Victorian Electoral Commission

Report on the South-West Coast District By-election held on 31 October 2015

May 2016

The Honourable Bruce Atkinson, MLC,
President of the Legislative Council

The Honourable Telmo Languiller, MP,
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

I am pleased to submit to you, for presentation to Parliament, this report on the conduct of
the South-West Coast District by-election held on 31 October 2015.

The report is presented in accordance with section 8(2)(b) of the *Electoral Act 2002.*

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

May 2016

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Executive summary

A by-election for the South-West Coast (State) District was triggered by the resignation, on 3 September 2015, of the sitting member, the Honourable Denis Napthine, MP.

A communication campaign that included householder letters on enrolment and voting, and a range of newspaper advertisements helped ensure that electors were aware of details of the by-election, their voting options and the result.

Eleven candidates nominated for the by-election. Five independent candidiates nominated.The Animal Justice Party, Australian Christians, Australian Country Party, Australian Greens, Liberal Party and The Nationals each endorsed a candidate. The Australian Labor Party did not nominate a candidate for this by-election. As no candidate achieved an absolute majority, a preference distribution was required. Mrs Roma Britnell, the Liberal candidate, who polled 40% of the first preference votes, was elected at the ninth exclusion.

The turnout rate of 91.09% was slightly lower than the turnout rate of 94.93% in the 2014 State election. However the turnout rate for this by-election was higher than the average turnout of 79.80% for the five preceding State by-elections.

In line with observed trends, the proportion of voters who voted prior to election day in person or by post, was 54.67%. This was an increase on the 49.32% of South-West Coast voters who voted before election day at the 2014 State election and appeared to be the highest proportion ever witnessed at a Victorian election. This phenomenon has been observed around Australia and will be the subject of consideration by the VEC.

The informality rate of 6.24% for South-West Coast, with eleven candidates, was an increase on the informality rate of 4.04% for South-West Coast District with six candidates at the 2014 State election. Yet the informality rate was lower than the average informality rate of 9.06% for the five preceding State by-elections.

An analysis of the informal votes has been conducted and a report is included in Appendix D.

The result of the by-election was declared on Thursday 5 November 2015, and the writ was returned to the Speaker, the Hon.Telmo Languiller MP, on 9 November 2015. I take this opportunity to thank all VEC staff, contractors and suppliers, and particularly the Election Manager, Mr Ian Sadler, Assistant Election Managers, Mr Russell Isaac and Mr Neil Bridge and Election Support Officer, Ms Therese Camm, for their contributions to the very successful conduct of the South-West Coast District by-election.

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

1. Snapshot

SOUTH-WEST COAST

First preference votes (% of first preference votes)

Candidate	%
VAN DE HOEF, Rodney	1.75%
BRITNELL, Roma — Liberal	40.00%
REEKIE, Roy	16.82%
DOUKAS, Jim — Australian Country Party	10.34%
NEOH, Michael — The Nationals	14.42%
SMITH, Pete	1.80%
CAMPBELL, Thomas — Greens	7.59%
MARSH, Swampy	2.94%
GAMBLE, Jennifer — Animal Justice Party	1.27%
LEN, Lillian — Australian Christians	1.50%
McCLUSKEY, Michael	1.59%
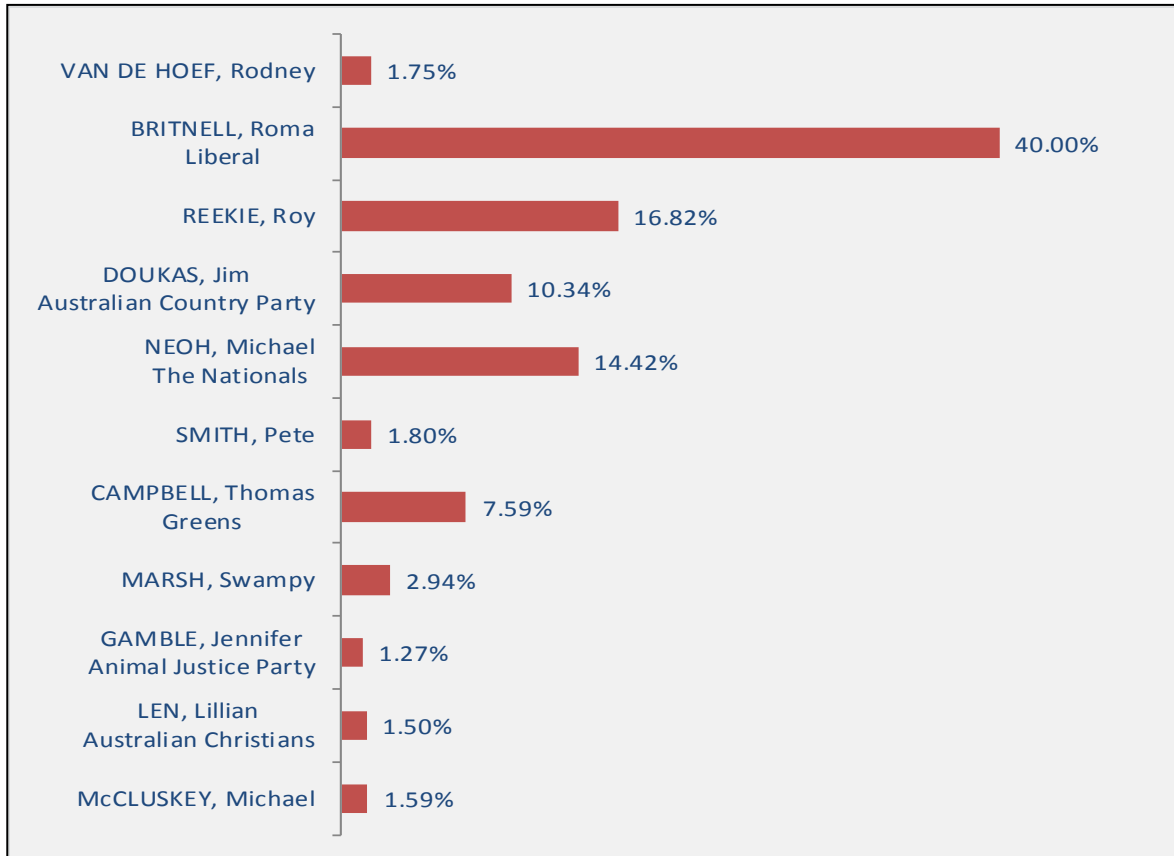
Results after distribution of preferences

Candidate	%
BRITNELL, Roma — Liberal	60.58%
REEKIE, Roy	39.42%
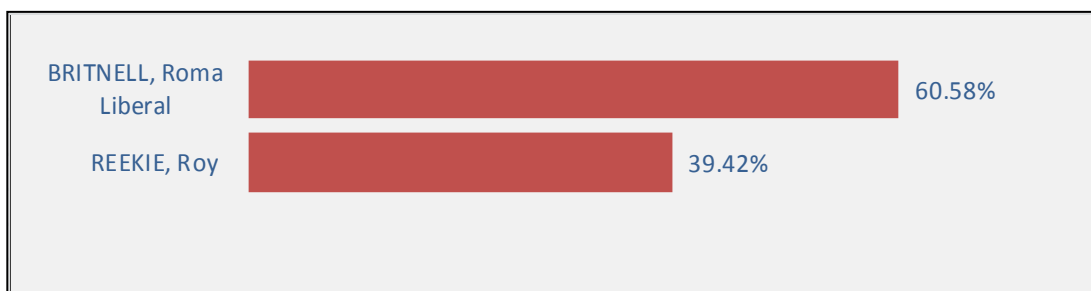
Participation

Participation at South-West Coast District by-election 2015
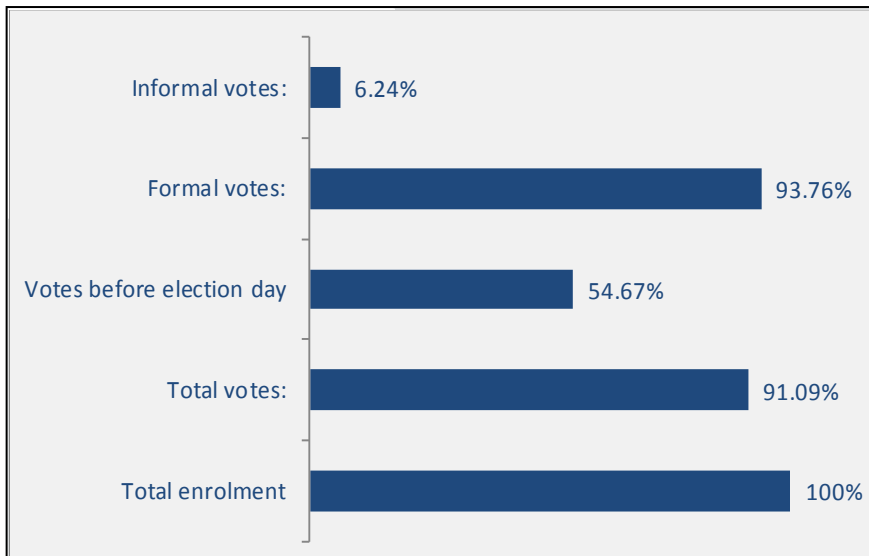
Voter turnout at Victorian State by-elections 2011–15 (% enrolment)
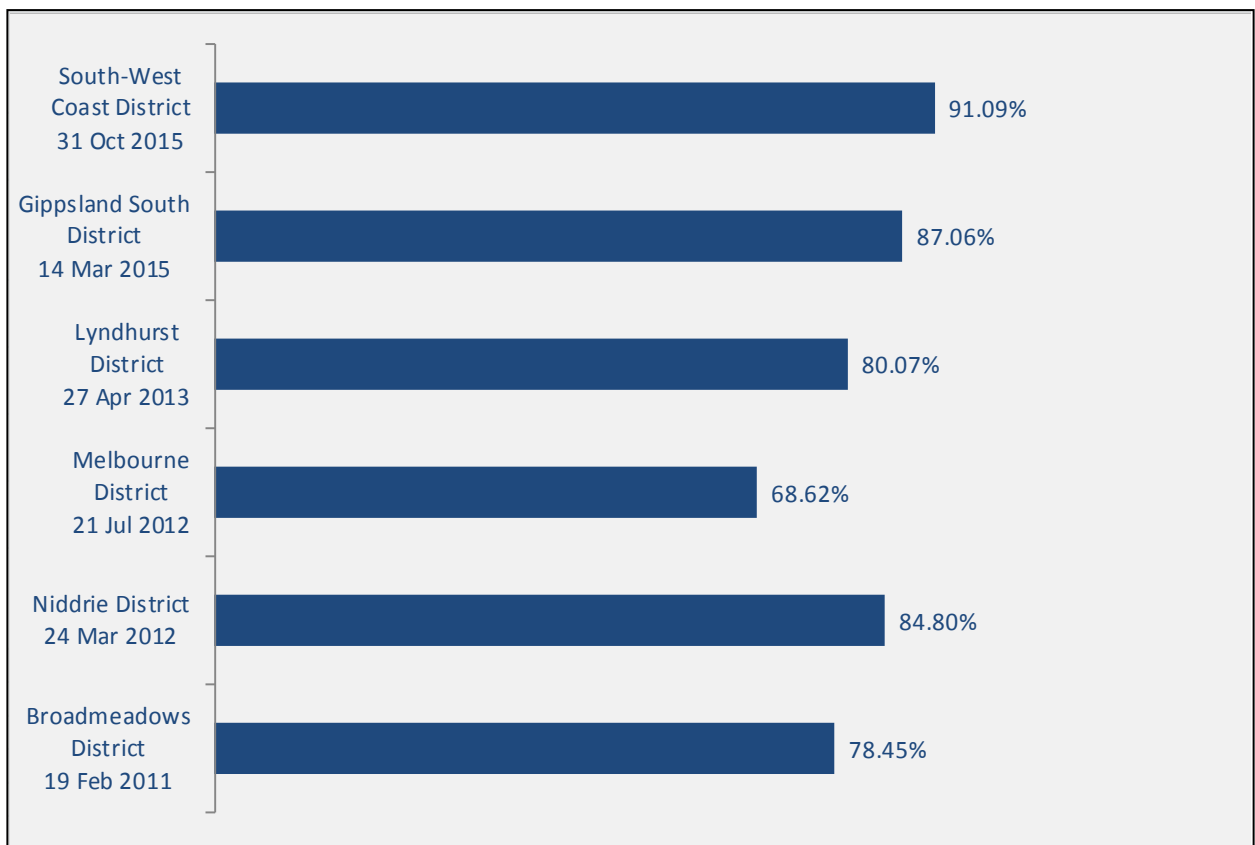
Informal votes at Victorian State by-elections 2011–15 (% votes)

