



Victorian Electoral Commission

Report on the Polwarth District By-election held on 31 October 2015

May 2016

Victorian Electoral Commission

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This publication is available online at vec.vic.gov.au

ABN 46 583 749 552

ISBN 978-0-9876072-4-9

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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 Polwarth District by-election held on 31 October 2015.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warwick Gately' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

May 2016

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Executive summary

A by-election for the State District of Polwarth was triggered by the resignation, on 3 September 2015, of the sitting member, the Honourable Terry Mulder, 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.

Eight candidates nominated for the by-election. One independent candidate nominated and the Australian Christians, Australian Country Party, Australian Greens, Australian Sex Party, Democratic Labour Party, 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. Mr Richard Riordan, the candidate for the Liberal Party, who polled 49.65% of the first-preference votes, was elected at the second exclusion.

The turnout rate of 86.18% was lower than the turnout rate of 94.88% for Polwarth 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 34.11%, an increase from 26.65% for Polwarth at the 2014 State election. This phenomenon has been observed around Australia and will be the subject of consideration by the VEC.

The informality rate of 5.16% for Polwarth, with eight candidates, was an increase on the informality rate of 3.89% for Polwarth District with four 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, Ms Elizabeth Reeves, Assistant Election Managers, Mr John Keller and Mr Jon McLeod and Election Support Officer, Ms Therese Camm, for their contributions to the very successful conduct of the Polwarth District by-election.

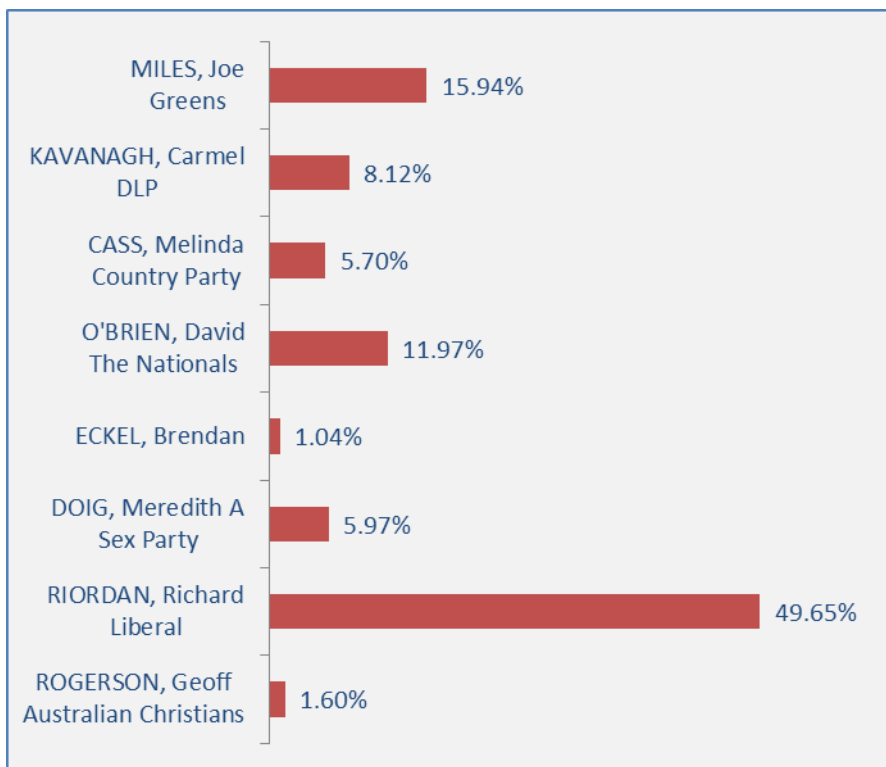


Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

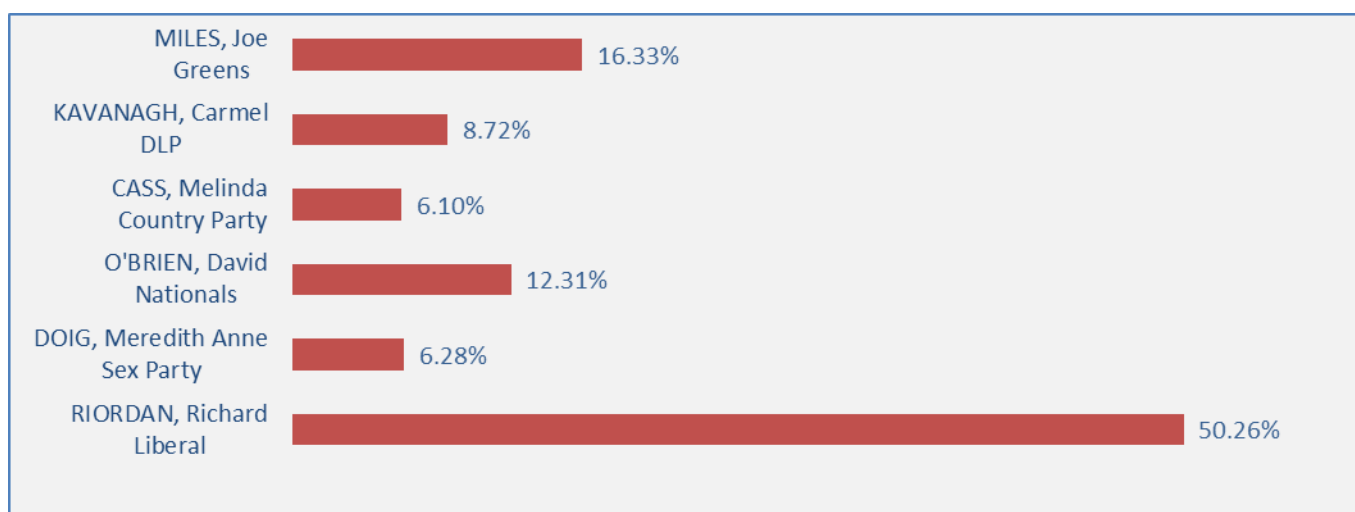
1. Snapshot

POLWARTH

First preference votes (% of first preference votes)



