on the need to find a 'bring-your-own' solution to replace the need for hardcopy communication boards in all voting centres and having to train staff in their use. Furthermore, the application negates the need for Auslan interpreters at key voting sites.

The VEC developed the inaugural version for the 2016 Victorian local government elections - in conjunction with project partner Scope (a disability support agency). A prototype was developed and trialled with potential users, disability support staff and representatives from the VEC's Electoral Access Advisory Group.

The application functions include the ability to 'speak' or 'show' pre-filled name and address information, as well as key voting phrases. It also provides a keyboard for those with a higher level of literacy skill. Questions and answers (which are able to be pre-prepared) can be 'asked' out loud or shown on a screen in interactions with election staff.

Voters Voice received excellent coverage in the media and positive feedback from disability agencies. The application was available in the iTunes store from 8 August 2016 and had a total of 1,615 downloads over a five week period.

Although specifically designed to assist voters with complex communication difficulties to interact with election staff in a voting centre, the Voters Voice app also provides enrolment and voting information in Easy English, plain English, Auslan and video format. These extra information channels consider other secondary audiences who may have English language or literacy issues or those who speak Auslan. It was this functionality provision that excited the Australian Electoral Commission, which is currently working on producing a replica app.

The app has since won the overall Best App category at the 2017 Australian Design Awards and a Silver Award at the 2017 Tech Design Awards.

"This project solves an important, practical problem and should have been done years ago!" – Good Design Jury

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

CALD Advisory Group

The VEC believes that the continued engagement of all citizens in the democratic process, regardless of their English language proficiency, is an important part of an inclusive and representative democracy. Many new citizens will come from countries and cultures where voting systems are very different, where culture and customs mean that gender plays a strong role in the voting process, and where the freedom to vote as one chooses is not always available. Lack of access to electoral education and information within CALD communities can thus effectively disenfranchise a significant number of voters. In 2010, in order to respond to these challenges, the VEC established a CALD Advisory Group to facilitate the provision of expert advice from a cross-section of peak and advocacy bodies representing Victorians from CALD backgrounds. The Advisory Group meets twice yearly and has direct input into the development of the VEC's electoral products and services.

Democracy Ambassador Program

The Democracy Ambassador pilot project ran in the lead-up to the 2014 State election and provided electoral information and education to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly new and emerging communities. The project aimed to increase political literacy and consequent participation in the electoral system, by providing electoral information sessions to the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia), Sudan and South Sudan communities. A total of 26 community members were employed as Community Educators and delivered 75 sessions to their communities. Sessions were delivered in community languages and English in a range of community settings such as churches, community halls and private homes. At the conclusion of most sessions, participants were asked to complete a 'mock' ballot paper, which gave the facilitators an indication of the participants understanding of the information presented. The percentage of correct completion of ballot papers ranged from 84% to 100% with an average of 99% over all sessions.

CALD Outreach

As a result of the Democracy Ambassador project, the employment and training of community members has enabled the VEC to continue providing in-language outreach services to the community. Over the past two years, a team of (currently six) casual community educators have delivered electoral information sessions to a range of language groups. In the four months prior to the 2016 local council elections the

educators, who between them speak 16 languages, delivered 74 electoral information sessions to 1,672 participants.

Be Heard partnership with Leadership Victoria

In partnership with Leadership Victoria, the VEC has developed a *Be Heard* community leader workshop to improve electoral participation for CALD communities. Through an active learning approach, the two-hour workshop aims to build community leaders' political literacy and provide participants with an understanding of:

- democratic principles
- the three levels of government and
- how preferential elections work.

The *Be Heard* workshop content is flexible and can be adapted and inserted into existing leadership programs. Six *Be Heard* workshops have been delivered to 109 participants over the past two years through both Leadership Victoria and via local council networks. Many participants learned that they had inadvertently voted informally for a number of elections.

'It is my duty to teach my community how to vote correctly.' – Be Heard participant

Multilingual Translations

Given that almost one in three Victorians (28.69%)³¹ was born overseas, there is an obligation to ensure that citizens whose first language is not English have access to in-language information about their right and responsibility to enrol and vote.