District	%
South-West Coast District 31 Oct 2015	6.24%
Gippsland South District 14 March 2015	5.51%
Lyndhurst District 27 Apr 2013	9.45%
Melbourne District 21 July 2012	9.34%
Niddrie District 24 March 2012	11.48%
Broadmeadows District 19 Feb 2011	9.50%
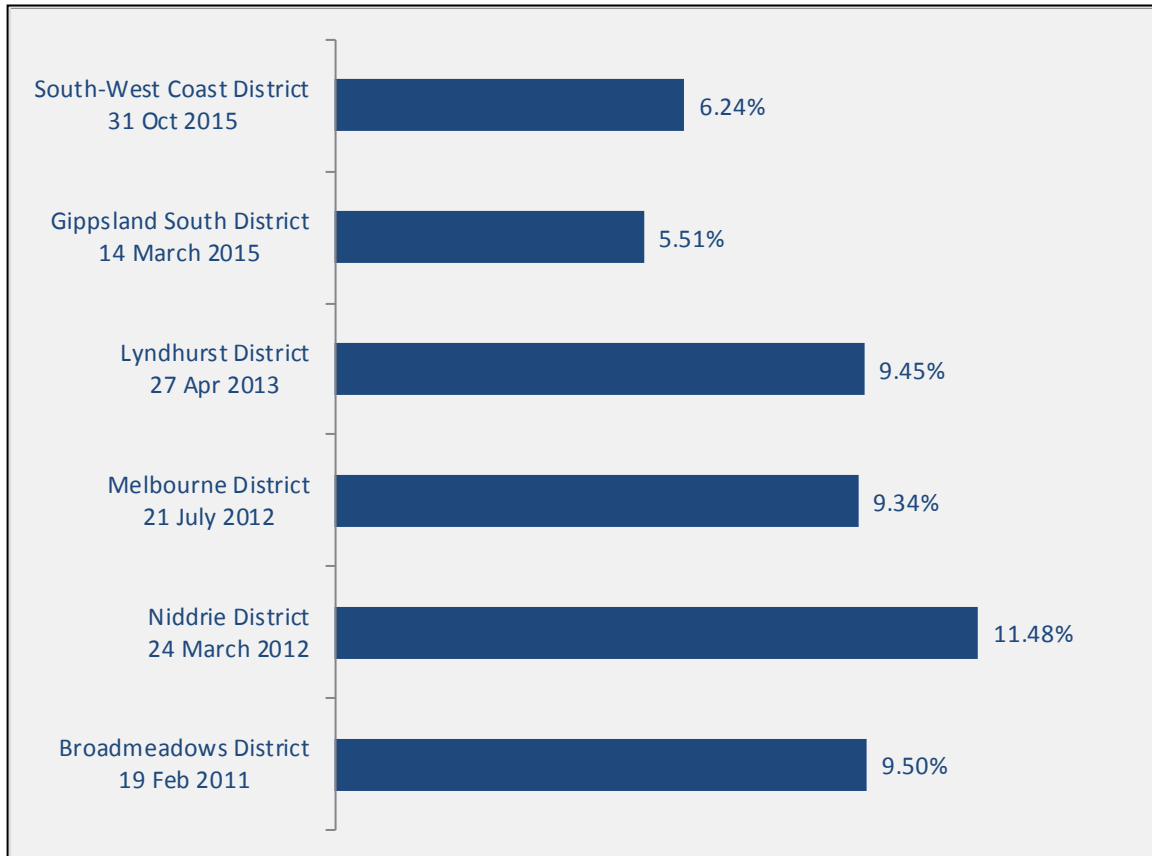
Votes cast prior to Election Day

Postal votes	2,423	5.87%
Early votes	20,152	48.80%
Total cast before election day	22,575	54.67%
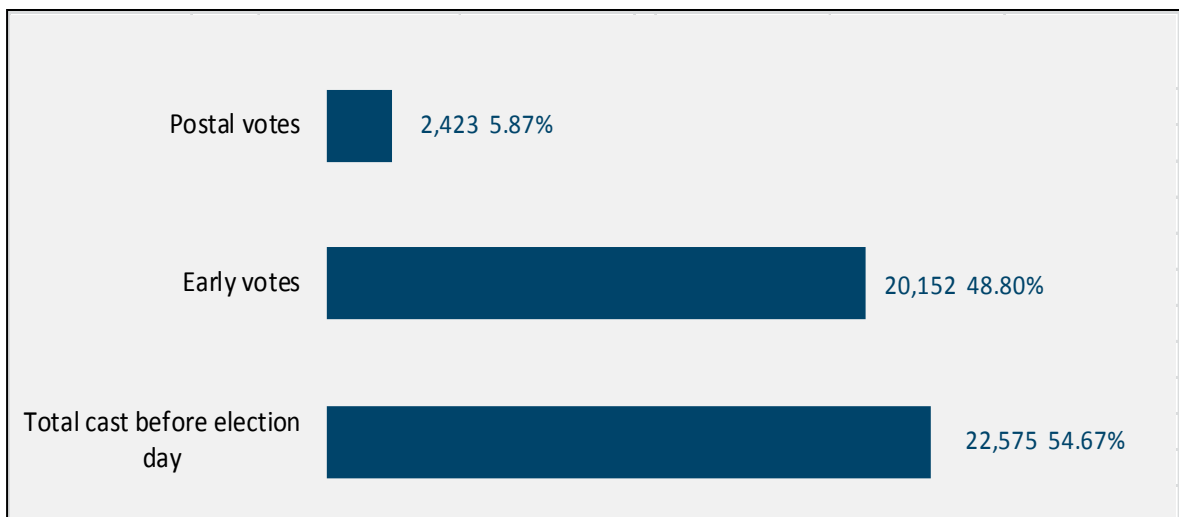
2. Background

The writ

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly issued a writ for the by-election for South-West Coast District on 17 September 2015. The writ set out the timetable for the by-election.

Election timeline

Issue of the writ	Thursday 17 September
Nominations opened	9.00 am, Friday 18 September
Close of Roll	8.00 pm, Thursday 24 September
Close of Nominations (party candidates)	12 noon, Thursday 1 October
Close of Nominations (independent candidates)	12 noon, Friday 2 October
Early voting commenced	4 pm, Friday 2 October
Registration of how-to-vote-cards opened	Monday 5 October
Registration of how-to-vote cards closed	12 noon, Friday 23 October
Last chance to apply for a postal vote	6.00 pm, Thursday 29 October
Early voting closed	6.00 pm, Friday 30 October
ELECTION DAY VOTING	8.00 am - 6.00 pm, Saturday 31 October
Results	From 6.00 pm, Saturday 31 October
Last day for return of writ	Friday 20 November

Preliminary arrangements with other agencies

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to ensure that any matters relating to how-to-vote cards could be heard within a 24 hour period. The VEC thanks VCAT for its support.

Victorian Government Solicitor's Office

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office (VGSO) to have a senior legal advisor on standby 24 hours a day during the election period, to ensure that any matters were dealt with in a timely fashion. The VEC thanks the VGSO for its support.

Victoria Police

The VEC contacted the Chief Commissioner of Police to request a discreet police presence at all voting centres during the hours of voting on election day. The VEC provided a full list of all voting venues to Victoria Police to assist with this request. The VEC formally records its appreciation for the support received from the Chief Commissioner and Victoria Police.

Supreme Court

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Supreme Court to ensure that a Practice Court and presiding judge would be available to hear any applications for injunctions if the need arose on election day. The VEC thanks the Supreme Court for its support.

The former member

The Honourable Denis Napthine, MP, represented the District of South-West Coast from 2002 to 2015, and the District of Portland from 1988 to 2002. Dr Napthine was the 47th Premier of Victoria, from 6 March 2013 to 4 December 2014.

