

Senior election official handbook

June 2024

Senior election official handbook

Acknowledgement of country

The VEC pays respect to Victoria's traditional owners and their elders past and present who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years. Their living culture and their role in the life of Victoria is acknowledged by the VEC.

About this handbook

This information will help you to understand the VEC. You'll learn about your working conditions, rights and responsibilities, and find out about the standards and conduct we expect you to maintain.

This document sets out the role and responsibilities of Senior election officials (SEOs) and the various SEO appointments.

We hope that this handbook will assist you in your time at the VEC and will enable you to rapidly gain the knowledge you need to be successful and effective.

Further information about the VEC as an employer can be found on the VEC website vec.vic.gov.au

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About the VEC

Stakeholders

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

Voters

The VEC will make it as easy as possible for all sectors of the community in Victoria to enrol and vote through the identification of barriers to full participation. As a result, it will focus on addressing these barriers and creating an environment so that at every opportunity, voters are made aware of their obligations, understand what they are required to do, and are motivated to participate in Victoria's democracy (enrol and vote).

Clients

We aim to build on the delivery of fair and equitable elections by better interpreting the requirements of our clients to deliver high quality, value-for-money products and services.

Our people

The ability to contribute to the delivery of democracy is a key factor that can attract new staff to the organisation. At the same time, we aim to provide staff with the environment and opportunity to enable them to learn and thrive on a personal and professional level. This will enable VEC staff to be better placed to respond to challenges and adapt to changes both in their operating environment and outside of work.

Staff must be well supported by the organisation, systems and quality processes to provide consistent high-quality outcomes. In this way they remain motivated, informed and engaged.

The role of the VEC

The VEC is an independent agency, operating under the auspices of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, within the portfolio of the Minister for Government Services. The VEC is not subject to the direction or control of any Minister in respect of the performance of its responsibilities and functions and the exercise of its powers.

The VEC's primary responsibilities under the *Electoral Act 2002* are:

- conducting parliamentary, local government, and certain statutory elections
- maintaining the register of Victorian electors
- promoting public awareness and understanding of electoral issues.

Legal responsibilities

The VEC and its employees, appointees, and contractors, have certain responsibilities under government legislation including the:

- *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic)
- *Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic)
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
- *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* (Vic)
- *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* (Vic)
- Section 17A of the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic), in reference to Disclosure of Political Activities
- *Infringements Act 2006* (Vic)

Elections

The electoral environment is shaped by legislation, which determines electoral cycles, provides a framework for the conduct of elections and creates the expectation that all eligible citizens will enrol and vote.

To effectively meet its legislative obligations the VEC must respond to a changing electoral environment and ensure the alignment of our approach with the expectations of our voters, our clients and our partners.

The activities of the VEC are largely determined by each electoral cycle. The following is a summary of the two key types of elections run by the VEC.

Parliamentary elections

- Parliamentary election terms are fixed at four-year terms (introduced by the Constitution Amendment Act 2003) and held on the last Saturday in November.
- All Victorian Members of Parliament (both houses) are elected for a four-year term of office.
- The Legislative Assembly (Lower House) has 88 districts (electorates) across the state.

- All districts have approximately equal numbers of voters (approximately 50,000).
- Each district has one elected member.
- The Legislative Council (Upper House) has 8 regions comprising 11 districts.
- Each region elects 5 members, giving a total of 40 members in the Legislative Council.
- The VEC appoints Election Managers to manage the election for each district and region.

Local government elections

- Local government elections are held on a four-yearly basis (according to the Local Government Act 2020), with election day being the fourth Saturday in October.
- Local government councillors are elected for a four-year term of office (unless they vacate office prior to the end of their term).
- There are 79 municipal councils across Victoria.
- Subdivided councils are divided into wards and have councillors elected to each ward.
- Unsubdivided councils have one election, electing multiple councillors.
- Local government elections for Melbourne City Council are governed by the City of Melbourne Act 2001. Melbourne City Council elections comprise two elections, one for the Leadership Team of a Lord mayor and Deputy lord mayor, the second for the election of councillors.
- The VEC appoints Election managers to manage the elections for each council.

Working for the VEC

The VEC as an employer

The VEC provides an environment in which you can have the satisfaction of knowing that your work is making a significant positive contribution to the Victorian community.

The VEC recognises that election management work brings with it considerable responsibilities and unique challenges. Therefore, we are committed to providing our senior election officials with:

- a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities
- tools and support to enable you to excel in your role
- an enjoyable and safe place to work

Your entitlements and conditions are summarised later in this section.

Organisational structure

The Electoral Commissioner is the accountable officer for all of the activities of the Commission. To assist the Electoral Commissioner in carrying out his function, the VEC is divided into six areas, known as branches. These branches are grouped under the umbrella of either the Deputy Electoral Commissioner or the Executive Director, Governance and Enabling Services.

The following branches are grouped under the Deputy Electoral Commissioner:

- Event Strategy and Delivery
- Communication and Engagement
- Electoral Integrity and Regulation

The following branches are grouped under the Executive Director Governance and Enabling Services:

- Information and Digital Services
- People
- Corporate Services

A high-level organization chart is provided in Appendix 1. Note that election staff sit within the Event Strategy and Delivery Branch. A glossary of electoral personnel is provided in Appendix 2. This lists the key positions involved in the operation of an election office.

Your responsibilities

The VEC and its employees and appointees have certain responsibilities under legislation. To comply with legislation, you must follow the procedures described in the election manuals and handbooks that are provided to you. Specific procedures you are required to follow are dependent on the role you are assigned.