The VEC goes to great measures to ensure that information on how to complete the ballot paper appears in every voting screen in 19 languages for State elections. This is complemented by translated information on the VEC's website, which also includes audio versions for those not literate in their own language during election periods. Also included on the website is a translated enrolment form, which converts to English for processing once printed.

In addition, the VEC has 20 dedicated language lines through which the VEC provides audio information on enrolling and voting for Australian citizens. There is an option to

³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census, STATE AND TERRITORY COMPOSITION OF COUNTRY OF BIRTH, [Migration 3412.0](#)

connect to an interpreter for a live three-way call with the VEC if the caller has any queries not answered in the pre-recorded messages.

Advertising Programs

There is a Victorian Government Guideline that requires all government agencies to place at least 5% of its advertising placement spend on multicultural media. The VEC's minimum is 10% in recognition of the compulsory nature of enrolment and voting and the multicultural nature of the Victorian community.

English as Additional Language (EAL) project

Vast populations of both established and recently arrived CALD communities have no or minimal English language literacy skills. Adding to the complexity, many of them are illiterate in their own language and have minimal numeracy skills. Having inadequate English language skills makes it very difficult to learn electoral vocabulary. This presents a major challenge when the VEC delivers electoral information in language schools and community learning centres to Level 1 English classes. It requires the VEC's educators to 'teach' the words or concepts (such as compulsory voting, preferential voting) and then to provide the information.

To remedy this, the VEC's EAL pilot project involves the development and delivery of a three-hour professional development training session to EAL teachers in July 2017. The training aims to increase EAL teachers' competency in teaching electoral vocabulary.

The training content is based on the VEC's Easy English Guides to Voting. A train-the-trainer model will be used to assist teachers to learn about electoral processes and the associated vocabulary, incorporating delivery methods that are interactive and engaging. When returning to classrooms, teachers can use the knowledge and skills learned to teach their students as part of English language lessons. It is anticipated that when the VEC delivers electoral information sessions after the training has occurred, community members will be able to focus on content, rather than trying to learn new words or concepts.

This program will be evaluated for its effectiveness with the aim of offering it to all language schools in Victoria if proven.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

In January 2017 the VEC launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This plan was developed by the VEC's Aboriginal Communities Officer in consultation with

community groups and with VEC staff input. The aim of the RAP is to build confidence and trust in the VEC's determination to address reconciliation and electoral participation barriers experienced by community.

Key actions in the RAP include the development of culturally competent civic education programs, cultural learning and development opportunities for staff (as highlighted in section 4 of this submission) and building strong relationships with Aboriginal communities. Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are represented in the VEC's core and casual workforce is also a key priority.

In addition to the VEC's existing partnership with the Korin Gamadji Institute, the VEC also offers electoral outreach services via local Koori Education Coordinators and to Aboriginal community groups across Victoria.

People experiencing homelessness

The VEC's *Homeless not Voteless* program has now been running for ten years. Through the delivery of face-to-face outreach, the program aims to dispel the myths around enrolling and voting for people who do not have a fixed address. Year-round enrolment outreach is offered to homelessness agencies, in addition to a specialist mobile early voting service during election time. A core element of the program is to build the skills and knowledge of agency workers with regards to elections so they are able to assist clients with voter enrolment throughout the year.

In recent years the VEC has partnered with the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP), enabling members of CHP's Peer Education and Support program to assist with enrolment outreach. Having peer educators - people with a lived experience of homelessness – assist with VEC outreach, means that greater trust can be built with service users thereby extending the impact of the VEC's work.

People in Prison

In 2010 the VEC initiated a research project into prisoners and voting. The research found that while people serving a sentence of less than five years are entitled to enrol and vote, only one in four of them were actually enrolled.³² Significant attitudinal and environmental barriers were identified, indicating that access to electoral information and services for people in prison needed to be addressed.

³² Victorian Electoral Commission (2010) *Prisoners and Voting*, p3.

Enrolment drives and mobile early voting were conducted in prisons for the 2010 and 2014 State elections; however rates of electoral participation have remained largely unchanged. While these initiatives are essential in the lead-up to an election, they did not address systemic issues with access to information and attitudinal barriers to participation for both people in prison and prison staff.