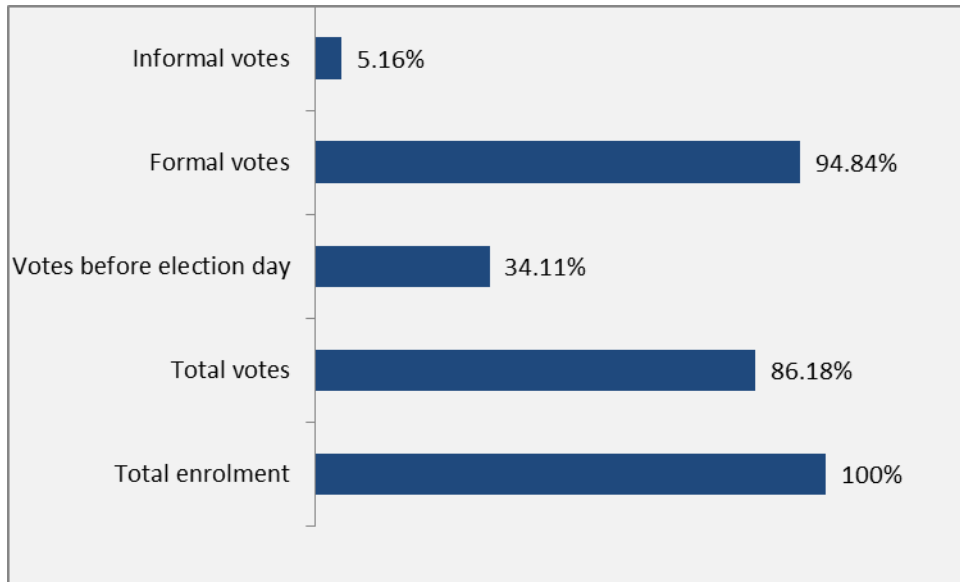
Results after distribution of preferences



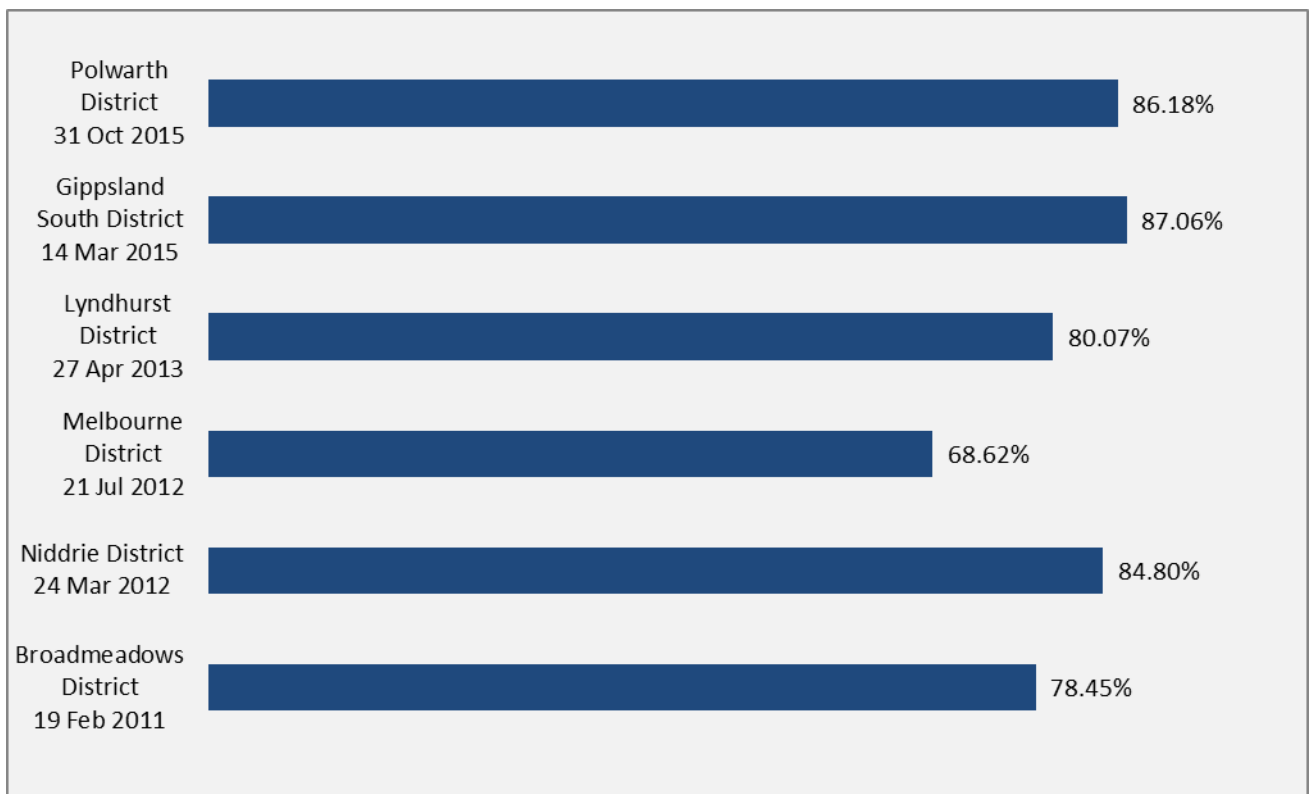
Footnote: Riordan majority gained after exclusion of Eckel and Rogerson.