Disclosure of political activities

A justified community perception of political neutrality is critical to ensuring a high level of public trust and confidence in the independence and impartiality of the VEC.

As an SEO, you are asked to disclose your political memberships and activities prior to the commencement of your appointment. Section 17A of the Electoral Act 2002 authorises the VEC to discriminate against a person in relation to offering employment on the basis of political membership or activity. This discrimination is lawful under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. You will be required to complete a disclosure of political activities in order to accept an appointment. A disclosure is required for each appointment you may be offered. If anything changes in relation to your disclosure after it is submitted, you must notify the VEC through your appointing manager.

A disclosure will not necessarily preclude you from being appointed in an EMT role. For more information, view the VEC's impartiality requirements at [Disclosure of Political Activities \(vec.vic.gov.au/work-with-us/disclosure-of-political-activities\)](http://vec.vic.gov.au/work-with-us/disclosure-of-political-activities) (missing - between of and political).

Disclosure of pre-existing illness, injury or medical condition

You are not required or permitted to undertake activities that you are not physically capable of performing. In accordance with the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, you are required to disclose all pre-existing diseases, illnesses, or injuries that you reasonably believe could be accelerated, aggravated, exacerbated, or caused to recur or deteriorate by undertaking the activities set out in the duty statement specific to your appointment. There is an opportunity to disclose any conditions when accepting your appointment.

If you have a pre-existing condition, please ensure that you advise your supervisor prior to the commencement of your appointment. The VEC will consider reasonable modifications to the environment to enable you to conduct your activities in a way that is safe for you and others working with you. The VEC will also make reasonable adjustments to your duties and take appropriate action to ensure these duties are conducted in a manner that maintains the health and safety of all its employees and appointees. For example, if a person is unable to stand for long periods of time this will be addressed by the supervisor to ensure adequate change in roles to allow sitting to take place.

Governance

The VEC is the administrative agency through which the Electoral Commissioner's legislative obligations are exercised. The VEC is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices reflect good governance as well as complying with all relevant legislation. Adherence to the VEC's governance framework demonstrates accountability to stakeholders and ensures the vitality and impartiality of the electoral system, now and into the future. Staffing and work practices are determined by the *Public Administration Act 2004* and guided by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

General information

Policies and guidelines

The VEC has a range of policies and guidelines to ensure staff understand both their entitlements and responsibilities. Policies, guidelines, and procedures also provide SEOs with guidance regarding people management.

Once appointed to an election role you will be provided with a list of VEC policies and guidelines. You will be provided with direction about those policies and guidelines you will need to familiarise yourself with in preparation for your role. You will be alerted to those you will not need to read in advance of your role but should be aware of in case a need arises.

Below is a selection of policy and guideline documents and information available – note this is not an exhaustive list.

- Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaint and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure
- Email and Internet Usage Policy
- Financial Code of Practice
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy and Guidelines
- Harassment, Discrimination, Workplace Bullying and Anti-Violence Policy
- Information and Cybersecurity Awareness Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Protected Disclosure Policy
- Social Media Policy

If you wish to access detailed information regarding VEC policies, procedures and guidelines prior to appointment, you may do so by contacting the People team on (03) 8620 1100 or PeopleMailbox@vec.vic.gov.au and requesting a copy of the relevant policy. Any questions or queries relating to VEC policies and procedures should be directed to this number.

Election management teams will have access to all policies via EONetwork during their appointment.

Further information

The VEC website (vec.vic.gov.au) is a source of information about the VEC and electoral processes. You can obtain information from current and previous election events that will help you understand the electoral environment.

For any questions regarding your membership in the SEO pool please email seoqueries@vec.vic.gov.au

For any questions regarding updating your personal details, please email personnelhelpline@vec.vic.gov.au

Senior election officials (SEOs)

The SEO pool

The VEC has a pool of Senior election officials (SEOs) from which the VEC offers specific election management appointments during parliamentary and local government elections. Members of the pool have successfully completed the VEC's recruitment and induction programs. They are highly trained to perform the functions of any appointment during elections.

Each state district will have one Election manager (EM) and at least one Assistant election manager (AEM) appointed to conduct the election for that district.

For local government elections, an Election manager (EM) and up to three Assistant election managers (AEMs) are appointed for each election.

Selection for these roles occurs in the lead-up to each round of elections. They are not ongoing appointments, and last only until the conclusion of each election.

Not every SEO will be appointed to a management role during every election. Successful appointment will depend on your experience, availability, performance during selection and induction, and the number of other suitably qualified SEOs available in your area. SEOs not appointed to a management role may be offered other opportunities to strengthen their election knowledge.

Election support officers (ESOs)

A group of senior and experienced SEOs are appointed as Election support officers (ESOs) for each election. ESOs work to support field operations during an election event, overseeing the activities of election management teams and providing support and expertise.

ESOs work from either the VEC head office or based in the field to support their allocated districts or councils during the election. They spend time in each of their allocated election offices to provide support to the election management team and undertake important electoral integrity checks on behalf of the VEC.

Election management

The management of an election is an important job. When an election is called, the Electoral Commissioner will appoint election management team(s) to manage specific elections.

As an SEO, you may be called upon to be an EM, AEM, ESO, SEO Reserve or SEO consultant. When undertaking any of these roles you are expected:

- to perform your duties and functions in accordance with the law
- not to disclose anything you learn during the election that must not be disclosed
- to treat all staff, clients and voters respectfully in accordance with VEC values.