Availability of resources in early 2016 enabled the VEC to scope the viability of conducting a more comprehensive program of electoral engagement for people in prison, resulting in the production of a program design document. The scoping exercise consisted of the following activities, the results of which have been incorporated into the program design:

- initiation of a working relationship with Corrections Victoria (CV)
- establishment of a project reference group with key government and community stakeholders
- a desktop literature review on prisoners and electoral engagement
- a short research project to better understand the barriers to voting among the Victorian prison population
- conduct by the VEC of individual interviews with ex-prisoners
- individual interviews with community stakeholders and
- the development of a comprehensive program design.

The program design proposes a peer education model to deliver electoral information to prisoners who are eligible to vote. With the program design completed at the end of 2016, the VEC is now working with Corrections Victoria to initiate the project by the end of the 2017 calendar year.

Research

As mentioned previously, a sound research basis for the planning of programs, services and resources is invaluable. The VEC has recently completed, commenced or scheduled the following research projects:

People with Intellectual Impairment

In 2016, the VEC sponsored the production of a report into the identification of best practice in assisting people with a cognitive impairment to exercise their human and legal right to participate in democracy as active citizens (including the production of a guide to becoming an engaged citizen). This study tour, by Inclusion Melbourne,

looked at electoral systems and practices in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

To complement the Inclusion Melbourne study tour learnings, the VEC has this year sponsored Australian-first research into a collaborative two stage action research project by the La Trobe University Living with Disability Research Centre and Inclusion Melbourne. The overarching research question is 'What best supports the participation of people with intellectual disability to participate in elections in Australia?' The aim of the project is twofold; to identify the factors that facilitate or obstruct voting of people with intellectual disability, and; to trial and evaluate strategies to support voting tailored to the Australian cultural and political context. A pilot project arising from this research will be trialled at the 2018 State election. The two year program will result in a final report in March 2019.

Non-voters

Compulsory voting means that the great majority of electors vote in Australian elections. Even so, some 7% of electors (about 250,000) did not vote in the 2014 State election. The voter turn-out rate at the 2016 Federal election was the lowest since the introduction of compulsory voting in 1925. Turnout is an even bigger issue in local government elections, where only 77.17% of those for whom voting was compulsory turned out to vote in the 2016 local government elections.

The VEC has identified the value of understanding the nature and motivation of the substantial non-voter group and any differences between State and local government elections, with a view to developing strategies to reduce non-voting in future elections. Further, the outcome of this research may assist to address informal voting at future elections that is not related to the voting system. This research is scheduled to occur in late 2017.

Direct enrolment

Direct enrolment was introduced in Victoria in 2010 to maximise the enrolment of eligible Victorians. Upon receiving advice from other government agencies, the VEC enrolls Victorians who appear to be eligible or update their enrolment if they have changed address.

The VEC has just produced a research report on direct enrolment in Victoria. Such research is timely, considering that direct enrolment has become a key feature of Australia's electoral enrolment system. The VEC interrogated its own databases to

learn about the nature of directly enrolled electors (both those new to the roll and those whose enrolment address has been updated) and their voting participation in the 2014 State election, and also received feedback from the electors themselves. Key findings of the research are:

- directly enrolled new electors are overwhelmingly young (with a younger age profile than new electors in general), are disproportionately male, and tend to be concentrated in the outer suburbs
- electors whose address has been updated have similar characteristics to electors in general
- directly enrolled new electors had a very low voter turnout (61.73%) in the 2014 State election. There was a solid voter turnout by electors aged 18 and 19, but less than 50% of new electors aged 20 and over voted
- voter turnout by electors whose address had been updated was slightly lower than the State average and
- respondents to a VEC survey strongly supported direct enrolment, and regarded voting as important.

Digital strategy

The VEC has been a leader in the use of digital technology and web-based applications in the provision of high quality information and election services to all parts of the Victorian community. A number of changing circumstances warranted the development of a defined digital strategy to enable the VEC to be at the forefront of the conversation about digital technology within the context of:

- increasing stakeholder expectations around accessibility and immediacy
- changing State and Federal Government regulations
- rapid technology development
- risks posed by operating in the digital realm (e.g. the 2016 Census) and
- the core business of democracy and voting.

This research project involved voter preferences about online service delivery, to create an evidence base to inform the development of new digital and online projects. The Strategy was completed several months ago and several initiatives are currently in train as a result e.g. a digital communication service, a 'mobile-first' website redevelopment, further enhancement of the Voters Voice app.