Previously, Dr Napthine was leader of the Liberal Party from October 1999 to August 2002. Ministerial portfolios held by Dr Napthine include Youth and Community Services (1996-1999), Treasurer (October 1999), and Ports, Regional Cities, Racing and Major Projects (2010-2013).

Profile of the District

The District includes part of the Western District, one of the most fertile dairying and pastoral areas in Victoria. Industries include the manufacture of cheese, butter and other dairy products, vegetable growing, cattle and sheep farming, and tourism. The largest towns in the District are Warrnambool and Portland. The Lower Glenelg National Park and coastal towns attract large numbers of tourists.

Map of the District

South-West Coast District
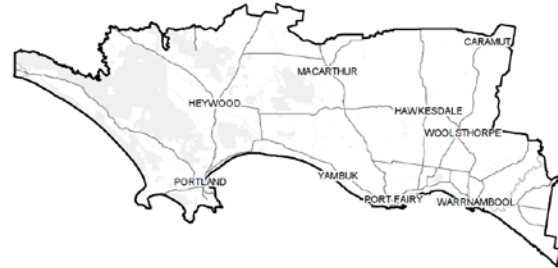
Historical pattern of the District

2002-present	Liberal

Past Results for South-West Coast District

2014 State election results

Elected member	NAPTHINE, Denis
Total enrolment	44,766
Formal votes:	40,782
Informal votes:	1,715 (4.04%)
Total votes:	42,497 (94.93%)

Candidate	First preference votes	%
CAMPBELL, Thomas Australian Greens	3,993	9.79%
McCLUSKEY, Michael	654	1.60%
MOORE, Steven Australian Country Alliance	945	2.32%
SMITH, Linda K	449	1.10%
REEKIE, Roy Australian Labor Party	11,507	28.22%
NAPTHINE, Denis Liberal	23,234	56.97%

2010 State election results

Elected member	NAPTHINE, Denis
Total Enrolment	43,344
Formal votes:	39,196
Informal votes:	1,644 (4.03%)
Total votes:	40,840 (94.22%)

Candidate	First preference votes	%
NAPTHINE, Denis Liberal	19,316	49.28%
HOWARD, Jack Greens	3,228	8.24%
HABERFIELD, Craig Family First	1,081	2.76%
HERBERTSON, John ALP	9,658	24.64%
ARSCOTT, Tony CA	1,394	3.56%
PURCELL, James	4,519	11.53%

3. Participation

The VEC uses three measures to determine participation in the electoral system:

- enrolment: the proportion of the eligible voting population that enrols to vote
- turnout: the degree to which those who are enrolled actually vote in elections
- informality of voting: the degree to which those who vote cast an informal vote

Enrolment

At the close of roll, there were 45,331 electors enrolled, 565 more than at the close of roll for the 2014 State election.

See Section 5 of this report for information about enrolment.

Turnout

The turnout for the South-West Coast District by-election was 91.09%. This participation rate is considered satisfactory, particularly since the Australian Labor Party did not endorse a candidate for the by-election. In fact, the voter turnout rate was the highest at a State by-election since the 1983 Warrnambool by-election.

Informal voting

The informality rate of 6.24% was an increase on the informality rate of 4.04% for South-West Coast District at the 2014 State election.

The informality rate for South-West Coast District is lower than the average informality rate of 9.06% for the five preceding State by-elections.

An analysis of informal voting at the South-West Coast District by-election is included in Appendix D.

4. Election Personnel

Election Manager

Mr Ian Sadler was appointed the Election Manager for the District. The Election Manager was responsible for:

- staffing the election office
- receiving candidate nominations
- conducting the draw for ballot paper positions
- dealing with electoral enquiries
- appointing voting centre managers and election officials
- training voting centre managers
- receipt of how-to-vote cards for registration by the VEC
- supervising voting, and receiving and recording results
- declaring the election.

The Election Manager was assisted by VEC staff and other election officials.

Support for Election Manager

Mr Russell Isaac and Mr Neil Bridge were appointed as Assistant Election Managers and Ms Therese Camm was appointed Election Support Officer.

The VEC supported the Election Manager through the provision of:

- advice on election management
- office equipment and furniture, computers, telephones, ballot boxes, voting screens and voting centre furniture
- help desk support and assistance for the VEC's election management system and with other technical issues
- electoral materials, including voting centre and office forms and manuals
- a voter information campaign for the by-election
- assistance with public and media relations
- netbooks for use in early and mobile voting centres.

Recruitment and training

A total of 205 staff, including an Election Manager, two Assistant Election Managers and an Election Support Officer were appointed for the by-election.

Of these, 108 were appointed as election officials at voting centres on election day. Three election officials were appointed as election liaison officers responsible for ensuring processes and procedures were being followed at election day voting centres.

The Election Manager appointed 90 election casuals to assist with early voting at the early voting centres, mobile voting, and administrative duties including counts conducted at the election office.

A three-hour training session was conducted for the voting centre managers, assistant voting centre managers, early voting centre managers and election liaison officers. The Election Manager and Assistant Election Managers had previous recent election experience and did not require additional training.

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5. Services to Electors

Enrolment

The day after the issue of the writ for South-West Coast District, the VEC sent written notification of the by-election to every household in the electorate. The letter advised that, since a by-election would be held soon, eligible people who were not on the electoral roll should enrol, and those who had recently moved should update their enrolment details. This provided four working days for electors to ensure that they were correctly enrolled and eligible to vote in the by-election.

Enrolment advertisements were placed in both major daily papers (see Appendix C for the advertising schedule and sample communication products).

Electors were able to update their enrolment or enrol on the VEC website (vec.vic.gov.au). Printed enrolment forms were also available from the VEC website, Australia Post offices, Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) divisional offices and by contacting the VEC election office.

The VEC head office and District election office remained open until 8.00 pm on Thursday, 24 September. The VEC also made arrangements with the Wannon AEC divisional office at Warrnambool to remain open until 8.00 pm on Thursday, 24 September.

A total of 540 enrolment transactions occurred between the issue of the writ and the close of roll.

	Online Enrolment	Direct Enrolments	AEC Txns
New to Roll	29	26	71
Change of Address	70	219	102
Reinstatement	2	11	10

At the close of roll, there were 45,331 electors enrolled, 565 more than at the close of roll for the 2014 State election. Of these electors, 414 were general postal voters (GPVs). GPVs automatically receive postal ballot material at the time of an election.

Services for electors from non-English speaking backgrounds

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census, English was stated as the only language spoken at home by 93% of people usually resident in South-West Coast District.

Electors who were not fluent in English were able to telephone the VEC for information in other languages. Additionally, electors could access voting instructions translated into 21 languages (including English) placed inside each voting screen.

Accessibility of voting centres

All voting centre premises are rated for wheelchair accessibility using a rating assessment tool developed by the VEC, and ratings are included in advertisements, EasyVote letters and on the VEC website.

A by-election was held for Polwarth District concurrently with the South-West Coast by-election. Electors voting early could do so at any early voting centre in either District. Two early voting centres were established in South-West Coast District and one in Polwarth District. Early voting was also available at the VEC's office at 530 Collins Street, Melbourne.

The early voting centres located within South-West Coast District and at the VEC office were all assessed as Assisted Wheelchair Access (AWA), mainly due to issues with accessible parking or building access.

The early voting centre located within Polwarth District was rated No Wheelchair Access (NWA), mainly due to the distance between the disabled car park and the entrance to the early voting centre.

Of the 34 election day voting centres, two were rated as Fully Wheelchair Accessible (FWA), 18 were rated as Assisted Wheelchair Access (AWA) and the remaining 14 were rated as No Wheelchair Accessibility (NWA). To assist voters, a brief description of accessibility limitations was included on the VEC's website for venues rated AWA or NWA.

Voting before Election Day

Early voting

Electors unable to vote on election day had the opportunity to vote early at early voting centres established within the South-West Coast and Polwarth Districts. Additionally, electors in Melbourne during the early voting period could vote at the VEC's office.

The early voting centres were located at:

- Colac - 310-312 Murray Street
- Warrnambool – 171A Liebig Street
- Portland – Shop 2, 103-111 Percy Street
- VEC Melbourne – Level 11, 530 Collins Street.

Early voting centres were open between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday from Monday 5 October to Friday 30 October 2015. Extended opening hours were available on Saturday 24 October and Thursday 29 October.

A total of 20,152 electors (48.80% of total voters) voted early, in person, for the by-election, compared with 19,066 (44.86% of total voters) for the District at the 2014 State election.

Mobile voting

A total of 976 electors took advantage of mobile voting, with a mobile voting team visiting 19 venues in the weeks prior to election day.

Voting interstate and overseas

Early voting services were provided at eight interstate locations and one overseas location (London).

A total of 25 early votes were cast outside Victoria for the South-West Coast District by-election. This compares with 118 for the District for the 2014 State election.

Postal voting

Electors unable to attend a voting centre on election day could apply for a postal vote. Postal vote applications were available for download at vec.vic.gov.au, and could be obtained at any post office in South-West Coast or Polwarth District, or by calling the VEC.

To help ensure the efficient delivery of ballot packs, postal vote applications were processed on the day they were received by the VEC. As postal vote applications may be received up until 6.00 pm on the Thursday prior to the election, the VEC contacted anyone whose application was received on that day to advise them that their vote had to be postmarked on or before election day to be included in the count, and to inform them of other available voting options.

A total of 414 ballot packs were mailed to General Postal Voters and 2,706 election-specific postal vote applications were processed. Eleven postal votes were issued outside the State for the by-election. This compares with 6 at the 2014 State election.

In total, 2,423 postal votes (5.87% of total votes) were counted for the by-election.

Voting on Election Day

As the by-election for Polwarth District was held on the same timelines as the South-West Coast District by-election, electors could vote at any of the 75 voting centres open across the two districts on election day. South-West Coast electors voting in Polwarth District had to cast an absent vote. There were 149 absent votes cast for South-West Coast at the by-election.

Provisional votes

People who were not on the roll but who claimed to be entitled to enrol and vote, were able to cast a provisional vote. They are required to show a proof of identification such as a driver licence or learner permit, or to nominate a service provider to be contacted for identity verification. Votes cast in this manner are classified as 'provisional' votes until the person's enrolment details can be verified.