The EM is responsible for the establishment of the election office and the recruitment and training of office staff (see Appendix 2 for a list of staff). They are legally responsible for all activities that take place in the election as it relates to their district, region, or council.

In the case of a major issue during a parliamentary election, the EM may have to appear in the Supreme Court sitting as The Court of Disputed Returns. For local government elections, disputes about election results are heard by the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

SEOs appointed to election management teams must be mindful that the successful conduct of an election is based on integrity:

- Each aspect of the election must be capable of the closest scrutiny.
- Each aspect of the election must be seen to be transparent and ethical.
- Elections are conducted within a strict legal framework.

It is important that information provided by the election management team to office staff and members of the public during an election is correct. Election procedures are documented in detail, and it is important that these procedures are followed to ensure that the conduct of the election is consistent with these principles and instructions. Provision of incorrect information could cast doubt on the integrity and outcome of the election.

Support for election management teams

Materials and Resources

Appointed SEOs are provided with a detailed Election Manual and Election Diary which will be their main point of reference for the duration of the election. While we expect our election staff to be knowledgeable, we don't expect them to know all the answers. Don't guess. It is far better to say "I will check that and get back to you" than to give out incorrect information.

Throughout the election, communication between head office and election offices will occur significantly through EOBulletins, available via the EONetwork.

Access to a number of other useful manuals, handbooks and guides will also be provided.

People

For issues that can't be resolved by reference to the manual, EMs and AEMs can call the Help Desk based in the VEC Head Office, which will either answer your query or put you through to your Election support officer (ESO).

As an EM or AEM, you will be supervised by an ESO based at Head Office. If you have any doubt or uncertainty about procedures or legislation, you must consult your Election support officer (ESO) for guidance and resolution. Your ESO will also be your first point of contact in relation to any queries about your position.

The VEC's Personnel Helpline is available year-round to assist all election staff, including Senior election officials, with queries relating to the Election Staff Self-service portal.

Training

SEO training and development activities are provided by the VEC to assist you to continually improve your performance and understanding of elections, as well as help the VEC achieve its goals. Training may involve face-to-face training sessions conducted at the VEC together with both online and paper-based home study units. SEOs are paid for participation in the training program and will require an internet connection for booking into sessions and participating in training.

Training is organised prior to an election for any SEO appointed to a role. All SEOs who accept an appointment at an election must attend training regardless of previous experience, as legislation, systems and procedures may have changed since the previous election. The training will familiarise the appointee with the procedures and systems relevant to the particular election.

Entitlements and conditions

Remuneration and allowances

Payment method and timeframe

Payments will be made by electronic funds transfer in fortnightly instalments. Please ensure that your banking details are up to date in your Election Staff Self-Service portal, as any incomplete or incorrect banking details will result in a delay in payment.

Any queries regarding pay issues should be directed to the Personnel Helpline.

Remuneration arrangements

There are two primary ways of paying SEOs appointed to an election management position:

Salary packages (fixed term)	Hourly rate
<p>During major election events, election management teams will be placed on a fixed term agreement.</p> <p>Salary packages for this fixed period consider the anticipated ordinary and overtime hours expected to fulfil the requirements of the role for the election period.</p> <p>No casual loading is applied during the appointment term and SEOs will instead accrue a small amount of annual and personal leave. Any outstanding annual leave balance will be paid pro-rata throughout the fixed term agreement.</p>	<p>Outside the defined term of a fixed term appointment, and for all work undertaken by SEO consultants, SEOs will be paid at an hourly casual rate (inclusive of 25% casual loading). Timesheets must be submitted and approved for all casual work.</p> <p>The casual loading rate is to compensate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pro-rata payment in lieu of sick leave • pro-rata payment in lieu of recreation leave • out-of-hours work • the intermittent nature of employment. <p>Time and a half (x 1.5) rates apply if you are required to work more than 8 hours (excluding breaks) on any day from Monday – Saturday or over 38 hours in a working week. Double time (x 2) rates apply all day on Sundays and public holidays.</p> <p>If your shift commences between 8.00pm and 6.00am, an overtime rate of 1.4 x the base hourly rate will apply. If a night shift is in excess of 8 hours or occurs on a Sunday/Public holiday the overtime rules above will take effect.</p> <p>The 25% additional loading does not apply to any hours worked as overtime.</p> <p>Overtime should not be used and will not be approved for self-directed activities including office acquisition, home study and online training.</p> <p>For activities outside the election period, including training, debriefing and voting centre reviews, the appointed casual hourly rate will apply.</p>

Payment for training

You will be paid for completing home study modules and attending training at the VEC. Payment for the home study is based on the number of hours anticipated to be required to complete the activity, as determined by the VEC.

Additional payments for attending training

Lunch, tea, coffee, and light snacks will be provided on all training days attended in person at the VEC, factoring in any dietary requirements.

Where SEOs are required to stay overnight to complete the training program, the VEC will arrange and pay for accommodation. Travel allowances will also be paid.

The VEC pays a meal allowance to cover an evening meal and breakfast on the days where accommodation is provided.

Outposted SEOs

In instances where there are no local SEOs available, an SEO from another area may be deployed to fill the vacancy. In these cases, the VEC will cover:

- accommodation (arranged by the VEC).
- travel expenses.
- meal allowances.

SEOs appointed to other casual roles

Where an SEO is appointed to another election casual or official role not mentioned in the *SEO Handbook* they should refer to the employment guide in their offer letter.