ERRN – convenience voting

The VEC is participating in research sponsored by the Electoral Regulation Research Network (ERRN) into convenience voting in Australia. Convenience voting (defined as voting other than that at local voting centres on election day, and including postal, early in-person and electronic voting) has come to the fore in recent times. While convenience voting provides a service for voters and may contribute to higher voter turnout, its rise has created issues for electoral commissions, political parties and candidates. Based on surveys of key stakeholders and of voters themselves, as well as analysis of election statistics, the research seeks to assess the desirability and feasibility of the various forms of convenience voting. A research report is planned for November 2017.

6. Conclusion

The VEC is energised about the future and the potential to do more around civics education and electoral inclusion and participation, not least due to the advances in technology and attendant increasing societal expectations.

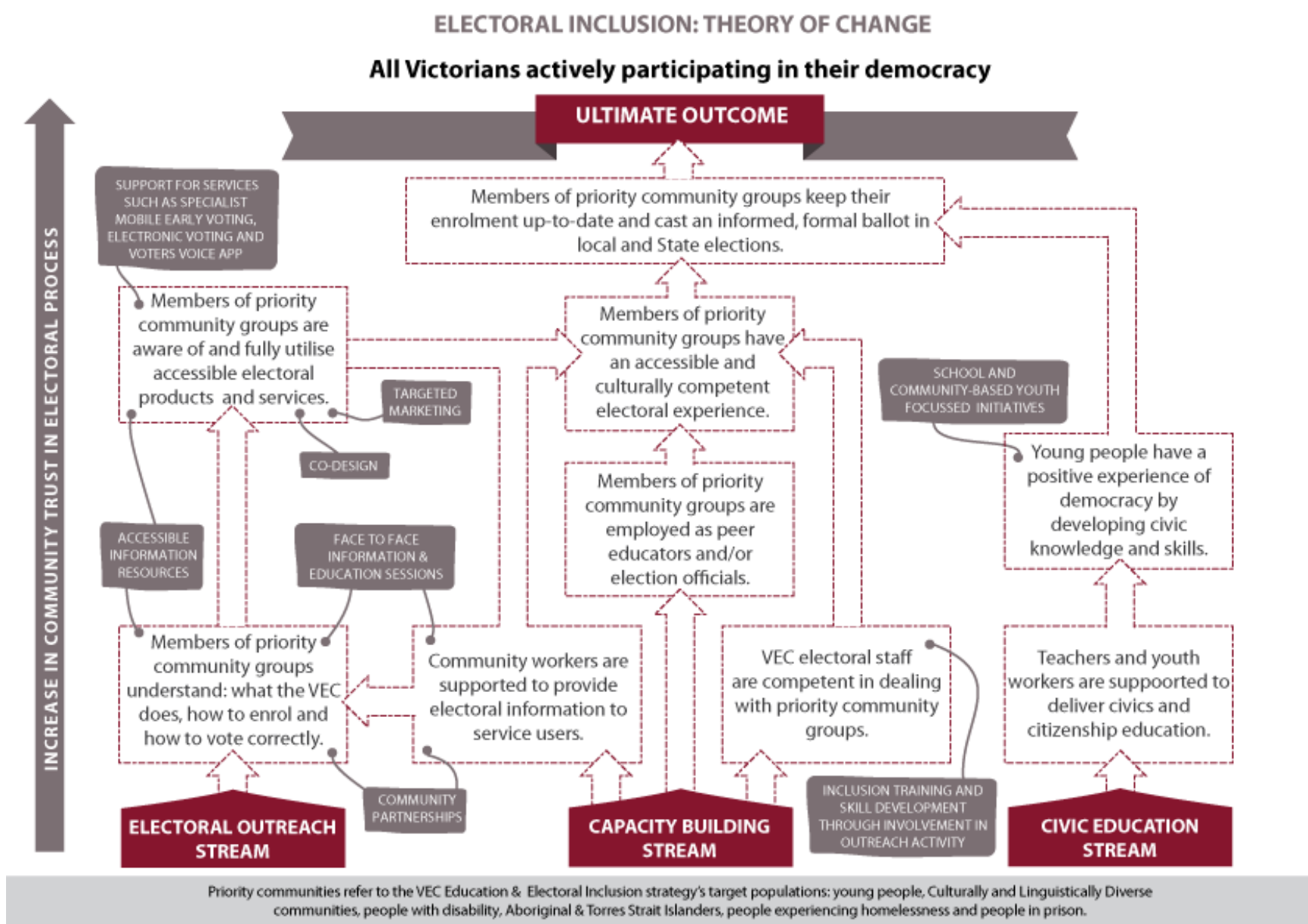
“If voting really is a gradually acquired habit, then early experience is likely to have a lasting effect. Some argue that **the first three elections** in which a person is eligible to vote **will define whether they become a habitual voter or non-voter**³³.”

