



ELECTION REPORT

2018 South Australian State Election



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Message from the Electoral Commissioner



One of my major priorities as Electoral Commissioner was ensuring every eligible elector was supported to vote regardless of their location or circumstance. In the months leading up to the Election, many hours and resources were devoted to consulting with stakeholders and using their feedback to design accessible information and voting services. I am particularly proud of our efforts in this regard and the outcomes we achieved. Notable examples include consulting and partnering with a range of community organisations to design and distribute targeted information and services, as well as enfranchising electors in the APY Lands which resulted in increased enrolments and 18% more votes collected. I also note the trial of VoteAssist in partnership with the Royal Society for the Blind, which was the first ever special voting service for blind and low vision electors offered at a South Australian election.

In March 2018 South Australian electors voted to elect their representatives for the 54th Parliament of South Australia.

At the conclusion of the Election the Liberal Party won 25 seats in the House of Assembly and formed government. The Australian Labor Party won 19 seats, with independent candidates winning the remaining three seats. In the Legislative Council election, the Liberal and Labor parties each won four seats, Nick Xenophon's SA-Best won two seats, while The Greens took one seat.

The 2018 State Election was noteworthy for the significant changes to the electoral environment that both the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) and the 1.2 million South Australian electors were required to navigate.

Perhaps the most significant of these changes was the largest redistribution of electoral boundaries in recent history. Another major change was the introduction of optional preferential voting for the Legislative Council, and the associated need for ECSA to introduce scanning technology to manage the complexity of counting Legislative Council ballot papers.

In line with our State Election Service Charter, we sought to give electors confidence in our commitment to high-quality election service delivery and electoral integrity. I am pleased that most targets were met or exceeded, including 96.9% of all eligible South Australians enrolled. The overall elector satisfaction rating was 90% with 96% of electors satisfied with their voting experience on polling day.

Despite these successes, I recognise that there are a number of areas for improvement in the way that ECSA conducts state elections.

Indeed, much of the electoral legislation that sets out how ECSA must conduct elections has remained unchanged for decades. And while our reliance on tried and tested ways of doing things has allowed us to continue to deliver successful state elections, this has resulted in South Australia failing to keep pace with the electoral modernisation that has occurred in other jurisdictions. It is now well overdue for South Australia to modernise its electoral act and allow voting services to evolve in order to meet changing community expectations. Our electoral system must adapt and integrate technology to better reflect the digitally-connected environment we live in in the 21st century.

This Report contains 16 major recommendations for legislative change that cover a wide range of areas and that will, if actioned, deliver the electoral modernisation and reform that South Australia requires. To summarise some of the key themes and priorities of these recommendations, we must:

- Recognise the exponential growth in the number of South Australians who want to vote early and – like other jurisdictions around Australia – accommodate this preference for convenience voting by expanding our pre-poll voting services and removing the eligibility requirements for voting early. I recommend too that most pre-poll votes be issued as ordinary votes, so that ECSA can count ballot papers sooner. Without these changes, it is likely that election results will not be known for many days after polling day.
- Modernise our voting services to better accommodate the realities of modern society and continue to enfranchise all electors, including those unable to access a polling booth, those living in remote areas of the state, in prison, and those travelling interstate or overseas. Major changes are required to overhaul our approach to postal voting and to introduce mobile voting teams in metropolitan areas.

In addition to these ‘Calls for legislative change’, you will also note throughout this Report a number of sections titled ‘Modernising electoral services’. Although these innovations do not require legislative change, they represent substantial improvements to how we conduct elections and would require additional funding to achieve. They include:

- Full electronic roll mark-off at every polling booth, and printing House of Assembly ballot papers on demand at pre-poll voting centres. This will reduce queue waiting times, the potential for multiple voting and the incidence of polling official error.

- Opening a pre-poll centre in every House of Assembly electoral district and expanding opening hours to accommodate electors who work or whose commitments prevent them from voting during normal business hours.
- An ongoing education campaign aimed at young people and new electors to counter the declining levels of participation, formality and youth enrolment.

I note that while each of these would be exciting and valuable innovations for South Australia, all have been successfully adopted by other jurisdictions.

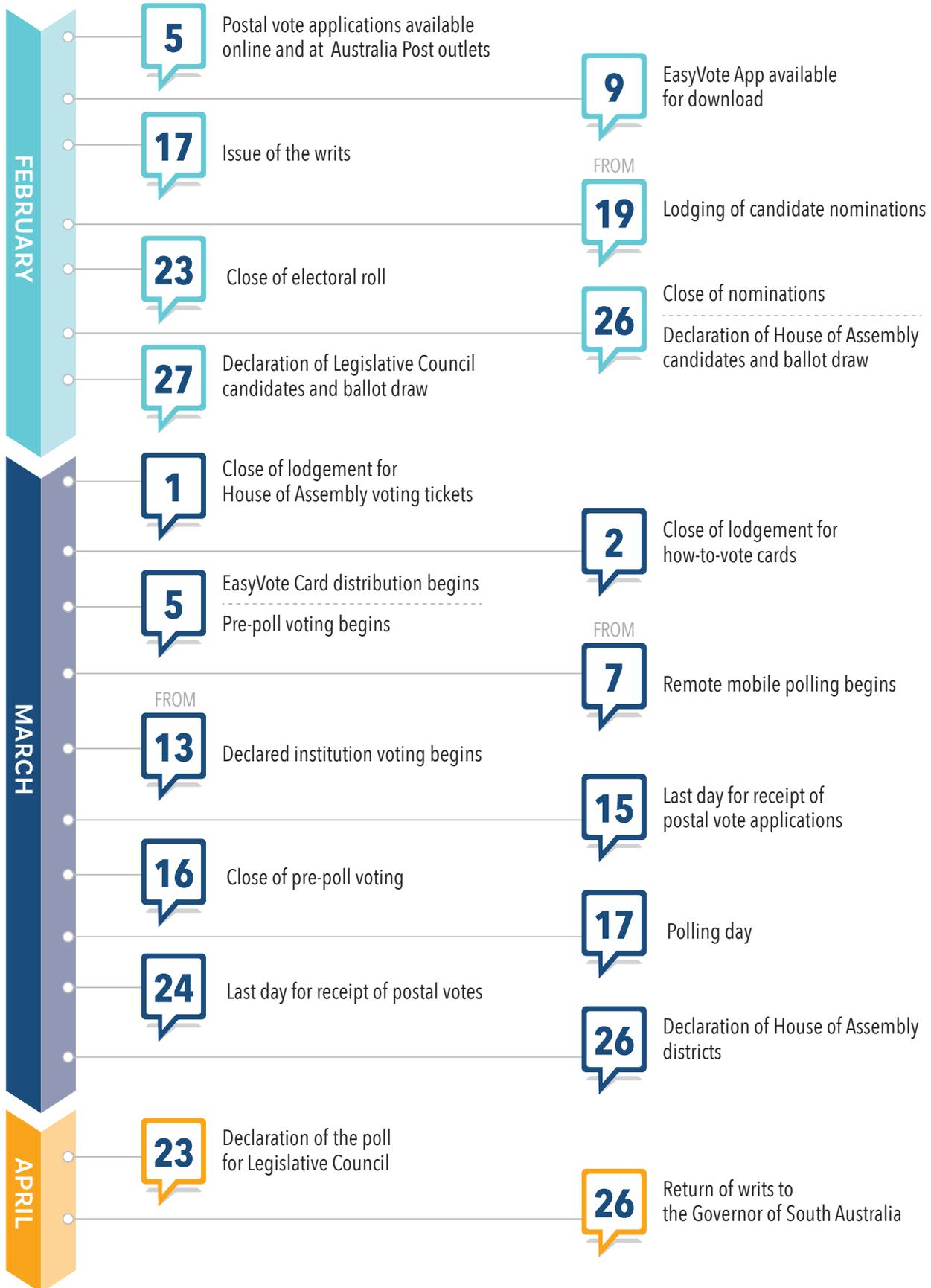
ECSA’s annual budget per elector is by far the lowest of any electoral commission in Australia and our ongoing staffing level is considerably lower than our closest equivalent, the Western Australian Electoral Commission. As argued within the Report, ECSA must ensure it has sufficient resources, staffing capacity, expertise and the best possible organisational structure to meet the challenge of running elections in a sustainable manner and deliver the program of modernisation outlined in this Report.

As a final note, I wish to thank all the people and organisations that contributed to the 2018 State Election. These include ECSA staff and our thousands of polling officials, but also many stakeholders such as community organisations, government agencies, candidates, party officials, registered officers, suppliers, and other electoral commissions. I express my sincere gratitude for your role in the Election’s success.

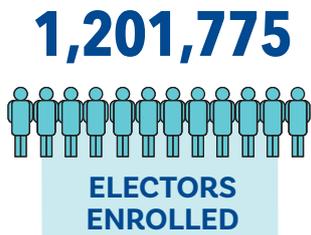


Mick Sherry
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

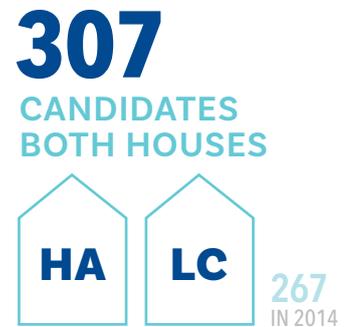
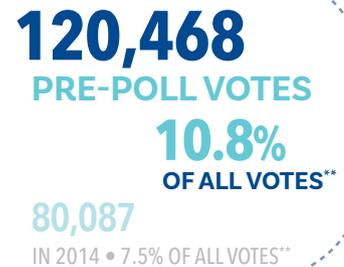
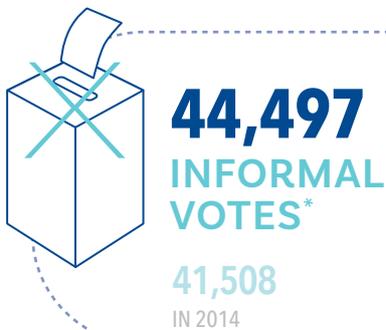
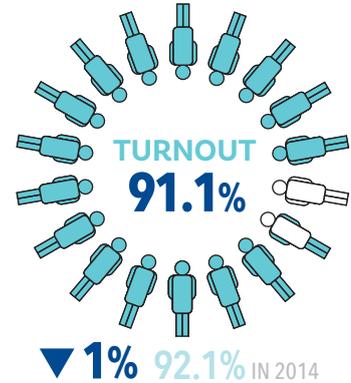
Election timeline



Election highlights



▲ **5.2%**
1,142,419
IN 2014



* Legislative Council Election

** Ballot papers issued

Results of the Election

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY RESULTS SUMMARY					
South Australian State Election, 17 March 2018					
Enrolled electors	1,201,775				
Votes cast	1,093,584		Turnout %	91.0	-0.9
Informal votes	44,871		Informal %	4.1	+1.0
Summary of votes by affiliation					
Affiliation	First preference votes	%	Swing	Seats won	Change
Liberal Party	398,182	38.0	-6.8	25	+3
Australian Labor Party	343,896	32.8	-3.0	19	-4
Nick Xenophon's SA-Best	148,360	14.1	+14.1	0	0
The Greens	69,826	6.7	-2.0	0	0
Australian Conservatives	31,826	3.0	-3.2	0	0
Dignity Party	15,565	1.5	+0.9	0	0
Animal Justice Party	3,262	0.3	+0.3	0	0
Danig Party	732	0.1	+0.1	0	0
Stop Population Growth Now	284	0.0	0.0	0	0
Independents (multiple)	36,780	3.5	-0.2	3	+1
Total	1,048,713			47	
Two-party-preferred					
Liberal	544,654	51.9	-1.1		
Labor	504,059	48.1	+1.1		

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RESULTS SUMMARY

South Australian State Election, 17 March 2018

Enrolled electors	1,201,775				
Votes cast	1,095,371		Turnout %	91.1	-1.0
Informal votes	44,497		Informal %	4.1	+0.1
Summary of votes by affiliation					
Affiliation	First preference votes	%	Swing	Seats won	Seats in parliament
Liberal Party	338,700	32.2	-3.8	4	9
Australian Labor Party	304,229	29.0	-2.0	4	8
Nick Xenophon's SA-Best	203,364	19.4	+19.4	2	2
The Greens	61,610	5.9	-0.6	1	2
Australian Conservatives	36,525	3.5	-0.9	0	0
Liberal Democrats	25,956	2.5	+1.9	0	0
Animal Justice Party	22,822	2.2	+1.3	0	0
Dignity Party	20,337	1.9	+1.0	0	0
Child Protection Party	15,530	1.5	+1.5	0	0
Stop Population Growth Now	12,878	1.2	+0.8	0	0
Advance SA	4,227	0.4	+0.4	0	1
Danig Party	94	0.0	0.0	0	0
Independents (multiple)	4,602	0.4	-16.9	0	0
Total	1,050,874			11	22

Recommendations for legislative change

This Election Report includes a number of recommendations for consideration by the Parliament of South Australia. The context and reasons for each of these recommendations can be found throughout the Report in break-out sections titled 'A call for legislative change'.

Recommendation 1.

Enrolment up to and on polling day s32B

That the *Electoral Act (1985)* (the Act) be amended to enable eligible electors to enrol up to and on polling day. After claiming enrolment, these electors would be allowed to cast declaration votes which would not be admitted to the count until an enrolment investigation had been satisfactorily completed in the week after polling day. See page 15.

Recommendation 2.

Compulsory voting exemption for itinerant electors s85

That the Act be amended so that itinerant electors are exempted from compulsory voting at state elections. See page 16.

Recommendation 3.

Enrolment of itinerant electors s31A

That the Act be amended to avoid inconsistency with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918)*, so that itinerant electors who fail to vote at a state election, or who remain outside South Australia for a continuous period of more than one month, continue to be entitled to be enrolled as itinerant electors. See page 16.

Recommendation 4.

Online portal for candidate lodgements s53, s53A, s54

That the Act be amended to prescribe a method for the electronic lodgement of nominations, voting tickets and how-to-vote cards to enable more accurate, timely and robust mechanisms that assist and support parties and candidates with meeting legislative obligations. See page 19.

Recommendation 5.

Public notices s18, s41, s48, s49, s77

That the Act be amended to remove the obligation for the Electoral Commissioner to publish public notices by advertisement in a newspaper circulating generally throughout the state, so that notices can instead be published on ECSA's website or by any other means the Electoral Commissioner deems appropriate. See page 43.

Recommendation 6.

Postal vote applications s73, s74, s91

That the Act be amended to remove the requirement for postal vote applications to be by letter and to bear the signature of the elector, so that a secure method can be implemented to allow electors to apply for postal votes online and by telephone with a form of identification that can ensure the validity of the returned votes. See page 51.

Recommendation 7.

Postal voting timeframes s74, s82, s91

That the Act be amended to modify the timeframes for postal voting, bringing forward the deadline to apply for a postal vote from 5pm on the Thursday prior to polling day to:

- i. 5pm on the Tuesday prior to polling day for applications from South Australian locations; and
- ii. 5pm on the Friday eight days prior to polling day for applications from interstate and overseas locations. See page 51.

Recommendation 8.

Electronic postal voting s74

That the Act be amended to allow ECSA to replace long-distance postal voting for electors overseas, in non-metropolitan interstate locations, as well as remote locations of South Australia, with a robust and secure system for the electronic delivery and return of ballot papers. Should this recommendation be agreed Recommendation 7(ii) would not be required. See page 52.

Recommendation 9.

Postal voting for prisoners reg 9A

That the *Electoral Regulations (2009)* be amended so that a reason of a prescribed nature allows an eligible resident of any correctional institution to make a declaration vote by post. See page 53.

Recommendation 10.

Register of declaration voters s73, s74

That the Act be amended to change the name 'registered declaration voter' to 'general postal voter' and to harmonise the eligibility criteria of the registered declaration voter program with the criteria of the Commonwealth general postal voter program. See page 54.

Recommendation 11.

Eligibility criteria for pre-poll voting s71

That the Act be amended to remove eligibility criteria for pre-poll voting to allow any enrolled elector to opt for convenience voting at a pre-poll voting centre in the fortnight prior to polling day. See page 56.

Recommendation 12.

Encouragement of voting on polling day s8

That the Act be amended to remove the direction for the Electoral Commissioner to encourage the casting of votes at a polling booth on polling day. See page 56.

Recommendation 13.

Issue of ordinary votes at pre-poll centres s71

That the Act be amended so that ordinary votes may be issued at pre-poll voting centres located within the elector's own district. See page 57.

Recommendation 14.

Mobile polling s77

That the Act be amended to remove references to places within a remote subdivision to allow the Electoral Commissioner to establish mobile polling booths at any location in the state which he or she deems appropriate. See page 63.

Recommendation 15.

Declared institutions s83

That the Act be amended to abolish section 83 concerning declared institutions and electoral visitors, which will be replaced instead by mobile polling teams able to visit and take votes at any location which the Electoral Commissioner deems appropriate. See page 63.

Recommendation 16.

Scrutiny of ordinary pre-poll votes s89

That the Act be amended to allow the scrutiny to commence before the close of polling so that ordinary votes cast at pre-poll voting centres (if Recommendation 13 is taken up by Parliament) can be scrutinised and counted on polling day under suitably tight security conditions to guarantee the secrecy of the count until after the close of poll. See page 70.

Recommendations from the 2014 Election Report

Following the 2014 State Election, ECSA made a number of recommendations for legislative change which were not acted upon. ECSA is of the view that some of those recommendations remain necessary for the improved administration of elections and requests that Parliament give them further consideration.

Recommendation 1.

Staff s12

Provide for the setting of a scale of fees and allowances to be fixed by the Electoral Commissioner based upon the relevant public sector award rather than by the Minister.

Recommendation 2.

Printing of rolls s25

That the Act be amended to remove this section or delete reference to 'or the Minister so directs' as the rolls are available in electronic form and prepared for close of rolls for any relevant election.

Recommendation 3.

Inspection and provision of rolls s26

That the Act be amended to remove reference to 'of the latest prints' of the rolls if section 25 is removed under the previous recommendation.

Recommendation 9.

Properly staffed polling booths to be provided for districts s65

That the Act be amended to provide the Returning Officer with the ability to establish a polling booth at each polling place 'for' the district rather than 'within' the district to allow for the establishment of polling booths outside the district. This will assist with polling for a by-election when a suitable polling location may exist outside of the designated district.

Recommendation 10.

Preparation of certain electoral material s66

That the Act be amended so that how-to-vote cards submitted by candidates be required to be in a form prescribed by regulation. This will provide clarity and standardise design.

Recommendation 11.

Distance eligibility criteria s71

That the Act be amended to change the distance qualification criteria from 8 to 20 kilometres so that all electors entitled to apply for a declaration vote meet the same distance qualification, as previously altered for those seeking inclusion on the register of declaration voters.

Recommendation 25.

Limitations on size of electoral advertisements s115

That the Act be amended to remove limitations on the size of electoral advertisements.

Recommendation 30.

Injunctions s132

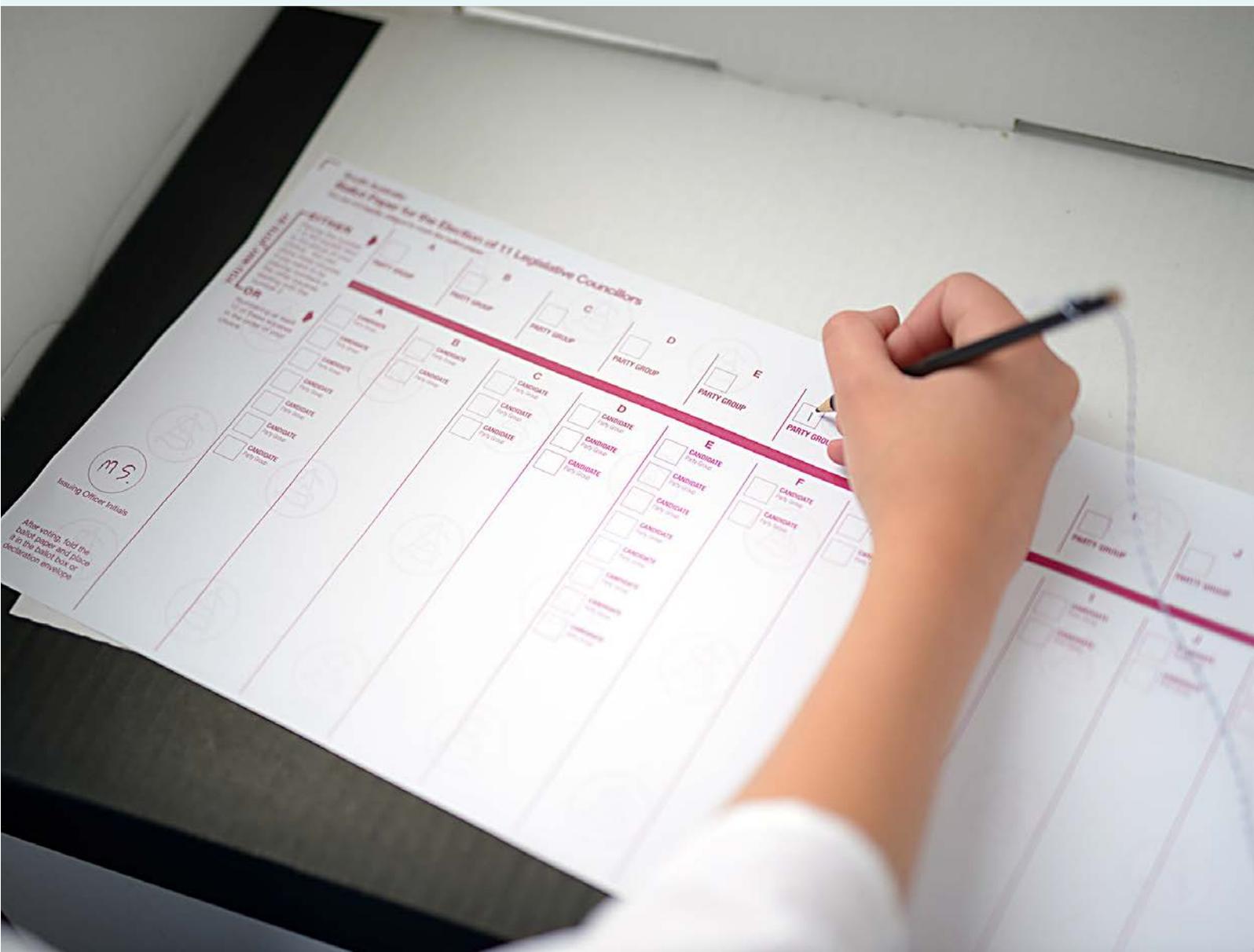
That the Act be amended so that injunctive relief may be sought in relation to contravention of, or non-compliance with, all of Division 2 of Part 13, including special provisions relating to how-to-vote cards under s112A, where a person may distribute a how-to-vote card in breach of the requirements.

Election participants and environment

The election of South Australia's 54th Parliament took place against the backdrop of significant changes in the electoral landscape compared to previous elections. These included an extensive redistribution of the House of Assembly electoral boundaries, as well as substantive changes to the *Electoral Act (1985)* (the Act) enacted by the South Australian Parliament in the four years since the previous election. These included the abolition of voting tickets and the introduction of optional preferential voting for the Legislative Council.

This election saw an upswing in both the number of electors enrolled to vote and the number of nominations lodged. While encouraging, the increase in enrolled electors masks a declining rate of youth enrolment.

In this chapter, topics include the electoral redistribution, legislative changes, the issue of the writs, enrolment, and nominations for both houses of Parliament. We also introduce the new funding and disclosure arrangements which are covered in more detail in Chapter Six and provide information about party registration. All of these elements set the scene for the 2018 State Election.



ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

After every state election, South Australia's independent Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission (EDBC) examines the boundaries of the House of Assembly electoral districts to ensure that South Australian electors continue to have effective representation as demographics change. Serving on the three-person 2016 EDBC were the Chair, the Honourable Justice Ann Vanstone (senior puisne Judge of the Supreme Court), Mr David Gully (the Acting Electoral Commissioner) and Mr Michael Burdett (the Surveyor-General).

The EDBC published its Order on 7 December 2016 in which it altered all but one of the state's House of Assembly districts (Mount Gambier). Boundaries were redrawn – substantially in some areas – with the goal of redistributing the population relatively equally, maintaining communities of interest to the extent possible, and as far as practicable, to achieve a parliamentary majority for the party that won the two-party preferred vote.

The redistribution resulted in around 400,000 electors changing electoral districts and a further 81,000 electors in seven districts having their districts renamed. These seven districts were:

- Badcoe (formerly Ashford)
- Black (formerly Mitchell)
- Elizabeth (formerly Little Para)
- Gibson (formerly Bright)
- Hurtle Vale (formerly Fisher)
- King (formerly Napier)
- Narungga (formerly Goyder)

Details about the 2016 redistribution as well as official maps of the redrawn and renamed districts were published in the 2016 Report of the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission and on the EDBC's website (edbc.sa.gov.au). Electors were also able to explore the boundaries and find their electoral district on the new interactive map ECSA launched before the State Election at ecsa.sa.gov.au/map.