Superannuation

The VEC will make superannuation contributions on behalf of eligible SEOs for ordinary hours worked, as required by the terms and conditions of the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992*. SEOs will be offered their choice of fund and contributions will be paid into the fund nominated in the Election Staff Self-Service Portal.

To select a self-managed fund, you must complete the [Superannuation standard choice form](#) from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) website and email it along with any required documents to electionpayroll@vec.vic.gov.au

Salary sacrifice

The VEC has determined that SEOs can request superannuation salary sacrifice arrangements in line with the following general guidelines:

- Salary sacrifice is not available for SEO recruitment activities as participants are not yet SEOs.
- The request to salary sacrifice must be in advance – that is, you cannot ask to sacrifice salary that has already been earned.

It is essential that individuals seek independent financial advice before requesting salary sacrifice arrangements from the VEC. The VEC requires that you sign a declaration form, Additional Superannuation Request (see below) that independent financial advice has been received prior to implementing any salary sacrifice arrangements.

The VEC cannot and will not provide any advice to individuals regarding their personal financial circumstances and the possible effects of salary sacrificing on those arrangements. Advice from the VEC is limited to the effect on the individual's gross and net salary.

To request superannuation salary sacrifice, you must complete the Additional Superannuation Request form and email it to electionpayroll@vec.vic.gov.au no later than 4 weeks before you wish the scheme to commence. As per legislative requirements, you are not eligible for salary sacrifice if you are over 75 years of age.

Hours of work

Where an SEO is placed on a fixed term appointment their salary package will be calculated based on the projected hours required to perform the role. A breakdown of the expected hours will be outlined in the staffing profile provided with the appointment letter.

Some additional or offset hours may be required outside ordinary hours of work. Compensation for expected additional or offset hours will be included in the salary package.

Where the SEO is on a casual appointment the minimum amount of time that you can be appointed to work is three hours per day. The three-hour minimum does not apply to training activities to which a one-hour minimum applies. No minimum time applies when working from home.

Safe working practices, including management of fatigue, are in place to support wellbeing through the fixed term appointment. Election support officers (ESOs) will monitor hours worked by election management teams and will arrange support where necessary.

Meals and breaks

You will not be required to work more than 5 hours continuously without a rest or meal break (unpaid) of at least 30 minutes. If you require more regular breaks for medical or religious reasons, please discuss this with your supervising manager to agree on alternative arrangements.

Use of private motor vehicles

As an SEO there may be situations where you will be required to use your private motor vehicle in connection with your appointment. If it is required, your appointing manager or ESO will discuss this with you.

Where this is applicable, a mileage allowance will be paid at the current rate per kilometre after submitting a claim via electronic timesheet or paper form.

The table below outlines different travel types and their associated allowances.

Travel type	Travel allowance
Travel to and from home to the election office, voting centre and/or other normal place of "Travel to work"	✓ claim on distance in excess of 30km (each way)
Travel to and from home or normal place of work to location on work related business e.g. post-office collection, voting centre inspections (usually within work hours) "Travel for work"	✓ All kilometres travelled + time spent travelling
Travel to and from training location where venue is different to normal place of work "Travel to training"	✓ claim on distance in excess of 30km (each way) + time spent travelling in excess of 30 minutes each way)
Travel to and from home or normal place of work where destination venue is different to normal place of work	✓ claim on distance in excess of 30km (each way)

It is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is registered for use on the open road, roadworthy and free of defects, insured by a motor vehicle policy, and free of any modification that may invalidate the insurance at all times you use your vehicle for VEC purposes. Use of a private motor vehicle requires the owner to accept costs incurred resulting from accident or damage.

The VEC will not be liable for toll fees, transport infringements or fines, or parking costs.

Rates of pay

(From 8 June 2024)

Election casual rates of pay:

Election casual role	Base hourly rate	Rate including 25% loading	1.5 x base rate	2 x base rate
Election Support Officer (by-election level 1)	\$50.75	\$63.43	\$76.12	\$101.49
Election Support Officer (by-election level 2)	\$52.84	\$66.04	\$79.25	\$105.67
Election Support Officer (by-election level 3)	\$55.34	\$69.17	\$83.01	\$110.68
SEO Consultant Level 1	\$33.32	\$41.65	\$49.98	\$66.64
SEO Consultant Level 2	\$49.70	\$62.12	\$74.55	\$99.40
SEO Recruit	\$32.74	\$40.92	\$49.11	\$65.47
SEO Reserve	\$33.32	\$41.65	\$49.98	\$66.64

Allowances

Allowance type	Rate
Phone allowance Per claim (where a work mobile has not been provided)	\$50.00
Breakfast allowance (Metro)	\$33.90
Breakfast allowance (Country)	\$30.35
Lunch allowance (Metro)	\$38.10
Lunch allowance (Country)	\$34.65
Dinner allowance (Metro)	\$64.95
Dinner allowance (Country)	\$59.75

Meal allowances are set to the current ATO guidelines on reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses. Metro rates will apply in Melbourne metropolitan areas (e.g., when attending training in CBD) or high-cost country centres and country rates will apply in Tier 2 country centres. A full list can be found on the ATO website.

General conditions

Centrelink information

If you receive a Centrelink payment, you must advise Centrelink about your income and changes to your (or, in some circumstances, your partner's) work status. This includes any income from your work as an SEO with the VEC.

Dress code

Election management teams work in an environment that is visible to voters, candidates, and the media. As a representative of the VEC, you are expected to be dressed in no less than smart casual and to keep clean and tidy always, including personal hygiene. Inappropriate clothing in the workplace includes thongs, tracksuit pants, sports shorts, and ripped or sheer clothing.