This would seem to endorse the VEC’s focus on young voters across all priority communities.

Finally, the VEC does not operate in a vacuum and there are many other players whose views, behaviour and policies may directly affect levels of participation and informal voting. Research indicates that voters need to feel that they are heard, that their vote counts, that they have viable options in terms of choices between policies and parties and that their early experiences will shape and form potentially lifelong habits.

³³ Franklin, 2004, in Howe, 2007, “Electoral Participation of Young Canadians”, working paper series on electoral participation and outreach practices, Elections Canada.

Appendix A – VEC Education and Electoral Inclusion Strategy ‘Theory of Change’



Appendix B – Summary of VEC Programs for Priority Audiences

Initiative	Youth	Disability	CALD	Aboriginal	Homeless	Prisoners
Homeless not Voteless - enrolment outreach and worker information sessions	X				X	
Korin Gamadji Institute REAL program	X			X		
Reconciliation Action Plan				X		
Be Heard Workshops			X			
English as Additional Language Initiative			X			
Democracy Ambassador Program			X			
Electoral Education for People in Prison Program						X
Carers Program		X				
Research on barriers for people with intellectual impairment, will result in trial initiative		X				
Voting is for Everyone		X				
Voters Voice app		X				
Passport to Democracy	X					
Support for YMCA Youth Parliament	X					
Shadow election 2018	X					
Extended outreach 2018	X					
Electronic voting						
Capacity building programs (train the trainer) - outreach						
Teacher professional development	X					
VEC Advisory Groups		X	X	X		

Appendix C – Summary of election staff roles

Election Roles

Election Casuals

Election casuals are appointed to roles before, on and after election day. This includes roles in election offices or early and mobile voting centres. The following summarises different roles in this category.

Office Assistant (OA) (min age 18 years)

Office Assistants provide administrative support in election offices. Responsibilities include responding to public enquiries, assisting with the appointment of voting centre staff, the preparation of voting centre materials, issuing early votes, recording results from voting centres on election night, and assisting with sorting and counting activities after election day.

Hours: Generally 9:00am - 5:00pm (Mon-Fri) but may involve some work during evenings, weekends and public holidays.

Early Voting Centre Manager (EVCM)/Early Voting Centre Officer (EVCO) (min age 18 years)

EVCMs and EVCOs provide customer service to electors, issue and record votes and account for ballot papers. They also assist with sorting and counting early votes and postal votes on election night.

Hours: Generally 8:30am - 5:00pm (Mon-Fri) but may involve some evening and weekend work.

Mobile Voting Manager (MVM)/Mobile Voting Officer (MVO) (min age 18 years)

MVLs and MVOs provide voting services at venues such as hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities where residents/patients are not easily able to access alternative voting options. They provide customer service to electors, issue and record votes and account for ballot papers.

Hours: Generally 8:30am - 5:00pm (Mon-Fri).

Counting Team Leader (TL) (min age 18 years)

Counting Team Leaders direct a team of Counting Officers, keep scrutineers informed of counting procedures, and supervise primary counts, rechecks and preference distributions.

Hours: Generally 8:30am - 5:00pm (Mon-Fri) but may involve some work during evenings, weekends and public holidays.

(Previous election experience desirable)

Counting Officer (CO) (min age 18 years)

Counting Officers assist with the sorting and counting of ballot papers.

Hours: Generally 8:30am - 5:00pm (Mon-Fri) but may involve some work during evenings, weekends and public holidays.

Scrutiny Assistant (Election Office) (SA) (min age 16 years)

Scrutiny Assistants are appointed in election offices to assist with the set up/pack up of counting areas, unfolding of ballot papers, and tidying the election office.