A total of 339 provisional votes (69.9% of the 485 provisional votes received) were admitted to the count. Most of the excluded provisional votes were rejected because the voters were enrolled in districts other than South-West Coast.

6. Services to registered political parties and candidates

Eleven candidates nominated for the South-West Coast District by-election compared with six candidates in the 2014 State election.

Candidate nomination forms were available by calling the election office or VEC directly. They were also available for download from the VEC's website. The VEC provided independent candidates with the facility to complete a nomination form online prior to printing and submitting it to the election manager.

Parties nominated their candidates directly with the VEC and the independent candidates nominated through the election office.

The VEC provided a handbook explaining aspects of electoral law directly relating to candidates. Candidates also received a VEC Candidates' Kit containing:

- a how-to-vote card declaration
- an 'Appointment of Scrutineer' form
- an Electoral Roll Confidentiality Agreement
- a list of voting centres in the District (and early voting centres)
- estimated votes and the number of issuing points at each voting centre
- Election Manager contact details
- a nomination form
- a District fact sheet

After nominating and upon request, candidates were provided with a copy of the electoral roll for the District, via the VEC's new secure data exchange, for the purposes of campaigning – in compliance with section 33(6) of the *Electoral Act 2002*.

By-election briefings for parties and candidates

Registered political parties were invited to attend individual briefing sessions before the close of nominations. Three parties participated.

Prospective independent candidates were invited to attend a briefing session conducted on 23 September 2015 at the election office. One prospective independent candidate attended.

Registration of how-to-vote cards

How-to-vote cards that are distributed within 400 metres of a voting centre on election day must be registered with the VEC. Political parties were required to register how-to-vote cards directly with the VEC. Independent candidates could submit their cards with the Election Manager for registration by the VEC.

A how-to-vote card checklist was provided in each candidate's handbook, to ensure that all cards were correct, authorised and properly registered.

A total of 11 how-to-vote cards were registered for the South-West Coast District by-election (see Figure 1). As required by legislation, registered how-to-vote cards were published on the VEC website.

Party/Candidate/Stakeholder	# HTVCs
AUSTRALIAN GREENS	1
ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY	1
THE NATIONALS	2
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	1
VAN DE HOEF, Rodney	1
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	1
LIBERAL PARTY	1
MARSH, Allan	1
REEKIE, Roy	1
McCLUSKEY, Michael	1

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF HOW-TO-VOTE CARDS REGISTERED, SOUTH-WEST COAST DISTRICT BY-ELECTION 2015

7. Communication services

The South-West Coast District by-election communication campaign consisted of direct mail, newspaper advertising, a telephone enquiry service, proactive media relations, Facebook and Twitter posts, and information and services provided via the VEC website.

Direct mail

The VEC distributed 28,690 enrolment information letters to households in South-West Coast District from 18 September 2015.

An EasyVote letter was sent to each elector on the roll (excluding General Postal Voters). The EasyVote letter provided information about early voting, postal voting, overseas and interstate voting and Election Day voting arrangements. It also provided the location and accessibility rating of all voting centres, and a suggestion that the elector take the letter to the voting centre to help streamline the voting experience.

A total of 44,917 EasyVote letters were lodged with Australia Post for distribution on 1 October 2015.

Newspaper advertising

A series of advertisements that met the requirements set out in the *Electoral Act 2002* appeared in local newspapers, as well as in *The Age* and *Herald Sun* throughout the election period (see Appendix C for placement details and advertisement samples).

Telephone enquiry service

The election office operated a dedicated telephone enquiry service from 17 September. Calls to the office peaked each time a mailout occurred, with electors calling to:
- check enrolment details
- ask for advice about what to do if they could not attend a voting centre on election day and
- enquire about the location of election day voting centres.

Email information

Electors could also email the VEC with requests and queries via its info@vec.vic.gov.au email address.

The main types of queries received during the election period related to:
- early voting centre locations
- overseas voting, and

- employment.

The VEC received a relatively low number of emails (19) through its info@vec.vic.gov.au email address.

Website

From the day the writ was issued, the VEC website provided information about the by-election for electors in the District, candidates and the general public. Traffic to the website peaked on election day, with just over 5,000 page views of the primary by-election information page. There were 863 sessions on the registered how-to-vote cards and then 10,342 sessions looking at results on election night and the following two days.

Electors were able to update their enrolment details online via the VEC's website. Online information detailed voting obligations and options for electors if they could not vote on election day. During the by-election period, around 1,500 postal vote applications were downloaded directly from the site, and a total of 1,400 sessions involved the download of the list of voting centre locations (including interstate and overseas).

During the entire period, the most frequently accessed content was – in order of user sessions: results; how-to-vote cards; the election timeline; and voting centre locations. Candidate information and nomination forms were also available on the website.

Results were made available progressively on the VEC website after 6.00 pm on election night.

Social media

Facebook and Twitter were used by the VEC to help disseminate key election information and updates throughout the election.

When compared to the 2014 State election, social media activity was very quiet throughout the by-election.

The VEC posted a number of standard Tweets during the campaign. Public posts regarding the by-election were the main activity seen on Twitter for the South-West Coast by-election.

There were only 73 posts to Twitter using the generally accepted tag #SWCVotes and 23 posts to Twitter using the less popular tag #swcoastvotes. Visits to the VEC's Facebook page were only marginally higher than when no election is being conducted.

Media relations

The VEC distributed five media releases to local and State-wide media outlets throughout the election period. The releases provided key electoral information, including the deadline for enrolment, the opening of candidate nominations, the final candidate list, the opening of the early voting period and voting options for South-West Coast District electors. A media advisory was also issued, offering interested media outlets the opportunity to record footage on election day.

The VEC handled 53 media enquiries relating to the concurrent South-West Coast and Polwarth by-elections from several local and seven State-wide media outlets. The majority of queries concerned the timing of the by-elections and the four-week early voting period, early voting figures, registration of interest to film on election day, and availability of results. In addition, the VEC sought correction of an error regarding the potential date of the by-elections published in the *Warrnambool Standard.*

On election night, media results data files were made available for download from the VEC website.

8. Complaints

The VEC received three formal complaints about the South-West Coast District by-election. One complaint related to the process of gaining employment, another to the length of the early voting period and a third to concerns surrounding the recycling of how-to-vote cards. All complaints were managed in accordance with the VEC process and where relevant, appropriate response/action was taken.

9. Counting the votes

After the 6.00 pm close of voting, the first-preference count took place in the voting centres and the results were phoned through to the election office.

A two-candidate-preferred (2CP) count, to distribute preferences to the two candidates considered most likely to be in the lead after the distribution of preferences, was conducted following each count of first-preference votes. The VEC had selected the Liberals and The Nationals for the 2CP count. It became apparent on election night that the leading two candidates were the Liberal candidate and the independent candidate, Mr Roy Reekie. The VEC adjusted the original 2CP to reflect this, with all votes for other candidates distributed to the Liberal candidate and

to Mr Reekie according to the preferences on the ballot papers.

Postal and early votes were counted in the election office on election night in the same count order as in the voting centres. Provisional votes were checked on the Monday after election day and those entitled to be admitted were counted.

A recheck was conducted on all ballot papers on the Monday following the election. A preference distribution was conducted to determine the result of the election.

10. Declaration of result, return of the writ

Mrs Roma Britnell (Liberal) was declared the successful candidate on Thursday 5 November 2015.

The writ was returned to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on 9 November 2015.

11. Actual cost

At 18 March 2016 the actual direct cost incurred by the VEC in conducting the South-West Coast District by-election was $343,601. This includes direct expenses and obligations related to salaries of temporary election personnel, advertising and associated infrastructure including office accommodation, transport and office requisites. These costs exclude the election entitlement payments shown in Figure 2.

12. Refund of nomination deposits

Upon nominating for an election, candidates (or their party) must provide a deposit of $350. This deposit is refunded if the candidate obtains at least 4% of the first preference vote or is elected. Deposits were refunded on 7 December 2015.

Of the eleven candidates, five were refunded their deposit, and six candidates forfeited the deposit with the funds being forwarded to consolidated revenue.

13. Electoral entitlements

An amount of $1.668 per vote was payable to political parties and independent candidates for this election where candidates obtained at least 4% of the first-preference votes.

An entitlement existed for four party candidates and one independent candidate. All the entitlements were paid by 15 March 2016.

Registered Political Parties	Entitlement
Liberal Party	$25,830.65
Australian Country Party	$6,680.34
The Nationals	$9,309.11
Australian Greens	$4,371.01
Total	$46,191.11
Independent Candidates	Entitlement
Reekie, Roy	$10,862.02
Total electoral entitlements	$57,053.13

FIGURE 2. ELECTORAL ENTITLEMENTS, SOUTH-WEST COAST BY-ELECTION 2015

14. Enforcement of compulsory voting

Postal vote declarations received too late for the count, and elector information reports completed at voting centres on election day — detailing elector excuses for not voting – were processed through the compulsory voting module of the VEC's Election Management System during December 2015.

The first stage of the non-voter follow-up process is conducted under Part 9, Division 2 of the *Electoral Act 2002*. Subsequent follow-up of electors who do not respond to the 'Apparent Failure to Vote' notice, or who provide an invalid response, is conducted under the *Infringements Act 2006.*

Electors who are deemed to be non-voters may receive two further notices from the VEC.

- An Infringement Notice providing notification of liability for a penalty amount (currently set at $76)

- A penalty reminder notice that includes costs as well as the original penalty.

Payment of penalties may be by cheque, money order, cash, via the internet using BPAY, or at any Australia Post outlet using the PostBillPay facility.

The first stage of compulsory voting follow-up for the South-West Coast by-election commenced on 15 January 2016, with 2,353 Apparent Failure to Vote notices mailed.

On 2 March 2016, 1,955 Infringement notices were mailed to apparent non-voters who either did not respond to the Apparent Failure to Vote notice, or provided an invalid excuse.

It is anticipated that enforcement of compulsory voting provisions will be completed by early July 2016.

Further details of enforcement of compulsory voting provisions at the by-election will be included in the VEC's Annual Report.