Employment opportunities with VEC and the VPS

Employment opportunities within the VEC can be accessed through the VEC website (vec.vic.gov.au).

Alternatively, careers.vic.gov.au is the job advertising site for the Victorian Public Service (VPS). There are no restrictions on who can apply for a job advertised.

National Police Check

The VEC must have in place a system of controls to ensure fit and proper persons are appointed to SEO roles. National Police Checks are one of the controls that form part of that system. Your appointment to an SEO role is subject to and conditional upon the return of a satisfactory National Police Check. By accepting an offer of appointment, you consent for the VEC to conduct this check.

Working with Children Check

The VEC is a 'Child Safe' organisation committed to the health, wellbeing and safety of children and young people. This commitment is taken seriously, and employees are expected to be cognisant of, and act consistently with, the VEC's expectations with regard to child safe principles and behaviours.

SEOs may be required to obtain and maintain a Working with Children Check. This will be dependent on the nature of the appointed role and any requirements of the election venues involved.

Occupational health and safety

Safety is everyone's responsibility at the VEC including SEOs.

The VEC is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment which is safe and without risk to the health of its appointees, employees, clients, contractors and visitors.

This commitment also extends to ensuring that the work of the VEC does not place the Victorian community at risk of injury, illness, disease or any form of property damage. Workplace health and safety management principles are integral to the everyday business of our workplace.

SEOs will be provided with procedures and guidance in how to ensure occupational health and safety is managed within the workplace.

If you discover a health and safety hazard, take remedial action immediately if it is safe to do so (follow the relevant Appendix of the Election Manual when it becomes available), and report it to your ESO.

Other payments

The VEC does not pay parking fees or child-care costs.

Privacy

The VEC collects personal information to fulfil its statutory functions under the *Electoral Act 2002* and for administrative purposes.

When collecting personal information, the VEC will take reasonable steps to advise you what information is being sought, for what purpose, whether any law requires the collection of the information and the main consequences, if any, of not providing the information. The VEC handles all personal information it receives in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. For more information, view the VEC's Privacy Policy on our website vec.vic.gov.au/privacy

Termination

Appointment to an election role may be revoked or suspended at any time under section 41 of the *Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984*.

In accordance with your contract, you can terminate your appointment by providing one day's notice in writing to your appointing manager. That is, to the end of that working day.

Code of conduct

Any person working for the VEC, including every election casual and official, must uphold a high degree of integrity in their conduct during their employment. The professional conduct of elections maintains the public's trust and confidence in Victoria's electoral processes.

Although SEO appointments to election management roles are not Victorian Public Service (VPS) appointments, the VEC does require that all election management staff abide by the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Code of Conduct for Employees of Special Bodies. A summary of the Code of Conduct is detailed below, and the full version is available electronically via the Victorian Public Sector Commission's website (vpssc.vic.gov.au).

General behaviour

As an SEO, you must:

- carry out your duties in accordance with VEC procedures and instructions
- treat everyone equally, fairly, consistently and with respect, regardless of a person's age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, or religion
- act with openness, honesty, and integrity
- promote confidence in electoral procedures and processes
- promote inclusiveness and diversity in employment
- provide timely and responsive service
- be accessible and available
- demonstrate high standards of communication, interpersonal skills, demeanour, punctuality, and diligence.

Confidentiality

As an SEO, you must:

- honour the confidentiality of information available to you as part of your duties consistent with the VEC's Privacy Policy
- not make any unauthorised audio, video or photographic recording inside any VEC-operated venue
- only access information necessary for the successful completion of your duties and only when access to that information is authorized.

Impartiality

As an SEO, you must:

- not associate with political parties, candidates or lobby groups, other than as required through the performance of your duties
- refrain from commenting on political matters
- disclose all interests that may impact on your impartiality and inform the VEC if circumstances relating to your impartiality have changed
- decline gifts or hospitality offered in the performance of your duties.

Social media

As an SEO, you must:

- consider the consequence of any comment you post to social media if it becomes available to a global audience before posting the comment
- exercise extreme care when participating in social media discussions so as to not explicitly or implicitly suggest an official position of the VEC
- ensure anything you publish online, including comments and posts made on social media, are in accordance with the VPS Code of Conduct and VEC Social Media Policy.