Participation

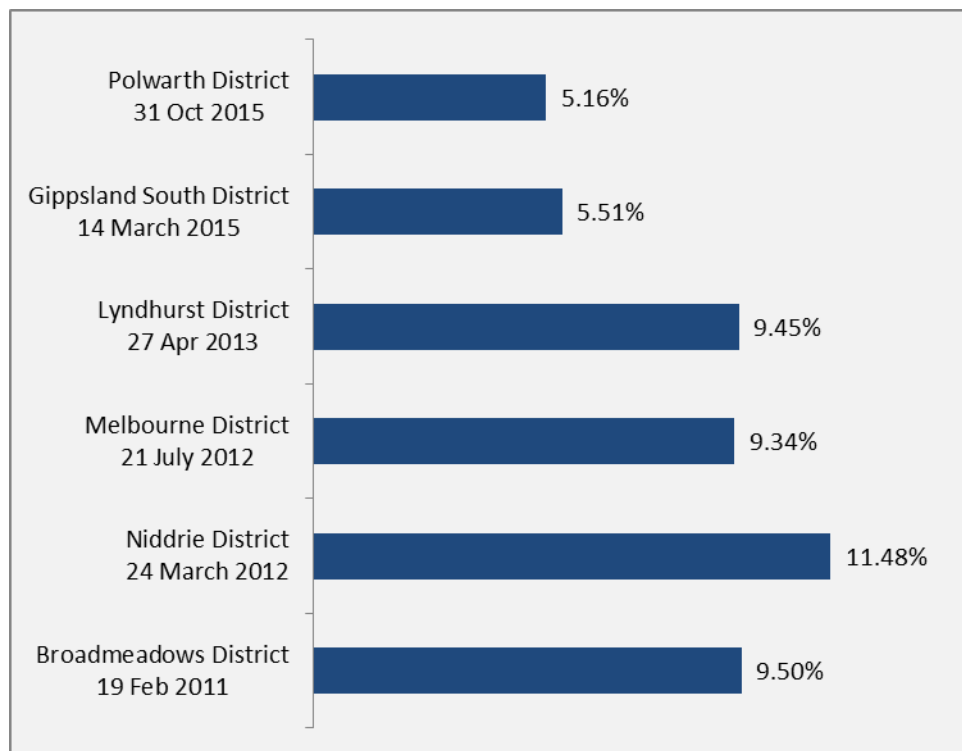
Participation at Polwarth District by-election 2015



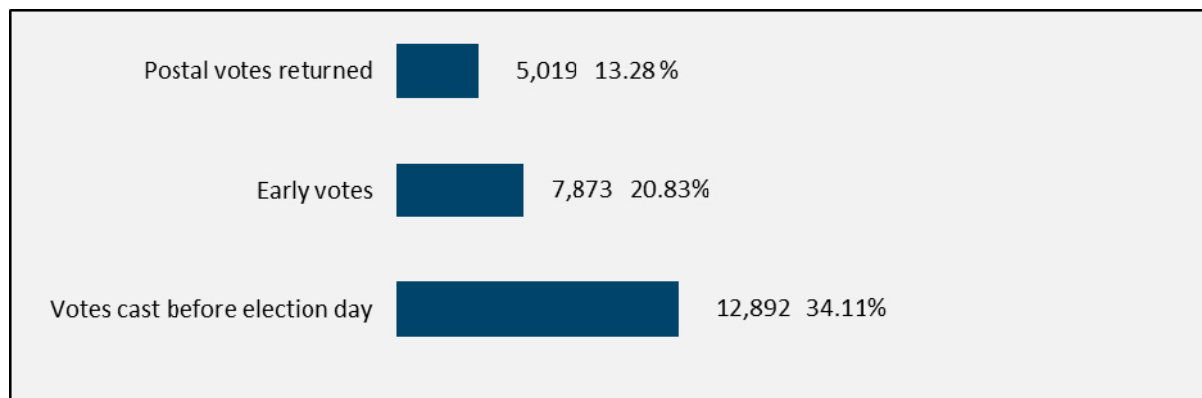
Voter turnout at Victorian State by-elections 2011–15 (% enrolment)



Informal votes at Victorian State by-elections 2011–15 (% votes)



Votes cast prior to Election Day



2. Background

The writ

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly issued a writ for the by-election for Polwarth 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 opens	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 Terry Mulder, MP represented the District of Polwarth from 1999 to 2015. Mr Mulder was the Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Roads from 2010 to 2014 after serving as the Shadow Minister for the same portfolios from 2006 to 2010. Mr Mulder served on several parliamentary committees between 1999 and 2009, and from April-September 2015.

Profile of the District

The District includes the centre 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, timber and sawmilling, vegetable growing, cattle and sheep farming, and tourism. Polwarth District has a number of natural features, such as the Otway Ranges, Lake Colac, Lake Corangamite, and well-known seaside resorts such as Apollo Bay, Lorne and Port Campbell.

Map of the District

Polwarth District



Historical pattern of the District

1889-94	Conservative
1894-99	Liberal
1899-1902	Conservative Liberal
1902-07	Conservative
1907-08	Fusion
1908-09	Conservative
1909-17	Fusion Liberal/Liberal
1917-18	Economy
1918-40	National/UAP
1940-49	Country
1949-present	LCP/Liberal

2014 State election results

Elected member	MULDER, Terry
Total enrolment	43,277
Formal votes:	39,464
Informal votes:	1,599 (3.89%)
Total votes:	41,063 (94.88%)

Candidate	First preference votes	%
MULDER, Terry Liberal	21,861	55.39%
NORTHEAST, Simon Australian Greens	4,352	11.03%
EDGE, Philip Australian Country Alliance	2,206	5.59%
COKER, Libby Australian Labor Party	11,045	27.99%

2010 State election results

Elected member	MULDER, Terry
Total Enrolment	42,079
Formal votes:	38,409
Informal votes:	1,539 (3.85%)
Total votes:	39,948 (94.94%)

Candidate	First preference votes	%
MODRA, John Family First	1,211	3.15%
KERR, Garry CA	1,502	3.91%
MULDER, Terry Liberal	21,245	55.31%
CROOK, Brian ALP	10,432	27.16%
ATHERDEN, Natalie Greens	3,235	8.42%
BEALE, Grant	784	2.04%

3. Participation

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

- enrolment: the proportion of the eligible voting population that enrolls 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 43,856 electors enrolled, 579 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 Polwarth District by-election was 86.18%. This participation rate is considered satisfactory, particularly since the Australian Labor Party did not endorse a candidate for the by-election. The turnout rate for the by-election was higher than the average turnout of 79.80% for the five preceding State by-elections.

Informal voting

The informality rate of 5.16% was an increase on the informality rate of 3.89% for Polwarth District at the 2014 State election.

The informality rate for Polwarth 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 Polwarth District by-election is included in Appendix D.

4. Election Personnel

Election Manager

Ms Elizabeth Reeves 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
- receiving 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 John Keller and Mr Jon McLeod 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 194 staff, including an Election Manager, two Assistant Election Managers and an Election Support Officer were appointed for the by-election.