Hours: Generally 9.00am - 5.00pm (Mon-Fri) but may involve some work during evenings, weekends and public holidays.

Election Officials

Election Officials are appointed to roles in voting centres on election day. Staff in this category (except for Voting Centre Assistants) will be required to complete an online training activity via the internet as part of their appointment.

Election Liaison Officer (ELO) (min age 18 years)

ELOs visit a designated group of voting centres to ensure correct procedures are being followed, and provide support and assistance to Voting Centre Managers as required.

Hours: Election eve and from 7:00am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

(Previous election experience required)

Voting Centre Manager (VCM) (min age 18 years)

VCMs are responsible for the management of a voting centre on election day.

Responsibilities include setting up the centre, supervising staff, assisting with public enquiries, conducting the count after the close of voting, and managing the pack up and return of materials to the election office.

Hours: Election eve and from 7:00am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

(Previous election experience desirable)

Assistant Voting Centre Manager (AVCM) (min age 18 years)

AVCMs are responsible for assisting with the conduct of voting at a voting centre, including the supervision of staff, handling public and staff enquiries, providing relief for voting centre staff and assisting with the conduct of the count after the close of voting.

Hours: 7:00am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

Ballot Box Guard (BBG) (min age 18 years)

Ballot Box Guards are responsible for the security of all ballot boxes. They ensure voters place completed ballot papers in the correct ballot box, direct voters to the correct exit, and assist with counting activities after the close of voting.

Hours: 7:30am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

Declaration Issuing Officer (DIO) (min age 18 years)

Declaration Issuing Officers establish the correct district and region for the voter, issue declaration votes (including absent and provisional votes, etc.), account for all ballot papers, sign & witness enrolment applications (therefore must be on the State electoral roll) and assist with counting activities after the close of voting.

Hours: 7:30am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

Ordinary Issuing Officer (OIO) (min age 18 years)

Ordinary Issuing Officers mark voters off the roll, issue and account for all ballot papers, assist with counting activities after the close of voting, and assist with packing up the voting centre.

Hours: 7:30am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

Queue Controller (QC) (min age 18 years)

Queue Controllers direct ordinary voters to issuing points, direct declaration voters to the declaration table, identify and provide assistance to all electors, including those with special needs if required, and assist with counting activities after close of voting. The Queue Controller is required to wear a visibility vest.

Hours: 7:30am on election day until all tasks are completed on election night.

Support Officer (SO) – am position (min age 18 years)

Support Officers are appointed to some voting centres to assist with various activities during peak periods on election day.

Hours: 8:30am - 1:00pm

Count Support Officer (CSO) – pm position (min age 18 years)

Count Support Officers are appointed to some voting centres to assist with counting and other activities after the close of voting.

Hours: 5:30pm - 10:00pm

Voting Centre Assistant (VCA) (min age 16 years)

Voting Centre Assistants are appointed to assist with the unfolding of ballot papers, dismantling and stacking of all cardboard furniture, and tidying the voting centre.

Hours: 5:30pm - 9:30pm

Appendix D – Duty Statement for Election Manager

Duty Statement for Election Manager

The Election Manager reports to the Election Support Officer. The Election Manager is responsible for managing all aspects of the election for the District/s for which they are appointed. The Election Manager will conduct the election in an impartial, efficient and professional manner and will demonstrate by example excellent customer service practice and VEC values.

Duties could include:

- Undertake training as required by the VEC.
- Undertake venue accessibility audit of all voting centres.
- Acquire suitable accommodation for the temporary Election Office and arrange connection of utilities.
- Assist with the selection and establishment of early voting centres appointed for your electorate(s).
- Receive delivery of resources and set-up office in readiness for operation.
- Supervise the connection of telecommunication services.
- Participate in pre-election trials.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Election Office.
- Communicate all relevant issues to the Election Support Officer.
- Appoint and train election staff. This involves conducting on-the-job training for office staff, including computer training in the Election Management System (EMS). It also includes training of key voting centre staff and counting team leaders.
- Confirm the hire of schools/buildings to be used as voting centres.
- Ensure that all election details are accurately recorded in EMS.
- Interview candidates and process their nominations and how-to-vote cards.
- Conduct the draw for candidates' position on the ballot paper, which is a public event.
- Conduct the draw for the Region if required to do so.
- Appoint, train and supervise Early Voting Manager(s).
- Arrange mobile voting and employ and train Mobile Voting staff.