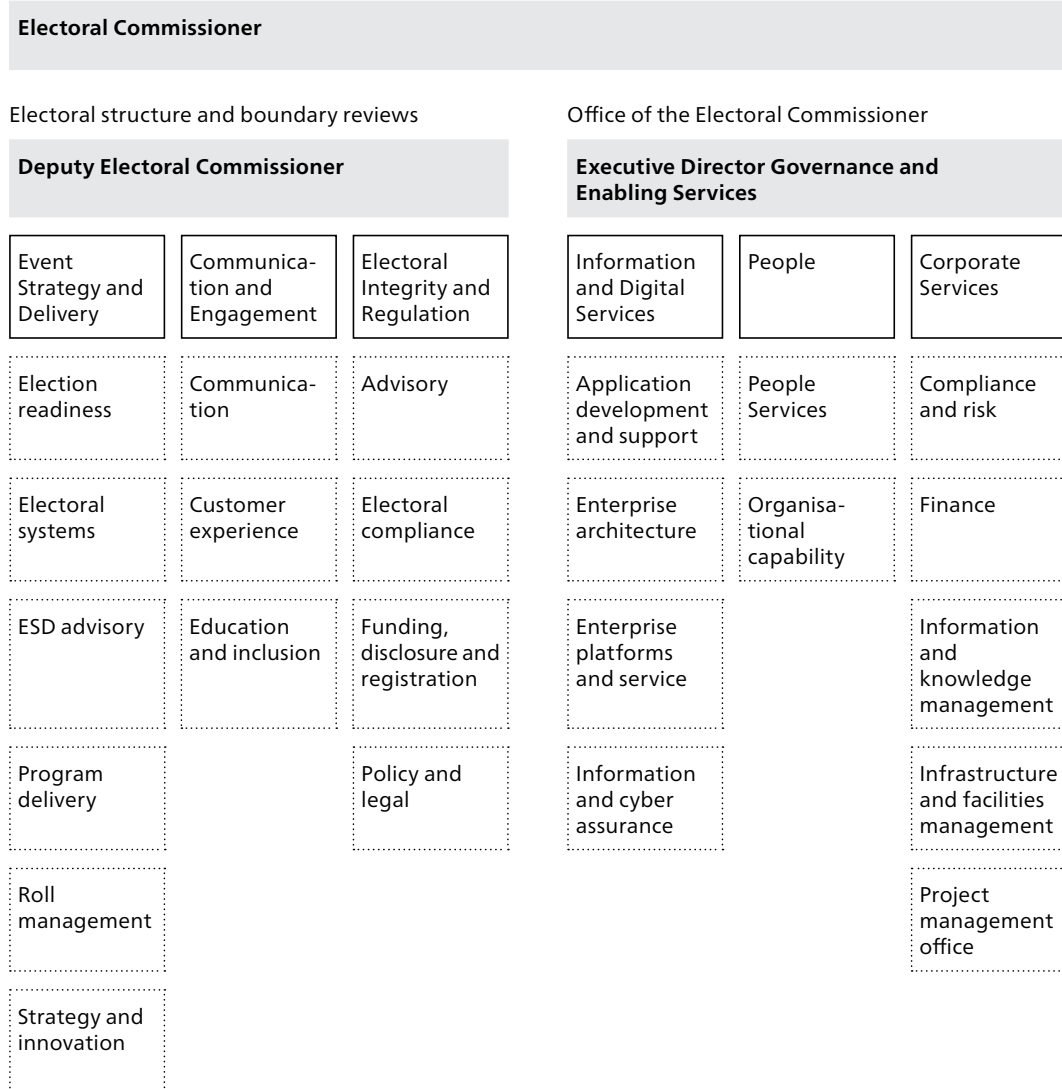
Performance evaluation

SEOs appointed to election roles are required to complete a performance evaluation at the end of the election.

Your self-assessments will be submitted to your manager. For AEMs, the manager will be the EM; for EMs the manager will be the ESO. For SEO Reserves, your performance review will be completed by the EM. Your manager will review the self-assessment and rate your performance. These ratings are moderated prior to being finalised. Conversations regarding your performance should be ongoing throughout the election period so that you have a clear understanding of the performance expectations for your role.

Appendix 1: Organisational structure

Effective February 2024



Appendix 2: Glossary

Role	Definition
Assistant election manager (AEM)	A Senior election official appointed by the Electoral commissioner to assist in the conduct of an election and supervise office staff. The Assistant election manager reports directly to the Election manager.
Assistant voting centre manager (AVCM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to assist a Voting centre manager to manage the conduct of the election at a voting centre with four or more issuing points.
Candidate	A person who is nominated under relevant legislation to stand for election to the Parliament or to a council.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The person appointed by a council to be its Chief executive officer or any person acting in that position.
Client liaison officer (CLO)	A member of staff employed by the VEC to liaise with councils to ensure the conduct of the election is in accordance with the terms of the Electoral Service Agreement with each council. CLOs are led by the Client liaison manager.
Counting Officer	A person appointed to undertake counting activities at an election.
Declaration issuing officer (DIO)	A person appointed by the Election manager to be responsible for issuing declaration votes to voters who are unable to be found on the roll or are outside their enrolled district/ward.
Deputy Electoral Commissioner (DEC)	A person appointed by the Governor-in-council to perform all functions, powers and duties delegated by the Electoral Commissioner. During the absence of the Electoral Commissioner, or if that office becomes vacant, the Deputy Electoral Commissioner shall act in that office.
Early Voting Centre Manager (EVCM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to manage the conduct of the election at an early voting centre.
Early voting centre officer (EVCO)	A person accountable for the issuing of ballot papers and the recording of voters on the roll at an early voting centre.
Election liaison officer (ELO)	A person appointed by the Election manager to visit and support Voting centre managers at a number of specific voting centres within a district or ward on election day.
Election manager (EM)	A Senior election official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election for a district at a State election or a council at a local government election. The Election manager is the front-line manager for that election and reports to the Election support officer.