Of these, 137 were appointed as election officials at voting centres on Election Day. Five 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 48 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. Mobile early voting centre team leaders received training prior to commencing work.

The Election Manager and Assistant Election Managers had previous recent election experience and did not require additional training.

5. Services to Electors

Enrolment

The day after the issue of the writ for Polwarth 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 Corangamite AEC divisional office at Colac to remain open until 8.00 pm on Thursday, 24 September.

A total of 411 enrolment transactions occurred between the issue of the writ and the close of roll.

	Online Enrolment	Direct Enrolments	AEC Txns
New to Roll	23	8	64
Change of Address	47	151	104
Reinstatement	2	7	5

At the close of roll, there were 43,856 electors enrolled, 579 more than at the close of roll for the 2014 State election. Of these electors, 747 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 93.7% of people usually resident in Polwarth 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 South-West Coast District concurrently with the Polwarth by-election. Electors voting early could do so at any early voting centre in either District. One EVC was established in Polwarth District and two in South-West Coast District. Early voting was also available at the VEC's office at 530 Collins Street, Melbourne.

The early voting centre located in 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.

The early voting centres 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.

Of the 41 election day voting centres, one was rated as Fully Wheelchair Accessible (FWA), 22 were rated as Assisted Wheelchair Access (AWA) and the remaining 18 were rated as having 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 Polwarth and South-West Coast Districts. Additionally, electors in Melbourne during the early voting period could vote at the VEC's office.

Early voting centres were located at:

- Colac - 310-312 Murray Street
- Portland – Shop 2, 103-111 Percy Street
- Warrnambool – 171A Liebig 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 7,873 Polwarth District electors (20.83% of total voters) voted early in person for the by-election, compared with 8,036 (19.57% of total voters) for the District at the 2014 State election.

Mobile voting

A total of 589 electors took advantage of mobile voting, with mobile voting teams 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 37 early votes were cast outside Victoria for the Polwarth District by-election. This compares with 90 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 election office or post office in Polwarth or South-West Coast District, or by calling the

VEC. Postal voting was also available at interstate early voting centres and in London.

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 747 ballot packs were mailed to General Postal Voters and 5,228 postal vote applications were processed for Polwarth. Eleven postal votes were issued outside the State for the by-election. This compares with six at the 2014 State election.

A total of 5,019 postal votes were counted for the by-election (13.28% of total votes).

Voting on Election Day

As the by-election for South-West Coast District was held on the same timelines as the Polwarth District by-election, electors could vote at any of the 75 voting centres open across the two districts on election day. Polwarth electors voting in South-West Coast District had to cast an absent vote. There were 303 absent votes cast for Polwarth 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. These people 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 201 provisional votes (57.75% of the 348 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 Polwarth.

6. Services to registered political parties and candidates

Eight candidates nominated for the Polwarth District by-election compared with four 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 candidate 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. No prospective independent candidates 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 however the independent candidate at the by-election did not register any how-to-vote cards.

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 9 how-to-vote cards were registered for the Polwarth District by-election (see Figure 1). As required by legislation, registered how-to-vote cards were published on the VEC website.

Party/Candidate/Stakeholder	# HTVC
AUSTRALIAN GREENS	1
THE NATIONALS	2
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	1
DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)	1
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	2
LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA - VICTORIA	1
AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY	1

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

7. Communication services

The Polwarth 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 28,984 enrolment information letters to households in Polwarth District from 18 September 2015.

An EasyVote letter was also 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 43,109 EasyVote letters were lodged with Australia Post on 1 October 2015 for distribution.

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 over 7,200 page views of the primary by-election information page. There were over 1,100 sessions on the registered how-to-vote cards and then over 6,000 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 Polwarth by-election.

There were 110 posts to Twitter using the generally accepted tag #PolwarthVotes and 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 Polwarth 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 Polwarth and South-West Coast 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 two formal complaints about the Polwarth District by-election. One complaint related to difficulties contacting the Polwarth Election Office and a second to the conduct of staff at the Polwarth Election Office. 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 in terms of first preference votes were the Liberal and Greens candidates. As it was not clear whether The Nationals or the Greens would be second-placed once preferences were distributed, the VEC did not adjust the original 2CP figures, but extended the preference distribution to achieve the 2CP split between the Greens and the Liberal Party.

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. Mr Riordan gained a majority after only two candidates had been excluded. The VEC continued with the preference distribution for information purposes down to the final two candidates.

10. Declaration of result, return of the writ

Mr Richard Riordan (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 costs incurred by the VEC in conducting the Polwarth District by-election was \$371,820. 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 eight candidates, six were refunded their deposit, and two candidates forfeited their 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 six of the seven party candidates. There were no entitlements payable for the independent candidate. All the entitlements with the exception of the Australian Sex Party were paid by 15 March 2016.

Registered Political Parties	Entitlement
Australian Greens	\$8,502.48
Democratic Labour Party (DLP)	\$4,754.00
Australian Country Party	\$3,407.72
National Party	\$7,159.06
Australian Sex Party - Victoria	\$3,569.52
Liberal Party	\$29,687.06
Total electoral entitlements	\$57,079.84

FIGURE 2: ELECTORAL ENTITLEMENTS, POLWARTH DISTRICT BY-ELECTION 2015

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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. Penalties collected are progressively reconciled and transferred to consolidated revenue.

The first stage of compulsory voting follow-up for the Polwarth by-election commenced on 15 January 2016, with 4,348 Apparent Failure to Vote notices mailed.

On 2 March 2016, 2,839 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 regarding the enforcement of compulsory voting provisions at the by-election will be included in the VEC's Annual Report.