ABOVE, ECSA'S INTERACTIVE BOUNDARIES MAP, 2014 BOUNDARIES IN BLUE, 2018 IN RED.

Despite ECSA's own efforts to publicise the unprecedented scale of the 2016 redistribution and its impact on electors through the interactive map and the distribution to every enrolled elector of an EasyVote Card detailing their electoral district, many South Australians remained unaware of the changes ordered by the EDBC.

According to ECSA's 2018 Surveys of Electors, only one in three electors (32%) were aware of whether their district had changed or not since the 2014 State Election. Among electors who were aware of the redistribution, there was broad ignorance about why it had been ordered, with significant proportions blaming gerrymandering (28%) or unable to provide an explanation (33%).

Many electors were under the impression that ECSA had been responsible for the boundaries redraw. This misperception contributed to a decrease in the number of electors who felt that ECSA had conducted the State Election impartially from 93% in 2014 to 79% in 2018. The most frequently given reason for this change was a perception that the boundaries redistribution had been unfair.

Confusion over who is responsible for redrawing boundaries points to a need for the EDBC to do more to raise public awareness about any future changes it orders to boundaries. ECSA intends to discuss with the Chair of the EDBC the need to directly inform all residents of areas affected by boundary redistributions about the changes it orders and the reasons for those changes.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Act gives effect to South Australians' right to vote in state elections by setting the framework for the state electoral process. ECSA conducts state elections in accordance with its provisions.

A range of electoral reforms enacted by the South Australian Parliament since 2014 had an impact on the conduct of the 2018 State Election. Major changes included the following (with a complete list available in Appendix 3):

Changes to the method of voting for the Legislative Council

Optional preferential voting was introduced for the Legislative Council. This allowed electors to either mark preferences above the line for more than one group, or to vote below the line by marking a minimum of 12 preferences for candidates instead of having to preference all candidates below the line as previously required.

Abolition of ticket voting for the Legislative Council

Group voting tickets for Legislative Council elections were removed from the Act in 2017, meaning that political parties or groups contesting the elections no longer determine the preference flow for above-the-line votes cast for that party or group.

Reduction of the deposit paid by House of Assembly candidates

From 2018, candidates nominating for election to the House of Assembly needed to pay a deposit of \$1,000, a significant reduction from the previous \$3,000. Another amendment to the Act meant that cash was no longer acceptable as a method of payment for a nomination deposit.

Electronically assisted voting for vision-impaired electors

Electronically assisted voting was authorised to allow electors whose vision is impaired to vote independently at state elections without seeking assistance. This provided this category of electors with the means of casting an independent and secret ballot (see page 64 to read about the trial of VoteAssist at the Election).

Obligation to promote voting at a polling booth on polling day

An obligation was placed on the Electoral Commissioner to promote and encourage the casting of votes at a polling booth on polling day. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter Four.

ISSUE OF THE WRITS

The trigger for a state election is the issue of the writs, which occurs 28 days before polling day. On Saturday 17 February 2018, the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, proclaimed the prorogation of Parliament and dissolution of the House of Assembly and issued writs for the 2018 State Election. One writ was issued for the election of the 47 Members of the House of Assembly and another for the election of 11 Members of the Legislative Council.

The writs set out the timetable for the election and provided the Electoral Commissioner with 74 days to successfully complete the elections before the writs had to be returned to the Governor.

ENROLMENT

At the close of rolls on Friday 23 February 2018, 1,201,775 electors were registered on the state electoral roll and eligible to vote at the State Election, a significant increase of 5.2% from the 2014 Election and the largest ever roll for a South Australian election. This increase reflects population growth, the effects of the federal direct enrolment program and a surge of enrolments in 2017 for the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey. The average number of electors per House of Assembly electoral district was 25,570, with the highest number of electors enrolled in Elizabeth (28,399) and the lowest in Flinders (22,756).

South Australians responded positively to ECSA's calls for enrolment with approximately 25,000 enrolments and updates effected in the month leading up to the close of rolls. During the six days from the issue of the writs to the close of the rolls there were approximately 11,900 enrolments and updates to the electoral roll, representing a decrease of 20.6% from the same period in 2014.

Despite this success, a breakdown of the electoral roll by age groups shows that a significantly high proportion of younger South Australians were not on the roll for the Election.

An estimated 37.4% of eligible 18-year-olds (up from 31.9% in 2014) and an estimated 13.2% of all eligible 18 to 24-year-olds were not enrolled to vote. These estimates of electors against the voting eligible population were calculated by the AEC by reducing an estimate of non-eligible persons from the total population. However, for consistency with past

Election Reports they should also be compared with the number of enrolled electors estimated against the total population of South Australians of voting age. By this measure, 38.9% of 18-year-olds and 25.4% of 18 to 24 year-olds were not on the roll at this election.

ELECTORS ENROLLED BY AGE GROUP

Age group	No.	% of Voting Age Population enrolled (estimated)	% of Voting Eligible Population enrolled (estimated)
18	12,986	61.1	62.6
19	14,322	66.0	80.0
20-24	91,003	78.6	93.0
18-24	118,311	74.6	86.8
25-34	184,823	79.9	95.7
35-44	183,292	86.4	97.7
45-54	207,006	90.9	97.8
55-64	205,914	95.2	98.5
65+	302,429	97.1	99.8
Total	1,201,775	88.5	96.9

- Numbers enrolled is as at 23 February 2018 (including provisional electors turning 18 by polling day 17 March 2018)
- Voting Age Population percentages are calculated using total Estimated SA Resident Population (ERP) 18+ years as at June 2017 (ABS Cat No. 3101.0 Updated time series released December 2017) with no reduction for non-eligible persons
- Voting Eligible Population percentages are calculated using AEC estimates as at 31 March 2018 based on ABS Estimated Eligible Population data adjusted for British Subjects, those of unsound mind, overseas electors, new citizens and growth estimates.

ECSA believes there is more work to be done to improve enrolment levels among young people, citizens from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Aboriginal South Australians, including those living in the APY Lands and other remote communities.

To counter the lower rate of enrolment among these groups, ECSA plans to look for opportunities to further enhance its enrolment strategy ahead of the next State Election. This will support a comprehensive enrolment drive in collaboration with the AEC which includes targeted engagement activities for underrepresented sectors of the population such as young people, CALD groups and Aboriginal citizens. ECSA's efforts to build engagement with electors in CALD and Aboriginal communities are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three of this Report.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

ENROLMENT ON THE DAY

The declining rate of enrolment of younger electors and the increasing numbers of non-voters are a matter of concern not isolated to South Australia. Indeed, there has been longstanding unease about both trends among electoral commissions and commentators in Australia, New Zealand and further afield.

One of the solutions to address falling participation rates successfully implemented by ECSA's counterparts in New South Wales (NSW), New Zealand (NZ), Queensland and Victoria (as well as most Canadian jurisdictions) has been to allow people to enrol after the close of rolls. Although the commissions of these jurisdictions continue to have and to advertise a close of rolls, they allow enrolment on the day as a 'savings provision' to enfranchise people who inadvertently miss the close of rolls. This helps avoid the situation at each election where thousands of people turn up to polling booths and are told they are not on the roll and cannot vote.

ECSA did not record the number of people who attended a polling place at the 2018 State Election and walked away when told they were not on the roll, but we are aware from polling official feedback that there were many potential electors in this circumstance. Records were kept of those who insisted on casting a vote, claiming there must have been an error with the roll. Of the 7,318 people who did so in 2018, just 153 (2%) had their House of Assembly vote counted and 852 (12%) their Legislative Council vote counted, after investigation of their enrolment.

NSW (since 2011) and Victoria (since 2010) permit enrolment up to and including on polling day. NZ (since 2005) and Queensland (since 2017) allow enrolment and voting during the early voting period but not on polling day itself - although Elections NZ is currently investigating extending enrolment to polling day.

The Victorian and NSW electoral commissions consider enrolment on the day a success. In both jurisdictions, the number of voters who have made use of this provision has significantly increased: in NSW from 20,960 in 2011 to 41,978 in 2015; in Victoria from 34,546 in 2010 to 50,653 in 2014. In NZ, where late enrolment has been in place longer, there has been an even more significant rise in enrolments after the close of rolls: from 35,363 in 2005 to 130,757 in 2017 (including 53,000 at pre-poll centres).

Given the success of late enrolment options elsewhere in Australasia, ECSA seeks legislative change to bring South Australia into line with other jurisdictions and allow eligible electors to enrol up to and on polling day. Although ECSA would continue to actively promote the close of rolls, enrolment on the day would be a savings provision to help ensure that as many South Australians as possible can participate in state elections.

Recommendation 1.

That the Act be amended to enable eligible electors to enrol up to and on polling day. After claiming enrolment, these electors would be allowed to cast declaration votes which would not be admitted to the count until an enrolment investigation had been satisfactorily completed in the week after polling day.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

ITINERANT ELECTORS

There is broad consensus in Australia that the lack of a permanent residential address should not disenfranchise people from voting. All Australian jurisdictions, including South Australia, provide a special category of enrolment for people who do not have a fixed address. Broadly speaking, two categories of citizens are covered by the 'itinerant electors' enrolment category: people experiencing homelessness and people who are long-term travellers within Australia who do not have a permanent address to return to (some of whom are referred to colloquially as 'grey nomads').

Before the 2018 State Election, ECSA's stakeholder partners from the homeless sector raised concerns during consultation that by encouraging their clients to enrol as itinerant electors and participate in the Election, they could be setting them up for failure. Concern centred on the fact that under the Act while enrolment is not compulsory for itinerant electors, voting is compulsory. If a homeless person takes the positive step of enrolling as an itinerant elector, and then for whatever reason does not vote at an election, they will be issued with a failure to vote notice which they will be unlikely to receive given their lack of a fixed address. A failure to respond will then become a fine which left unpaid leads to accumulated late payment fees and potentially court action. As stakeholders pointed out, far from connecting homeless people with the democratic process, the current system is likely to exacerbate the fears and suspicion that many hold towards government.

To resolve this issue and remove the barriers to electoral participation by homeless people, other jurisdictions including the Commonwealth and NSW have amended legislation to exempt itinerant electors from compulsory voting. This allows electoral commissions in these jurisdictions to encourage homeless people to enrol and vote without fear of consequences if they fail to do so. ECSA recommends legislative change to harmonise South Australia's legislation with the Commonwealth,

and exempt itinerant electors from compulsory voting at state elections. This requires Parliament to add being an itinerant elector to section 85(8) of the Act.

ECSA also seeks legislative changes to section 31A(10) of the Act so that itinerant electors who fail to vote at a state election or who remain outside the state for a period of more than one month are not stripped of itinerant status and removed from the electoral roll. Both provisions are inconsistent with the Commonwealth legislation, which leads to a situation whereby South Australians who enrol as itinerant electors and then do not vote or go travelling are removed from the roll for state elections but continue to be enrolled for federal elections. This is another case where harmonisation with the Commonwealth would be beneficial. This provision is important for grey nomads and other non-overseas travellers, who are currently unable to remain on the state roll if they leave the state for more than one month.

Recommendation 2.

That the Act be amended so that itinerant electors are exempted from compulsory voting at state elections.

Recommendation 3.

That the Act be amended to avoid inconsistency with the Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918), so that itinerant electors who fail to vote at a state election, or who remain outside South Australia for a continuous period of more than one month, continue to be entitled to be enrolled as itinerant electors.

PARTY REGISTRATION

The cut-off date for lodging an application to register a political party for the 2018 State Election was 15 September 2017. ECSA published reminders about the application deadline on its website and social media.

There was keen interest in party registration in the lead-up to the State Election. ECSA received applications for registration from five new political parties, four of which were registered in time for the election. One application did not meet the requirements of the Act in time for the cut-off date resulting in that party not being registered for the election.

Following a review of the 2017 Annual Returns, two parties were identified as not meeting their ongoing registration requirements. Both were given an opportunity to demonstrate that they were able to meet their registration requirements. While one party, the Danig Party of Australia (SA Division), was able to satisfactorily show that it had met the requirements, the other party, Shooters and Fishers Party SA, was unable to do so and was subsequently de-registered on 13 February 2018 for failing to meet the requirements of section 43A of the Act.

By the time the writs were issued in February 2018, a total of 14 parties were registered, with 12 of them standing candidates at the Election, compared to 15 in 2014. A full list of registered political parties for the 2018 State Election can be found in Appendix 2.

NOMINATIONS

In 2018, the nomination period opened on Monday 19 February and closed at 12 noon on Monday 26 February. Candidates endorsed by political parties were required to submit their nominations by 5pm on Friday 23 February. On 26 and 27 February, ECSA conducted the declaration of candidates and then draws for position of names on ballot papers for each House of Assembly district and the Legislative Council respectively.

At the close of nominations, ECSA had received 307 nominations for the 2018 State Election, a significant increase on the 267 nominations received in 2014. There were 264 candidates for the 47 House of Assembly districts, up from 204 in 2014, an average of six candidates per district.

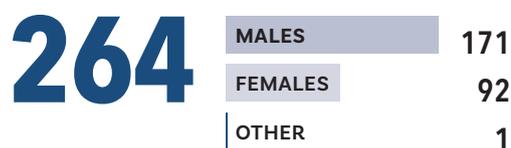
FAST FACTS



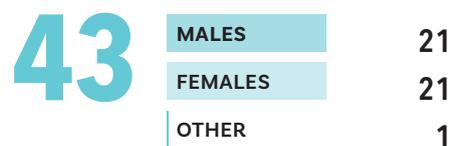
CANDIDATES CONTESTED 2018 STATE ELECTION

(267 CANDIDATES IN 2014)

2018 HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



2018 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



CANDIDATES FOR EACH HOUSE BY GENDER, 1997-2018

ELECTION	LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL			HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			TOTAL				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male		Female		Total
							No.	%	No.	%	
1997	32	19	51	140	57	197	172	69.4	76	30.6	248
2002	50	26	76	195	107	302	245	64.8	133	35.2	378
2006	34	20	54	179	90	269	213	65.9	110	34.1	323
2010	50	24	74	178	75	253	228	69.7	99	30.3	327
2014	41	22	63	138	66	204	179	67.0	88	33.0	267
2018*	21	21	43	171	92	264	192	62.5	113	36.8	307

* For the first time at the 2018 State Election nomination forms included the option for candidates to self-identify as other. Because one candidate for each House identified as other, the totals for this row in the table do not add up perfectly.

This increase may have reflected the substantial reduction in the nomination deposit candidates were required to pay. A total of 43 candidates nominated to contest the 11 vacancies in the Legislative Council, compared with 63 in 2014. Across all elections, 288 candidates were endorsed by registered political parties and 19 candidates stood as independents.

Of the nominations, 62.5% were male and 36.8% were female, with two candidates self-identifying as 'other'. The number of female candidates nominating in 2018 was the highest since 2002 and as a percentage of total nominations, at 36.8% was the highest rate of female participation ever recorded in South Australia.

In late January 2018, ECSA hosted briefings and information sessions for registered parties and prospective candidates. There were five briefing sessions for parties, comprising one each for the Labor Party, Liberal Party and SA-Best, with a separate session for all other registered parties, and one for unendorsed candidates.

The briefings gave parties and candidates an opportunity to meet and ask questions of ECSA staff and hear first-hand about the nomination process, postal vote processing, complaints handling, vote counting and results.



A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

ONLINE PORTAL FOR CANDIDATE LODGEMENTS

The lodging and checking processes for nominations, how-to-vote (HTV) cards and voting tickets for the 2018 State Election was labour intensive for candidates, political parties and key ECSA staff. The processing of nominations and other lodged election materials within tight legislative deadlines can be one of the most challenging parts of a state election.

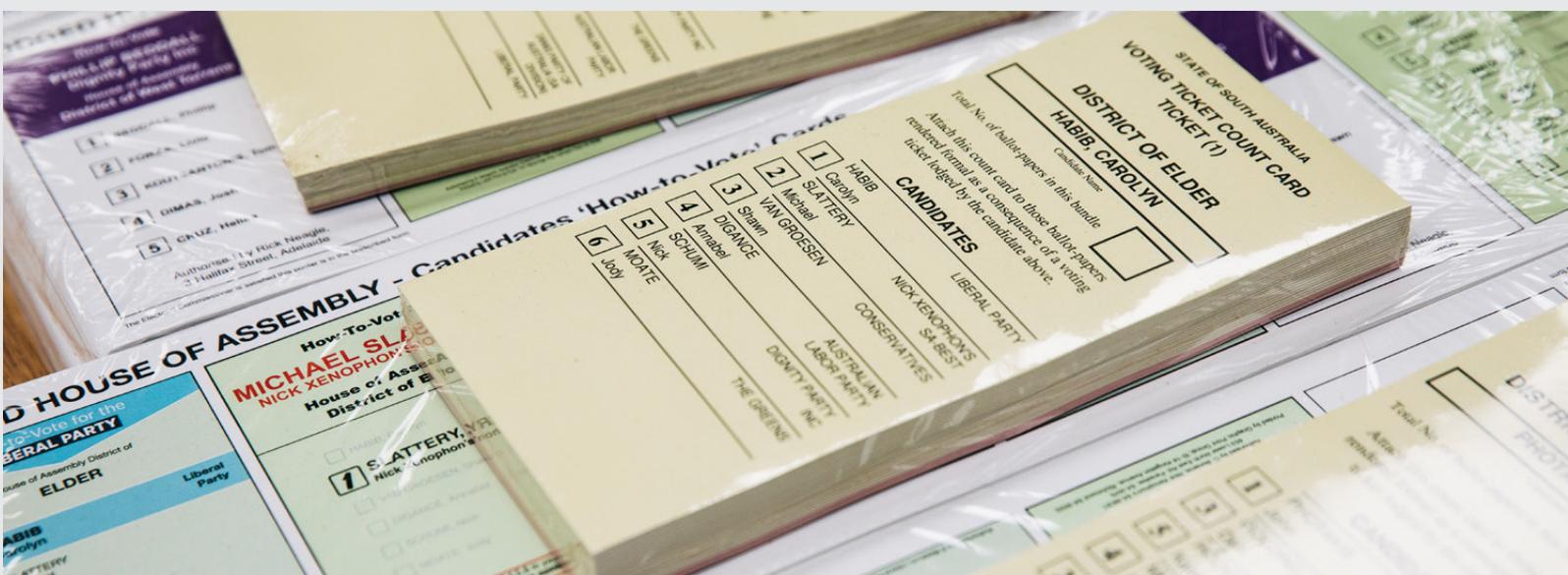
Over the past two decades, despite advances in technology, there has been little substantive change to the manner in which nominations, HTV cards and voting tickets may be lodged. The process continues to involve lodgement of paper forms, followed by manual data entry and multiple rounds of checking by senior staff. Feedback from candidates and registered officers included calls for a more modern method for lodgements.

Technology offers the ability to significantly reduce the time and resources required for processing nominations, HTV cards, voting tickets and other candidate-related information currently collected in paper forms. It can also allow for electronic lodgement of forms to enhance accuracy and streamline quality assurance practices.

For the 2022 State Election, ECSA seeks legislative support for a comprehensive candidate portal on the ECSA website containing all the tools that candidates and political parties need to complete and lodge their nominations correctly. Within the candidate portal, each candidate or party's approved nomination data can then be used to automatically populate the fields of HTV cards and voting tickets, thereby reducing the margin for error. Candidates and parties will be able to arrange their preferences and then download a version to provide to their graphic designers which fully complies with the regulations. Once prepared, the final HTV cards would be uploaded to the portal for checking and lodgement, avoiding issues which some parties experienced in 2018 with version control and email lodgement.

Recommendation 4.

That the Act be amended to prescribe a method for the electronic lodgement of nominations, voting tickets and how-to-vote cards to enable more accurate, timely and robust mechanisms that assist and support parties and candidates with meeting legislative obligations.



FUNDING AND DISCLOSURE EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

On 1 July 2015, Part 13A (Election funding, expenditure and disclosure) was inserted into the Act. This marked the first introduction of a funding and disclosure scheme in South Australia and this State Election was the first to have the scheme in operation.

In the lead-up to the Election, ECSA delivered a comprehensive education and engagement program to inform participants of their obligations under the new funding and disclosure scheme. ECSA produced extensive guides and conducted briefing sessions for political parties, associated entities, third parties and candidates. Although political parties and associated entities had been engaged and lodging periodic returns since July 2015, they still benefited from education on the increased disclosure requirements during an election period.

ECSA maintained regular communication with stakeholders through emails, telephone calls, lodgement reminders and a weekly Funding and Disclosure Newsletter. Although some compliance issues were identified during the election, ECSA took a collaborative approach and with its close working relationship with stakeholders was successful in implementing the funding and disclosure scheme for the 2018 State Election.

For more information on funding and disclosure, see Chapter Six.

Stakeholders

The funding and disclosure stakeholders for the 2018 State Election are summarised below:

15
REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

27
ASSOCIATED ENTITIES

7
THIRD PARTY CAMPAIGNERS

17
INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES

1
INDEPENDENT GROUP

46
DONORS

Preparing for polling day

INTRODUCTION

The sheer scale of the task and the enormous logistical planning required to stage a state election make it unlike any other event in South Australia. Organisation and precision are key to ensuring every element falls into place in the right quantity at the right time so that the election of a new parliament runs as smoothly as possible. The election is delivered by ECSA within tight timeframes as set out by legislation and with the utmost accuracy, transparency and integrity.

In the months before the election, the relatively small ECSA staff of around 30 swells to more than 5,600 to ensure the more than 1.2 million enrolled South Australians can cast their votes.

Staff need to be trained, premises rented, furniture organised, ballot papers and manuals printed, equipment ordered, stored and then delivered on time. Offices for the 47 Returning Officers must be established and arrangements made for 693 polling places and 22 pre-poll centres located in metropolitan, regional and remote areas with electoral staff on hand to make it all happen.

The complexity of preparing for the Election was increased by adverse weather predictions. For polling day the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) had forecast high temperatures and wind with gusts of up to 110 kilometres an hour, prompting a statewide severe fire danger warning from the Country Fire Service (CFS) which meant an additional degree of planning for ECSA staff.

With the possibility of such conditions during a March election, consultation with emergency services stakeholders including the CFS, BOM and SA Police had already been undertaken with contingency plans in place should any fire incident disrupt voting services by forcing the closure of polling places.

Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plans provided guidance on the steps required. Fortunately, the extreme weather forecast for polling day did not eventuate with an early change keeping temperatures well below predicted levels across the state and light showers present in many areas.



STAFFING

For the 2018 State Election staff were employed in 7,282 separate roles, compared to 7,123 roles for the 2014 election, reflecting a small increase of about 2%. The following tables show the staff categories and number of staff in each category.

ELECTION WORKFORCE BY CATEGORY

ROLES PERFORMED	2018 NO.	2014 NO.
Electoral district administration		
Returning Officers	48	48
Assistant Returning Officers	11	11
District Support Officers	36	0
Clerical Assistants in district offices	767	670
	862	729
Voting before polling day		
Pre-poll venues	280	202
Electoral Visitors	177	94
Mobile polling teams	37	12
	494	308
Voting on polling day		
Polling Booth Managers	694	699
Deputy Polling Booth Managers, Declaration Issuing Officers and Polling Officials	4,481	4,645
Polling assistants	440	394
	5,615	5,738
Support functions		
Central Processing Centre	286	317
Call centre	25	31
Total number of roles undertaken	7,282	7,123

The employment system used in 2018 did not record demographic information for the election workforce such as the ability to speak languages other than English, or disability status. ECSA will ensure this information is recorded at the next State Election through the introduction of a new and improved employment system and process for engaging members of the public in the election workforce.



RETURNING OFFICERS

Returning Officers are directly responsible to the Electoral Commissioner for the conduct of the election for a designated House of Assembly district and are required to perform specific duties that cannot be delegated. These include recruitment of polling booth managers, the declaration of nominations and draw for position of names on ballot papers, management of scrutiny procedures and completion of election returns and declaration of the poll. An additional Returning Officer is responsible for conducting the Legislative Council election.

All 47 House of Assembly Returning Officers were appointed and assigned to their electoral districts by September 2017. Among them, 25 had previously worked as a Returning Officer at a State Election while 22 were new to the role but in most cases were experienced polling booth managers. To fill the new positions, a number of individuals were invited to provide an expression of interest in becoming a Returning Officer for the 2018 State Election. All applicants underwent a testing and interview session which included practical exercises such as conducting a count and presenting training. From this process, the 22 new Returning Officers were chosen.

Some key facts about Returning Officers for the 2018 State Election:

- 42 said they would be interested in working on an election again
- 60% were more than 55 years of age
- 29% were more than 65 years of age.

RETURNING OFFICER LIAISON OFFICERS

Four Returning Officer Liaison Officers were appointed to mentor and support Returning Officers, as well as to provide support and advice during rechecks and recounts and monitor election progress especially in districts where a close count was expected.

DISTRICT SUPPORT OFFICERS

In 2016 ECSA contributed, through an Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand working group, to the development of a set of new Ballot Paper Handling Guidelines. These are intended to ensure the security of ballot papers from production through to counting, and finally, authorised destruction.