- Ensure that any electors with special needs are being identified and assisted appropriately.
- Ensure that the layout and set-up of the public area allows optimal access for all electors, including electors with disabilities.
- Deal with enquiries from candidates, the local media and the public.
- Ensure the security of ballot material.
- Supervise the allocation and distribution of resources to voting centres.
- Plan for Election Day in the office, including the receipt of results and materials.
- Ensure all election results are recorded accurately in EMS.
- Complete all required election documentation progressively.
- Brief and supervise scrutineers.
- Manage the extraction and count of postal ballot papers and early votes.
- Supervise the count and recheck of ballot papers, and a distribution of preferences, if required.
- Ensure Region ballot papers are securely transferred to the Region recheck centre.
- Supervise the preparation and dispatch of voting materials to other Election Offices.
- Formally declare the result(s) of the election.
- Ensure that all assessments for election staff are complete and entered in Personnel System.
- Supervise the packing of furniture, equipment and materials for return to the VEC.
- Arrange disconnection of utilities.
- Other duties, as directed.

Code of Conduct –election officials must:

- Treat everyone equally, fairly, consistently and with respect, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin or religion.
- Not associate with political parties/candidates or lobby groups.
- Refrain from comment on political matters.
- Disclose interests that may impact on impartiality.
- Decline gifts and hospitality offered in the performance of my duties.

- Act with openness, honesty and integrity toward all clients.
- Promote confidence in electoral procedures and processes.
- Promote inclusiveness and diversity in employment.
- Provide timely and responsive service and respond to customer needs.
- Be accessible and available.
- Honour the confidentiality of information available to me as part of my duties.
- Demonstrate high standards of communication, interpersonal skills, demeanour, punctuality and diligence.

Appendix E – 2016 Local Government elections - Overview of election staff roles and training details

These details are from the 2016 Local Government elections. There are additional roles that would be utilised at a state election that are not included here.

Election Casuals			
Staff Title	Role	Training Details	Materials
Office Assistants	Appointed to assist by management team at the election office	On the job training by management team at the election office	<i>Induction Handbook</i>
Computer Count Team Leaders	Appointed to manage the set-up and operation of the computer count process	Attend a training session arranged by VEC Head office well in advance of the counting process	<i>Computer Count Team Leader Manual</i>
Counting Team Leaders	Appointed for extraction, sorting and conduct of preference distributions, where counts are done manually and for extraction and batching of ballot papers in preparation for computer counts.	Attend a training session conducted by management team at the election office. Length will vary for each election type.	<i>Counting Team Leaders Guide</i>
Counting Officers	Appointed for extraction, sorting and conduct of preference distributions, where counts are done manually	Trained on the job. Will be briefed by Counting Team Leaders.	
Data Entry Operators	Appointed to enter data from ballot paper into computer count application at computer counts.	Trained on the job. Will be briefed by Counting Team Leaders.	<i>DEO Manual</i>
Election Officials			
Staff Title	Role	Training Details	Materials
Early Voting Centre Managers	Manages and oversees early voting prior to election day	Trained by the RO prior to opening of early voting. Coaching session with all early voting staff maybe held.	<i>Early voting manual</i>
Early Voting Centre Officers	Issue early votes	Trained on the job once early voting commences. Early voting officers who will work at stand-alone voting centres can be asked to attend a coaching session prior to the opening of their early voting centre	<i>Early voting manual</i>

Voting Centre Manager	Manages and oversees all activities in the voting centre on election day	Online and face to face training	<i>VCM guide, election officials manual and pre-seminar home study</i>
Assistant Voting Centre Manager	Supports the Voting Centre Manager and rotates with Declaration Issuing Officers during breaks	Online and face to face training	<i>VCM guide, election officials manual and pre-seminar home study</i>
Election Officials	Various roles within the election office and voting centres	Online training	<i>Election officials manual</i>
Election Liaison Officers	Provides assistance and support to Voting Centre Managers on election day. Persons appointed to this role must have experience in voting centre management.	Online and face to face training	<i>VCM guide, ELO guide, election officials manual and pre-seminar home study</i>