Role	Definition
Election support officer (ESO)	An experienced Senior election official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to support and manage election management teams in the conduct of elections from a head office base.
Electoral commissioner (EC)	A person appointed by the Governor-in-Council to be responsible for the administration of electoral law in Victoria. The Electoral Commissioner is the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Electoral Commission with the power to appoint Election managers and other integral roles. The EC's responsibilities include the maintenance of the electoral roll and the conduct of all Parliamentary and municipal elections.
Help desk operator	Trained operators who respond to enquiries from election offices and assist or refer the issue to specific support staff. Calls regarding procedural matters are forwarded to Election support officers.
Mobile voting manager (MVM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to manage the conduct of the election at one or more mobile early voting centres
Mobile voting officer (MVO)	A person accountable for the issuing of ballot papers and the marking of the roll at a mobile early voting centre.
Office assistant (OA)	A person appointed by the Election manager to provide administrative support during the election period including activities such as recruitment of staff.
Ordinary issuing officer	A person appointed by the Election manager to assist the Voting centre manager with the conduct of the election at a voting centre.
Scrutineer	A person appointed by a candidate to represent the candidate's interests and observe election activities to satisfy the candidate that the election was conducted strictly in accordance with the legislation.
Senior election official (SEO)	A trained election official who may be appointed to a management role in the conduct of elections, as outlined in this handbook.
Senior election official (SEO) consultant	A Senior election official position reporting to a project or program manager based at the VEC head office, or to an Election manager in an election office to support key election activities. SEO Consultants also form part of a reserve strategy that will be implemented if any appointed Election manager or Assistant election manager becomes unavailable during the lead up to or throughout the election period.

Role	Definition
Senior election official (SEO) recruit	During recruitment of senior election officials, participants are paid for their time for recruitment activities where the time commitment significantly exceeds standard recruitment practices. SEO recruits are paid at a lower rate than other SEO roles, as they have not successfully passed recruitment and are not yet considered to be an SEO.
Senior election official (SEO) reserve	To ensure the VEC has sufficient election management staff trained for major election events, additional SEOs may be appointed to reserve positions. These SEOs are engaged on a casual basis and will be paid at their appointed hourly rate (inclusive of 25% casual loading) to attend training and for any work undertaken as an SEO reserve. If an SEO reserve steps into an EMT position, they will then be paid at the rate relevant to the new role.
Team Leader	An authorised person who directs the activities of a team to obtain the results of an election.
Voting centre manager (VCM)	A person appointed by the Election manager to manage the conduct of the election at a voting centre.

Appendix 3: Duty statements

Election Manager (Local Government elections)

The Election Manager (EM) reports to the election support officer (ESO). The Election Manager is responsible for managing all aspects of the election for which they are appointed. Election Managers are responsible for the conduct of an election in their assigned electorate. Each electorate (local council area) will have one Election Manager and up to three Assistant Election Managers appointed.

Election Managers work in a temporary election office within the electorate, from which they coordinate and manage a large-scale election operation, within a short timeframe. They lead and direct staff, including the Assistant Election Manager, and hold overall accountability for the successful delivery of election activities in that electorate.

The following list of typical duties is not exhaustive and includes other duties as directed by the ESO. This role will be scaled depending on the size and complexity of the election, and Election Managers at lower levels may not complete all listed activities.

Planning, management and reporting

The Election Manager is responsible for the planning, documentation and reporting all election matters relevant to the current election.

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the election office, including daily briefings, resource planning and personnel management
- Plan tasks and resources in accordance with the Election Manual and Election Diary
- Allocate tasks and areas of responsibility to AEM or OAs as applicable
- Maintain accurate records of all election matters in the Election Diary
- Communicate all relevant issues to the election support officer
- Ensure the management and security of ballot material and other sensitive materials at all times
- Complete all required election documentation progressively
- Plan for election weekend, including developing a count plan
- Plan for election day activities in the office.

Staff

The Election Manager is directly responsible for a small number of supporting office staff, and indirectly responsible for a larger number of election staff.

- Appoint, train and manage election staff, including office, counting and election day staff
- Conduct on-the-job training for office staff, including use of the Election Management System (EMS) and Personnel system
- Ensure sufficient staff for required activities across the span of the election
- Monitor staff performance and address issues arising
- Ensure all electronic timesheets entered into the Personnel system are approved within the current pay period
- Ensure that all assessments for election staff are complete and entered in the personnel system.

Venues

The Election Manager is responsible for the set-up and management of the election office.

- Support the acquisition of suitable accommodation for the temporary election office and connection of utilities
- Plan layout for election office and early voting centres
- Receive delivery of resources and set-up office in readiness for operation
- Supervise the installation of IT equipment
- Ensure that the layout and set-up of the public area allows optimal access, including voters/electors/staff with special needs
- Arrange election office space for various activities, e.g. training, sorting and counting
- Complete workplace safety checks each time venue is rearranged
- Supervise the packing of furniture, equipment, and materials for the return to the VEC (or ballot materials to Council)
- Decommission the election office.

Candidates

The Election Manager is responsible for representing the VEC in localised contact and communications with candidates and parties, and must demonstrate VEC values and codes of conduct while doing so.

- Conduct candidate information session/s
- Process candidate nominations, statements and questionnaires and provide relevant information to stakeholders
- Conduct the draw for candidates' position on the ballot paper as a public event
- Deal with enquiries from candidates, the local media and the public
- Communicate information and key timelines to candidates via Candidate Bulletins
- Brief and supervise scrutineers.

Voting

The Election Manager is responsible for providing adequate and compliant voting services for all electors within the current election.

- Supervise the issue of replacement ballot material
- Manage the processing of postal vote applications
- Respond to voter questions and issues
- Proactively monitor voter experience and respond accordingly
- Respond to escalated issues such as compliance with electoral material rules.

Results

The Election Manager is responsible for all ballot papers, including during voting, counts, results declarations and storage.

- Ensure results are accurately recorded in EMS
- Monitor the implementation of the Count Plan and address issues as they arise
- Determine the formality of ballot papers as required
- Organise and conduct the processing of returned postal ballot material
- Supervise counting of ballot papers and a distribution of preferences
- Supervise the preparation and dispatch of ballot papers to a computer count venue
- Manage the opening of ballot paper envelopes and extraction and counting of ballot papers
- Prepare for and conduct further scrutiny counts such rechecks, preference distribution and recount, if required
- Formally declare the results of the election.