15. Appendices

Appendix A:
Detailed voting statistics

Enrolment:	45,331	
Formal votes:	38,716	
Informal votes:	2,578	(6.24% of total votes)
Total votes:	41,294	(91.09% of electors enrolled)

	VAN DE HOEF, Rodney	BRITNELL, Roma LIBERAL	REEKIE, Roy	DOUKAS, Jim AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	NEOH, Michael THE NATIONALS	SMITH, Pete	CAMPBELL, Thomas AUSTRALIAN GREENS	MARSH, Swampy	GAMBLE, Jennifer ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY	LEN, Lillian AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	McCLUSKEY, Michael	Informal Votes	Total Votes Polled
Allansford	4	193	81	121	87	13	24	18	1	12	9	42	605
Bolwarra	2	102	43	2	20	7	23	6	3	8	2	16	234
Caramut	3	43	9	4	7	1	5	1	0	2	1	4	80
Condah	4	117	20	9	9	1	8	5	0	5	0	6	184
Gorae West	1	34	7	1	2	1	4	2	1	1	0	3	57
Grassmere	0	22	8	16	13	6	1	3	3	4	1	6	83
Hawkesdale	3	109	19	70	16	6	14	8	3	2	1	14	265
Heywood	11	356	72	40	63	7	47	16	7	6	8	72	705
Koroit	7	356	163	219	123	25	76	33	13	29	20	68	1132
Macarthur	4	175	23	42	35	4	19	6	1	2	1	22	334
Mailors Flat	4	82	35	92	35	3	8	13	0	7	4	21	304
Naringal	0	69	4	25	10	2	2	4	0	9	2	9	136
Narrawong	1	66	40	8	16	4	22	3	0	5	0	11	176
Nelson	3	90	4	6	7	1	11	3	1	1	2	6	135
Orford	0	37	11	24	5	1	0	3	1	1	1	5	89
Panmure	3	54	24	31	17	5	10	5	0	2	1	13	165
Port Fairy	15	559	262	125	166	35	212	46	21	14	15	108	1578
Portland	11	327	140	40	74	21	87	19	9	24	7	76	835
Portland South	18	284	140	22	87	18	76	18	13	15	11	55	757

	VAN DE HOEF, Rodney	BRITNELL, Roma LIBERAL	REEKIE, Roy	DOUKAS, Jim AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	NEOH, Michael THE NATIONALS	SMITH, Pete	CAMPBELL, Thomas AUSTRALIAN GREENS	MARSH, Swampy	GAMBLE, Jennifer ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY	LEN, Lillian AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	McCLUSKEY, Michael	Informal Votes	Total Votes Polled
Portland South West TAFE	6	200	89	6	42	13	56	18	9	14	3	37	493
Purnim	1	49	15	31	10	5	7	4	1	1	3	7	134
Tyrendarra	1	66	11	10	7	1	9	0	1	2	0	5	113
Wangoom	4	74	38	24	31	8	8	9	0	2	7	14	219
Warrnambool	42	701	485	332	483	30	218	80	34	44	36	206	2691
Warrnambool - Tower Square	9	236	158	45	119	21	48	15	7	16	8	48	730
Warrnambool Central	7	105	107	41	62	14	43	15	8	7	4	27	440
Warrnambool East	15	269	238	82	170	21	100	27	25	13	6	64	1030
Warrnambool Education Centre	9	187	179	65	70	6	62	15	6	3	8	44	654
Warrnambool North	32	604	368	173	303	40	121	45	25	39	32	122	1904
Warrnambool South West	14	127	161	47	91	9	50	23	4	5	5	44	580
Warrnambool West	8	191	112	69	132	10	58	27	8	9	13	44	681
Woodford	2	91	58	49	34	4	17	6	0	3	4	11	279
Woolsthorpe	1	77	43	46	21	5	7	8	1	0	4	17	230
Yambuk	3	84	21	28	14	8	11	9	0	0	4	14	196
Total Ordinary Votes	248	6136	3188	1945	2381	356	1464	513	206	307	223	1261	18228
Absent	1	61	18	20	22	2	12	4	1	2	2	4	149
Early Vote	366	8038	2981	1807	2897	298	1249	494	230	234	347	1211	20152
Postal Vote	50	1135	296	194	226	35	178	112	42	31	42	82	2423
Marked As Voted	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Provisional	12	115	29	38	54	4	35	14	11	5	2	20	339
Total Declaration Votes	429	9350	3324	2060	3200	339	1474	624	284	272	393	1317	23066
TOTAL ALL VOTE TYPES	677	15486	6512	4005	5581	695	2938	1137	490	579	616	2578	41294
Percentage of Formal Vote Polled By Candidate	1.75%	40.00%	16.82%	10.34%	14.42%	1.80%	7.59%	2.94%	1.27%	1.50%	1.59%		

Appendix B:
Distribution of preference votes

Total valid first preference votes polled for all candidates:	38,716
Number of votes required to constitute an absolute majority on first count:	19,359
Number of informal votes:	2,578

Candidates' Names (in ballot paper order)	VAN DE HOEF, Rodney	BRITNELL, Roma	REEKIE, Roy	DOUKAS, Jim	NEOH, Michael.	SMITH, Pete	CAMPBELL, Thomas	MARSH, Swampy	GAMBLE, Jennifer	Len, Lillian	McCLUSKEY, Michael	TOTAL
Total first preference votes recorded for each candidate	677	15486	6512	4005	5581	695	2938	1137	490	579	616	38716
Transfer of 490 ballot papers of GAMBLE, Jennifer (1st excluded candidate)	28	44	27	53	31	11	166	51		48	31	490
Progressive Total	705	15530	6539	4058	5612	706	3104	1188		627	647	38716
Transfer of 627 ballot papers of LEN, Lillian (2nd excluded candidate)	19	125	23	245	85	17	31	25			57	627
Progressive Total	724	15655	6562	4303	5697	723	3135	1213			704	38716
Transfer of 704 ballot papers of McCLUSKEY, Michael (3rd excluded candidate)	54	93	75	90	65	66	83	178				704
Progressive Total	778	15748	6637	4393	5762	789	3218	1391				38716
Transfer of 778 ballot papers of VAN DE HOEF, Rodney (4th excluded candidate)		362	178	72	44	37	36	49				778
Progressive Total		16110	6815	4465	5806	826	3254	1440				38716
Transfer of 826 ballot papers of SMITH, Pete (5th excluded candidate)		156	149	167	112		64	178				826
Progressive Total		16266	6964	4632	5918		3318	1618				38716
Transfer of 1618 ballot papers of MARSH, Swampy (6th excluded candidate)		253	433	346	217		369					1618
Progressive Total		16519	7397	4978	6135		3687					38716
Transfer of 3687 ballot papers of CAMPBELL, Thomas (7th excluded candidate)		418	2043	443	783							3687
Progressive Total		16937	9440	5421	6918							38716
Transfer of 5421 ballot papers of DOUKAS, Jim (8th excluded candidate)		1494	2564		1363							5421
Progressive Total		18431	12004		8281							38716
Transfer of 8281 ballot papers of NEOH, Michael (9th excluded candidate)		5024	3257									8281
FINAL TOTAL		23455	15261									38716

BRITNELL, Roma (Liberal) elected at 9th exclusion

Appendix C: Communication products

Advertisements

Advertisement	Outlets	Publication date(s)
Issue of the writ	The Age (combined), Herald Sun (combined)	18 September 2015
Early voting	Hamilton Spectator, Portland Observer, Port Fairy Moyne Gazette, Warrnambool Standard (combined)	5–10 October 2015
How to vote on election day	Port Fairy Moyne Gazette, Portland Observer	29–30 October 2015
Vote today	The Age (combined), Herald Sun (combined), Warrnambool Standard, Hamilton Spectator	31 October 2015
Result and return of the writ	The Age (public notices), Herald Sun (public notices)	11 November 2015

Note: 'combined' refers to advertisements that reference both Polwarth District and South-West Coast District by-elections.

Polwarth District & South-West Coast District
State by-elections

I have received writs from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Telmo Languiller, MP, issued on Thursday 17 September 2015, for the election of one member of the Legislative Assembly for Polwarth District and one member of the Legislative Assembly for South-West Coast District.

The writs specify the following dates for both by-elections:

Close of roll:
8.00 pm Thursday 24 September

Nominations close:
12 noon Friday 2 October

Election day:
Saturday 31 October

Return of the writ:
On or before Friday 20 November

W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner

Polwarth District

South-West Coast District

Voting

Make sure you're enrolled to vote

You are already enrolled for either the Polwarth District by-election or South-West Coast District by-election if you're on the State or Federal roll for your present address within the area shown on the maps below.

If you're an Australian citizen, aged 18 years or over and are not enrolled, you must enrol to vote immediately.

If you have recently moved or changed your name, you must update your enrolment by **8.00 pm on Thursday 24 September**.

How do I check if I'm on the roll?

You can check your enrolment details to see if they are current at **vec.vic.gov.au** or by calling 1300 805 478.

Enrolling or updating your details online

To enrol or update your details online, just visit **vec.vic.gov.au**—there is no need for paper forms.

If you are enrolling for the first time, you will need a driver licence number, Australian passport number or a person who is already on the electoral roll in Victoria to confirm your identity.

For more information please visit **vec.vic.gov.au** or call 1300 805 478.

Enrolling or updating using a paper form

Paper enrolment forms are available at any post office, Centrelink or Australian Electoral Commission office. Alternatively, visit **vec.vic.gov.au** to download a printable form.

Enrolling is compulsory

Enrolling and keeping your enrolment details up-to-date are compulsory.

However, if you have never enrolled or have let your details lapse, you will not be penalised if you enrol for this by-election.

When do I vote?

Election day is *Saturday 31 October*.

Details of where to vote and other voting options will be available shortly and mailed to enrolled electors within Polwarth District and South-West Coast District, listed online at **vec.vic.gov.au** and advertised in local newspapers.

Candidates

Nominations

Registered political parties must nominate candidates at the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne. Nominations close at 12 noon on Thursday 1 October. Late nominations cannot be accepted.

Candidates not endorsed by a registered political party must nominate at the election office with the Election Manager, who will supply a Candidate Information Kit including a nomination form.

Non-party candidates can use the Candidate Helper at **vec.vic.gov.au** to pre-complete their nomination form.

Non-party candidate nominations close at 12 noon on Friday 2 October. Late nominations cannot be accepted.