To help ensure these principles were properly implemented at the 2018 State Election, and in recognition of the need to provide Returning Officers with additional support, ECSA recruited a new group of senior polling officials known as District Support Officers (DSOs). The DSOs fulfilled a similar role in metropolitan districts to the role played since 2010 in country districts by Assistant Returning Officers.

The 36 DSOs worked closely with Returning Officers with a particular focus on the complex logistical elements of ballot paper management, receipt and delivery of election materials and managing declaration vote processing. In addition, the DSOs provide a pool of experienced senior staff that ECSA can draw from to fill Returning Officer positions at future elections.



Ex-Holden staff engaged for the State Election



During preparations for the 2018 State Election the closure of the Holden plant in Elizabeth presented an opportunity for ECSA to engage ex-Holden workers to assist with the election. In October 2017 ECSA contacted the Holden Transition Centre and secured nine former Holden staff.

The skills and experience the nine staff had developed over many years at Holden proved to be highly transferable to election work. Each of the staff made an outstanding contribution to the delivery of the election across a range of vital tasks including transport, logistics, sorting and processing, kit packing and stock management.

One example is Tom Wetherall, who worked at Holden for 15 years including as a Work Group Leader supervising the production line – skills he ably transferred to his role as ECSA’s Warehouse Supervisor coordinating the assembly and packing of all the materials sent out to polling locations around the state.

Tom enjoyed the camaraderie of election work: *“The best part of working for ECSA is the way people band together and get the job done. There were big hours and a thousand different things to do but we always worked as a team and looked out for each other and got a good result. Sometimes it was a madhouse but I’d do it again in a heartbeat.”*

ABOVE: ELECTORAL OFFICER CORALIE LOWE (CENTRE) WITH FORMER HOLDEN STAFF SHANE RICHARDS, ANDREW KUSKOFF, ADRIAN RUDGE AND JOHN HOLLINGWORTH (LEFT TO RIGHT)



ENGAGEMENT OF POLLING STAFF – TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ECSA has a strong focus on ensuring the integrity, neutrality and professionalism of its election workforce and implemented two new checks to establish the suitability of staff for employment at the 2018 State Election:

- National Police Checks were required for senior staff and anyone directly involved with vulnerable people, such as residents of nursing homes and hospitals. Five individuals were excluded from employment as the result of 294 National Police Checks completed. These exclusions were for multiple driving and drink-driving offences for one individual; multiple

disorderly behaviour and alcohol-related offences for another; and various assault offences for the other three individuals.

- All Polling Booth Managers and Pre-Poll Voting Centre Managers – 712 in total – were required to provide an integrity declaration attesting to their good character and suitability for their duties completed by an ECSA staff member, a Returning Officer or an authorised person who had known them for more than 12 months.

In addition, staff in all 7,282 election roles completed the Code of Conduct for Electoral Officials in the lead-up to the 2018 Election. Four were excluded from employment due to declared criminal history and one was excluded due to political involvement.

FAST FACTS

5,600

STAFF COMPLETED THE CODE OF CONDUCT

5 WERE EXCLUDED

294

NATIONAL POLICE CHECKS COMPLETED

5 DID NOT MEET ECSA REQUIREMENTS

712

POLLING BOOTH & PRE-POLL VOTING CENTRE MANAGERS PROVIDED AN INTEGRITY DECLARATION

MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

CAPACITY TO SUCCEED

A comparison of staffing levels across Australian electoral commissions shows that ECSA has a relatively small head office staff count with just 28.4 full time equivalent employees (FTEs). Our closest counterpart in terms of elector numbers, the Western Australian Electoral Commission, had 45 FTEs at the time of its State Election in 2017.

The small number of permanent positions at ECSA impacts negatively on staff, who are required to work considerable hours for a period of up to 18 months, juggling multiple projects. Almost half of ECSA head office staff surveyed said the pressures of their role

did not allow them to achieve a work-life balance and the majority of staff had to undertake significant levels of overtime to achieve ECSA targets.

ECSA must ensure it has sufficient staffing capacity, expertise and the best possible organisational structure to meet the challenge of running elections in a sustainable manner and deliver the program of modernisation outlined in this report.

To achieve these aims ECSA will undertake an organisational design review of its structure and staffing numbers in 2019.

TRAINING

A key part of preparing ECSA's temporary election workforce for the 2018 State Election was the training of the thousands of polling staff engaged to work around the state.

In-person training was mandatory for 138 Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, District Support Officers, Polling Booth Managers and deputies, Pre-poll Managers and deputies, and Declaration Vote Issuing Officers. Online training sessions were available for all other polling and support staff. For the first time, training was also delivered to Aboriginal Information Officers in the APY Lands (see Chapter Three for more information).

Training covered the full range of voting processes and scrutiny and counting of ballot papers. All training materials were developed in-house through a consultation process with subject matter experts across ECSA.

Although ECSA's staff surveys found overall satisfaction with training, with 92.8% of staff saying the training helped them to understand their roles and 91.7% saying it helped them to confidently undertake their tasks, ECSA will pursue the sourcing of a new interactive learning platform accessible on mobile and tablet devices and capable of handling large volumes of data and providing real-time reporting on training completion.



(LEFT) RETURNING OFFICERS UNDERTAKING COUNT TRAINING IN JANUARY 2018.

A BETTER LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Requiring staff to complete role-specific training is vital to ensuring ECSA's election workforce are capable of understanding and completing their required duties. Effective training delivery requires a capable online learning management system.

Unfortunately, ECSA's online training system has reached the end of its functional life and was subject to significant criticism by senior staff for its failure to support monitoring of online training completion by their polling staff, amongst other shortcomings.

In early 2019 ECSA will commence a process to identify a suitable new learning management system for training our election workforce. The new system can also be used to offer training and professional development to ECSA permanent staff on subjects such as risk management, project management and cultural awareness.

ACCOMMODATION

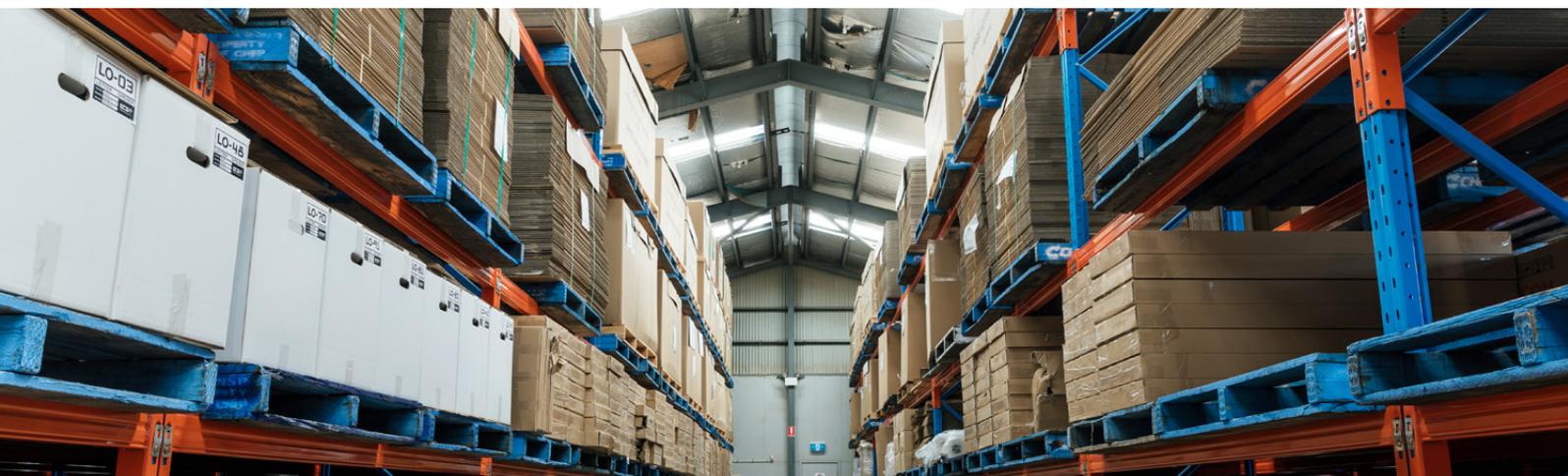
In the 12 months preceding the election, ECSA undertook the challenging task of securing 744 premises in metropolitan Adelaide and across the state to accommodate Returning Officers, pre-poll voting centres, polling booths, the call centre and the central processing centre.

The four-year election cycle poses a significant challenge in that the required premises must be identified and new leases negotiated at each election with a range of stakeholders, building owners and agents.

Accommodation for Returning Officers must allow for a variety of tasks including the training of electoral officials, receipt and dispatch of election materials, counting of votes, and interaction with candidates and the public. In regional areas, premises were required to be in the closest major regional centre associated with the relevant electoral district.

Returning Officer premises were leased for two months where possible, as a way of keeping costs under control. However, this placed considerable pressure on transport and logistics activities to ensure all premises were cleared of office furniture, equipment and election materials within two weeks of polling day.

(BELOW) MATERIALS READY FOR ASSEMBLY INTO KITS FOR POLLING BOOTHS AND RETURNING OFFICERS.



POLLING PLACE SELECTION

For the 2018 State Election there were 693 polling booths established in 611 locations, six fewer than in 2014. 79 were shared polling booths located near electoral district boundaries. Shared locations allow for the issuing of ordinary votes for more than one district. ECSA established pre-poll centres in 22 locations, with nine co-located in Returning Officer premises.

The complex process of identifying and selecting polling booth locations began almost a year before polling day. It included consideration of the booth locations used at the 2014 State Election, booths used by the AEC for the 2016 federal election, as well as analysis of the likely impacts of the EDBC's changes to House of Assembly district boundaries and predicted voter turnout. Once this process was completed, a list of recommended locations was provided to Returning Officers who visited the locations to conduct an accessibility audit and ensure the venues were able to cater for predicted voter turnout. While there was a focus on securing fully accessible locations wherever possible, in some instances – particularly in smaller regional towns – ECSA was constrained by the limited choices available. This was partly compounded by the reluctance of the commercial property market to agree to the short-term leases required. As a result, several premises were neither the optimal size nor standard required.

Identifying suitable pre-poll voting centre premises proved to be a challenge at the 2018 State Election, not only because of the shortness of the leases required, but also the difficulty in finding suitably accessible locations. A notable example was the difficulties experienced in identifying a location for a centre in the main hub of Jetty Road, Glenelg. Despite our best efforts, the lack of availability forced ECSA to settle for a premise located on a side street, with less than ideal facilities, which contributed to lengthy queues of electors during pre-poll voting. A further example was the choice of premises on Glynburn Road, Glynde. Despite receiving assurances from building owners that renovation work would be completed prior to the commencement of pre-poll voting on 5 March, a significant portion of the building works remained incomplete, including the front entrance. This severely impacted on the space available for ECSA to offer voting services and contributed to longer than desired waiting times and confusion for some electors.

ECSA's preferred option for polling booth locations is public schools due to the fact they are conveniently located, highly accessible and are available to ECSA at significantly reduced cost. At the 2018 State Election, 57.3% of all polling booths were located at schools, with the remaining 42.7% consisting of town, church and RSL halls, community centres, recreation centres and even a handful of bowling clubs. In total 96% of all polling day booths were either fully accessible or accessible with assistance.

(BELOW) QUEUES AT GLYNDE PRE-POLL CENTRE IN MARCH.

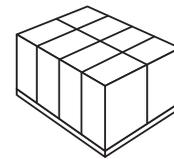


MATERIALS

Election materials were distributed to Returning Officer (RO) district offices and polling places in multiple stages prior to the election. Office materials for RO offices were delivered in late January, while election materials such as certified rolls, manuals, electoral roll look up devices and ballot papers were delivered to pre-poll locations in early March. Materials for polling booths were assembled and packed as kits specific to each location and then delivered to RO offices ready for further distribution to booth managers on the evening before polling day.

Additional deliveries of the extensive polling day cardboard equipment for each of the 693 polling booths, comprising voting screens and queue management material were completed during the week leading up to polling day. In total there were approximately 1,600 deliveries between ECSA's packing centre, RO offices and polling places between January and March 2018.

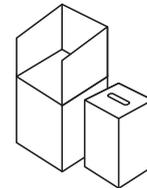
Some of the materials delivered to polling booths are illustrated to the right:



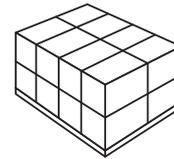
53
PALLETES OF
BALLOT PAPERS



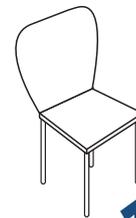
30,000
PENCILS



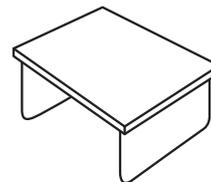
17,500
INDIVIDUAL CARDBOARD
ITEMS INCLUDING
VOTING SCREENS



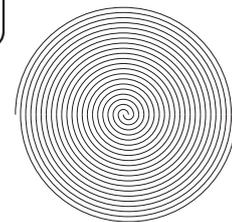
3,000
CARTONS OF MANUALS
ELECTORAL ROLLS &
OTHER MATERIALS



1,280
CHAIRS



950
DESKS & FOLDING
TABLES



34
KILOMETRES
OF STRING

(BELOW) ECSA STAFF PACKING KITS TO BE DELIVERED TO POLLING BOOTHS.



Coralie Lowe – election veteran



“Don’t panic, just fix it. That, to me, is an election”

If staging a state election is South Australia’s biggest logistical exercise, then Coralie Lowe is the person you want calling the shots.

The former dental nurse has been working on elections since 1997 and became a full-time employee in ECSA’s Elections Branch in 2004.

For the past three elections Coralie has been at the centre of logistics planning for state elections: that is, what needs to be where, when and in what quantity. This involves ensuring that sufficient quantities of voting screens, ballot boxes, stationery and a multitude of other items like computing equipment are packed and delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner for use in polling places across the state.

After the election, Coralie and her team at the CPC need to make sure everything is returned, stored or disposed of once it is no longer needed.

“You plan your campaign by establishing what is needed and when it is needed, but it’s a big challenge because there are so many things that are out of your control,” Coralie says.

“I always think of it as a giant jigsaw puzzle where each branch of the office is part of the puzzle. No one branch can conduct the election alone; we each play our role, but we also need to collaborate to bring it all together.”

“It is not only the now, though, it’s important to be constantly thinking ahead of what needs to start happening and what resources can be called upon at the last minute if there are any issues. In an election there are always things that don’t go to plan, you need to be adaptable and flexible, don’t panic, just fix it. That, to me, is an election.”

One of the things Coralie enjoys the most about her work is being part of a team of dedicated like-minded people working above and beyond the call to get the job done.

“Our office is full of people who wouldn’t consider going home at five o’clock, they like the challenge and they want to see the job done well,” she says. “We are all election tragics!”

ASSESSING ELECTION READINESS

State elections are always complex logistical undertakings. ECSA's planning and preparation for the 2018 State Election commenced at the conclusion of the 2014 Election, coordinated by an Election Delivery Committee (EDC) chaired by the Electoral Commissioner. To provide additional assurance that ECSA was adequately prepared, a request was made to the Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC) to critically review ECSA's election planning and system readiness.

In December 2017, the WAEC Deputy Electoral Commissioner Chris Avent travelled to Adelaide. To facilitate his review, Mr Avent was granted access to every part of ECSA's election preparations, including attending EDC meetings, reviewing project plans, and interviewing numerous ECSA staff. Mr Avent provided ECSA with valuable recommendations, along with helpful advice to many ECSA staff.

ECSA acknowledges and thanks Mr Avent and the WAEC for making a significant and valuable contribution to ECSA's election readiness.

INTERSTATE SECONDMENTS

ECSA participates in a reciprocal agreement with interstate electoral commissions for seconding staff to assist with state election delivery. This agreement provides ECSA with experienced electoral staff from other commissions while also offering development opportunities for ECSA staff who travel to other jurisdictions to assist when requested.

A total of 20 electoral staff from six electoral commissions were seconded to assist with the 2018 State Election for periods ranging from two days to more than 30 days. These staff brought with them valuable skills and experience and made an outstanding contribution to the successful delivery of the Election. Staff involved were from the Australian Electoral Commission, Victorian Electoral Commission, Electoral Commission NSW, Electoral Commission of Queensland, ACT Electoral Commission and Western Australian Electoral Commission.

CENTRAL PROCESSING CENTRE (CPC)

ECSA secured office and warehouse facilities of around 1,700 sqm at Wingfield in Adelaide's north-western suburbs to provide suitable premises for:

- Preparation, distribution and receipt of election materials
- Staff briefings and training sessions
- ICT equipment testing and setup
- Processing of postal and declaration votes
- Receipt of all election materials after polling day
- Storage of sensitive equipment and electoral materials at the completion of the election.

The CPC was the site for receipt of all postal vote applications and on-site scanning and processing. Staff at the centre processed postal vote applications, checking them against enrolment details and eligibility and when approved, staff then prepared and posted voting packs out to electors.

The CPC also functioned as the Declaration Vote exchange where staff sorted and bundled received ballots into districts ready for transportation to the appropriate district office for counting after polling day.

(BELOW) CPC STAFF PROCESSING APPROVED POSTAL VOTE BALLOT PACKS.



BALLOT PAPER PRODUCTION

Once nominations closed and the ballot draws had been conducted on 27 February 2018 the printing of ballot papers was able to commence.

Immediately following the ballot draws, the master ballot paper templates were provided to the printer. The printing of ballot papers was conducted within tight timeframes with ballots for each House of Assembly district and the Legislative Council required the following morning for distribution to overseas pre-poll centres and posting to the Registered Declaration Voters and other electors who had applied for a postal vote by this date.

In total, 2,752,500 ballot papers were produced for the 47 House of Assembly districts. For the Legislative Council 1,655,000 ballot papers were produced. To ensure ballot papers were free from errors, ECSA staff undertook a comprehensive four-stage proofing process.

Security was paramount for the transport and storage of ballot papers, particularly with the return of ballot materials to the CPC.



ICT PREPARATION

Planning of ICT development projects for the 2018 State Election was well underway by early 2017, with an ICT Steering Committee comprising the Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner and other senior staff formed to monitor and guide project progress and completion.

In all, the Committee oversaw the successful delivery of six major development projects and seven minor ICT projects within a relatively short time frame. Several of the projects involved updates to existing systems, which required them to be rebuilt as web-based platforms and developed for long-term use.

The following six key ICT software projects were delivered for the election:

- Funding and disclosure portal

For lodgement of returns under the new funding and disclosure scheme (for more information see Chapter Six) a brand new funding and disclosure portal was developed. The portal was the culmination of months of hard work in design and testing. ECSA launched it on 17 January 2018, in time for the first designated period lodgement for the State Election. ECSA staff provided training and a great deal of help desk assistance to users.

- State Election Management System

Developed internally by ECSA and completed in February 2018, the State Election Management System consists of two components: StEMS which collates data for districts and polling places, including office and polling locations, and assists with allocation of staff and equipment; and the candidate system which collates all candidate information and is used to prepare outputs including ballot draws and ballot paper templates, as well as input data for counting and results processing.

(LEFT) BALLOT PAPER PRINTING UNDERWAY.

- Declaration Vote Module (DVM)
The DVM system was developed by ECSA and launched in January 2018. Among its functions it assists with postal voting by recording applications, preparing postal vote declarations, processing returned postal and absent declaration envelopes.
- Pre-poll system
The pre-poll system was designed to be used across all pre-poll voting centres to assist with declaration voting including looking up electors, vote issuing, envelope printing, system administration and reporting.
- Deliveries system
The deliveries system was used to record and report on declaration vote batches which are boxed for redistribution and delivery to Returning Officers. It was developed to be integrated into the DVM.
- Returning Officer system
The Returning Officer system identifies staff in various roles and provides a communication channel across ECSA and district offices. It also collects onboarding information for the casual staff employed during the election period.

SECURE ELECTION SYSTEMS

Prior to use during the election period, ECSA engaged an independent third party to test externally facing systems in order to ensure their security and integrity.

The testing included:

- Penetration testing of the ECSA website
- Penetration testing of the Funding and Disclosure Portal
- Easy Vote Application Code Review
- Declaration Vote Management web application vulnerability assessment.

In addition, internal systems such as the Declaration Vote Module were securely hosted within ECSA's environment at Internode and all hardware provided for election tasks required multifactor authentication with unique passwords.

ECSA met with representatives from the Australian Cyber Security Commission (ACSC) prior to the Election to discuss potential issues and identify how the ACSC would be able to provide support if required. The Electoral Commissioner and ECSA ICT Project Manager also met with NEC and Service SA to discuss and to review security arrangements and opportunities for additional support during the election period.

The 2016 US presidential election put a spotlight on cyber security, particularly for democracies with growing ICT reliance and ECSA put a strong focus on cyber security for the 2018 State Election.

The ECSA network sits within the SA Government Statenet environment and because of this had internal system reviews and received support from the Office for Cyber Security and the Chief Information Security Officer. There were no cyber security incidents identified at any stage of the Election.

ICT EQUIPMENT USED FOR THE 2018 STATE ELECTION



1,200

NETBOOKS FOR POLLING BOOTHS

300

NETBOOKS FOR PRE-POLL CENTRES

150

LAPTOPS FOR RETURNING OFFICERS & ASSOCIATED STAFF

MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

ICT HARDWARE

Conducting state elections in the 21st century increasingly requires large amounts of ICT hardware. For the 2018 State Election this included laptops, desktops, monitors, scanners, printers, wi-fi routers, servers, and mobile phones.

Given the cyclical nature of ECSA's need for ICT hardware, it can be challenging and expensive to ensure a timely rollout of equipment with the required software and capability. In 2018 and at previous elections ECSA had some success in borrowing hardware from other electoral commissions and SA government agencies, but improved solutions need to be identified to prepare for future elections.

To support plans for a substantive technological shift from paper-based practices towards automated processes, ECSA will undertake a comprehensive hardware needs analysis to identify ICT requirements for the 2022 and 2026 State Elections. The analysis will consider technology advances such as 5G and will culminate in a cost-benefit analysis to assess how ECSA should obtain access to sufficient suitable hardware. As part of this, ECSA will investigate how it can contribute to combined hardware purchases made by other Australian commissions and a national device pool. Any identified pathway forward is likely to require a significant investment in ECSA's ICT hardware capability to ensure ECSA is able to continue to meet community expectations and match the level of innovation already in place in other jurisdictions.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

The management of elections is an intricate process, involving hundreds of separate tasks, the use of a diverse range of resources and the employment of thousands of short-term staff. To run elections smoothly and ensure that the multitude of tasks, resources and people come together without incident requires advanced project management techniques supported by high quality project management software (PMS).

ECSA's existing planning software is outdated and no longer capable of performing some of the functions most modern electoral management bodies consider essential for preparing for major electoral events. These include resource management, budget reporting, tracking staff and team tasks, visibility over workloads, team collaboration, or the generation of task scheduling.

ECSA will identify a suitable project management system capable not only of aiding in planning for future state and council elections, but of storing data and insights from one election to the next, which will in turn drive optimisation of future electoral services.

Getting the message out

INTRODUCTION

In January 2018, ECSA launched an advertising campaign as the centrepiece of its communication strategy to encourage South Australians to participate in the 2018 State Election. Using the slogan “put your vote where your voice is”, the campaign referenced the myriad ways that people can share their views in the 21st century, particularly through social media, and called on electors to use their opinion in a way that has a genuine and meaningful impact: in other words, by voting. The concept was designed to effectively engage electors across a wide range of advertising platforms and was used on television, radio, digital channels, social media, posters and billboards, in addition to ECSA’s website and in printed material.

The advertising campaign had three separate stages with specific messages and content for each. The first stage called on electors to check and update their enrolment by the close of rolls on

23 February 2018, the second stage encouraged electors to have their say and vote, and the final stage instructed electors on how to fill out their ballot papers.

ECSA worked closely with the government mandated master media agency to ensure the advertising placement strategy targeted audiences that had been underrepresented at past state elections, such as young people and electors from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The campaign also had a strong focus on engaging South Australians living in rural and regional areas.

This whole-of-state campaign was supported by a successful social media strategy and a range of targeted engagement activities as highlighted throughout this chapter.

(BELOW) IMAGE FROM ECSA’S ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE ENROLMENT.

**Enrolment closes at
12 noon, 23 February**



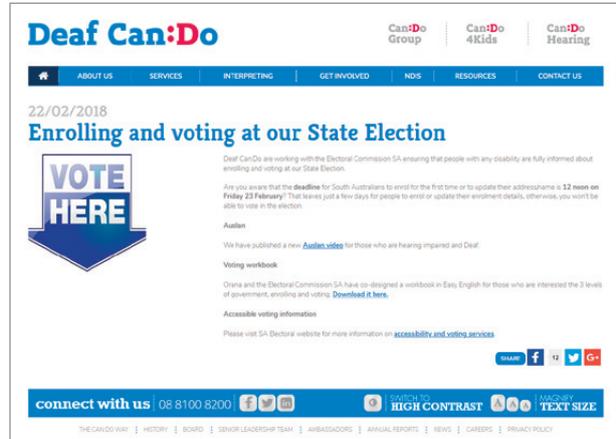
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the lead-up to the 2018 State Election, ECSA significantly expanded its community engagement activities with the aim of building partnerships with stakeholders representing CALD electors, people living with a disability, the aged, homeless, and Aboriginal electors.