15. Appendices

14

15

Appendix A: Detailed voting statistics

Enrolment:	43,856	
Formal votes:	35,847	
Informal votes:	1,950	(5.16% of total votes)
Total votes:	37,797	(86.18% of electors enrolled)

	MILES, Joe AUSTRALIAN GREENS	KAVANAGH, Carmel DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)	CASS, Melinda AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	O'BRIEN, David THE NATIONALS	ECKEL, Brendan	DOIG, Meredith Anne AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY - VICTORIA	RIORDAN, Richard LIBERAL	ROGERS, Geoff AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	Informal Votes	Total Votes Polled
Aireys Inlet	296	14	5	22	2	42	165	6	19	571
Anglesea	416	68	43	99	3	81	417	16	56	1199
Apollo Bay	349	28	14	56	8	62	317	10	48	892
Bannockburn	256	330	242	102	14	249	776	67	146	2182
Beeac	26	12	41	44	0	6	102	3	13	247
Birregurra	112	23	19	59	4	23	214	1	24	479
Camperdown	208	206	96	309	28	117	917	25	144	2050
Carpentait	7	10	13	38	3	10	90	1	9	181
Cobden	95	87	56	125	13	66	634	18	82	1176
Colac East	176	96	91	198	4	123	627	23	89	1427
Colac West	142	95	68	135	8	113	527	25	67	1180
Cororooke	42	22	18	94	3	26	154	3	25	387
Cressy	6	5	18	33	0	4	92	0	9	167
Deans Marsh	99	4	1	27	4	9	59	0	7	210
Derrinallum	15	7	9	65	4	9	150	3	10	272
Ecklin	12	10	9	33	0	4	137	4	10	219

	MILES, Joe AUSTRALIAN GREENS	KAVANAGH, Carmel DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)	CASS, Melinda AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	O'BRIEN, David THE NATIONALS	ECKEL, Brendan	DOIG, Meredith Anne AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY - VICTORIA	RIORDAN, Richard LIBERAL	ROGERS, Geoff AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	Informal Votes	Total Votes Polled
Elliminyt	151	109	60	237	9	117	657	24	69	1433
Forrest	94	9	4	23	0	8	73	2	12	225
Fyansford	104	41	20	34	2	27	264	12	28	532
Gellibrand River	48	5	3	31	0	5	69	5	17	183
Inverleigh	141	45	36	61	9	56	339	14	46	747
Irrewillipe East	12	8	6	48	1	4	90	3	8	180
Lavers Hill	59	6	5	13	5	3	38	0	1	130
Lismore	18	15	17	55	5	11	171	1	25	318
Lorne	143	8	6	34	2	35	277	2	23	530
Mortlake	96	40	67	107	14	37	334	9	52	756
Noorat	22	21	8	72	3	16	196	2	15	355
Nullawarre	13	9	7	27	0	8	143	3	11	221
Peterborough	25	10	3	10	1	1	83	0	8	141
Port Campbell	51	8	6	32	1	11	106	4	11	230
Rokewood	6	5	17	17	0	9	90	0	16	160
Scotts Creek	10	6	13	20	0	2	119	2	6	178
Simpson	11	12	21	96	8	15	192	5	18	378
Skipton	33	29	7	64	3	28	146	3	23	336
Teesdale	145	128	80	44	9	44	303	13	63	829
Terang	109	81	80	168	14	68	549	19	107	1195
Timboon	116	39	43	80	9	33	407	16	58	801
Warrion	10	4	6	39	0	6	43	0	2	110
Winchelsea	169	132	121	88	9	37	496	17	64	1133
Winchelsea South	69	13	15	37	1	7	126	2	14	284
Wiridjil	15	3	3	31	1	5	108	4	7	177

	MILES, Joe AUSTRALIAN GREENS	KAVANAGH, Carmel DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)	CASS, Melinda AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY	O'BRIEN, David THE NATIONALS	ECKEL, Brendan	DOIG, Meredith Anne AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY - VICTORIA	RIORDAN, Richard LIBERAL	ROGERS, Geoff AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS	Informal Votes	Total Votes Polled
Total Ordinary Votes	3927	1803	1397	2907	204	1537	10797	367	1462	24401
Absent	35	27	20	34	5	16	144	8	14	303
Early Vote	885	631	389	959	77	394	4070	114	354	7873
Postal Vote	840	435	218	364	84	173	2707	83	115	5019
Provisional	28	15	19	28	3	20	80	3	5	201
Total Declaration Votes	1788	1108	646	1385	169	603	7001	208	488	13396
TOTAL ALL VOTE TYPES	5715	2911	2043	4292	373	2140	17798	575	1950	37797
Percentage of Formal Vote Polled By Candidate	15.94%	8.12%	5.70%	11.97%	1.04%	5.97%	49.65%	1.60%		

Appendix B: Distribution of preference votes

Total valid first preference votes polled for all candidates:	35,847
Number of votes required to constitute an absolute majority on first count:	17,924
Number of informal votes:	1,950

Candidates' Names (in ballot paper order)	MILES, Joe	KAVANAGH, Carmel	CASS, Melinda	O'BRIEN, David	ECKEL, Brendan	DOIG, Meredith Anne	RIORDAN, Richard	ROGERS, Geoff	TOTAL
Total first preference votes recorded for each candidate	5715	2911	2043	4292	373	2140	17798	575	35847
Transfer of 373 ballot papers of ECKEL, Brendan (1st excluded candidate)	92	57	65	44		66	32	17	373
Progressive Total	5807	2968	2108	4336		2206	17830	592	35847
Transfer of 592 ballot papers of ROGERS, Geoff (2nd excluded candidate)	48	158	78	78		45	185		592
Progressive Total	5855	3126	2186	4414		2251	18015		35847
Continuation of distribution for information purposes									
Transfer of 2186 ballot papers of CASS, Melinda	268	802		473		310	333		2186
Progressive Total	6123	3928		4887		2561	18348		35847
Transfer of 2561 ballot papers of DOIG, Meredith Anne	963	587		525			486		2561
Progressive Total	7086	4515		5412			18834		35847
Transfer of 4515 ballot papers of KAVANAGH, Carmel	1745			1748			1022		4515
Progressive Total	8831			7160			19856		35847
Transfer of 7160 ballot papers of O'BRIEN, David	2145						5015		7160
FINAL TOTAL	10976						24871		

RIORDAN, Richard (Liberal) elected at 2nd 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	Geelong Advertiser, Surf Coast Times, Colac Herald, Geelong Independent, Winchelsea Star, Cobden Times, Camperdown Chronicle, Terang Express, Mortlake Dispatch, Warrnambool Standard (combined)	5–9 October 2015
How to vote on election day	Surf Coast Times, Colac Herald, Geelong Independent Winchelsea Star, Cobden Times, Camperdown Chronicle, Terang Express, Mortlake Dispatch, Cobden Times	27–30 October 2015
Vote today	The Age (combined), Herald Sun (combined), Geelong Advertiser, Warrnambool Standard	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

Early voting Polwarth 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:

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

NWA - No wheelchair access
AWA - Assisted 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 Polwarth 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 Polwarth District can vote.
Visit vec.vic.gov.au to check your enrolment.