An information session for prospective non-party candidates will be held at the election office. Call the Election Manager for more information on nominating.

Polwarth District

Election Office: 310–12 Murray St, Colac

Election Manager: Elizabeth Reeves
Contact: (03) 5231 1134

South-West Coast District

Election Office: 171A Liebig St, Warrnambool

Election Manager: Ian Sadler
Contact: (03) 5561 3357

How-to-vote cards

If a person or organisation intends to distribute how-to-vote cards on election day, Saturday 31 October, the cards must be registered by the VEC.

Registered how-to-vote cards are the only form of printed electoral material that may be distributed within 400 metres of a voting centre on election day.

The period for submitting how-to-vote cards for registration is from Monday 5 October to 12 noon on Friday 23 October.

Organisations or individuals other than registered political parties can submit how-to-vote cards to the Election Manager for each District or to the VEC.

Registered political parties must submit their how-to-vote cards for registration to the VEC at Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne.

How-to-vote cards submitted for registration after 12 noon on Friday 23 October cannot be accepted.

Voting is compulsory for all enrolled electors

@electionsvic   /electionsvic   131 832   vec.vic.gov.au   Victorian Electoral Commission VEC

Authorised by W Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Early voting advertising

Early voting
South-West Coast District by-election

Can't get to a voting centre on Saturday 31 October? Check your early voting options.

Vote in person

Vote between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm weekdays until Friday 30 October at:

- Shop 2/103–111 Percy Street, Portland **AWA**
- 171A Liebig Street, Warrnambool **AWA**
- 310–12 Murray Street, Colac **NWA**
- VEC, Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne **AWA**

  AWA - Assisted wheelchair access
  NWA - No wheelchair access

Extended early voting hours apply:
- 9.00 am–2.00 pm Saturday 24 October
- 8.30 am–8.00 pm Thursday 29 October

To vote early, you will have to declare that you are unable to attend a voting centre on election day during voting hours.

Vote by post

Get a postal vote application at **vec.vic.gov.au** or any post office within South-West Coast District, or call 131 832.

Complete and return your application immediately to have a ballot pack sent to you.

Going away?

Before you leave
Vote early in person or by post.

While you're away
Vote by post. Or visit an interstate or overseas early voting centre until Friday 30 October.

Check **vec.vic.gov.au** for locations.

Who can vote in this by-election?

Anyone on the State electoral roll for South-West Coast District can vote.

Visit **vec.vic.gov.au** to check your enrolment.

Are you an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and living in South-West Coast District, who has never enrolled? You can enrol and vote on the spot. Just bring one of these documents when you visit a voting centre:

- a driver licence or learner permit
- a council rates notice in your name
- an electricity bill in your name for your current home address
- a current Victorian identification, such as a Proof of Age card.

vec.vic.gov.au   Victorian Electoral Commission **VEC**

Authorised by W Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

How to vote on Election Day advertising

Voting this weekend
South-West Coast District by-election

Who can vote?

Everyone on the State electoral roll for South-West Coast District can cast a vote at any voting centre on election day.*

If you are an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and living in South-West Coast District, who has never enrolled, you can enrol and vote on the spot. Just bring one of these documents when you visit a voting centre:

- a driver licence or learner permit
- a council rates notice in your name
- an electricity bill in your name for your current home address
- a current Victorian identification, such as a Proof of Age card.

How to vote correctly

For your vote to count, you must complete your ballot paper correctly.

Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number **ALL** the other boxes in order of your preference.

You must number every box for your vote to count. Use numbers only.

Candidates

The candidates, in ballot paper order, are:

VAN DE HOEF, Rodney

BRITNELL, Roma
LIBERAL

REEKIE, Roy

DOUKAS, Jim
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY

NEOH, Michael
THE NATIONALS

SMITH, Pete

CAMPBELL, Thomas
AUSTRALIAN GREENS

MARSH, Swampy

GAMBLE, Jennifer
ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY

LEN, Lillian
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS
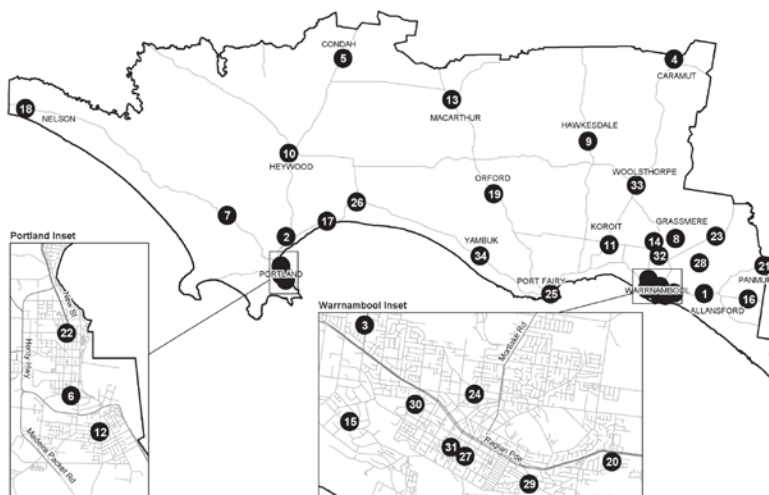
McCLUSKEY, Michael

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory if you were on the electoral roll for South-West Coast District at the close of the roll, 8.00 pm on Thursday 24 September 2015.

Visit vec.vic.gov.au to check your enrolment.

You may be fined if you do not vote.

Election day is this Saturday 31 October
Voting centres will be open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm

1. Allansford Primary School
   Frank Street
   Allansford **AWA**
2. Bolwarra Primary School
   249 Henty Highway
   Bolwarra **NWA**
3. Brauer College
   37 Caramut Road
   Warrnambool **NWA**
4. Caramut War Memorial Hall
   Brown Street
   Caramut **NWA**
5. Condah Hall
   5162 Henty Highway
   Condah **NWA**
6. Drill Hall
   22 Bentinck Street
   Portland **NWA**
7. Gorae West Hall
   Portland-Nelson Road
   Gorae West **NWA**
8. Grassmere Primary School
   16 Ibbs Lane
   Grassmere **AWA**
9. Hawkesdale P-12 College
   corner Mitchell and Spring Streets
   Hawkesdale **AWA**
10. Heywood Community Complex
    Gorrie Street
    Heywood **NWA**
11. Koroit Senior Citizens Rooms
    High Street
    Koroit **AWA**
12. Legacy Lodge
    60 Wellington Road
    Portland **NWA**
13. Macarthur Primary School
    23 Russell Street
    Macarthur **AWA**

14. Mailors Flat Hall
    Warrnambool-Caramut Road
    Mailors Flat **NWA**
15. Merrivale Primary School
    158 Merrivale Drive
    Warrnambool **AWA**
16. Naringal Public Hall
    Cobden-Warrnambool Road
    Naringal **NWA**
17. Narrawong Mechanics Institute
    Princes Highway
    Narrawong **AWA**
18. Nelson Community Centre
    Leake Street
    Nelson **AWA**
19. Orford Memorial Hall
    High Street
    Orford **NWA**
20. Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School
    28 Selby Road
    Warrnambool East **NWA**
21. Panmure Mechanics Institute
    Princes Highway
    Panmure **AWA**
22. Portland South West TAFE
    154 Hurd Street
    Portland **AWA**
23. Purnim Mechanics Hall
    Hopkins Highway
    Purnim **FWA**
24. St Joseph's College Stadium
    70 Botanic Road
    Warrnambool **AWA**
25. St Patrick's Parish Primary School
    9 William Street
    Port Fairy **AWA**
26. Tyrendarra War Memorial Hall
    (Public Hall)
    Princes Highway
    Tyrendarra **AWA**

27. Uniting Church Hall
    115 Koroit Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**
28. Wangoom Memorial Hall
    Wangoom-Warrumyea Road
    Wangoom **NWA**
29. Warrnambool East Primary School
    Ward Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**
30. Warrnambool Special
    Development School
    101 Hyland Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**
31. Warrnambool Temperance Hall
    195 Koroit Street
    Warrnambool **NWA**
32. Woodford Primary School
    8 Victoria Street
    Woodford **NWA**
33. Woolsthorpe Primary School
    12 Manifold Street
    Woolsthorpe **AWA**
34. Yambuk Public Hall
    Princes Highway
    Yambuk **AWA**

FWA - Full wheelchair access
AWA - Assisted wheelchair access
NWA - No wheelchair access

* Please note: You can also vote for the South-West Coast District by-election at any voting centre in the adjoining Polwarth District, which is having a by-election on the same day.

See vec.vic.gov.au for locations. Please prepare for longer waiting times if you vote outside your enrolled district.

For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call (03) 5561 3357

@electionsvic   /electionsvic   vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission **VEC**

Authorised by W Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Vote today advertising

Vote today
South-West Coast District by-election

Who can vote?

Everyone on the State electoral roll for South-West Coast District can cast a vote at any voting centre today.*

If you are an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and living in South-West Coast District, who has never enrolled, you can enrol and vote on the spot. Just bring one of these documents when you visit a voting centre:

- a driver licence or learner permit
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How to vote correctly

For your vote to count, you must complete your ballot paper correctly.

Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number **ALL** the other boxes in order of your preference.

You must number every box for your vote to count. Use numbers only.

Candidates

The candidates, in ballot paper order, are:

VAN DE HOEF, Rodney

BRITNELL, Roma
LIBERAL

REEKIE, Roy

DOUKAS, Jim
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY

NEOH, Michael
THE NATIONALS

SMITH, Pete

CAMPBELL, Thomas
AUSTRALIAN GREENS

MARSH, Swampy

GAMBLE, Jennifer
ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY

LEN, Lillian
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS

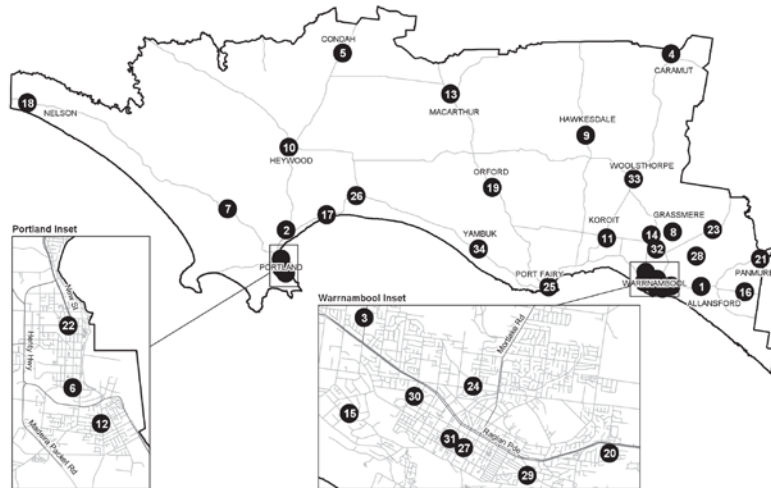McCLUSKEY, Michael

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory if you were on the electoral roll for South-West Coast District at the close of the roll, 8.00 pm on Thursday 24 September 2015.