These efforts commenced with six workshops held in August 2017 with community sector organisations representing the above groups. These helped ECSA identify specific barriers to electoral participation and guide ECSA's engagement strategies to support electors who need assistance. The partnerships fostered by ECSA through the workshops also enabled ECSA to better target its election messaging by distributing information about the election in community sector publications and digital and social media channels. Sector partners also assisted in the development of accessible electoral services and materials in accordance with ECSA's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. This included information videos in Auslan, audio products, administering VoteAssist and distributing material in braille.

ECSA also undertook face-to-face engagement as part of its community outreach in the form of staffed stalls at shopping centres and community events. Members of the public were able to pick up information, ask questions, and even check their enrolment or enrol on the spot.

(BELOW) ECSA STAFF WITH BHUTANESE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.



(BELOW) ECSA STAFF WITH CHINESE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.



MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

VOTER EDUCATION

Despite ECSA's best efforts, the 2018 Electors Surveys revealed that significant proportions of electors were unaware of the voting alternatives available at the State Election. Even among electors who were aware of at least one method of voting other than attending a polling booth on polling day, levels of awareness were poor: 33% were unaware of postal voting, 55% were unaware of absentee voting and 56% were unaware of pre-poll voting.

Shortcomings in voter education could be observed in other data. Informality, at 4.1% for both the House of Assembly and Legislative Council elections was at its highest levels since 1982. The Electors Surveys showed that 6% of voters were not confident about completing their ballot papers (up from 2% in 2014), with this figure rising to 14% in young voters aged 18-24.

Clearly, a range of stronger measures are needed to counter the declining levels of participation, formality, youth enrolment, as well as voter awareness and confidence witnessed at the 2018 State Election. Chief among these measures, ECSA identifies a need to devise and deliver a comprehensive voter education program.

The evidence suggests that this program needs to be dual-focused:

- Firstly, an ongoing component specifically targeting new voters (young people and new citizens) to inform them of their rights and responsibilities as electors and how elections work. Studies have shown that education sessions in schools for 17 and 18-year-olds not only increase their knowledge of voting but boost enrolment and turnout by almost 10%. It is particularly important to target school students then because evidence shows that citizens who vote at their first opportunity become life-time voters, while those who do not are likely to become non-voters. Acting on these findings, ECSA will investigate the possibility of launching an ongoing statewide initiative to reach as many Year 11 and 12 students as possible.
- Secondly, a pre-election component raising knowledge and awareness among all voters, firstly about any changes or innovations to voting but more generally about the more complex aspects of the electoral process, such as how to vote formally and how votes translate into seats.

An effective education program requires appropriate funding. ECSA will investigate the best way to roll out and support an ongoing electoral education program in all high schools and multicultural community centres, as well as through the ECSA website and other online channels.

ENGAGING WITH CALD ELECTORS

It is well known that people from CALD backgrounds experience barriers to participation in Australian democracy, with lower rates of enrolment and turnout at elections, and significantly higher rates of informal votes due to poor understanding of the voting process. The two chief barriers to CALD citizens' enfranchisement as voters are language and voter education issues. The 2016 Census showed around 20,000 South Australians aged 18 or over who are Australian citizens and unable to speak English well or at all. This represents in electoral terms almost as many electors as an entire state electoral district.

As part of its efforts to engage and educate CALD electors, ECSA:

- published a brochure, 'Enrolling and Voting at the 2018 State Election' (pictured below), which was translated into 21 languages and accessed more than 20,000 times via ECSA's website.

- provided multilingual radio advertising in several languages on 5EBI FM and SBS, as well as in-language print advertisements in a range of multicultural newspapers.
- provided a multilingual guide containing information about how to vote formally in 21 languages at every polling place.
- held stalls at a variety of multicultural events and celebrations.
- employed 99 bilingual polling staff at a selection of polling booths in areas with high densities of CALD community members.
- trialled a Community Ambassador program, as discussed across the page.

(BELOW) DUK NARET FROM THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY, ONE OF 99 BILINGUAL POLLING STAFF WHO PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO ELECTORS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH.



Community Ambassadors at work



As part of its expanded community engagement initiative, ECSA introduced a trial of a Community Ambassador program in the lead-up to the election. Multicultural community representatives were identified and trained to assist people from South Australia's CALD communities to understand their democratic rights and responsibilities and to participate in the electoral process.

Research into South Australia's demographic and migration trends in consultation with government and multicultural sector peak bodies resulted in four communities being chosen to have Community Ambassadors.

Community Ambassadors spread key messages about the importance of enrolling and voting

Two representatives each from the Afghani, Bhutanese/Nepalese, Chinese and Vietnamese communities were trained as Community Ambassadors. After providing them with training, educational materials and translated information booklets, Ambassadors went out into their

communities to educate people in their own language about the election. The Ambassadors spread key messages about the importance of enrolling and voting at the election and how to vote correctly at sessions they organised, as well as cultural events to which they were invited. In total, the Ambassadors held 65 engagement sessions across 22 suburbs, reaching a total of 787 people.

On polling day, Community Ambassadors like Uzair Safi (pictured above), who represented the Afghani community, worked assisting with voting information at polling booths with high numbers of electors from their respective communities. The locations where the Ambassadors and 99 bilingual staff could be found were advertised in multicultural media as well as through our stakeholder partners, our website and social media. Advertising, plus word-of-mouth led to crowds of voters at the indicated polling booths and an extremely busy polling day for our Ambassadors.

In feedback sessions with Community Ambassadors, ECSA learned that some communities' knowledge of Australian electoral and political systems is very low. To help remedy this, ECSA is evaluating the Community Ambassador program with a view to expanding it at the 2022 State Election.

ECSA Aboriginal Elector Services in the APY Lands – a success story



In the second half of 2017, ECSA embarked on its largest and most ambitious program ever to increase voter engagement in Aboriginal communities in South Australia including the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.

While voting is compulsory for all people enrolled in SA, it is recognised that additional support is needed to ensure that people in Aboriginal communities engage fully at state elections.

An ECSA team partnered with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and TAFE SA to develop the enrolment and education strategy for Aboriginal electors in 18 communities across SA.

Two 'listening tours' in September and October 2017 allowed the ECSA team to engage with the communities and key stakeholders to develop a culturally appropriate approach towards increasing knowledge and participation in the electoral process.

Regular engagement, face-to-face conversations and feedback loops with local people helped the ECSA team to refine its approach.

(ABOVE) WOMEN TAKING PART IN TRAINING AT THE TAFE SA CAMPUS IN ERNABELLA

Community members assisted the ECSA team in deciding locations for mobile polling, polling times and duration of polling which would best suit the community and increase the chances of a greater turnout.

As a result of the listening tours, ECSA employed 30 Aboriginal Information Officers whose role was to promote the election and manage enrolment in their communities. To assist with voting, the program trained local people in enrolment and how to vote at six TAFE SA locations across the APY Lands in partnership with TAFE SA.

ECSA also engaged two retired AFL Aboriginal champions, Michael O'Loughlin and Gavin Wanganeen, to appear on the opening day of mobile polling to encourage people to vote. Read more about this in Chapter Four on page 61.

The program ultimately delivered a demonstrable improvement to the services provided to Aboriginal electors for the 2018 State Election including improvements to the accuracy of the electoral roll and new enrolments leading to a 17% increase in the enrolled population on the APY Lands.

The program was a resounding success when compared with the level of electoral engagement in the APY Lands at the 2014 election. At the 2018 Election there was a 57% increase in polling hours which contributed to an 18% increase in total votes cast at polling locations on the Lands.

Dealing with remote communities can present a unique set of challenges, both logistically and culturally. Face-to-face conversations and the establishment of regular feedback with local people ultimately helped the ECSA team to refine its approach in the lead-up to polling day.

The consultative approach resulting from the listening tours also assisted in the creation of appropriate advertising and voter information material in Pitjantjatjara which included talking posters and a how-to-vote video.

(ABOVE RIGHT-TOP TO BOTTOM) IMAGES FROM ECSA ENGAGEMENT FIELD TRIPS TO THE APY LANDS AND ONE OF ECSA'S TALKING POSTERS.



ECSA Electoral Commission SA **VOTING IN REMOTE AREAS**

Your vote is important!

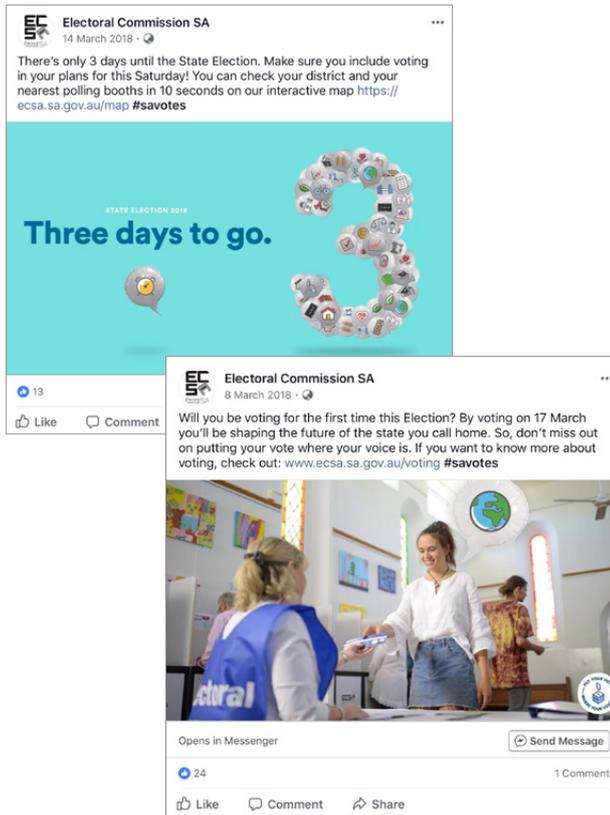
2018 State Election
 Voting will be available at
Amata Community
Friday 9 March 2018
9:30 AM and 3:00 PM

Authorised by Mick Sherry, Electoral Commissioner

SOCIAL MEDIA

Underpinning the advertising campaign was ECSA’s social media campaign starting in January 2018 on Twitter and Facebook. ECSA published multiple daily posts designed to engage electors and inform them of various stages of the campaign. The social media posts reinforced messaging in the advertising campaign and also depicted ‘behind the scenes’ elements of ECSA’s preparations for polling day.

The social media campaign dramatically increased public engagement, particularly among young people, with previously dormant ECSA social media channels taking engagement and activity to new levels.



WEBSITE

The ECSA website underwent a major redesign to improve its accessibility functionality for mobile and tablet devices.

The desktop version of the website also had greatly improved functionality for users. It provided a simple and clear pathway via a minimum of clicks enabling users to find their electoral district, check their enrolment and locate their nearest polling places.

There were also important accessibility modifications to the website such as ReadSpeaker, text-to-speech software which allowed easy access for hearing impaired users, and a dyslexia button on the home page which altered the website font to make it easier for users with dyslexia to read.

Tracking daily unique user website visits prior to 17 February showed website activity was business as usual with 2,000 to 3,000 visits daily with a spike to 22,000 visits the day before the writs were issued. Once the writs had been issued and the official election campaign had begun, daily visits to the website increased to up to 10,000 per day. Visits spiked again to 22,000 on 5 March, steadily climbing in the lead-up to polling day, 17 March. On polling day unique website visitor numbers peaked at 110,000 with a total number of visits to the website between 1 January to 18 March 2018 of 475,874 and an average stay of two minutes.

Post-election research found that 83% of website users were able to find the information they were looking for easily and the same percentage of users was very satisfied or satisfied with the information provided by the website, with these figures up more than 20% compared to 2014.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY/GROWTH

13,361 LINK CLICKS
14,426 ENGAGEMENTS
4.4 MILLION IMPRESSIONS

f ▲ 186.1%
2,466
 FOLLOWERS (FROM 1 JAN)

t ▲ 100%
347
 FOLLOWERS (FROM 1 JAN)

ELECTION NOTICES

The Act requires several electoral notices to be published and sets out the publications and timeframes by which these statutory notices must appear. Statutory notices were published in print media and the Government Gazette as required by legislation.

SUBJECT MATTER	ELECTORAL ACT	PLACEMENT	DATE
District and subdivision maps	s15(1)	Government Gazette	23.01.2018
Remote subdivisions	s15(3)	Government Gazette	23.01.2018
Declared institutions	s83(1)	Government Gazette	23.01.2018
Polling places – appointment	s18(2)	Government Gazette	23.01.2018
Issue of writ and RO details	s48(7a)	The Advertiser	19.02.2018
Mobile polling place	s77(3)	Regional Press*	21.02.2018
Availability of VoteAssist	s84A(2)(a)(iii)	Government Gazette	27.02.2018
Polling places – locations	s18(4)	The Advertiser	14.03.2018
Attributed votes	s96(11)	Government Gazette	04.04.2018

* Details of mobile polling places and pre-poll voting centres in regional areas also appeared in regional press circulating in the relevant areas during March 2018.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

PUBLIC NOTICES

The Electoral Commissioner is bound by legislation to publish certain statutory notices in newspapers, often at considerable expense. As one example, section 18 of the Act states that, “... the Electoral Commissioner must, between the date of the issue of the writ and polling day, give public notice by advertisement in a newspaper circulating generally throughout the State of the position of all polling places for the district.” To meet this requirement and publish the details of all 693 polling booths used at the State Election, ECSA was required to book four consecutive pages in The Advertiser at a cost of approximately \$42,000.

Given the high costs involved in publishing notices in newspapers and the prevalence of online and digital media nowadays, ECSA recommends that the Act be amended to allow the Commissioner the flexibility to publish notices on ECSA’s website and

by any other means deemed appropriate, instead of in newspapers circulating throughout the state. ECSA notes that this amendment would align with other jurisdictions such as Victoria, where legislation defines publish as “by any means including by publication on the Internet”.

Recommendation 5.

That the Act be amended to remove the obligation for the Electoral Commissioner to publish public notices by advertisement in a newspaper circulating generally throughout the state, so that the notices can instead be published on ECSA’s website or by any other means the Electoral Commissioner deems appropriate.

CALL CENTRE

An election call centre was established and operated from 31 January through to 23 March 2018.

Call centre responsibilities included answering telephone enquiries from the public, responding to emails through ECSA's general inbox and mailing out enrolment forms and postal vote applications as requested.

Throughout the eight weeks of its operation, 22 staff were employed, comprising 18 customer service operators, three call centre supervisors and one call centre manager. The call centre also had the assistance of two secondees from interstate electoral commissions for four weeks who provided electoral expertise.

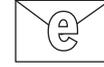
The call centre fulfilled its obligations with telephone calls answered within acceptable timeframes, exceptionally low abandon rates given the volume of calls, and all emails answered within 24 hours.

THE CALL CENTRE



30,157
CALLS ANSWERED

▲ 50% ON 2014



2,954
EMAILS
RESPONDED TO



4,933
ITEMS OF MAIL
POSTED



17,479
REASONS FOR
NOT VOTING



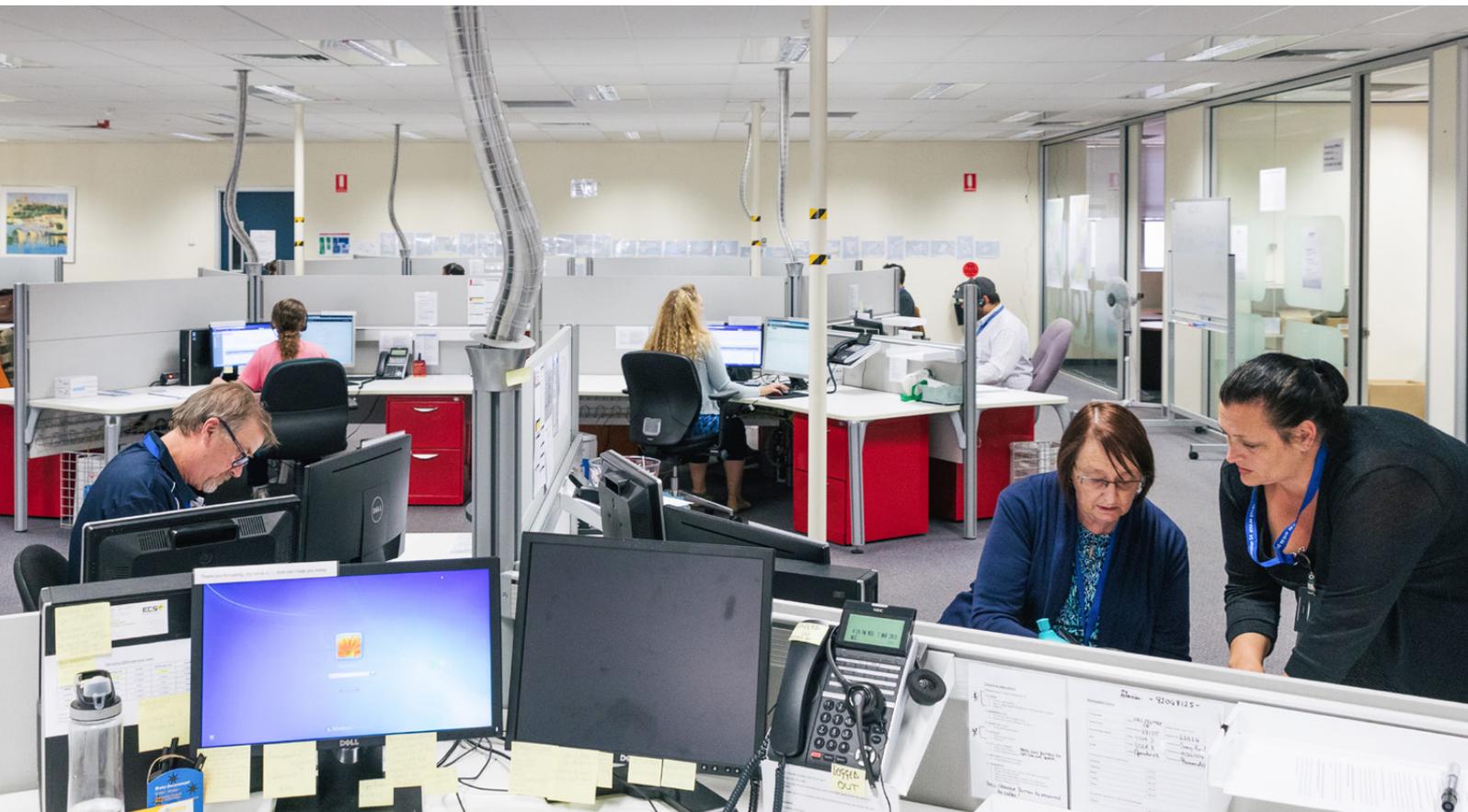
2m59s
AVERAGE CALL
HANDLING TIME



35s
AVERAGE QUEUE
WAIT TIME



2.3%
CALL ABANDONMENT
RATE





EASYVOTE CARD AND APP

In the lead-up to past state elections ECSA has mailed personally-addressed information to every eligible elector across South Australia. For the 2014 State Election this took the form of an election guide with an EasyVote Card printed on the front page, which the elector was instructed to detach and bring with them to the polling booth.

After reviewing the relatively low rate of EasyVote Card use at that election (less than 50%) and the approaches taken by other electoral commissions in recent years, ECSA decided to send out the nearly 1.2 million EasyVote Cards as a stand-alone postcard. The Cards featured the elector's enrolment details on the front, allowing a polling official to quickly identify and mark the elector off the electoral roll, as well as a list of the polling booths in the elector's district on the back.

While it was not compulsory, an average of 78% of all electors brought their Card along with them to vote, significantly speeding up their voting experience. The Card was particularly valuable given the significant changes to electoral district boundaries and the benefit in informing every elector of their enrolled district and local polling booths.

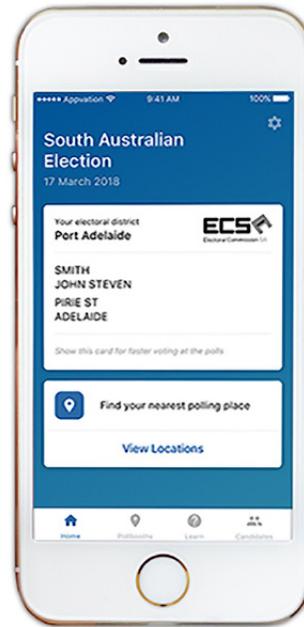
Feedback from electors and staff about the convenience and effectiveness of the EasyVote Card in reducing waiting times to vote was overwhelmingly positive. The ECSA Surveys of Electors found that 34% of in-person voters indicated they had used the Card as their key source of information about where to vote. 76% of electors said the Card made it quicker to have their name and address marked off the electoral roll.

While the EasyVote Card was clearly a valuable tool and resulted in efficiencies for both electors and election staff, it is a high-cost initiative that equates to approximately \$1.22 per elector (with most of the cost relating to postage). In an effort to offset these costs and embrace technological innovation, ECSA also introduced an EasyVote App for mobile devices.

Once a user downloaded the App and entered their personal information the App matched it against the electoral roll and populated their electoral district and enrolment details. Similar to the EasyVote Card, the elector could then go to a polling booth and present the App to a polling official who could quickly find the user on the electoral roll and mark off their name.

In addition to including the same personal enrolment details as the Card, the EasyVote App contained useful information about voting and candidates and a map of polling locations. It also provided updated waiting times for each polling booth, allowing electors to choose a less busy time to vote or to find a booth with shorter queues.

Almost 17,000 electors downloaded the App prior to roll close on 23 February 2018 and were not sent an EasyVote Card in the mail as a result, reducing environmental impact and costs. By polling day more



than 34,000 South Australians had downloaded the App. While these figures are respectable in comparison to download statistics for other state government apps, they represent only a fraction of all electors.

Feedback from the Electors Surveys showed that 55% of electors would have been unlikely to use the App even if they had been aware of it. However, given the considerable cost savings that can be generated through use of technologies, ECSA will further explore how the App and other like solutions can be rolled out to electors at the 2022 State Election.

MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

THE POTENTIAL OF THE EASYVOTE APP

Although engagement with the App was lower than ECSA had hoped for, with sufficient promotion prior to future elections the App has the potential to enhance ECSA's provision of information and services to voters and generate cost savings.

Savings could be generated through higher use of the App, given that each elector who obtains their EasyVote details via the App does not require an EasyVote Card to be printed and posted.

The EasyVote App offers a range of exciting possibilities for future elections, including:

- serving as one of the means by which electors could apply electronically for a postal vote, as per Recommendation 6 of this Report.
- supporting electors to conveniently manage their enrolment information.
- integrating Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to assist in roll mark-off and prevention of multiple voting.

As we move forward to the 2022 State Election, ECSA will further explore opportunities that provide value-for-money improvements in election conduct through use of this technology and other like solutions.

Voting

INTRODUCTION

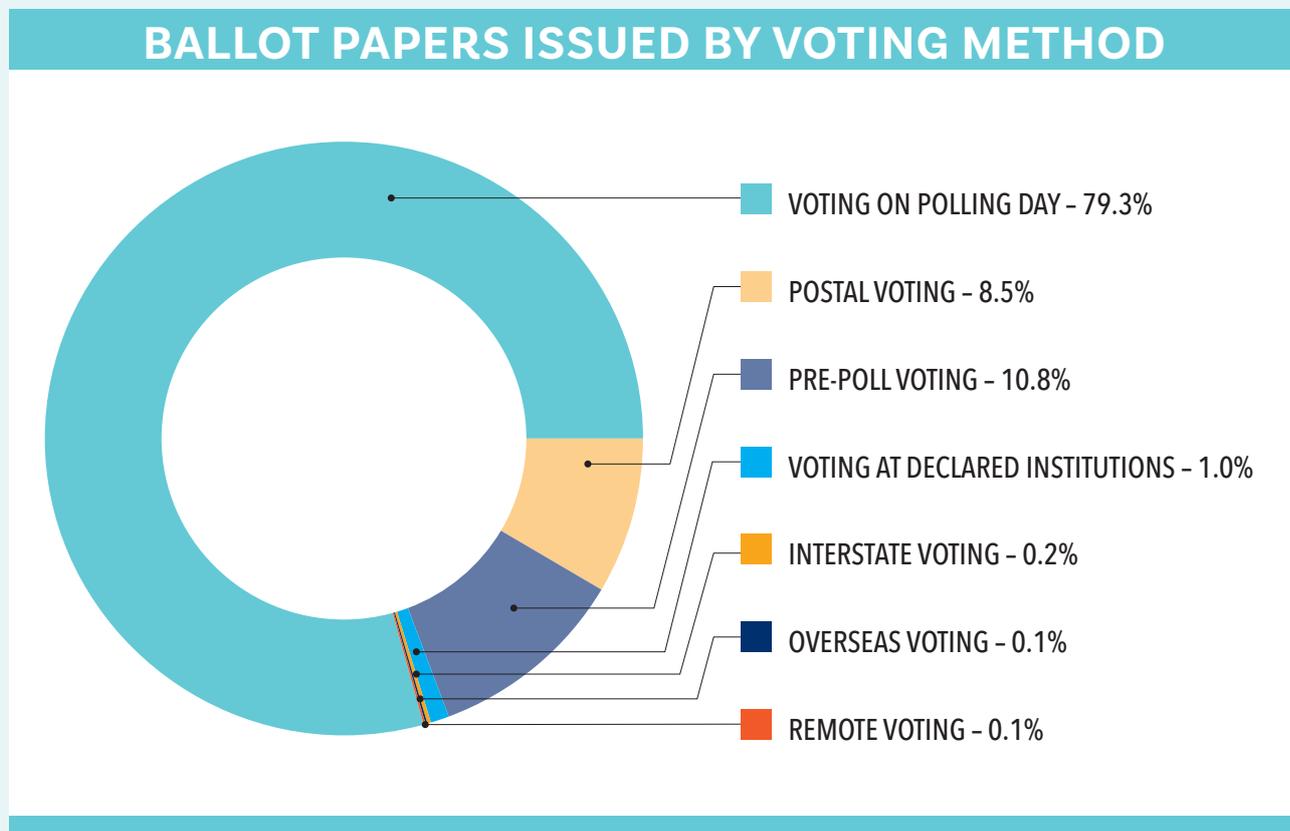
In March 2018 almost 1.1 million South Australians exercised their democratic right to vote at the State Election. There were 5,600 staff employed in 7,282 separate roles who assisted with the conduct of the election at 1,307 locations across the state, helping ensure that voting services were delivered in a manner that was efficient, fair and professional.