Are you an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and living in Polwarth 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.

131 832 vec.vic.gov.au Victorian Electoral Commission 

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

Voting this weekend

Polwarth District by-election

Who can vote?

Everyone on the State electoral roll for Polwarth 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 Polwarth 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:

MILES, Joe
AUSTRALIAN GREENS

KAVANAGH, Carmel
DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)

CASS, Melinda
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY

O'BRIEN, David
THE NATIONALS

ECKEL, Brendan
DOIG, Meredith Anne
AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY - VICTORIA

RIORDAN, Richard
LIBERAL

ROGERS, Geoff
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS

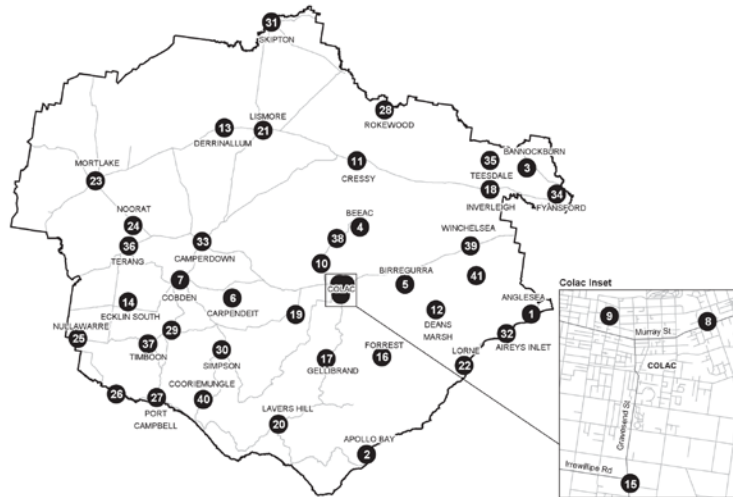
Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory if you were on the electoral roll for Polwarth 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. Anglesea Memorial Hall
McMillan Street
Anglesea NWA | 16. Forrest Primary School
10-12 Grant Street
Forrest AWA | 31. Skipton Mechanics Institute
5 Anderson Street
Skipton AWA |
| 2. Apollo Bay Youth Club
19-21 Moore Street
Apollo Bay NWA | 17. Gellibrand Hall
Colac-Lavers Hill Road
Gellibrand NWA | 32. St Aids Church
27-29 Great Ocean Road
Aireys Inlet NWA |
| 3. Bannockburn Cultural Centre
27 High Street
Bannockburn AWA | 18. Inverleigh Primary School
Hamilton Highway
Inverleigh NWA | 33. St Paul's Anglican Parish
Church Hall
Church Street
Camperdown NWA |
| 4. Beecac Primary School
35 Lang Street
Beecac AWA | 19. Irrewillipe Public Hall
2480 Timboon-Colac Road
Irrewillipe NWA | 34. Stonehaven CFA Fire Station
corner Dog Rocks and
Fyansford-Gheringhap Roads
Fyansford AWA |
| 5. Birregurra Community Health Centre
28-30 Strachan Street
Birregurra AWA | 20. Lavers Hill Public Hall
47 Great Ocean Road
Lavers Hill NWA | 35. Teesdale Primary School
Sutherland Street
Teesdale AWA |
| 6. Carpendeit Public Hall
corner Ansons and Carpendeit-Bungador
Roads
Carpendeit NWA | 21. Lismore Primary School
77 William Street
Lismore AWA | 36. Terang Civic Hall
131 High Street
Terang AWA |
| 7. Cobden Scout Hall
1 Peter Street
Cobden NWA | 22. Lorne Senior Citizens Centre
Mountjoy Parade
Lorne NWA | 37. Timboon P-12 College
Hamilton Street
Timboon NWA |
| 8. Colac Primary School
65 Murray Street East
Colac NWA | 23. Mortlake Soldiers Memorial Hall
Shaw Street
Mortlake AWA | 38. Warrion Public Hall
Coragulac-Beecac Road
Warrion NWA |
| 9. Colac West Primary School
2-24 Ligar Street
Colac FWA | 24. Noorat Primary School
McKinnons Bridge Road
Noorat AWA | 39. Winchelsea Senior Citizens Centre
36 Harding Street
Winchelsea AWA |
| 10. Coronooke Public Hall
580 Corangamite Lake Road
Coronooke AWA | 25. Nullawarre Public Hall
2184 Timboon-Nullawarre Road
Nullawarre AWA | 40. Wiridjil Hall
Princetown Road
Coorimungle AWA |
| 11. Cressy Hall
Yarima Road
Cressy AWA | 26. Peterborough Golf Club
20 Schomberg Road
Peterborough AWA | 41. Wurdale Hall
220 Wurdale Road
Winchelsea South NWA |
| 12. Deans Marsh Public Hall
Penryroyal Valley Road
Deans Marsh AWA | 27. Port Campbell Recreation Reserve
Desally Street
Port Campbell NWA | |
| 13. Derrinallum Community Hall
Main Street
Derrinallum AWA | 28. Rokewood Primary School
38 Aitchison Street
Rokewood AWA | |
| 14. Ecklin Hall
143 Timboon-Terang Road
Ecklin South AWA | 29. Scotts Creek Public Hall
Cobden-Port Campbell Road
Scotts Creek NWA | |
| 15. Elliminyt Primary Events & Education
Centre (EPEE)
Main Street
Elliminyt NWA | 30. Simpson Primary School Early
Childhood Centre
Barrumul Street
Simpson AWA | |

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

* Please note: You can also vote for the Polwarth District by-election at any voting centre in the adjoining South-West Coast 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) 5231 1134

[@electionsvic](https://twitter.com/electionsvic) [/electionsvic](https://facebook.com/electionsvic) vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission **VEC**

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

Vote today

Polwarth District by-election

Who can vote?