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Today is election day
Voting centres are open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm

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   Bolwarra **NWA**
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   37 Caramut Road
   Warrnambool **NWA**
4. Caramut War Memorial Hall
   Brown Street
   Caramut **NWA**
5. Condah Hall
   5162 Henty Highway
   Condah **NWA**
6. Drill Hall
   22 Bentinck Street
   Portland **NWA**
7. Gorae West Hall
   Portland-Nelson Road
   Gorae West **NWA**
8. Grassmere Primary School
   16 Ibbs Lane
   Grassmere **AWA**
9. Hawkesdale P-12 College
   corner Mitchell and Spring Streets
   Hawkesdale **AWA**
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    Gorrie Street
    Heywood **NWA**
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    High Street
    Koroit **AWA**
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    Portland **AWA**
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    Macarthur **AWA**

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    Warrnambool-Caramut Road
    Mailors Flat **NWA**
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    Naringal **NWA**
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    Princes Highway
    Narrawong **AWA**
18. Nelson Community Centre
    Leake Street
    Nelson **AWA**
19. Orford Memorial Hall
    High Street
    Orford **NWA**
20. Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School
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    Warrnambool East **NWA**
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    Princes Highway
    Panmure **AWA**
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    Portland **AWA**
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    Hopkins Highway
    Purnim **FWA**
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    Port Fairy **AWA**
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    (Public Hall)
    Princes Highway
    Tyrendarra **AWA**

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    115 Koroit Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**
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    Wangoom **NWA**
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    Warrnambool **AWA**
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    101 Hyland Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**
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    195 Koroit Street
    Warrnambool **NWA**
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    8 Victoria Street
    Woodford **NWA**
33. Woolsthorpe Primary School
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    Woolsthorpe **AWA**
34. Yambuk Public Hall
    Princes Highway
    Yambuk **AWA**

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For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call (03) 5561 3357

Result and return of the writ notice

Polwarth District and South-West Coast District

State by-elections

Declaration of results

The candidate elected in the Polwarth District by-election held on Saturday 31 October 2015 was:

Richard Riordan
Liberal

The candidate elected in the South-West Coast District by-election held on Saturday 31 October 2015 was:

Roma Britnell
Liberal

I have returned writs to the Hon. Telmo Languiller, MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The writs were issued on Thursday 17 September 2015 for the election of one member to the Legislative Assembly for Polwarth District and one member to the Legislative Assembly for South-West Coast District.

Detailed results are available at vec.vic.gov.au

Warwick Gately, AM
Victorian Electoral Commission

Media releases and advisories

Phase	Headline	Dispatch
Issue of writ	Timeline for State by-elections set for October	17 September 2015
Nominations	Call for candidates for Polwarth and South-West Coast by-elections	18 September 2015
Close of roll (District enrolment figures)	Almost 90,000 to head for polls in Polwarth and South-West Coast	25 September 2015
Close of nominations and start of early voting period	Candidates announced for Polwarth and South-West Coast by-elections	2 October 2015
Early and election day voting period	Voting options for Polwarth and South-West Coast electors	26 October 2015
Election day media opportunities	Polwarth and South-West Coast by-elections: Media photo/film opportunities and results	28 October 2015

Direct mail

Product	Content	Volume dispatched	Dispatch
Enrolment letter to households	Key election dates and how to check and update your enrolment	28,690	18 September 2015
EasyVote letter	Voting options, voting locations, contact information and an EasyVote Card	44,917	1 October 2015

Enrolment letter to households

Important information:
South-West Coast District by-election

To the householder

Are you correctly enrolled?

A by-election for your District is being held on Saturday, 31 October 2015. By law, if you are an Australian citizen over the age of 18, you must be enrolled at your current address once you have lived there for one month.

If you've moved since you last enrolled, or have changed your name or post office box, you must ensure your enrolment details are up to date by *8.00 pm on Thursday, 24 September*.

If you are an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and you are not enrolled, you need to enrol immediately.

How do you check if you are on the roll?

Check online at **enrolment.vec.vic.gov.au** or call 1300 805 478.

Enrolling or updating your enrolment online

To enrol or update your details online, just visit **enrolment.vec.vic.gov.au** and complete an electronic enrolment update; there is no need for paper forms.

If you are enrolling for the first time, you will need a driver licence number, Australian passport number or a person who is already on the electoral roll in Victoria to confirm your identity.

Enrolling or updating your enrolment with a paper form

Paper enrolment forms are available at any post office, Centrelink or Australian Electoral Commission office. Alternatively, visit **vec.vic.gov.au** to download a printable form.

Completed enrolment forms should be mailed immediately to the Victorian Electoral Commission, Reply Paid 66506, Melbourne, Victoria, 8001 (no stamp is required). You can also fax it to (03) 9277 7126, email a scanned copy to **elector@vec.vic.gov.au** or deliver the form in person to one of the offices listed below:

- Australian Electoral Commission, 100 Kepler Street, Warrnambool
- Victorian Electoral Commission, Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne

You must ensure that you're enrolled and that your details are correct by *8.00 pm on Thursday, 24 September*.

Do you have to enrol?

Enrolling and keeping your enrolment details up-to-date are compulsory. However, if you have never enrolled or have let your details lapse, you will not be penalised if you enrol for this by-election.

Voting in the by-election

The VEC will write to all enrolled voters before election day providing information about the various voting options that will be available.

If you are registered as a General Postal Voter, your ballot material will be mailed to you from *Monday, 5 October*.

Warwick Gately, AM
Electoral Commissioner

Check your enrolment online at enrolment.vec.vic.gov.au or call 1300 805 478

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street,

@electionsvic   /electionsvic   Victorian Electoral Commission   VEC

Melbourne, Victoria.

EasyVote letter

Your EasyVote Letter:
South-West Coast District by-election

The South-West Coast District by-election will be held on
Saturday 31 October 2015
Voting is between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm
VOTING IS COMPULSORY - AVOID A FINE

Where can I vote?

You can vote at any voting centre within South-West Coast District between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm on Saturday 31 October.

A complete list of voting centres is available on the back of this letter.

There is also a by-election on the same day in the adjoining Polwarth District. You can vote in the South-West Coast District by-election at any voting centre located in Polwarth District. See vec.vic.gov.au for voting centres within Polwarth District.

Can I vote early?

If you can't get to a voting centre on election day, you can vote at any early voting centre listed below:

- 171A Liebig Street, Warrnambool **AWA**
- Shop 2/103-111 Percy Street, Portland **AWA**
- 310-312 Murray Street, Colac **NWA**
- VEC Head Office, Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne **AWA**

AWA - Assisted wheelchair access
NWA - No wheelchair access

Early voting centres are open between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm on weekdays until Friday 30 October, with extended hours on Saturday 24 October (9.00 am to 2.00 pm) and Thursday 29 October (8.30 am to 8.00 pm).

To vote early, you will have to declare that you are unable to attend a voting centre on election day during voting hours.

Early voting is also available at Victoria House, London, UK, and at various interstate locations. See vec.vic.gov.au for hours of operation.

Can I vote by post?

Postal vote applications are available:
- online at vec.vic.gov.au
- at any post office within South-West Coast District
- at the election office: 171A Liebig Street, Warrnambool
- at the Australian Electoral Commission office: 100 Kepler Street, Warrnambool
- at the VEC Head Office: Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne
- by calling 131 832.

The VEC must receive your postal vote application by 6.00 pm on Thursday 29 October.

Is voting compulsory?

Yes. Voting is compulsory if you were on the State or Federal roll for South-West Coast District at 8.00 pm on Thursday 24 September.
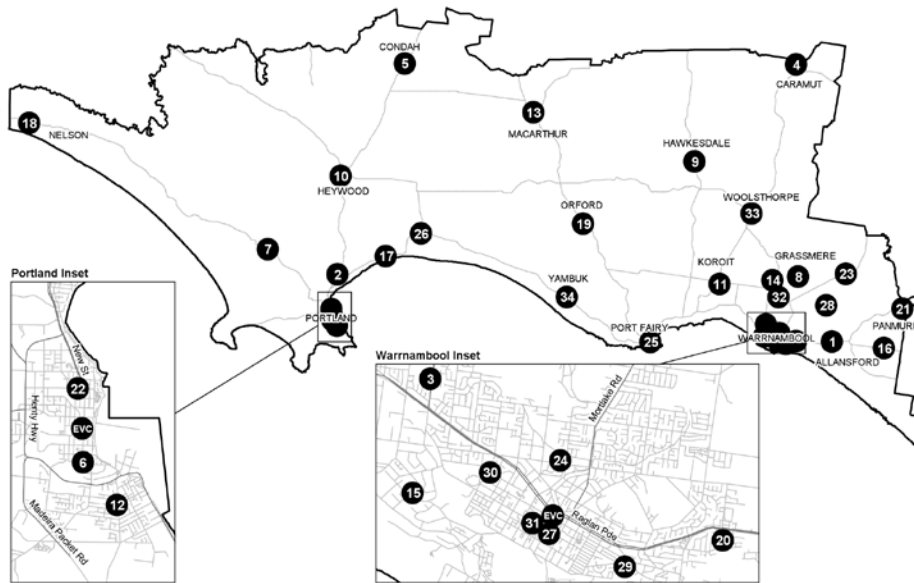
You may be fined if you do not vote.

For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call (03) 5561 3357.

@electionsvic   /electionsvic   Victorian Electoral Commission   VEC

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Election day is Saturday 31 October.
Voting is between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm.