ECSA offered a range of accessible voting options to ensure that every eligible elector was supported in casting their vote. These voting options included:

- Postal voting
- Pre-poll voting
- Voting at declared institutions
- Interstate voting
- Overseas voting
- Remote voting
- Voting on polling day

As discussed in this chapter, substantial increases have occurred over successive state elections in the number and percentage of South Australians voting before polling day. In total, 120,468 electors voted at pre-poll centres around the state in 2018, compared to 35,333 in 2010 and just 15,706 in 1997. This represents an increase of 241% over the past two state elections, and an increase of 667% since 1997. A further 73,982 electors cast postal votes and returned their ballot papers in time to be admitted to the count.

The share of votes issued for each voting method offered at the 2018 State Election is shown in the graph below.





PARTICIPATION

Voter turnout at the 2018 State Election decreased despite a rise in the total number of ballots cast.

Turnout or participation measures the percentage of enrolled voters who cast a vote (formal or informal) which is accepted for scrutiny. As is customary, it does not include rejected votes or postal votes returned after the legislated deadline.

The participation rate in 2018 decreased to 91.1% for the Legislative Council, down from 92.1% at the 2014 State Election, and decreased to 91.0% for the House of Assembly from 91.9% in 2014. These are the lowest participation rates for a State Election since World War II and a reflection of a slow but steady decline in electoral turnout across recent elections. Declining participation is a trend across Australia and most democratic countries. In 2018, the growth of the electoral roll as a consequence of the federal direct enrolment program and a surge in enrolments for the 2017 Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey, may to some extent have negatively affected the turnout rate through the addition to the roll of electors who had previously avoided enrolling and did not wish to vote.

At the same time, there was an increase in the number of ballot papers cast at this election, with almost 43,000 more South Australians turning out to vote in 2018 than four years previously. Although there may seem to be a contradiction between the falling participation rate and the increase in the number of ballots cast, this increase occurs at every election and is the natural effect of population growth on voter numbers from one election to the next.

Older South Australians turned out to vote in force at the election, particularly electors aged 65 and over, almost all of whom voted (98.4%). By contrast, participation was lowest among young electors. The low turnout rate among 18 to 24-year-olds (76.2%) and 25 to 34-year-olds (84.0%) reinforces the need for a new voter education program and improved awareness campaign.





VOTER PARTICIPATION BY AGE GROUP
(votes issued in the Legislative Council election)

Group	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	All electors
Enrolled electors	118,311	184,823	183,292	207,006	205,914	302,429	1,201,775
% of age group that voted	76.2%	84.0%	89.6%	92.1%	95.8%	98.4%	91.1%

Voter turnout was highest across a large part of country South Australia as well as the Adelaide Hills and some of the outer-southern metropolitan areas. As in 2014, Schubert had the highest participation rate in the state (94.3%), followed on this occasion by Heysen (93.7%) and Narungga (93.6%). Giles was again the district with the lowest turnout (86.0%), followed closely by Elizabeth (86.6%) and Taylor (86.7%).

Low turnout was concentrated in districts with three different profiles: inner urban districts that have young and mobile populations (Adelaide); districts that have high proportions of residents who are not proficient in English (Croydon, Enfield and Taylor), and districts with a degree of socioeconomic disadvantage (Elizabeth and Giles).



POSTAL VOTING

Postal voting is an important and popular part of convenience voting at South Australian elections. At the 2018 State Election, ECSA processed 102,974 applications for postal votes (including 20,734 where the application was automatic due to registration on the register of declaration voters), a 14.8% increase on the 89,719 applications processed in 2014. In processing these applications, 7,756 were rejected for reasons such as missing signatures and duplicate applications. Voting packs were posted out to 95,191 electors, 73,982 of whom completed their ballot papers and returned them in time to be admitted to the count. In all, postal votes accounted for 8.5% of all votes issued at this State Election compared to 7.8% in 2014.

Electors who were unable to attend a polling booth could access a postal vote application form from any Australia Post outlet, by phoning ECSA to request a form be posted to them or by obtaining a form from a political party. In 2018 the postal vote application form was also available for the first time for download from the ECSA website. Voters who chose this option were required to print the form, sign it, scan it and email it back to ECSA.

There were 20,734 voting packs posted out to electors on the register of declaration voters – a register of electors who are permanently unable to attend a polling booth at election time.

FAST FACT



102,974

POSTAL VOTING APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

(89,714 IN 2014)



This Election highlighted a number of serious issues affecting the ongoing viability of postal voting as a voting service which are covered in the following pages. There is widespread concern across all Australian electoral commissions that the changes to Australia Post's business model have challenged the reliability of postal voting as a voting method, especially for electors located in rural, interstate and overseas destinations. Longer delivery times for letters, the abolition of Saturday deliveries, and the reduction in the number of weekly deliveries particularly in regional and rural areas all increase the likelihood that a postal application or postal vote may be rejected due to it arriving after the legislated cut-off dates (namely the Thursday prior to polling day for applications and the Saturday after polling day for returned ballot papers).

INFORMATION TO ELECTORS THAT CAUSED CONFUSION

In the lead-up to the Election the Liberal Party distributed material to electors via mail, a dedicated website and on social media, requesting their personal details in order to send them early voting information and postal vote application forms. This caused confusion among many electors who mistakenly perceived it to be official material from ECSA. In response to a number of complaints and media coverage, ECSA issued a press release to inform the public that it had not issued the material.

In addition to creating significant confusion among electors, these actions resulted in some South Australians being disenfranchised due to a belief that by responding to the material they were applying to ECSA for a postal vote. This is evidenced by a number of electors who, in response to a failure to vote notice, claimed that they believed they had applied for a postal vote by replying to the Liberal Party-issued material.

While not contravening the Act, these actions caused confusion and disenfranchisement. Consideration must be given to prohibiting political participants from any involvement in the postal voting process.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

REMOVING SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTAL VOTE APPLICATIONS

ECSA was the only electoral commission in Australia not to offer electors the option of applying for a postal vote online at its most recent election. The reason why ECSA has never offered online (or telephone) applications for postal votes is the legislative requirement followed for over a century across Australia obliging Returning Officers to compare the signature on the postal application with the signature on the envelope containing the postal ballot papers. In recent years every jurisdiction other than South Australia has updated their legislation to allow types of postal applications that do not contain a signature.

ECSA is aware of significant public expectations for government agencies to offer online services and also recognises the significant printing and postage costs involved in the paper-based postal vote application process. More crucially, as ECSA observed in 2018, with the decline in the timeliness of the postal service, significant numbers of postal applications were rejected and electors disenfranchised due to late arrivals of applications.

ECSA seeks legislative change to allow electors to apply for postal votes online and by telephone. Crown legal advice obtained since the 2018 State Election informed ECSA that the provisions of the *Electronic Communications Act (2000)* may be applied to the requirements for signatures within the Act, meaning that ECSA could already accept electronic applications for postal votes without pen-and-ink signatures. However, to avoid any uncertainty and to allow telephone applications ECSA requests that Parliament remove the requirement for postal vote applications to bear the signature of the elector, replacing it with a robust verification process to be determined by the Electoral Commissioner. This discretion to determine what verification system ECSA uses is important to allow ECSA the ability to adapt and evolve its processes to changes in technology as they occur, without having to return again to Parliament.

Recommendation 6

That the Act be amended to remove the requirement for postal vote applications to be by letter and to bear the signature of the elector, so that a secure method can be implemented to allow electors to apply for postal votes online and by telephone with a form of identification that can ensure the validity of the returned votes.

POSTAL VOTING TIMEFRAMES

Postal voting at the 2018 State Election was affected by a number of issues that highlighted the unsuitability of the legislated deadlines for applying for and returning postal votes, currently 5pm on the Thursday two days prior to polling day for the former, and 6pm on the Saturday after polling day for the latter. These issues included:

- 1,823 postal vote applications which arrived after the deadline and consequently could not be processed. No ballots were sent out to these electors and it was not possible to advise them in time for polling day to make other arrangements to vote.
- 1,232 postal ballots which arrived after the deadline for the return of completed postal votes. These votes could not be processed and hence did not count in the Election.

These numbers constitute in ECSA's view a strong indication that the current postal service is not capable of meeting the timeframes for postal voting stipulated by legislation.

The deadlines themselves are vestiges of a bygone era. The two-day deadline to apply for a postal vote dates back to the birth of the current Act in 1985, while the seven-day deadline to return a postal vote has remained unchanged since 1955.

It is clear from Australia Post's current delivery times that the two-day deadline to apply for a postal vote is too late to ensure ballot papers reach anyone other than metropolitan Adelaide electors in time to vote at the election.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

After carefully considering the different solutions available, ECSA requests that Parliament move the deadline to apply for a postal vote. Two factors need to be considered here: Australia Post's delivery times; and the interruption to postal services provided by the Adelaide Cup public holiday on the Monday prior to polling day. In light of these factors, ECSA recommends to Parliament that the only viable dates are those detailed in the Recommendation below.

Even with these revised timeframes, overseas deliveries are still unlikely to arrive in time. For this reason, ECSA recommends most overseas postal votes be replaced by the solution proposed in Recommendation 8.

Recommendation 7.

That the Act be amended to modify the timeframes for postal voting, bringing forward the deadline to apply for a postal vote from 5pm on the Thursday prior to polling day to:

- i. *5pm on the Tuesday prior to polling day for applications from South Australian locations; and*
- ii. *5pm on the Friday eight days prior to polling day for applications from interstate and overseas locations.*

ELECTRONIC POSTAL VOTING FOR OVERSEAS AND REMOTE VOTERS

Of the 712 postal voting packs ECSA mailed overseas at the 2018 State Election, only 48 votes (6.7%) arrived back in time to be counted.

The estimated delivery times for Australia Post's standard international airmail service are not compatible with the calendar for postal voting in South Australia. These currently range from eight business days to London to 13 business days to Beijing, with an additional two business days for any address outside major metropolitan areas.

However, even using a much pricier express service to dispatch and return a postal vote from both ends, it is impossible to guarantee that a postal vote can make it across the world and back between the date ballot papers are printed and the deadline for votes to be received. This has been proven through the experiences of other electoral commissions, such as the NT Electoral Commission which in 2016 used Australia Post's International Express service but only received 20.6% of its overseas votes back in time to be counted.

Electoral commissions around Australia recognise that long distance postal voting has increasingly become unfeasible and is failing to meet the needs of the large numbers of Australians travelling or residing overseas. ECSA shares the view of other commissions that a viable electronic solution is needed to replace long distance postal voting, not only for overseas electors but for those in similar circumstances in non-metropolitan interstate locations, as well as remote locations of South Australia.

Following assessment of the electronic solutions used in other jurisdictions, ECSA advocates a secure system for the electronic delivery and return of ballot papers at state elections modelled closely on the system used in New Zealand.

Under the New Zealand system, at election time electors overseas apply for and download their ballot papers from a secure website. After printing their ballot papers and then voting, electors must scan or photograph them and then upload the images back into the system. The electronic system enabling this process built by the NZ Electoral Commission prior to the 2014 general election, is subjected to rigorous independent security testing and accreditation before each electoral event. Since launching in 2014, this has become the preferred voting method for NZ voters overseas, with 'electronic postal votes' rising from 22,333 in 2014 (56% of overseas votes) to 41,221 in 2017 (67% of overseas votes). Although it continued to offer a traditional postal option in 2014 and 2017,

after the 2017 general election the NZ Electoral Commission recommended to parliament that this option be removed for future elections on account of the rising number of postal votes arriving too late to be counted.

ECSA recommends South Australia learn from this experience and move directly to an electronic-only option for electors located overseas, making it optional for electors in non-metropolitan interstate locations, as well as remote intrastate locations.

ECSA does not advocate internet voting or the use of email to return ballot papers until the risks associated with voter privacy and IT security have been fully addressed and a national system implemented.

Recommendation 8.

That the Act be amended to allow ECSA to replace long-distance postal voting for electors overseas, in non-metropolitan interstate locations, as well as remote locations of South Australia, with a robust and secure system for the electronic delivery and return of ballot papers. Should this recommendation be agreed Recommendation 7(ii) would not be required.

POSTAL VOTING FOR PRISONERS

Voting at state elections is compulsory for all South Australian electors, including residents of correctional facilities. It is the Electoral Commissioner's responsibility to ensure all electors have the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote at elections.

Prior to 2018, the only legally available method for prisoners to vote was for the Electoral Commissioner to declare a prison to be a declared institution and have electoral officers visit it and issue declaration votes under section 83 of the Act.

Significant problems can arise with attempting to send electoral visitor teams into correctional facilities. During operational situations, electoral officers can be denied entry into prisons or be required to leave. Occasions have arisen at the past three state elections where electoral officers have been unable to enter a prison, or there has been insufficient time to take all votes. Additionally, at each state election staff have raised concerns about their personal safety visiting these facilities.

Commonwealth legislation provides that at federal elections prisoners can vote by post or a mobile team can visit the prison and take votes. During the 2016 federal election, all South Australian prisons requested prisoners vote by post. The same is planned for the next federal election.

In November 2017, the Electoral Commissioner requested that the then-Attorney General consider making a regulation to enable imprisonment to be considered a 'reason of a prescribed nature' as provided for under section 71(2)(b)(vii) of the Act to allow ECSA to provide postal vote applications to prisoners in correctional facilities instead of visiting them as a declared institution. This request was agreed to and a regulation made, however, this was limited to the state's three maximum security facilities.

ECSA prefers to be able to provide postal vote applications to all eligible prisoners and hence requests that imprisonment be considered a 'reason of a prescribed nature' as provided for under section 71(2)(b)(vii). This measure has the support of the Chief Executive of the Department for Correctional Services.

Recommendation 9.

That the Regulations be amended so that a reason of a prescribed nature allows a resident of any correctional institution to make a declaration vote by post.

REGISTERED DECLARATION VOTERS

Electors who are unable to attend a polling booth at election time and meet certain criteria are eligible for registration as registered declaration voters for state elections and general postal voters for federal elections. Once registered, voters do not need to re-apply for future elections and, providing their circumstances do not change, will automatically receive a postal vote for each state and federal election.

The number of electors on the register of declaration voters has increased by more than 85% over the past two state elections, from 11,917 in 2010 to 20,734 in 2018. Silent electors account for almost half of the total number, while 7,926 or 36% live with a disability or are carers.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

HARMONISING THE REGISTER OF DECLARATION VOTERS

The register of declaration voters is an increasingly popular option for electors who are permanently prevented from attending a polling booth on polling day due to living with a disability, being a carer for someone who is seriously ill or infirm, living in a nursing home, religious beliefs or one of several other criteria.

ECSA is aware that the number of South Australians aged 65 and over is projected to increase significantly over the next decade, which will create a corresponding increase in the number of electors who may be eligible for and would benefit from becoming a registered declaration voter.

The register of declaration voters is managed by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), and South Australian electors who wish to apply to be registered are required to do so via the AEC website. ECSA is aware that electors have experienced confusion resulting from the different terminology used by the AEC, with the more intuitive term ‘general postal voter’ prescribed in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*. Furthermore, certain criteria on the AEC’s application form are limited to federal elections only, namely those

relating to voters serving a prison sentence of less than three years or those who are defence or Australian Federal Police employees serving overseas. ECSA is not aware of any reason why South Australia should not allow electors in these categories to apply to be on South Australia’s register.

To better support South Australian voters, ECSA believes that South Australia should amend its legislation to follow the example of other jurisdictions around Australia and change the name of its registered declaration voter program to ‘general postal voter’ program, and also harmonise the list of eligibility criteria with Commonwealth criteria.

Recommendation 10.

That the Act be amended to change the name ‘registered declaration voter’ to ‘general postal voter’ and to harmonise the eligibility criteria of the registered declaration voter program with the criteria of the Commonwealth general postal voter program.

PRE-POLL VOTING

South Australians who were unable to attend a polling booth on polling day were able to vote in the two weeks prior by attending one of 22 pre-poll voting centres established at 10 locations in metropolitan Adelaide and 12 regional locations around the state.

Pre-poll voting proved to be extraordinarily popular in 2018 with 120,468 votes issued, representing an increase of 241% since the 2010 State Election.

In its pre-2018 election planning ECSA anticipated an increase of 30% in the number of pre-poll votes that would be cast (around 105,000) and staffed accordingly. The actual increase of 50% resulted in additional pressure on staff and in some instances longer-than-anticipated queues and wait times at some pre-poll voting centres. Pre-poll waiting times also result in part from the fact that pre-poll votes are declaration votes which take much longer to issue and process, leading to longer queues at pre-poll centres.

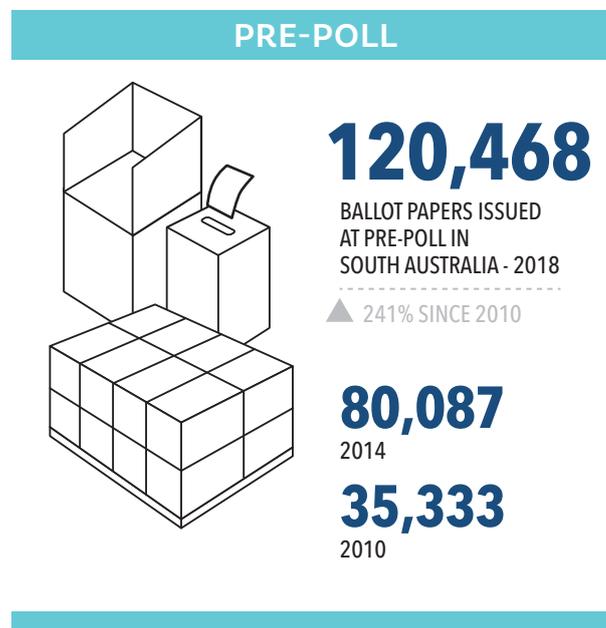
The growing public demand for pre-poll voting is apparent right across Australasia, as evidenced in the following table showing pre-poll votes as a share of all votes taken at the three most recent elections in each jurisdiction:

PRE-POLL VOTES AS A SHARE OF VOTES AT THE MOST RECENT AUSTRALASIAN ELECTIONS

JURISDICTION	AUS	NZ	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Election 1	8.2%	14.7%	20.3%	5.5%	11.0%	9.8%	3.7%	4.0%	8.8%	4.7%
Election 2	11.3%	29.3%	26.9%	8.2%	13.9%	19.6%	7.8%	6.7%	16.3%	6.3%
Election 3	18.2%	47.2%	33.7%	14.1%	36.2%	26.2%	10.8%	10.3%	25.8%	15.5%

Recent elections listed chronologically. For example for South Australia: Election 1 2010, Election 2 2014, Election 3 2018.

Over the past five years, ECSA's counterparts in other jurisdictions have all made changes to accommodate this rising demand. It is clear that the work commitments, mobility, changing lifestyles and expectations of South Australian electors are no different to those of electors living elsewhere in Australia and ECSA considers it is inevitable the popularity of pre-poll voting will continue to increase with future elections.



With the declining number of young people voting, there is a risk that not embracing pre-poll voting could frustrate and disenfranchise electors who expect convenient voting options. To cater for this major change in voter behaviour and expectations, ECSA believes several changes are required before the next state election, as outlined in the following pages.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PRE-POLL VOTING

Pre-poll voting has seen a surge in popularity in recent years in South Australia and across Australasia. To meet this growing demand, electoral commissions in other jurisdictions have greatly expanded their pre-poll voting services.

ECSA recognises that in addition to changing demands on people's time on Saturdays, public expectations about voting have profoundly changed. Research has shown that electors want convenient options that allow them to fulfil their democratic duty and obligations under compulsory voting.

Key to this expansion of convenience voting is the removal of eligibility requirements for pre-poll voting. Four Australian jurisdictions (NT, Queensland, Victoria and WA) have removed pre-poll eligibility requirements in the past decade, while the ACT government is currently considering removing its requirements. ECSA's 2018 Electors Surveys show broad support for removing pre-poll eligibility requirements in South Australia, with 58% of pre-poll voters stating that people should not have to provide a valid reason to vote early.

Another important reason to remove eligibility requirements is ECSA's inability to enforce compliance. As progressively more people vote early, the eligibility test has become problematic. The reality is that polling officials cannot test voters' claims to be travelling or caring for an ill family member, and must simply accept them at face value.

Given the indisputable rise in demand for pre-poll voting, mirroring national and international trends, the public's support for removing eligibility requirements and the impracticality of enforcing compliance, ECSA recommends legislative change to remove the eligibility criteria for pre-poll voting in South Australia.

Recommendation 11.

That the Act be amended to remove eligibility criteria for pre-poll voting to allow any enrolled elector to opt for convenience voting at a pre-poll voting centre in the fortnight prior to polling day.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF VOTING ON POLLING DAY

In 2017, the government inserted into section 8 of the Act the requirement for the Electoral Commissioner to, "... promote and encourage the casting of votes at a polling booth on polling day." At the time, the then-Attorney General stated in his second reading speech that the intention of this legislation was to "discourage pre-poll voting for convenience" and "curb the increase in pre-poll voting". No other jurisdiction places this obligation on its Electoral Commissioner and ECSA recommends it be removed from the Act.

Recommendation 12.

That the Act be amended to remove the direction for the Electoral Commissioner to encourage the casting of votes at a polling booth on polling day.

MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

EXPANDING PRE-POLL CAPACITY

To meet the growing public demand for pre-poll voting most electoral commissions around Australia have opened greater numbers of pre-poll centres. They also offer pre-poll voting on the Saturday prior to their polling days and extend opening hours to cater to electors who work.

Despite legislative attempts to hold back the growth of convenience voting in South Australia, the surge in demand for pre-poll voting and complaints about pre-poll queues and opening hours have shown that

electors expect voting services that are more flexible in meeting their needs.

ECSA recognises this and considers it appropriate to accommodate the growing demand for pre-poll voting at future elections by significantly expanding our pre-poll capacity, establishing a much greater number of pre-poll voting centres equipped with more issuing points and more staff. ECSA will also cater for electors who cannot vote during business hours by expanding opening hours and opening on the Saturday prior to polling day.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

ISSUING ORDINARY VOTES AT PRE-POLL VOTING CENTRES

The community expectation for votes to be counted and results announced promptly is challenged by the rise of convenience voting. All votes not cast on polling day are currently issued as declaration votes which cannot be counted until the week after polling day once rolls have been scanned and declaration envelopes transferred to each Returning Officer. As the number of declaration votes increases, the more likely it becomes that results in close elections will not be known for several days.

Casting a declaration vote is also complex and time-consuming for voters. Declaration votes take much longer to issue than ordinary votes and each voter needs to complete a declaration, which can be challenging for voters with literacy issues.

The status quo approach to pre-poll vote issuing and counting is no longer sustainable, with ever increasing numbers of declaration votes impacting on the speed of both the vote and the count. Unless action is taken, queues will be longer and election results delayed, creating frustration for candidates and voters, as well as criticism of ECSA.

A number of jurisdictions – the Commonwealth, NZ, the ACT, NT, Tasmania and Victoria – have resolved this problem by issuing the majority of pre-poll votes as ordinary votes and then counting these on polling day. ECSA recommends this approach be adopted in South Australia.

ECSA proposes to issue ordinary votes at pre-poll centres to all electors from the electoral district where the centre is located. Together with the greater number of pre-poll centres that will be established at future elections, this will ensure that the majority of pre-poll votes are issued as ordinary votes which can be counted sooner and faster. Electronic roll mark-off will ensure there is no associated risk of multiple voting.

This call for legislative change is closely associated with another on page 70 for all ordinary votes to be counted on polling day. Together these changes will ensure that a much greater proportion of the results are known on election night.