Assistant Election Manager (Local Government elections)

The Assistant Election Manager reports to the Election Manager. Each electorate (local council area) will have one Election Manager and up to three Assistant Election Managers appointed.

Assistant Election Managers are responsible for supporting their Election Manager. The Assistant Election Manager helps to coordinate and oversee operational and administrative activities within a short timeframe, as directed by their Election Manager. They should be able to conduct activities with a high degree of autonomy.

The duties of the Assistant Election Manager are to assist the Election Manager in the managing of all aspects of the election/s for which they are appointed and to take responsibility for the administration of specific tasks as directed by the Election Manager. The following list of typical duties is not exhaustive and includes other duties as directed by the Election Manager. This role will be scaled depending on the size and complexity of the election, and Assistant Election Managers at lower levels may not complete all listed activities.

Planning, management and reporting

The Assistant Election Manager is responsible for supporting the Election Manager in the planning, documentation and reporting of election matters as required by the Election Manager.

- Assist with the supervision of the day-to-day operations of the election office
- Assist with the planning for election weekend
- Receive delivery of resources and set-up office in readiness for operation
- Ensure the security of ballot material at all times
- Assist with the completion of election returns/documentation
- Supervise the packing of furniture, equipment and materials for the return to the VEC or ballot materials to Council

Staff

The Assistant Election Manager is responsible for supporting the Election Manager to appoint, train and supervise a number of election staff across a range of small projects.

- Supervise the work of a team of office assistants
- Assist with the recruitment and training of election staff. Conduct on-the-job training for office staff, including use of the Election Management System (EMS) and Personnel system. Train key staff and counting team leaders
- Supervise the entry of timesheets for election casual staff into the Personnel system
- Ensure that all assessments for election staff are complete and entered in the personnel system

Voting

The Assistant Election Manager is responsible for supporting the Election Manager to plan, deliver and supervise voting services for all electors within the current election, including counting and recording results.

- Ensure that all staff are dealing with voters in a fair, friendly and helpful manner
- Deal with public enquiries
- Ensure that the layout and set-up of the public area allows optimal access for all voters, including voters with special needs
- Supervise the issue of replacement ballot material
- Assist with the scrutiny of declaration votes
- Supervise the checking and processing of returned postal ballot material
- Assist with counting of ballot papers and a distribution of preferences, if required
- Assist with the conduct of the draw for candidates' position on the ballot paper, which is a public event
- Ensure all election results are recorded accurately in EMS
- Assist with preparation and dispatch of ballot papers to a computer count venue if required
- Supervise the opening of ballot paper envelopes and extraction/counting of ballot papers

Senior election official consultant

The SEO consultant is a Senior election official position reporting to a project or program manager based at the VEC head office, or to an Election manager in an election office. The SEO consultant may be involved in voting centre reviews, election office acquisitions, reviewing debriefing documents, reviewing manuals and online training, and assisting with recruitment and training.

During major election events, SEO consultants may form part of a reserve strategy that will be implemented if any appointed Election manager or Assistant election manager becomes unavailable during the lead up to or throughout the election period.

The SEO consultant must conduct their duties in an efficient, impartial and professional manner.

Level 1 key accountabilities, as delegated:

- perform voting centre reviews and/or election office acquisitions
- perform project or program tasks and activities
- participate in selection and induction training
- any other duties, as directed.

Level 2 key accountabilities, as delegated:

- provide opinions, advice and expertise from an experienced SEO perspective
- apply legislation, rules, procedures, and processes applicable to a project or program
- recruit, train and supervise project officers on project or program tasks and activities
- contribute to the drafting, review and establishment of procedures and processes
- any other duties, as directed.

Senior election official reserve

The SEO reserve role is a Senior election official position reporting to a project or program manager based at the VEC head office, or to an Election manager in an election office.

During major election events, SEO reserves may form part of a reserve strategy that will be implemented if any appointed EM or AEM becomes unavailable during the lead up to or throughout the election period. SEO reserves are SEO staff who have been through the SEO assessment centre and are deemed suitable to step into an Election Manager (EM) or Assistant Election Manager (AEM) role if one becomes available. They may be engaged to support VEC head office activities or to provide further support to election offices.

The SEO reserve staff may be involved in voting centre reviews, election office acquisitions, reviewing debriefing documents, reviewing manuals and online training, and assisting with recruitment and training.

The SEO reserve staff must conduct their duties in an efficient, impartial and professional manner.

Duties:

- perform project or program tasks and activities, as directed
- participate in selection and induction training
- apply legislation, rules, procedures, and processes applicable to a project or program
- support election office staff, as directed
- contribute to the drafting, review and establishment of procedures and processes
- any other duties, as directed.

Senior election official recruit

The SEO recruit role is a Senior election official role for staff who are progressing through the required training and assessment centre in order to be assigned to an election role.

While in this role, SEO recruit staff may be asked to attend training sessions, participate in group discussions and activities, complete individual assessments and other training and assessment related activities as required.

SEO recruit staff will report to the project or program manager based at the VEC head office.

The SEO recruits must conduct their duties in an efficient, impartial and professional manner.

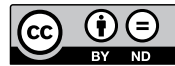
Duties:

- complete all required training, including online training
- attend sessions at VEC head office for training and assessment
- behave in accordance with VEC values and expectations
- engage in team and group work, discussions and projects
- learn required materials
- participate in planning activities
- any other duties, as directed.



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June 2024

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