Election day voting centres

1. Allansford Primary School
   Frank Street
   Allansford **AWA**

2. Bolwarra Primary School
   249 Henty Highway
   Bolwarra **NWA**

3. Brauer College
   37 Caramut Road
   Warrnambool **NWA**

4. Caramut War Memorial Hall
   Brown Street
   Caramut **NWA**

5. Condah Hall
   5162 Henty Highway
   Condah **NWA**

6. Drill Hall
   22 Bentinck Street
   Portland **NWA**

7. Gorae West Hall
   Portland-Nelson Road
   Gorae West **NWA**

8. Grassmere Primary School
   16 Ibbs Lane
   Grassmere **AWA**

9. Hawkesdale P-12 College
   corner Mitchell and Spring Streets
   Hawkesdale **AWA**

10. Heywood Community Complex
    Gorrie Street
    Heywood **NWA**

11. Koroit Senior Citizens Rooms
    High Street
    Koroit **AWA**

12. Legacy Lodge
    60 Wellington Road
    Portland **NWA**

13. Macarthur Primary School
    23 Russell Street
    Macarthur **AWA**

14. Mailors Flat Hall
    Warrnambool-Caramut Road
    Mailors Flat **NWA**

15. Merrivale Primary School
    158 Merrivale Drive
    Warrnambool **AWA**

16. Naringal Public Hall
    Cobden-Warrnambool Road
    Naringal **NWA**

17. Narrawong Mechanics Institute
    Princes Highway
    Narrawong **AWA**

18. Nelson Community Centre
    Leake Street
    Nelson **AWA**

19. Orford Memorial Hall
    High Street
    Orford **NWA**

20. Our Lady Help of Christians
    Primary School
    28 Selby Road
    Warrnambool East **NWA**

21. Panmure Mechanics Institute
    Princes Highway
    Panmure **AWA**

22. Portland South West TAFE
    154 Hurd Street
    Portland **AWA**

23. Purnim Mechanics Hall
    Hopkins Highway
    Purnim **FWA**

24. St Joseph's College Stadium
    70 Botanic Road
    Warrnambool **AWA**

25. St Patrick's Parish Primary School
    9 William Street
    Port Fairy **AWA**

26. Tyrendarra War Memorial Hall
    (Public Hall)
    Princes Highway
    Tyrendarra **AWA**

27. Uniting Church Hall
    115 Koroit Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**

28. Wangoom Memorial Hall
    Wangoom-Warrumyea Road
    Wangoom **NWA**

29. Warrnambool East Primary School
    Ward Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**

30. Warrnambool Special
    Development School
    101 Hyland Street
    Warrnambool **AWA**

31. Warrnambool Temperance Hall
    195 Koroit Street
    Warrnambool **NWA**

32. Woodford Primary School
    8 Victoria Street
    Woodford **NWA**

33. Woolsthorpe Primary School
    12 Manifold Street
    Woolsthorpe **AWA**

34. Yambuk Public Hall
    Princes Highway
    Yambuk **AWA**

Early voting centres in South-West Coast District

EVC. South-West Coast State
Election Office
171A Liebig Street
Warrnambool **AWA**

EVC. Portland Early Voting Centre
Shop 2/103-111 Percy Street
Portland **AWA**

FWA - Fully wheelchair accessible
AWA - Assisted wheelchair access
NWA - No wheelchair access

Appendix D: Analysis of informal votes

Informal votes at the South-West Coast by-election

After each State election and by-election, the VEC analyses the incidence and nature of informal voting at that election. The VEC aims to maximise participation by Victorians in their democracy, and knowledge of the types of mistakes that voters made can assist the VEC to achieve this goal.

The figure for the South-West Coast by-election was 2,578 informal votes (6.24% of the total). The by-election informal voting rate was significantly greater than at the November 2014 State election, when 4.04% of South-West Coast votes were informal. The actual number of informal votes increased by 863 in South-West Coast, despite a decline in the total number of votes. On the other hand, informal votes at the South-West Coast by-election were lower than at most by-elections over the past decade. Informal voting tends to be lower in country than in metropolitan electorates, which may be related to the more homogeneous and less mobile nature of society in country areas.

The number and range of candidates can affect the informal voting rate. The number of candidates in South-West Coast increased from six to eleven. Informal voting tends to be higher where there are more than 10 candidates, as a result of numbering errors, and this factor may have contributed to South-West Coast's increase in informal voting. Although there were more candidates in the by-election than at the State election, the ALP did not stand a candidate (though the South-West Coast Independent candidate Roy Reekie had been the ALP candidate in the 2014 and 2006 State elections). In by-elections over the past decade where both major parties were standing, the informal vote was a median of 1.33 percentage points lower than at the preceding State election. In contrast, where a major party was not standing, the informal vote was 2.39 percentage points higher than at the State election. It appears that some party supporters prefer to vote informally than to vote for another party or candidate.

In South-West Coast, the informal voting rate ranged from 3.3% at Condah to 10.2% at Heywood, and tended to be higher than average in the main centres of Warrnambool and Portland. Early voters voted informally at virtually the same rate (6%) as for the district as a whole, and only 3.4% of postal voters cast an informal vote.

In the survey of informal ballot papers, the VEC used the same categories as in its analyses of informal ballot papers since the 2006 State election. These categories are described below.

Category	Description
Blank	The bulk of these ballot papers were presumably deliberately informal, though they might include ballot papers lodged by people who had difficulties with the whole voting process.
Numbers – 1 only	
Numbers – insufficient	Ballot papers including insufficient numbers to constitute a formal vote.
Numbers – apparently deliberate	Ballot papers including number sequences such all '1's, or '0', or '1', '10', '300', which indicate an intention to cast an informal vote.
Numbers – other	
Ticks/crosses – preference	Ballot papers indicating a clear preference for a candidate through a single tick or cross.
Ticks/crosses – apparently deliberate	Ballot papers with ticks or crosses in every square, indicating an intention to reject all the candidates.
Ticks/crosses – other	
Writing – apparently deliberate	Ballot papers with writing or drawings indicating opposition to all the candidates, including those with a cross over the whole paper.
Writing – other	Vague scrawls not indicating any intention.

TABLE 1: CATEGORIES USED BY THE VEC IN ANALYSIS OF BALLOT PAPERS

Category	2015 by-election	2014 State election
Blank	521 (20.2%)	511 (30.9%)
Numbers – 1 only	172 (6.7%)	404 (24.4%)
Numbers – insufficient	201 (7.8%)	136 (8.2%)
Numbers – deliberate	183 (7.1%)	105 (6.3%)
Numbers – other	876 (34%)	96 (5.8%)
Ticks/crosses – preference	42 (1.6%)	139 (8.4%)
Ticks-crosses – deliberate	99 (3.8%)	55 (3.3%)
Ticks/crosses – other	5 (0.2%)	17 (1.0%)
Writing – deliberate	448 (17.4%)	178 (10.8%)
Writing – other	29 (1.1%)	14 (.08%)
TOTAL	1,950	1,655

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF SURVEY OF INFORMAL BALLOT PAPERS CAST FOR SOUTH-WEST COAST AT 2015 BY-ELECTION AND AT 2014 STATE ELECTION - DETAILED CATEGORIES

'Numbers – other' was by far the largest category, with 34% of the total (876 votes). This was an enormous increase on the 5.8% of informal votes in this category in South-West Coast in the State election. These votes were informal mainly through numbering mistakes – skipping or duplicating numbers. The large number of candidates for the South-West Coast by-election appears to have contributed to the rise in this category.

Blank ballot papers were the second largest category. The number of blank ballot papers was similar to that in the 2014 State election (521 at the by-election compared to 511 at the State election), but the proportion declined sharply from 30.9% in the State election to 20.2% at the by-election.

'Writing – deliberate' was the third largest category, comprising 17.4% of the informal votes. The proportion in this category increased substantially from the State election. Among the expressions of dissatisfaction with all candidates that were characteristic of this group were a number of ballot papers stating 'No Labor No Vote'.

As at other by-elections, the proportion of informal ballot papers with a single 1 (6.7%) was much lower than at the State election (24.4%). Without the confusion of the Upper House ballot paper (on which most voters do vote '1' above the line), very few by-election voters made this mistake.

Table 3 shows the results of the survey in broader categories.

Category	2015 by-election	2014 State election
Blank	521 (20.2%)	511 (30.9%)
Numbers	1,432 (55.6%)	741 (44.8%)
Ticks/crosses	146 (5.7%)	211 (12.7%)
Writing	477 (18.5%)	192 (11.6%)
TOTAL	2,576	1,655

TABLE 3: RESULTS OF SURVEY OF INFORMAL BALLOT PAPERS CAST FOR SOUTH-WEST COAST AT 2015 BY-ELECTION AND AT 2014 STATE ELECTION - BROAD CATEGORIES

Numbering errors were a large category, increasing to more than half of the total. Ticks and crosses were a small group. In the State election as a whole, 13.01% of informal votes were in this category, with the incidence being higher in districts with larger proportions of recent immigrants, many of whom would have voted using a tick or cross in their former homelands.

Table 4 groups the various categories of deliberately informal votes and shows the result when the blank ballot papers are added to the marked ballot papers that were deliberately informal. It also groups the ballot papers that indicated a clear preference (either through the number "1" or a single tick or cross).

Category	2015 by-election	2014 State election
Apparently deliberate	730 (28.3%)	338 (20.4%)
Apparently deliberate including blank	1,251 (48.6%)	849 (51.3%)
Indicating preferences	415 (16.1%)	679 (41.0%)
TOTAL	2,576	1,655

TABLE 4: RESULTS OF SURVEY OF INFORMAL BALLOT PAPERS CAST FOR SOUTH-WEST COAST AT 2015 BY-ELECTION AND AT 2014 STATE ELECTION - DELIBERATELY INFORMAL AND PREFERENCE VOTES

Deliberate informal votes including blank ballot declined to less than half. The higher rate of accidental numbering errors, accounts for the difference. The number of preference votes was greatly diminished from the State election.

The distribution of types of informal votes varied markedly from voting centre to voting centre, without any discernible pattern in the variations. Some differences become apparent when voting centres are grouped. The proportion of deliberately informal votes including blanks was slightly higher than average in Warrnambool and Portland, and lower than average in the rural voting centres.

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