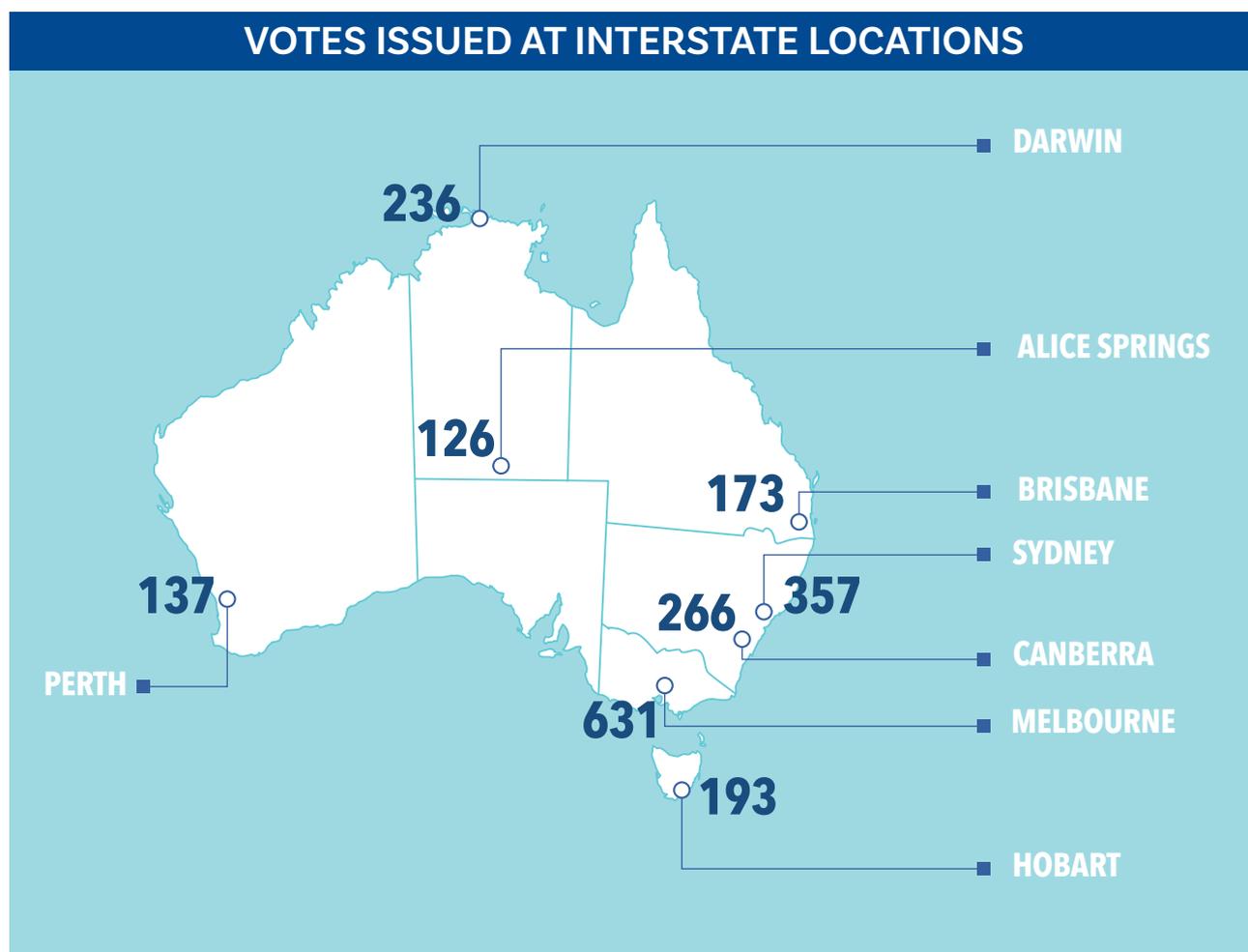
Recommendation 13.

That the Act be amended so that ordinary votes may be issued at pre-poll voting centres located within the elector's own district.

INTERSTATE VOTING

ECSA worked in partnership with all other Australian state and territory electoral commissions under a reciprocal partnership agreement to offer in-person voting services for South Australians visiting other states and territories during the election period. There were eight pre-poll locations interstate, the same as the previous two state elections.

In 2018 a total of 2,119 votes were issued at interstate locations, 576 more votes than in 2014.



OVERSEAS VOTING

At the 2018 State Election, ECSA worked with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the New Zealand Electoral Commission to offer pre-poll voting services at seven overseas locations. These overseas locations issued a total of 616 votes, compared to five locations at the 2014 State Election which issued 390 votes.

COUNTRY	CITY	VOTES ISSUED IN 2014	VOTES ISSUED IN 2018
UK	London	253	289
USA	Washington DC	14	21
USA	New York	31	N/A
NEW ZEALAND	Wellington	32	51
CHINA	Hong Kong	60	127
GERMANY	Berlin	N/A	30
FRANCE	Paris	N/A	18
VIETNAM	Ho Chi Minh City	N/A	80
		Total: 390	Total: 616

The selection of overseas locations in 2018 was based on consideration of the number of votes issued at those locations at the 2014 State Election, along with data shared by the AEC for votes cast by South Australian voters at overseas locations during the 2016 federal election. A request to establish a voting centre at the Australian consulate in New York in 2018 was declined due to the consulate's limited staffing capacity. The Hong Kong consulate only agreed to issue votes in the second week of pre-poll in 2018 due to their staff's perception of low numbers at previous elections.

MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

AN END TO OVERSEAS PRE-POLL VOTING CENTRES

Although ECSA has a responsibility to enfranchise as many overseas South Australians as possible, overseas pre-poll voting in 2018 was overly expensive and logistically challenging. Despite our staff's best efforts, it proved difficult - and in one case impossible - for voting materials to be delivered overseas in time for the beginning of voting and returned to ECSA in time to be included in the count.

The key problem with offering pre-poll voting at such a small number of overseas locations however, is that it caters to just a tiny fraction of the tens of thousands of South Australians living or travelling abroad. For this reason, from the 2022 State Election onwards, ECSA plans to discontinue pre-poll voting at consulates overseas. Electors will instead be encouraged to make use of the electronic system for the delivery and return of ballot papers as proposed in Recommendation 8.

REMOTE POLLING

Remote polling is a key election service delivered by ECSA to South Australian electors living in remote locations in the state, including remote Aboriginal communities.

Remote polling has complex logistical requirements which require extensive forward planning to arrange mobile teams to offer voting across the electoral districts of Flinders, Mackillop, Chaffey, Stuart, Giles and Narungga.

In 2018, ECSA increased its mobile polling teams by 29% compared to 2014 with a 7% increase in the number of locations polled.

ECSA's remote polling teams travelled more than 10,000 kilometres to 32 locations around SA over eight days in the fortnight before polling day to give remote electors their chance to vote.

ECSA chartered aircraft to conduct polling in the far north and other remote locations with each location visited on a single day in the two weeks leading up to polling day.

The remote polling teams conducted a 34% increase in total hours of polling when compared to 2014 and there was a 10% increase in total votes taken across mobile polling locations over 2014.



FAST FACTS

- 34%** ▲ TOTAL HOURS OF MOBILE POLLING
95 vs 71 HOURS IN 2014

- 10%** ▲ TOTAL VOTES TAKEN ACROSS MOBILE POLLING LOCATIONS, 1335 vs 1212 IN 2014

- 7%** ▲ LOCATIONS WHERE POLLING OCCURRED
32 vs 30 LOCATIONS IN 2014

- 29%** ▲ MOBILE TEAMS DEPLOYED
7 vs 5 TEAMS IN 2014



Footy legends take centre stage in polling in APY Lands



To many, polling day and the idea of going to the polling booth to cast a vote is something of a community event. For this year's Election, ECSA drew on a bit of footy star power to turn remote polling in Ernabella in the APY Lands in the far north-west of South Australia into a family fun day.

Retired Aboriginal Aussie Rules footy legends Gavin Wanganeen and Michael O'Loughlin accompanied the ECSA mobile voting team to the tiny community on Sunday 10 March to hold a footy clinic with local kids and a barbecue for the community.

The pair usually trail a bunch of kids after them wherever they go in Aboriginal communities, with the kids wanting to kick the footy with their idols and get an autograph. Ernabella was no exception.

Wanganeen and O'Loughlin ran skill sessions and kick to kick, and handed out Swans and Port Adelaide jumpers for the clinic.

By the time it was over, jumpers signed, and interviews done, around 200 adults had cast their votes in a makeshift polling booth at the local community store.

"... the kids see the elders vote, their mothers and fathers come in and vote, so it already plants that seed in their mind." Michael O'Loughlin.

As O'Loughlin told an ABC Adelaide reporter and crew who accompanied ECSA on the visit, watching the elders vote was like being a youngster aspiring to be an AFL player.

"Gav and I watched our uncles play, we saw more Aboriginal people on television playing footy at the elite level, so it's a bit like today – the kids see the elders vote, their mothers and fathers come in and vote, so it already plants that seed in their mind," O'Loughlin said.

"Hopefully some of these young fellas will turn into community leaders."

DECLARED INSTITUTIONS

Under the Act, the Electoral Commissioner can ‘declare’ certain institutions as locations where in-person voting services can be provided to residents unable to attend a polling booth. These ‘declared institutions’ are typically aged care facilities, hospitals and correctional institutions.

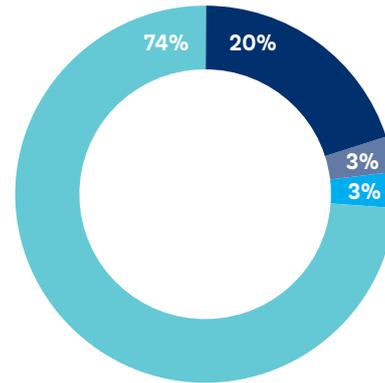
Once an institution has been declared, ECSA arranges for a team of electoral visitors to issue votes to residents at a mobile polling station located in situ at the facility or institution.

Electoral visits began in the week before polling day with teams of electoral officers issuing 10,717 votes across 269 declared institutions. Portable lookup devices allowed the officers access to the electoral roll to ensure the correct ballot papers were issued to electors.

As part of ECSA’s duty of care and focus on integrity and professionalism, all electoral visitors passed a working with vulnerable persons check and received training on working with the aged and people living with disabilities.

FAST FACT

DECLARED INSTITUTIONS WERE IDENTIFIED AS...



- RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITIES
- HOSPITALS
- CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS
- RETIREMENT VILLAGES

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

DECLARED INSTITUTIONS AND MOBILE POLLING

Almost a decade ago, in its Report on the conduct of the 2007 federal election, the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) recommended that section 227 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act (CEA)* relating to mobile polling be amended to remove all references to "remote divisions" and allow mobile polling at "... such locations and at such times as the Australian Electoral Commission deems necessary for the purposes of facilitating voting. For example, mobile polling ... should be able to be provided where there is likely to be sufficient demand for such facilities by homeless and itinerant electors, or in such other circumstances as warrant their use." The Australian Government endorsed JSCEM's two recommendations and successfully amended the CEA to open mobile polling up to all divisions and, as it explained in parliament, "... give the Electoral Commissioner flexibility rather than prescription ... the power to determine the places at which mobile polling can be conducted."

ECSA is of the view that adopting both of the above federal changes would be highly beneficial at state level in South Australia. Giving the Commissioner the flexibility to be able to determine other appropriate locations where teams of polling officials can go would allow ECSA to meet the special needs of sectors of the community by attending centres catering to homeless and itinerant electors (as well as others that ECSA's stakeholder partners alert us to). The Australian and Victorian electoral commissions (Victorian legislation also provides its Commissioner with complete flexibility to determine where mobile voting teams can visit) have reported that in addition to allowing them to reach electors in difficulty, this flexibility also permits them to use mobile polling as an appropriate strategy to service voting needs at, for example, major sporting events and community gatherings that can interfere with an election period.

To achieve this outcome, ECSA seeks the following changes to legislation:

- remove from section 77 of the Act all references to "places within a remote subdivision" to allow the Electoral Commissioner to establish mobile polling booths at any location in the state which he or she deems appropriate
- abolish section 83 of the Act, thereby eliminating declared institutions and electoral visitors which will be replaced by the more generic mobile polling teams covered by section 77.

Recommendation 14.

That the Act be amended to remove references to places within a remote subdivision to allow the Electoral Commissioner to establish mobile polling booths at any location in the state which he or she deems appropriate.

Recommendation 15.

That the Act be amended to abolish section 83 concerning declared institutions and electoral visitors, which will be replaced instead by mobile polling teams able to visit and take votes at any location which the Electoral Commissioner deems appropriate.

VoteAssist



In June 2017, Parliament introduced amendments to the Act that allowed ECSA to offer electronically-assisted voting for vision-impaired electors – amendments that ECSA had been advocating for since 2010.

Given the limited time available before the 2018 State Election, ECSA chose to implement an Adelaide-based trial of electronically-assisted voting software called VoteAssist, which had been successfully used at a previous Western Australian state election. VoteAssist uses specially-designed computer terminals coupled with headphones and a numeric keypad, with audio prompts guiding the elector through the voting process.

ECSA worked in partnership with the Royal Society for the Blind (RSB) to conduct the trial, with VoteAssist terminals located in four RSB locations across Adelaide in the two weeks leading up to polling day. RSB proposed the polling locations

as they were familiar to vision-impaired electors while ECSA trained RSB staff as polling officials to administer the four polling locations.

In total, 100 vision-impaired electors used VoteAssist. Of the 64 users who participated in an anonymous survey, 96.8 per cent said they had a positive voting experience and 98.4 per cent said they would be keen to use a facility like VoteAssist at a future election.

ECSA strongly supports the provision of an independent and secret method of voting for vision-impaired South Australians and will continue to work in partnership with RSB and the sector to identify the best voting method for the vision-impaired at future state elections.

(ABOVE) MICHAEL CLIFFORD DEMONSTRATES THE USE OF VOTEASSIST AT THE RSB OFFICE IN PIRIE ST, ADELAIDE AFTER COMPLETING HIS OWN VOTE USING VOTEASSIST.



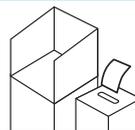
POLLING DAY

Voting opened at 8am on polling day, Saturday 17 March 2018, at 693 polling booths across South Australia. A total of 888,156 votes were taken by the close of polls at 6pm, representing 79.3% of all votes issued at the 2018 State Election. Electors who voted within their enrolled district or at a shared booth outside their district were able to cast an ordinary vote, while those who voted in another district in South Australia cast an absent vote, which requires the voter to fill out a declaration. Ordinary votes accounted for 796,297 of the votes cast on polling day, with the remaining 91,859 consisting of absent votes.

Polling booth locations were promoted through a range of methods, including the interactive map and polling booth finder on ECSA's website, the EasyVote Card and App, as well as advertisements in newspapers, including a four-page spread in The Advertiser in the lead-up to polling day. The accessibility rating of all booths was included in all material.

Polling day for the 2018 State Election proved to be an overwhelming success, in no small part due to the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by election officers as well as the intensive planning undertaken by ECSA over many months. One common perception of Australian elections is lengthy waiting times, which proved not to be the case on 17 March with an average waiting time of just 6.1 minutes according to ECSA's Electors Surveys.

FAST FACT



6m1s

AVERAGE WAITING TIME AT A POLLING BOOTH TO CAST A VOTE



MODERNISING ELECTORAL SERVICES

ELECTRONIC ROLL MARK-OFF AND BALLOT PAPER PRINT ON DEMAND

While internet-connected technology has transformed how South Australians conduct most basic business transactions, the voting process at elections has remained largely unchanged for decades. Voters wait in a line to have their name manually crossed off a printed paper list, just as they have at every South Australian election since 1858. Sometimes they may need to wait to fill out a form in detail and by hand. They will then receive paper ballots, which they must mark by hand and place in a cardboard box to be counted manually. Voting has, in effect, become unlike any other transactional process that the public is used to in their daily lives.

ECSA has identified two technological solutions which it is considering for the 2022 State Election to modernise and streamline the voting experience:

- full electronic roll mark-off technology linked to scanners that read barcodes placed on EasyVote Cards and within the EasyVote App.
- printing House of Assembly ballot papers at each issuing point of pre-poll centres and at a small number of polling booths on polling day.

ECSA envisages at the 2022 State Election that around 1.3 million South Australians will receive their EasyVote Card in the mail or download the App and take it with them to vote. Upon approaching the vote issuing point, the polling official will scan a barcode on the voter's Card or App and within seconds the voter will be electronically marked off the roll and their House of Assembly ballot paper will be printed and handed to them.

Several electoral commissions around Australia have made the move to full electronic roll mark-off, including the ACT, NT, Queensland and Tasmania, while every other commission is currently working to introduce it at their future elections. At the 2017 Queensland State Election, the Queensland Electoral Commission also printed ballot papers on demand at every polling place across the state.

The benefits of these approaches include:

- speeding up the voter identification process and significantly reducing queue times
- facilitating mark-off of voters with unusual names, particularly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds
- reducing the incidence of polling official error and subsequent erroneous issuing of non-voter notices
- reducing the incidence of and potential for multiple voting, through instant alerts.
- allowing real-time monitoring of ballot paper stocks and allowing election workers to cater for unanticipated demand at a polling place by printing ballot papers as required
- reducing costs and environmental wastage resulting from the longstanding approach of printing excess quantities of all 47 House of Assembly ballot papers to cater for those who vote out of district.

These advantages aside, if ECSA is to successfully implement Recommendations 13 and 16 and issue the majority of pre-poll votes as ordinary votes and count them sooner, electronic roll mark-off will be necessary at all polling places to mitigate the risk of multiple voting associated with not issuing declaration votes.

Electronic mark-off has been successfully trialled by ECSA at previous by-elections in 2012 and ECSA hopes to make it available at all polling places at the next State Election, along with print on demand House of Assembly ballot papers in pre-poll voting centres provided that an appropriate level of financial support is made available.

ECSA recognises that securing the required quantities of hardware to introduce these innovations may involve significant costs. ECSA will need to secure the necessary funds to ensure that South Australia keeps pace with other jurisdictions and continues to meet community expectations.

Processing the results

INTRODUCTION

At the close of polls at 6pm, as the last voters leave the polling booths and the party volunteers pack up and leave their posts outside, the day is only halfway through for many ECSA polling staff.

Before staff can head home after their full-day shifts, almost 1.6 million ordinary ballot papers need to be scrutinised and counted with the results entered into ECSA's systems and transmitted to our website and the media.

In the busy days that follow, the rolls from each polling booth must be scanned before the nearly 300,000 declaration envelopes can be scrutinised and – if accepted – opened by Returning Officers and the ballot papers they contain added to the count. This, along with rechecks and other counts, continues while postal votes return until the results can be finalised seven days after polling day.

Meanwhile, the Legislative Council recheck count takes much longer, with nearly half a million ballot papers needing to be securely transferred to the scanning centre. Once there, they are scanned and data-entered after which data from all votes is processed through the counting software, with preferences distributed and the results declared.

In all, nearly 2.2 million ballot papers must be securely stored, counted, checked and then transferred for safe storage in these busy weeks. ECSA staff work tirelessly to ensure the accuracy of the result, observed throughout by scrutineers who ensure the transparency of the process at polling booths, Returning Officers' premises, the central processing centre, LC counting centre and scanning centre.





COUNTING ON ELECTION NIGHT

The counting of votes began soon after polling booths closed at 6pm. Polling Officials conducted three separate counts of the ordinary votes issued at their booth on polling day:

- a first preference count of House of Assembly ballot papers
- a Two-Candidate Preferred count of House of Assembly ballot papers
- a first preference count of Legislative Council ballot papers

By 9:01pm, 90% of polling booths had completed and published the results of their first preference counts, surpassing ECSA's target of having more than 70% published.

After the first preference votes of House of Assembly ballot papers had been counted, a Two-Candidate Preferred count was undertaken with preferences distributed to the two candidates considered most likely to be in the lead. This count provided an early indication of the election results and a snapshot of preference flows for political parties and the media.

At some polling booths, staff worked late into Saturday night to ensure all ordinary votes were counted.



(ABOVE) ROLL SCANNING ON ELECTION NIGHT.

RECHECKS AND TWO-PARTY PREFERRED COUNTS

On the Sunday after polling day, Returning Officers conducted a recheck and recount of all ordinary House of Assembly ballot papers for all booths, including an assessment of informal and undetermined ballot papers to see if they followed candidates' voting tickets.

This was followed by Two-Party Preferred (2PP) counts for each polling booth to show how the vote was divided between the Labor and Liberal parties, taking into account the preferences of people who had voted for other parties and independents. A 2PP count was also performed on the following Saturday on all declaration votes admitted into the count.

ROLL SCANNING

After polling booths closed, the electoral rolls which Polling Officials had used to mark off voters' names were collected by Returning Officers and transferred to the scanning centre where they were scanned district by district beginning late on election night. Over the next two-and-a-half days all rolls were scanned and the contents converted into data to provide ECSA with an accurate list of who had voted and who appeared not to have voted.

Polling booth rolls from the 20 districts deemed to be marginal were couriered to the scanning centre and processed urgently. The rolls from the remaining non-marginal districts were delivered and scanned subsequently, with all scanning and processing of around 1,800 rolls completed on schedule by noon on Tuesday 20 March.

As soon as the roll data was available for their district, each Returning Officer and their staff could begin the processing and counting of the thousands of postal, absent and pre-poll declaration votes.

DECLARATION VOTE COUNT

Over the week following polling day, Returning Officers processed the declaration votes received in their districts.

Each declaration vote envelope needed to be scrutinised before being opened to ensure that the votes cast were admissible to the count and to reduce the risk of multiple voting. After setting aside any rejected envelopes, staff removed the declaration flaps from the accepted envelopes before opening them and counting the ballot papers. The counts were conducted in the same manner as the ordinary ballot paper recheck counts.

Because postal votes could be received up to seven days after polling day, the final declaration vote count was not held until Saturday 24 March.

A CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

COUNTING ORDINARY PRE-POLL VOTES ON POLLING DAY

As the number of declaration votes cast at pre-poll centres increases at state elections, the counting process becomes more drawn out, and the more likely it becomes that results in close elections remain unknown for several days. ECSA recognises that a situation could arise in a close election with a large number of declaration votes where South Australians might have to wait for a week after polling day to know the outcome of the election due to the extra time needed for the count.

The current declaration vote scrutiny process cannot take place until the week after polling day once the rolls have been scanned and declaration envelopes delivered to each Returning Officer. A number of jurisdictions – the ACT, the Commonwealth, New Zealand, NT, Tasmania and Victoria – have resolved this problem by issuing the majority of pre-poll votes as ordinary votes and then counting these on polling day. ECSA recommends this approach be adopted in South Australia and seeks legislative change to do so.

As discussed in the ‘Call for legislative change’ on page 57, if ECSA is permitted to issue ordinary votes at pre-poll centres to electors from the electoral district where the centre is located, this will ensure that most pre-poll votes are ordinary votes and can be counted sooner.

Following the New Zealand model, on the evening prior to polling day these ordinary votes cast would be transferred to the central processing centre, where they would be counted on polling day in a restricted area under tight security conditions to guarantee the secrecy of the count until after polls close. This would result in a much larger number of votes being included in the results reported on election night and provide the public with greater knowledge of the outcome of the election that same night. The resultant smaller number of pre-poll votes issued as declaration votes would be scrutinised as usual in the week after polling day to ensure their validity before their inclusion in the count.

Recommendation 16.

That the Act be amended to allow the scrutiny to commence before the close of polling so that ordinary votes cast at pre-poll voting centres (if Recommendation 13 is taken up by Parliament) can be scrutinised and counted on polling day under suitably tight security conditions to guarantee the secrecy of the count until after the close of poll.

The complexity of the Legislative Council count



The counting and processing of results for the Legislative Council (LC) election is always a complex undertaking. The single transferable vote system used for the election, the large numbers of candidates with preferences to distribute, along with the choice of two voting options on the ballot paper invariably make for a laborious process. In 2018, things were complicated further by the change to voting in the LC election and the much greater than expected volume of ballot papers with multiple preferences requiring scanning and data entry.

At polling booths on election night, Polling Officials conducted a first preference count of the LC ordinary votes. Over the next two days, ordinary ballot papers were transferred securely from polling booths around the state to ECSA's LC counting centre where they were manually rechecked and recounted, district by district, by a team of 75 staff. Ballot papers with a single group preference marked above the line were totalled (almost 634,837, or 58% of all ballot papers) and stored for loading into the counting system. All ballot papers marked below the line, or with multiple preferences above the line, as well as any ballot papers where there was any confusion about the voter's intentions were batched and then transferred securely to the scanning centre.

The same process was repeated the second week after polling day with declaration votes which were transferred to the counting centre once the deadline for postal votes to be returned had passed and each House of Assembly district Returning Officer had conducted their first preference counts.

The 2018 Election saw an eleven-fold rise in the number of ballot papers that were too complex for manual counting. Whereas at previous elections, data entry was used to count ballots marked below the line, in 2018 the sheer volume of ballot papers with multiple preferences and the impracticality of data entering so many necessitated the use of scanning. In all, the scanning centre processed 350,697 ballot papers with multiple preferences above the line (32% of all ballot papers), 65,202 ballot papers marked below the line (6.0%), and 44,635 ballot papers initially assessed as informal (4.1%). By comparison, in 2014 there were just 41,234 ballot papers marked below the line or informal that required data entry (4.1% of all ballot papers). This surge in numbers extended the period it took to process the results to five weeks.