Everyone on the State electoral roll for Polwarth District can cast a vote at any voting centre today.*

If you are an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and living in Polwarth 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:

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- KAVANAGH, Carmel
DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (DLP)
- CASS, Melinda
AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PARTY
- O'BRIEN, David
THE NATIONALS
- ECKEL, Brendan
- DOIG, Meredith Anne
AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY - VICTORIA
- RIORDAN, Richard
LIBERAL
- ROGERS, Geoff
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANS

Voting is compulsory

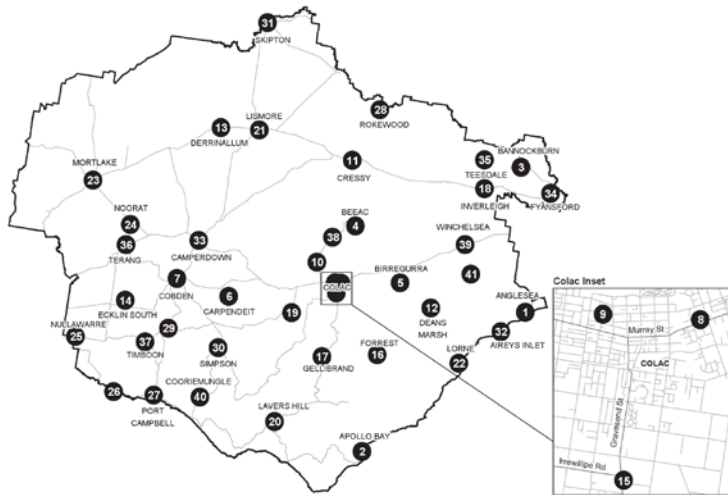
Voting is compulsory if you were on the electoral roll for Polwarth District at the close of the roll, 8.00 pm on Thursday 24 September 2015.

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

You may be fined if you do not vote.

Today is election day

Voting centres are open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
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McMillan Street
Anglesea NWA | 16. Forrest Primary School
10-12 Grant Street
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5 Anderson Street
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19-21 Moore Street
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For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call (03) 5231 1134

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	28,984	18 September 2015
EasyVote letter	Voting options, voting locations, contact information and an EasyVote Card	43,109	1 October 2015

Important information: *Polwarth 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, 55 Dennis Street, Colac
- 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



Melbourne, Victoria.



Your EasyVote Letter: *Polwarth District by-election*

The Polwarth 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 Polwarth 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 South-West Coast District. You can vote in the Polwarth District by-election at any voting centre located in South-West Coast District. See vec.vic.gov.au for voting centres within South-West Coast 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:

- 310-312 Murray Street, Colac **NWA**
- 171A Liebig Street, Warrnambool **AWA**
- Shop 2/103-111 Percy Street, Portland **AWA**
- 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).

For more information, visit vec.vic.gov.au or call (03) 5231 1134.

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 Polwarth District
- at the election office: 310-312 Murray Street, Colac
- at the Australian Electoral Commission office: 55 Dennis Street, Colac
- 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 Polwarth District at 8.00 pm on Thursday 24 September.

You may be fined if you do not vote.