After checking and confirming the total figures for every polling place and declaration count, ECSA staff loaded the details of every batch of ballot papers into the EasyCount counting system. On 23 April, 37 days after polling day, the Returning Officer for the LC ran the EasyCount software and conducted the declaration of the poll to announce the 11 successful candidates.

EasyCount software has been provided by the AEC under licence for each LC election since 1997. ECSA acknowledges the AEC's support in managing the complexities of a computer count of the size of an LC election. However, the AEC has advised it intends to discontinue development and support for EasyCount, which will require an alternative solution for future LC elections. Considerable costs will be incurred in sourcing or developing an appropriate replacement system.

“ I love the camaraderie and the friendships you make over the years, it’s definitely a labour of love ”



Legislative Council Returning Officer Trevor Overy

Trevor Overy reckons he's been involved in the counting of well over four million votes since he first started working on state elections 45 years ago.

At that time, polling booth managers were given a global budget to hire their own staff, train and supervise them, pay them, and prepare and send out their staff group certificates.

Trevor worked as a polling booth manager for every state election after that until a sudden vacancy a few weeks short of the 1989 election saw him drafted as RO for the Albert Park district.

"They threw me in at the deep end; I hadn't had much training, but we got there, and I learned quickly. We ran the election out of my lounge room and employed about 120 staff, we had a budget of about \$25,000 to run ten booths."

At the next few elections he was RO for the district of Adelaide which, Trevor says, was harder work given the number of declared institutions – the RAH, Wakefield St Hospital, St Andrews Hospital and the Remand Centre – requiring electoral visits.

This year's State Election marked his fourth as RO for the Legislative Council, possibly his last election, *"I need an understudy to take over from me,"* Trevor says.

Being the sole RO for the Legislative Council is much more labour intensive, Trevor says, given the number of candidates, particularly the plethora of minor parties and independents when compared to a House of Assembly district which may have only four candidates.

A career public servant who is now retired, Trevor says he's enjoyed immensely his time working on elections and is a Deputy Returning Officer for Adelaide City Council at the 2018 council elections. While reluctant to commit to another election he says he would consider working as an assistant next time.

"It's good work, besides I love the camaraderie and the friendships you make over the years, it's definitely a labour of love," he says.

RESULTS CAPTURE AND REPORTING

On election night, polling booth managers relayed the results of their polling booth count to their ROs, who checked and entered them into the Results Entry Module (REM) computer system. Monitoring of results processing was managed centrally by ECSA to assist in identifying delays in results or possible discrepancies.

Over the following days, the results for polling booth rechecks, 2PP and declaration vote counts were entered by ROs as they were undertaken, until the final declaration count later that week. Final results were updated following the distribution of preferences conducted on the second Sunday after polling day.

At no time are ECSA's ICT systems more important than on election night, when the results are entered into the system and transmitted to the ECSA website and the media. To ensure a reliable election night experience for South Australians, considerable testing and redundancies were built into the results applications, including conducting two full result entry trials in the week before polling day, to load test and check the operation and accuracy of the system. In one of these tests, all 47 ROs and their staff undertook a dry run entering the full election night results from the 2014 State Election into the system. In this way, staff were trained and practiced in entering data for each of the three election night counts and ECSA's technology was ready to go, working flawlessly on election night without any website or application outages.

RESULTS DISSEMINATION

ECSA again provided a live stream of the 2018 election results to the ECSA website to allow the public to view real-time results. Results from the REM system automatically updated onto the ECSA website and were made available as a direct feed to media from the close of voting at 6pm on election night until counting was completed the following weekend. Television networks and media organisations used the direct data feeds of results to support their election reports and broadcasts.

The process of reporting results went smoothly, with no outages or technical difficulties, even with ECSA website receiving more than 400,000 hits on the afternoon and evening of polling day.

Final House of Assembly results were published on ECSA’s website for all districts following the distribution of preference counts on Sunday 25 March. Final results for the Legislative Council were published after the declaration of the poll on Monday 23 April.

ECSCA Electoral Commission SA
Independent Professional Innovative

Home House of Assembly Legislative Council District Results

South Australian State Election

Live Results

15:03
LAST UPDATED

State Summary

House of Assembly

Percentage of total votes

LIB	38%
ALP	32.8%
SAB	14.1%
GRN	6.7%
IND	3.5%
AC	3%
DIG	1.5%
AJP	0.3%
DPA	0.1%
SPGN	0%

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

House of Assembly State Summary | Legislative Council State Summary

Results by District

Adelaide

Adelaide

Votes counted: 89%

PRICE Betty-Jean	DIG	4.4%	946
SIMMS Robert	GRN	12.6%	2,739
CHAPLEY Jo	ALP	35.8%	7,750
SANDERSON Rachel	LIB	47.2%	10,226
TOTAL VOTES			21,661

View Seat Summary

(ABOVE) LIVE RESULTS WEBPAGE ON ECSA'S WEBSITE

TICKET VOTING

Amendments to the Act in 2017 removed ticket voting for the Legislative Council.

Ticket voting for the House of Assembly is one of the unique features of South Australian elections. Because voters must indicate preferences for all candidates on the ballot paper if they wish their vote to be counted, there is potential for a high number of informal ballots. Voting tickets lodged by candidates serve as a 'savings provision' for votes that would otherwise be informal.

House of Assembly ballot papers marked with a single 1, ✓ (tick) or ✗ (cross), or partially completed with consecutive preferences consistent with a voting ticket lodged by the party, candidate or group, are accepted as formal ballot papers and attributed to the candidate for whom the first preference is marked.

Ticket voting for the House of Assembly in 2018 represented 3.8% of all formal ballot papers, an increase from 3.6% in 2014. Eight candidates (3%) did not lodge a voting ticket for the 2018 Election compared to 2014 when three candidates (1.5%) chose not to lodge a voting ticket. The highest rate of ticket voting was 7.7% in the district of Bragg with the lowest rate of 2.1% being recorded in Kavel.

INFORMALITY

Informality, at 4.1% for both the Legislative Council and House of Assembly elections, while comparatively low for the Legislative Council was uncharacteristically high for the House of Assembly.

In the Legislative Council election, the increase was only slight, up from 3.9% in 2014. However, this rise came in spite of the number of candidates dropping from 63 in 2014 to 43 in 2018, and a change in the formality rules for below-the-line voting whereby voters only needed to complete 12 preferences below the line (with a savings provision of six), compared to the previous requirement to mark all candidates.

Informality in the House of Assembly election increased by one percentage point, up from 3.1% in 2014. Although some of the increase may reflect voter confusion at the higher number of candidates contesting the elections, ECSA's post-election analysis of the informal ballot papers suggests the majority of informal votes were intentionally informal (see ballot paper audit section on page 85).

ECSA is concerned about these increases in informality and recognises that work is needed to reduce informality at future elections. Dedicated measures to tackle informality over the next election cycle may include the proposed voter education program in schools and multicultural community centres, consideration of improved instructions on ballot papers, and an expansion of the Community Ambassador program (see page 39 for more information).





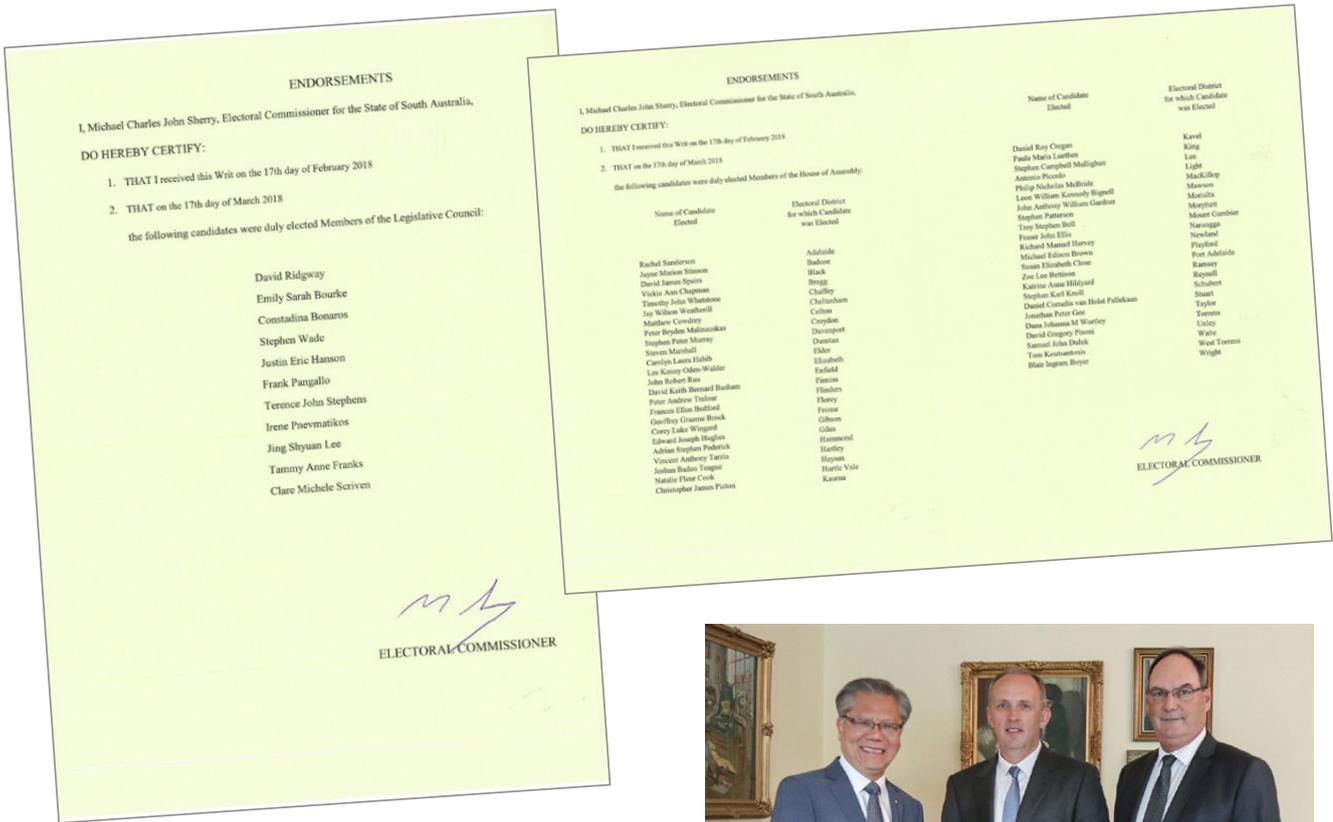
DECLARATION OF RESULTS

The results for the 47 districts of the House of Assembly were declared during the week of 26 March while the declaration of the results for the Legislative Council was conducted on 23 April.

(LEFT) RETURNING OFFICER FOR DUNSTAN, WAYNE TURNER, READS THE DECLARATION OF THE POLL IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RE-ELECTED MEMBER FOR DUNSTAN, THE HONOURABLE STEVEN MARSHALL, PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

RETURN OF THE WRITS

The writs were returned to the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Hieu Van Le AC, on 26 April 2018 at Government House.



(ABOVE) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY WRITS SHOWING MEMBERS ELECTED.

(RIGHT) HIS EXCELLENCY, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA HIEU VAN LE AC RECEIVES THE WRITS FROM ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER MICK SHERRY AND DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DAVID GULLY AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.



After the election

INTRODUCTION

The election does not end for ECSA with the return of the writs. In the weeks and months that follow, we close down our Returning Officers' premises, pay thousands of election staff, account for the tonnes of materials sent to polling places, and securely store the nearly two and a half million ballot papers cast at the election.

ECSA conducts a comprehensive review of the delivery of every election and 2018 was no exception. Following the election, a range of feedback, review and integrity check activities were undertaken to evaluate our performance across the entire electoral process. ECSA examined how the election went from

the points of view of the candidates, the parties, the electors and the many categories of staff who worked at the election.

It is through this examination and evaluation of what took place that ECSA can work to improve preparation and service delivery for future elections. Through our evaluation of the 2018 State Election, a number of recommendations for legislative amendments emerged, as well as proposals for changes to operating procedures. Taken as a whole, these changes will bring about substantial modernisation of the quality electoral services ECSA aims to provide for South Australians.



ECSA STAFF WERE HONOURED TO BE RECEIVED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE HIEU VAN LE AC, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AND MRS LE AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE SHORTLY AFTER THE 2018 STATE ELECTION. HIS EXCELLENCY THANKED ECSA FOR CONDUCTING THE ELECTION AND PRAISED OUR DELIVERY OF A COMPLEX ELECTION.

COURT OF DISPUTED RETURNS

As in 2014, no petitions were lodged with the Court of Disputed Returns following the 2018 State Election, meeting ECSA's strategic priority to deliver high quality election services by having no election challenged and upheld due to administrative error.

INVESTIGATION OF MULTIPLE VOTERS

After voting closed, certified lists from all district polling booths were priority collected and sent to the central scanning facility. All lists were then scanned to capture the marks made by issuing officers when marking electors off the electoral rolls. Scanning software was then used to interrogate the scanned marks to produce reports of electors who appeared not to have voted or who appeared to have voted more than once.

Roll scanning system reports indicated 637 possible multiple marks across the 47 electoral districts.

Assessments of these apparent multiple marks were conducted to identify those that were attributed to either incorrect or inadvertent markings by issuing officers next to the wrong elector name on the certified list. Following final investigations there were no apparent instances of multiple voter activity at the election.

Should electronic roll mark-off be introduced at the next state election it will significantly reduce the incidence of issuing officer errors.

COMPLAINTS

In advance of the State Election, ECSA reviewed and updated our complaints protocol which was then published on the ECSA website and in various candidate handbooks. At the briefing sessions ECSA held prior to the election, political parties and independent candidates were provided with a thorough explanation of the protocol and complaints lodgement and management processes.

In handling complaints, the Electoral Commissioner was supported by a team of complaints management staff headed by ECSA's legal officer. In addition, the Crown Solicitor's Office provided services to ECSA as at previous elections with a number of legal advisers including senior solicitors on call throughout the election to provide dedicated legal advice in the specialised field of electoral law. ECSA is grateful to the Crown Solicitor's Office for their assistance.

Consistent with previous years, ECSA received a large number of complaints at the 2018 State Election. Of these, 85 were alleged breaches of the Act which required investigation. This compares with 77 alleged breaches in 2014. The following table provides a breakdown into categories of the alleged breaches.

ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE ACT BY CATEGORY

CATEGORY	2018	2014
Misleading advertising	38	35
Authorisation	19	18
Fraud/intimidation/bribery	1	1
Size limitations of signage	11	11
Other*	16	12
Total	85	77

* Other comprises allegations of breaches to other sections of the Act, for example complaints regarding the ineligibility of candidates or advocating for an incorrect method of voting.

It should be noted that the method of calculating the number of complaints in 2018 was based on the number of allegations made against sections of the Act and is different to the method used in 2014 as cited in the 2014 Election Report.

Outcomes of alleged breaches of the Act

Misleading advertising

Of the 38 complaints received seven retractions were requested, nine requests for cessation of further publication were made, one remedy was requested, three warnings were issued, nine were found not to breach the Act and for 14 complaints, insufficient evidence was provided to properly assess the complaint.

Authorisation

Of the 19 complaints received three requests for cessation were made, four warnings were issued, 13 were found not to breach the Act and for one insufficient evidence was provided to properly assess the complaint.

Fraud intimidation and bribery

The sole complaint alleging bribery related to the provision of a token amount of food at an event organised by a political party. In this case a warning was issued.

Size limitations of signage

Of the 11 complaints received eight remedies were requested, eight warnings were issued and three were found to not to breach the Act.

Other

Of the 16 complaints received in this category one remedy was requested, four warnings were issued, and in 12 cases it was established that no breach of the Act occurred.

No matters were referred for prosecution in 2018. A breach of authorisation requirements or size limitations would only be referred where the breach was a result of intentional or repetitive action. It is also worth noting that breaches of the misleading advertising provisions are assessed by the Electoral Commissioner based on the balance of probability. For a prosecution to be successful, it would need to be proved beyond reasonable doubt with a higher burden of proof.

In 2018, the public also contacted ECSA with a large number of complaints about robocalls and signage, many of which involved a misunderstanding of ECSA's responsibility under the Act. Among complaints from members of the public about ECSA's services, some of the major issues regarded the EasyVote material (both Card and App), postal voting (particularly problems with voting packs arriving late or not arriving at all) and polling place accessibility, wait times or facilities.

ECSA's complaints protocol is to acknowledge complaints within two business days and resolve most complaints within five business days of being received. At the State Election 93% of complaints were acknowledged within two business days, and 85% were resolved within five business days. Although ECSA had aimed to resolve over 90% of complaints within five business days, this benchmark cannot always be reached, especially in cases involving potentially misleading advertising where ECSA relies on complainants to provide sufficient information in order to be able to make determinations.

The significant challenges of regulating misleading advertising

South Australia is the only jurisdiction in Australia and one of just a few jurisdictions in the world that has legislative provisions regarding misleading advertising. Under section 113 of the Act it is an offence for an electoral advertisement to contain “a statement purporting to be a statement of fact” that is “inaccurate and misleading to a material extent”.

South Australia is the only jurisdiction in Australia that has legislative provisions regarding the regulation of misleading advertising.

There are common misconceptions regarding the application of section 113. For a breach of section 113 to be determined and for ECSA to intervene a number of elements must be established.

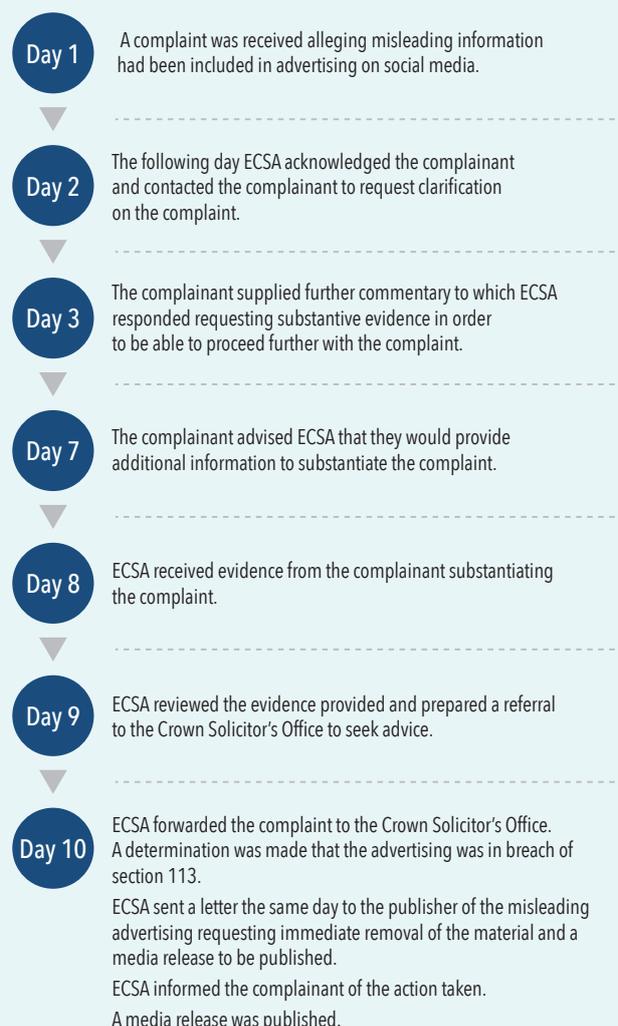
The subject of the complaint must be an electoral advertisement which contains electoral matter, defined as matter calculated to affect the result of an election. The electoral advertisement must contain a statement purporting to be a statement of fact. Opinions and predictions of the future cannot be considered statements of fact as neither a person’s opinion nor the future can be proven. Finally, and most significantly, the statement must be shown to be both inaccurate and misleading to a material extent: one of these alone is insufficient for ECSA to intervene.

One of the challenges the misleading advertising legislation introduces is that by necessity the onus is on the complainant to demonstrate that a statement is misleading. ECSA is unable to materially investigate matters to help make determinations and relies on the information provided by the complainant. However, in the majority of cases at the 2018 State Election, complainants disregarded the instructions provided on the complaints lodgement form and either failed to provide sufficient information or failed to articulate exactly what they alleged to be misleading. This resulted in ECSA having to chase up the complainants for further information before the complaints could be investigated. There were a number of instances where, despite numerous attempts to obtain enough information from the complainant to consider the matter, this

information was never obtained and the file was closed unresolved.

A further obstacle to the rapid resolution of alleged breaches of section 113 is the need in most cases for ECSA to seek comment from the person or organisation which the complaint has been made against. This generally necessitates subsequently seeking further information from the complainant in a back-and-forth manner which invariably causes delays beyond ECSA’s control. However, as soon as ECSA receives all the necessary information, making a determination is relatively quick.

An anonymised example from the 2018 State Election perfectly illustrates the time-consuming nature of the investigation process.



CANDIDATE AND POLITICAL PARTY FEEDBACK

ECSA sought feedback from the four political parties which won seats at the Election about our performance and what services could be improved. Only the Liberal Party responded to this request for feedback. This response was largely positive about the delivery of the election overall. Relatively few negatives were identified, however the following areas of improvement for future elections were highlighted:

- funding and disclosure reporting requirements
- electoral advertising restrictions

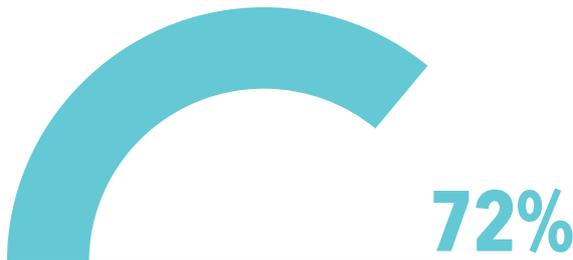
- voting ticket and how-to-vote card lodgement processes
- complaints resolution.

All candidates who stood at the 2018 State Election were invited to complete a survey evaluating their satisfaction with the services provided by ECSA. Candidates reported a high level of overall satisfaction with the way the election was run and of the information and support services provided by ECSA.

Highlights of the survey are listed below.

CANDIDATES' FEEDBACK ABOUT THE ELECTION

ECSA'S CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION



OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED



OF CANDIDATES CONSIDERED ECSA CONDUCTED THE ELECTION IMPARTIALLY

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

77% OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE CANDIDATE NOMINATION KIT

70% OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE CANDIDATE GUIDE

RESULTS

76% OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE ACCESSIBILITY OF RESULTS

67% OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE TIMELINESS OF RESULTS UPDATES

ECSA STAFF

75% OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THEIR RETURNING OFFICER

72% OF CANDIDATES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER ECSA STAFF

COMPLAINTS

69% OF CANDIDATES HAD NO INVOLVEMENT WITH COMPLAINTS HANDLING IN RELATION TO THE ELECTION

28% OF THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED WITH A COMPLAINT WERE SATISFIED WITH ECSA'S COMPLAINTS PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURES

ELECTORS SURVEYS

Electors were overwhelmingly positive about their voting experience and the services provided at the 2018 State Election. In three post-election surveys, conducted for ECSA by Colmar Brunton Social Research, ECSA was praised for the location of its voting centres, the time it took to vote, and especially the friendliness and professionalism of its polling staff.

While overall satisfaction with the voting experience remained very high at 90%, there was a moderate decline in the public's overall satisfaction rating from 2014. More significant was the decline in electors' confidence that ECSA conducted the election impartially and without bias, from 93% to 79%. Importantly however, the number of electors who considered ECSA was not impartial in its conduct of the election remained identical to 2014, at just 4%. Clearly, more voters felt neutral about ECSA's impartiality in 2018, possibly a reflection of a much broader decline to neutral noted in major studies of Australians' trust in institutions.

The most frequently given reason for this change in perception about ECSA's impartiality was a perception that the boundaries redistribution had been unfair. The surveys revealed low awareness among electors of the extensive changes to House of Assembly district boundaries. One in three electors (32%) were aware if their electoral district had changed or not since the 2014 election while two in three (68%) were not.

Those who stated they were aware of changes were asked to explain why the districts had changed, which revealed mixed levels of knowledge. These electors were most likely to mention that changes were due to population or demographic changes (35%), gerrymandering (28%), and/or a fairness clause in the Constitution (11%), while a third (33%) were unable to provide an explanation.

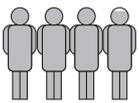
Two significant issues which the Electors Surveys highlighted were a lack of awareness of the voting options available to people unable to vote in their own electoral district on polling day, and reduced recall of ECSA's advertising campaign prior to the election.

The surveys also showed:

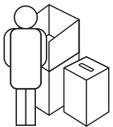
- Regarding awareness of voting options, 33% of electors were unaware of postal voting, 55% were unaware they could vote at a polling booth outside their own electoral district, and 56% were unaware about pre-poll voting
- Regarding ECSA's advertising campaign, awareness of the campaign among voters had reduced significantly since 2014. The three surveys showed between 27% and 31% of electors were able to recall the campaign or message when prompted with images or a description of the advertising.