@electionsvic

/electionsvic

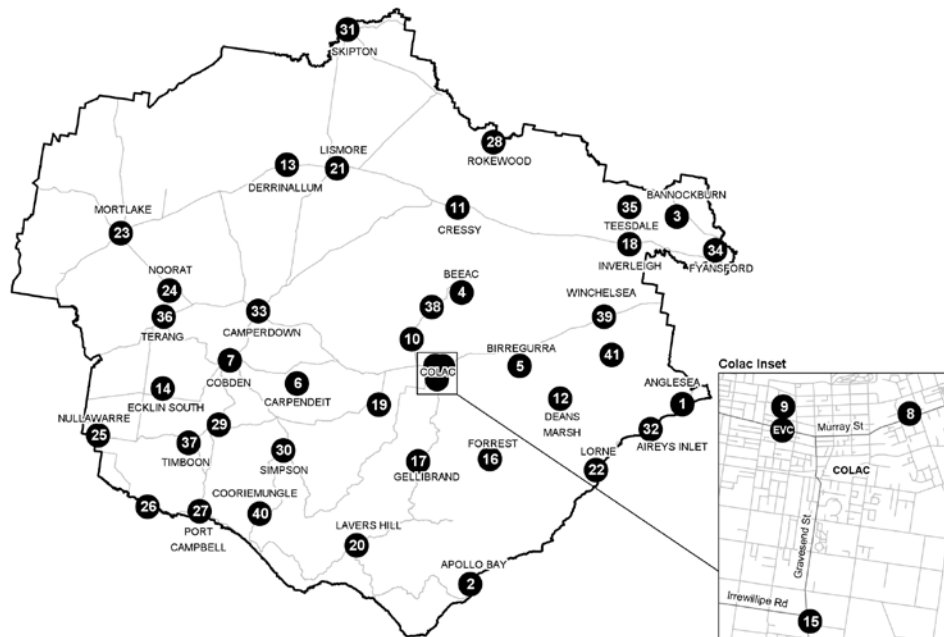
Victorian Electoral Commission



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. Anglesea Memorial Hall
McMillan Street
Anglesea NWA | 13. Derrinallum Community Hall
Main Street
Derrinallum AWA | 25. Nullawarre Public Hall
2184 Timboon-Nullawarre Road
Nullawarre AWA | 36. Terang Civic Hall
131 High Street
Terang AWA |
| 2. Apollo Bay Youth Club
19-21 Moore Street
Apollo Bay NWA | 14. Ecklin Hall
143 Timboon-Terang Road
Ecklin South AWA | 26. Peterborough Golf Club
20 Schomberg Road
Peterborough AWA | 37. Timboon P-12 College
Hamilton Street
Timboon NWA |
| 3. Bannockburn Cultural Centre
27 High Street
Bannockburn AWA | 15. Elliminyt Primary Events & Education Centre (EPEE)
Main Street
Elliminyt NWA | 27. Port Campbell Recreation Reserve
Desaily Street
Port Campbell NWA | 38. Warrion Public Hall
Coragulac-Beeac Road
Warrion NWA |
| 4. Beeac Primary School
35 Lang Street
Beeac AWA | 16. Forrest Primary School
10-12 Grant Street
Forrest AWA | 28. Rokewood Primary School
38 Aitchison Street
Rokewood AWA | 39. Winchelsea Senior Citizens Centre
36 Harding Street
Winchelsea AWA |
| 5. Birregurra Community Health Centre
28-30 Strachan Street
Birregurra AWA | 17. Gellibrand Hall
Colac-Lavers Hill Road
Gellibrand NWA | 29. Scotts Creek Public Hall
Cobden-Port Campbell Road
Scotts Creek NWA | 40. Wiridjil Hall
Princetown Road
Cooriemungle AWA |
| 6. Carpendeit Public Hall
corner Ansons and Carpendeit-
Bungador Roads
Carpendeit NWA | 18. Inverleigh Primary School
Hamilton Highway
Inverleigh NWA | 30. Simpson Primary School Early Childhood Centre
Barrumul Street
Simpson AWA | 41. Wurdale Hall
220 Wurdale Road
Winchelsea South NWA |
| 7. Cobden Scout Hall
1 Peter Street
Cobden NWA | 19. Irrewillipe Public Hall
2480 Timboon-Colac Road
Irrewillipe NWA | 31. Skipton Mechanics Institute
5 Anderson Street
Skipton AWA | |
| 8. Colac Primary School
65 Murray Street East
Colac NWA | 20. Lavers Hill Public Hall
47 Great Ocean Road
Lavers Hill NWA | 32. St Aidans Church
27-29 Great Ocean Road
Aireys Inlet NWA | |
| 9. Colac West Primary School
2-24 Ligar Street
Colac FWA | 21. Lismore Primary School
77 William Street
Lismore AWA | 33. St Paul's Anglican Parish
Church Hall
Church Street
Camperdown NWA | |
| 10. Cororooke Public Hall
580 Corangamite Lake Road
Cororooke AWA | 22. Lorne Senior Citizens Centre
Mountjoy Parade
Lorne NWA | 34. Stonehaven CFA Fire Station
corner Dog Rocks and
Fyansford-Gheringhap Roads
Fyansford AWA | |
| 11. Cressy Hall
Yarima Road
Cressy AWA | 23. Mortlake Soldiers Memorial Hall
Shaw Street
Mortlake AWA | 35. Teesdale Primary School
Sutherland Street
Teesdale AWA | |
| 12. Deans Marsh Public Hall
Pennyroyal Valley Road
Deans Marsh AWA | 24. Noorat Primary School
McKinnons Bridge Road
Noorat AWA | | |

**Early voting centres in
Polwarth District**

EVC. Polwarth State Election Office
310-312 Murray Street
Colac **NWA**

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

Appendix D: Analysis of informal votes

Informal votes at the Polwarth 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.

In the Polwarth by-election, 1,950 votes were informal (5.16% of total votes). The by-election informal voting rate was significantly greater than at the November 2014 State election, when 3.89% of the votes were informal. The actual number of informal votes increased by 351, despite a decline in the total number of votes. On the other hand, informal voting at the Polwarth by-election was the lowest at a by-election since the 2010 Altona by-election (4.96%). 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 for Polwarth increased from four at the State election to eight at the by-election. Although there were more candidates in the by-election than at the State election, the ALP did not stand a candidate. 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.

Informal voting rates ranged from 0.8% (1 vote) at Lavers Hill to 10% at Rokewood. Informal voting rates tended to be higher than average in the inland towns of Colac, Camperdown, Terang, Cobden, Winchelsea and Bannockburn. Very few postal votes were informal (2.3%), while the early informal voting rate (4.5%) was close to the district average.

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 in Table 1.

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 as '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

Table 2 shows the results of the survey for the by-election and for Polwarth at the 2014 State election.

Category	2015 by-election	2014 State election
Blank	767 (39.3%)	455 (29%)
Numbers – 1 only	134 (6.9%)	457 (29.1%)
Numbers – insufficient	181 (9.3%)	69 (4.4%)
Numbers – deliberate	98 (5%)	82 (5.2%)
Numbers – other	310 (15.9%)	64 (4.1%)
Ticks/crosses – preference	60 (3.1%)	134 (8.5%)
Ticks-crosses – deliberate	100 (5.1%)	64 (4.1%)
Ticks/crosses – other	6 (0.3%)	0
Writing – deliberate	236 (12.1%)	243 (15.5%)
Writing – other	58 (3%)	0
TOTAL	1,950	1,568

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

Blank ballot papers were by far the largest category of informal votes, with 767 votes, or 39.3% of the total. This was a significant increase from the 455 blank ballot papers (29%) cast by Polwarth voters at the 2014 State election.

'Numbers –'. Voters in the 'other' category were informal mainly through numbering mistakes – skipping or duplicating numbers. The large number of candidates for the Polwarth by-election appears to have contributed to the rise in this category. The proportion of informal votes of this type rose from 4.2% at the State election to 15.9% at the by-election, making this the second largest category.

'Writing – deliberate' was the third largest category, comprising 12.1% of informal votes. The proportion in this category declined slightly from the State election.

As at other by-elections, the proportion of informal ballot papers with a single 1 (6.9%) was much lower than at the State election (29.1%). 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	767 (39.3%)	455 (29%)
Numbers	723 (37.1%)	672 (42.9%)
Ticks/crosses	166 (8.5%)	198 (12.6%)
Writing	294 (15.1%)	243 (15.5%)
TOTAL	1,950	1,568

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

Numbering errors were a large category. Ticks and crosses were a small group in the by-election. 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	434 (22.37%)	389 (24.8%)
Apparently deliberate including blank	1,201 (61.6 %)	844 (53.8%)
Indicating preferences	375 (19.2%)	660 (42.1%)
TOTAL	1,950	1,568

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

The proportion of apparently deliberate informal votes was higher than at the State election, and the number of preference votes was greatly diminished. There appears to be a trend to a substantial protest vote at by-elections, particularly in normally safe seats.



Victorian Electoral Commission

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