Both issues highlight the difficulties electoral commissions face when informing and educating electors in the new media environment and when there is competition from 'Mad March' events such as the Adelaide Festival, the V8 Supercar Race and the Adelaide Cup. As the cut-through of advertising on traditional media channels declines, ECSA must review its media placement strategy and voter information campaigns for future electoral events.

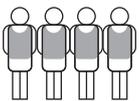
ELECTOR FEEDBACK



90% SATISFACTION WITH VOTING EXPERIENCE



96% SATISFACTION WITH THE VOTING EXPERIENCE ON POLLING DAY



99% SATISFACTION WITH THE ECSA STAFF ON POLLING DAY



97% SATISFACTION WITH POLLING BOOTH LOCATIONS



93% SATISFACTION WITH THE TIME IT TOOK TO VOTE ON POLLING DAY

Key findings from three main groups of electors are as follows:

Polling day voters

Voters interviewed at polling booths on 17 March showed extremely high levels of satisfaction across all of the key aspects of the voting experience, with 96% of voters satisfied overall. Satisfaction with ECSA staff and the convenience of booth locations was nearly universal among respondents (99% and 97% respectively). Voters estimated they waited on average just 6.1 minutes to vote, and 93% were satisfied with the time it took them to vote.

Pre-poll voters

Pre-poll voters were slightly less satisfied overall than polling day voters, although at 89% overall satisfaction levels were still extremely positive for ECSA. Satisfaction was lowest for the time it took to vote, with 18% of pre-poll voters being dissatisfied and 2% very dissatisfied. Pre-poll voters estimated they waited 18.9 minutes on average to vote, although wait times varied considerably. The most common reasons given for voting early were work on polling day (40%) and travel (32%). Interestingly, a broad majority of pre-poll voters (58%) stated that they did not believe that people should have to provide a valid reason in order to vote early.

Non-voters

Electors who did not vote at the State Election were actively sought out in the 2018 Electors Surveys in order to better understand their behaviour, perceptions and attitudes. Most non-voters (64%) did not consider voting at the election. There were a variety of reasons given for why they did not vote, with the most commonly mentioned reason being that they believed they were not enrolled (38%).

Non-voters were far less likely than voters to be aware of alternative voting options available to electors who were unable to vote in their electoral district on polling day: 66% were unaware of postal voting, 80% were unaware of pre-poll voting and 81% were unaware they could vote at a polling booth outside their own electoral district. While most non-voters were aware that voting is compulsory,

unsurprisingly their support for compulsory voting was much lower than that of voters (53% vs 81%).

A final highlight from the surveys was South Australian electors' attitudes towards the possibility of internet voting. When questioned initially, 60% of voters stated they would be likely or very likely to vote online if that were an option. However, when probed further, only 37% of voters expressed confidence in the security of online voting.

More detail about the results of ECSA's 2018 Electors Surveys can be found in the Report available on ECSA's website.

ECSA STAFF SURVEYS

State elections provide an opportunity for employment for many South Australians. Feedback from staff provides a valuable perspective on ECSA's delivery of election services and leads to improvements after every election.

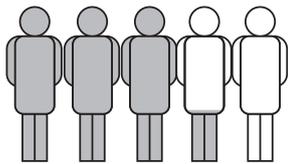
Seven surveys were undertaken of election casuals and officials involved in different roles at the election, from Polling Officials up to Returning Officers. More than 4,600 responses were received representing over 70% of those who worked on the election. The feedback from these surveys will be used over the next four years to closely analyse and improve ECSA's planning and procedures, particularly our approach to training and recruiting our election workforce.

Highlights among the findings include:

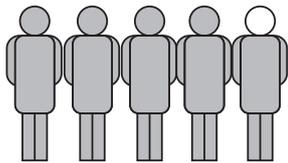
- 66.4% of those completing the surveys indicated they had worked at previous elections, while 33.6% were new to election work
- 96.8% stated that they were interested in working for ECSA at future elections and only 3.2% said they were not. Among those not interested, the key reasons given were age, the length of the working day and lack of necessary IT and computer skills

- Although the average age of staff employed at the election was 45-54 years, this figure is deceptive because of the preponderance among those surveyed of Polling Officials (73.9%) who were on average the youngest of all staff categories. Among more senior positions, ECSA's election workforce is considerably older which presents risks for the future.
- Satisfaction with training was very high overall, with 92.8% of all staff indicating that the training they received helped them to understand their roles and 91.7% stating the training helped them to confidently undertake their tasks. Staff identified some areas for improvement at future elections, including many calls for a new online training system, as well as more hands-on examples, practice and role play at future staff training sessions.
- ECSA's Work, Health and Safety arrangements at the election were also rated very highly overall, with 89.3% of all staff indicating they were satisfied.

STAFF RETENTION



66.4% OF STAFF HAD PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH ECSA AT ELECTIONS



96.8% OF STAFF EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN WORKING FOR ECSA AGAIN AT FUTURE ELECTIONS

ENFORCEMENT OF COMPULSORY VOTING

One of ECSA's key tasks in the wake of a State Election is to follow up those electors who appear not to have voted. With the record rate of abstention at the 2018 State Election, the number of non-voters increased significantly. While this abstention can be partly attributed to the increase of the electoral roll through automatic enrolments and enrolments for the 2017 Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey, reduced youth participation was also a major factor.

Under section 85 of the Act electors who appear to have failed to vote at an election are issued a notice within 90 days of polling day, giving them an opportunity to provide a valid reason as to why they did not vote. In June, notices were issued to 63,715 electors, up from 49,640 in 2014. Of those, 37,480 either failed to respond to the notice or provided an unacceptable reason for not voting and in July were issued with a \$70 expiation notice.

Expiation reminder notices were subsequently issued in late August to 27,942 electors who had failed to respond previously, requesting payment of \$125 by 25 September, the due date for expiating the offence.

In November 2018, 23,009 expiation notices were sent to the Fines Enforcement and Recovery Unit for enforcement.

NON-VOTERS 2010-2018

2018	2014	2010
63,715	46,940	44,100

BALLOT PAPER AUDITS

After each election ECSA conducts detailed audits of ballot papers to analyse informality, ticket voting and compliance with how-to-vote cards. This is an important quality control measure to ensure the accuracy of our counting procedures and identify any improvements that need to be made to manuals and training.

A detailed breakdown of the findings of the ballot paper audits will be provided in ECSA's stand-alone 2018 Election Statistics Report after analysis has been completed.

Key highlights from the raw data include:

Informality

An analysis of ballot papers for the House of Assembly found 44,821 ballot papers recorded as informal, an increase from 3.1% to 4.1% since the previous State Election. The level of informality ranged from 2.2% for the district of Adelaide to 7.0% for the district of Croydon. The key finding from the audit is that the vast majority (74.5%) of informal ballot papers were cast intentionally by voters, with 42.4% left blank, 24.0% containing marks and messages but no preferences, and 7.9% containing dismissive numbering. Only 23.5% of informal ballot papers appear to have been cast unintentionally.

In the Legislative Council election, 44,497 ballot papers were recorded as informal, an increase from 3.9% to 4.1% since 2014. Informality ranged from 2.4% for electors in Bragg and Waite to 6.4% for those voting in Ramsay. In the audit of 14,736 informal ballot papers from a sample of 17 Legislative Council divisions, the key finding again was that the majority (68.2%) of informal ballot papers had been cast intentionally by voters, with 45.7% left blank and 22.5% containing marks or messages. Of the 31.3% of ballot papers which it is assumed were unintentionally informal, two thirds were cases of informality below the line, particularly incomplete preferences or multiple first preferences indicated.

How-to-vote (HTV) card compliance

In the 17 districts audited, four out of the 91 candidates running did not lodge an HTV card. The audit of ballot papers for those candidates who lodged an HTV card found that overall, 37.7% of all formal ballot papers were consistent with HTV cards, compared to 42.8% in 2014, and 42.1% in 2010.

FUNDING AND DISCLOSURE

Election funding

Another important task following the State Election was for ECSA to reimburse eligible electoral participants who had participated in the election funding scheme.

The 2018 State Election was the first time that electoral participants in a South Australian election had the opportunity to receive public funding. This scheme is covered by Divisions 4 and 6 of Part 13A of the Act and allows for a reimbursement of political expenditure for eligible participants who keep within the expenditure limits set out in the above divisions.

Following on from the results of the 2018 State Election, 197 candidates qualified for election funding. Of these candidates, five were independent and the remainder endorsed by eight registered political parties.

Based on the political expenditure disclosed in the Capped Expenditure Return lodged by these candidates (or their agent where applicable), no candidate exceeded the caps set out in s130Z of the Act and therefore no penalties were applied to the payments.

2018 ELECTION EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES	TOTAL SPEND ON POLITICAL EXPENDITURE \$	TOTAL ELIGIBILITY PER 2018 STATE ELECTION RESULTS \$	EXCEEDED CAP	TOTAL ELECTION FUNDING PAYMENT DUE \$
Australian Labor Party	3,257,231.77	2,022,150.00	No	2,022,150.00
Liberal Party	3,788,388.01	2,299,071.84	No	2,299,071.84
The Greens	278,033.68	398,860.80	No	278,033.68
Dignity Party	60,524.00	13,297.44	No	13,297.44
Nick Xenophon's SA-BEST	1,146,406.33	1,193,947.56	No	1,146,406.33
Conservatives	259,032.72	181,016.16	No	181,016.16
Animal Justice Party	19,409.00	83,072.08	No	19,409.00
Liberal Democrats	13,447.56	94,479.84	No	13,447.56
INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES				
Dan Golding	1,599.80	4,793.88	No	1,599.80
Frances Bedford	41,608.42	21,721.44	No	21,721.44
Geoff Brock	18,167.33	29,689.92	No	18,167.33
Duncan McFetridge	30,521.99	10,258.56	No	10,258.56
Troy Bell	43,770.13	25,939.68	No	25,939.68
Total	8,958,140.74	6,378,299.20		6,050,518.82

Payment is legislated to be made in the period ending 120 days after polling day, and all payments were made within this timeframe.

Lodgement of disclosures

During the *designated period* of an election, the following returns are required to be lodged with high frequency:

- Political Party Return
- Associated Entity Return
- Third Party Return
- Candidate Campaign Donation Return
- Candidate Group Campaign Donation Return

The *designated period* for the 2018 State Election commenced on 1 January 2018 and ended on 16 April 2018. The lodgement schedule for the *designated period* included 12 return periods with stipulated return due dates.

The disclosure threshold applicable during the 2018 State Election was \$5,191.

Stakeholders are only required to start lodging returns upon commencement of their disclosure period which varies for different stakeholders.

For more information on the different disclosure periods, please refer to the relevant guides on the funding and disclosure section of ECSA's website (e.g. the Third Party Guide and Candidate Guide).

In addition, stakeholders who incurred more than \$5,191 in political expenditure during the capped expenditure period (1 July 2017 to 16 April 2018) were required to lodge a Capped Expenditure Period Return to report their expenditure. Participants in the election funding scheme also needed to lodge this return in order to claim public funding.

Donors were required to lodge returns to disclose donations of more than \$5,191. There were two due dates for donor returns to be lodged, one for donations made up to 31 December and one for donations made during the *designated period*.

Over \$2.5 million in donations were reported for the *designated period*.

Audits

The election funding, expenditure and disclosure provisions allow the Electoral Commissioner to undertake investigations for the purpose of ensuring that participants have met their obligations under Part 13A of the Act.

ECSA is currently performing three audits to ascertain compliance of electoral participants. These comprise an election funding audit, state campaign account audit and associated entities compliance audit.

The findings from these audits will be presented in ECSA's report on funding and disclosure to be published later in 2019.

Observations

Since its introduction in July 2015, the funding and disclosure legislation has been amended a number of times to address various issues with ambiguity and the operation of the legislation. However, not all issues have been addressed or remedied.

The 2018 State Election was the first to have a funding and disclosure scheme in operation. It became apparent during the election period that stakeholders found the legislation difficult to understand and comply with. There were complaints that the legislation was too onerous and not fair in the way it operated. ECSA appreciated the difficulties with the legislation and did its utmost to educate and assist stakeholders. Although there were various compliance issues throughout the State Election, ECSA took a collaborative approach, working closely with stakeholders to help them meet compliance obligations.

Some of the difficulties with the funding and disclosure requirements included:

■ Administration and compliance

The 7-day return lodgement schedule during the *designated period* of the election was a major administrative burden for stakeholders and for ECSA.

Many independent candidates and minor parties struggled to lodge on time and to understand reporting requirements. ECSA had to repeatedly chase up stakeholders each week for lodgement. ECSA also spent a large amount of time guiding several stakeholders step by step through the various requirements.

Political parties, associated entities and third parties are required to report 'Receipts' (income) and 'Debts' for the 7-day period. We received feedback from stakeholders that it is nearly impossible for them to comply with these requirements. Some organisations only do their books at the end of the month, have multiple subdivisions or branches and cannot collate all the required information weekly, or their finance person only works part time. There are delays in receiving invoices which results in inaccurate reporting of debts. A large number of amendments were requested because the figures reported in returns were not accurate.

Donor compliance was also a significant issue. Around 40% of State Election donor returns were lodged late. A majority of these late returns were only lodged after multiple follow-ups by ECSA.

ECSA's limited resources were strained due to excessive work involved with reviewing returns to check compliance, chasing up late lodgements, educating and assisting stakeholders and amending incorrect returns.

■ Inconsistencies and gaps in the legislation

The deadline for appointing an agent in relation to the 2018 State Election was at the close of nominations. Some organisations who became third parties after this date were unable to appoint an agent.

2018 State Election third parties ceased being third parties at the end of the election due to an apparent oversight in the legislation. For all other elections occurring after 2018, the general rule is that third parties will retain their third party status until the next election, which means that they will continue to lodge third party returns until the next election.

■ *Impracticable operation of the legislation*

There was considerable feedback that the third party reporting requirements were too onerous and created a barrier to freedom of political communication. The reporting requirements deterred a number of organisations from spending over \$10,000 campaigning during the election to avoid being classified as a third party.

If a registered political party or third party receives an amount over \$5,000 (indexed) from an organisation, or owes a debt of more than \$5,000 (indexed) to an organisation, they are required to provide further details about the organisation, including the names of the directors, trustees or executive committee members. Obtaining and reporting this information was onerous for stakeholders and in most situations, the provision of the information is of little public interest.

There are many other issues with the legislation. ECSA will undertake a comprehensive review of the funding and disclosure scheme in 2019 to determine recommendations for legislative review with a report prepared for tabling in Parliament.

Election costs

INTRODUCTION

Total actual expenditure incurred for the conduct of the 2018 State Election was \$16.728 million for the period to October 2018.

The majority of the cost (\$16.442 million) was spent in the 2017-18 financial year. Training materials amounting to \$20 000 were purchased in 2016-17

and a further \$266 000 was spent on post-election activities during the 2018-19 financial year, primarily on non-voter follow-up and ballot paper analysis and audits.

COMPARISON WITH BUDGET

The original budget allocation from the Department of Treasury and Finance (Treasury) for the 2018 State Election was \$12.693 million in total, represented by \$12.407 million in the 2017-18 financial year and \$286 000 in 2018-19 for post-election activities. This allocation was determined based on the same activities and volumes as the 2014 State Election plus inflationary growth in costs over the four years between elections, as well as a government initiative in the 2017-18 budget.

A further budget allocation of \$1.5 million was provided during the 2017-18 financial year for the impacts of amendments to the legislation for the Legislative Council voting system for the March 2018 election.

The total budget allocation from Treasury amounted to \$14.193 million.

Total actual expenditure was \$2.535 million greater than the total budget allocation, primarily due to:

- increases in postage costs paid to Australia Post in excess of inflation
- significantly higher volumes and costs of conducting pre-poll voting as well as vote scrutiny and count activities required in 2018
- the higher volume of Legislative Council preference votes received than expected
- an increase in training and survey/research activities compared with 2014 levels.

An additional allocation of \$2.354 million was provided by Treasury in June 2018 with the balance of the variation funded by agency cash reserves (\$181 000). By comparison, total expenditure on previous elections was slightly less than budgeted (e.g. \$362 000 for the 2014 State Election), which offset the unfunded variation in 2018.

ECSA also received an investing expenditure allocation from Treasury of \$1.4 million for a capital expenditure project to:

- replace the majority of state election management computer systems to allow ongoing maintenance and provide increased functionality (\$1.0 million)
- implement a software system to assist with compliance with funding and disclosure legislation which came into operation after the 2014 State Election (\$400 000).

Total project expenditure on completion in September 2018 was \$1.349 million, represented by \$952 000 on election management systems and \$397 000 on the Funding and Disclosure Portal. All systems were delivered on time and within budget.

COMPARISON WITH 2014 STATE ELECTION COSTS

Total actual expenditure of \$16.728 million for the 2018 State Election compares with \$10.719 million for the 2014 State Election.

The increase of \$6.009 million relates to:

Unavoidable cost pressures:

- a 5.2% increase in the number of electors
- compound annual inflationary growth of 1.5% to 2.5% resulting in an 11.1% increase in costs over four years
- increases in costs in excess of inflation:
 - Postage paid to Australia Post
 - Short-term rents paid for pre-poll venues and Returning Officers' premises
 - Materials costs for printing, cardboard and polling booth kits
- an increase in transport usage for secure delivery and collection of election materials

Changes in conditions:

- government initiative for an education and information campaign to encourage eligible members of the APY community to enrol to vote
- amendments to the legislation regarding the Legislative Council voting system
- higher volumes and costs of conducting pre-poll voting that were significantly greater than forecast increases
- higher volumes and costs for vote scrutiny and count activities required in 2018, with pressures for timely results and complexities created by the number of two-candidate preferred counts that arose due to the success of non-Labor / Liberal candidates.
- improvements in training programs for all staff with contact with electors
- expansion of professional survey and research activities to support operational changes for future events, and potential legislative amendments

There were 1 201 775 electors on the roll for the 2018 State Election compared with 1 142 419 for the 2014 State Election – an increase of 59 356 electors or 5.2%.

Cost per elector

Cost per elector for the 2018 State election has risen to \$13.92 from \$9.38 in 2014. The increase is due to the unavoidable cost pressures and changes in conditions over the four years between elections.

FAST FACT



13.92

COST PER ELECTOR IN 2018

▲ UP FROM \$9.38 IN 2014

COMPARISON OF COSTS FOR THE 2018 AND 2014 STATE ELECTIONS

EXPENDITURE	2018 \$000s	2014 \$000s
Staffing Costs		
Staff – polling, electoral visitor, pre-poll and casuals	5 271	4 144
Staff – Returning Officers and support staff	1 729	946
Staff – overtime (permanent staff only)	207	160
Staff – other costs (including training and secondees)	290	152
Remote and mobile polling	363	57
Overseas poll costs	23	3
	7 883	5 462
Other Costs		
Polling booth and pre-poll venue hire	263	153
Returning Officers' premises and equipment	768	540
Printing and stationery	1 232	944
Transport, freight and storage	425	281
Advertising and public education	2 629	1 491
Postal and declaration vote processing and management	885	573
Legislative Council scrutiny	1 478	308
Roll scanning and consolidation	120	113
Telephone enquiry service	177	145
Software and website development	171	287
Statistics and election results	173	48
Electoral administration	282	277
Non-voter processing	242	97
	8 845	5 257
Total	16 728	10 719
Electors on the roll	1 201 775	1 142 419
Cost per elector	\$13.92	\$9.38

Performance measured against the ECSA Service Charter

The 2018 State Election Service Charter advised how we intended to deliver the election. The Charter contained a clear outline of how the election would be delivered, alongside our key service standards and a series of key performance indicators against which ECSA's performance could be evaluated after the election and future improvements identified. These standards and indicators underpinned ECSA's overarching purpose of providing high quality electoral services for South Australians.

ECSA's performance against the service standards and performance indicators contained in the Service Charter can be found in the following tables:

ECSA ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST MAJOR 2018 STATE ELECTION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

STANDARD 1. TIMELY, ACCESSIBLE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FOR VOTERS AND CANDIDATES			
Indicator	Target	Result	Comments
ECSA will communicate timely and accurate information about the election using all appropriate channels	Always	Mostly achieved	ECSA made information about each stage of the election available through multiple channels: ECSA's website; call centre; TV, radio, press & online advertising; social media; community education sessions for Aboriginal, CALD and disabled electors. Some feedback from complaints and surveys revealed changes to the voting process for the LC were not adequately communicated.
ECSA's website will be a comprehensive source of information about election-related issues for voters and candidates	Always	Mostly achieved	Compared to 2014, website traffic was 52% higher and the Electors Surveys showed 23% higher satisfaction with the information provided on the website. However, feedback from Surveys showed the website needed more educational information about changes to the LC voting process and improved information for candidates.
All eligible electors will receive personalised information about how, where and when to vote through the EasyVote Card or EasyVote App.	% of eligible electors sent EasyVote Card or have installed EasyVote Card app by 5 March: >90%	97% of all eligible electors had been sent EasyVote Cards, and 1.3% of all eligible electors had installed the EasyVote Card App by 5 March	As planned, EasyVote Cards were not posted to electors on the Register of Declaration Voters (1.7% of eligible electors).
Tailored and accessible information is offered to electors with a disability, sight-impairment, low literacy or non-English speaking background	Information is offered to all targeted stakeholder groups	Tailored information was offered to the targeted stakeholder groups mentioned in the indicator, as well as the elderly, homeless and electors with hearing impairments.	Tailored information was co-designed and disseminated in partnership with sector organisations.

STANDARD 2. SOUTH AUSTRALIANS WILL BE DELIVERED HIGH QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE ENROLMENT AND VOTING SERVICES			
Indicator	Target	Result	Comments
ECSA will work actively to increase enrolment and participation	% of voting eligible population enrolled to vote at close of rolls: >95%	96.9% at close of rolls	Proportion calculated by dividing total enrolment by Australian Electoral Commission's estimate of voting eligible population as at 31 March 2018.
ECSA will offer voting options that cater for electors with diverse needs and circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of surveyed electors satisfied with their chosen voting option: >80% • Number of hours for Aboriginal and remote polling: 50% higher than at 2014 State Election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction levels with the major voting options were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ postal voters: 85% ▶ pre-poll voters: 89% ▶ polling day voters: 95% • Number of hours for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aboriginal polling: 57% more hours than 2014. ▶ overall remote polling: 34% more hours than 2014 	In 2018 remote polling was conducted for 95 hours compared to 71 in 2014. Of those hours, 64 were in remote Aboriginal communities, compared to 41 hours in 2014.
The location and opening hours of polling places will be adequately communicated to electors	100%	99.9%. The location details for one polling booth - as printed on the EasyVote Cards and initially on the website - were incorrect	ECSA communicated polling place information via multiple channels: EasyVote Cards and App, Interactive Map, website, advertisements in 15 metropolitan & regional newspapers, as well as community-specific advertising in remote polling locations.
Polling places are audited for accessibility and accurate information about their accessibility levels is available to electors	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audited for accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ polling booths: 100% ▶ pre-poll centres: 0% • Accurate information about accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ polling booths: 99.8% (one booth was incorrectly advertised as non-wheelchair accessible) ▶ pre-poll centres: 82% 	Although ECSA communicated information about accessibility, the accuracy of this information was limited by some elements of the process of auditing polling place accessibility, especially pre-poll centres.
Election staff will receive appropriate training before undertaking their assigned tasks	100% Returning Officers receive in-person training 100% of Polling Booth Managers complete training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Returning Officers received in-person training • 99% of Polling Booth Managers completed training 	4 out of 584 (0.7%) surveyed Polling Booth Managers did not complete either online or hard copy training.

STANDARD 3. SOUTH AUSTRALIANS CAN RELY ON ECSA TO DELIVER TIMELY, ACCURATE AND VERIFIABLE VOTE COUNTING SERVICES

Indicator	Target	Result	Comments
Votes will be counted in accordance with legislation	100%	100%	No count-related issues were referred to the Court of Disputed Returns.
Election results will be delivered as they become available, following designated time frames	% of House of Assembly first preference counts received from polling booths and published by 9pm on 17 March on ECSA's website: >70%* (*where <6 candidates are contesting the election)	90% at 9:01pm	
Scrutineers will be able to monitor issuing, scrutiny, rejection and counting of ballots	Always	Achieved	ECSA advised candidates & parties of the time and location of 100% of election procedures.
No election challenge will be upheld due to administrative error	Always	Achieved	No administrative issues were referred to the Court of Disputed Returns

STANDARD 4. STAKEHOLDERS HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IS FAIR AND WELL MANAGED IN THE DESIGNATED TIMEFRAMES

Indicator	Target	Result	Comments
The public and stakeholders will have confidence in the results	Always	Achieved	No results-related issues were referred to the Court of Disputed Returns; and no complaints were upheld or media stories published calling into question the integrity of the results.
ECSA's conduct of the election conforms strictly with the framework prescribed by legislation	% of parliamentary elections declared within 18 days: 98%	98%	All 47 House of Assembly elections were declared within 18 days. The Legislative Council election was declared after 37 days in time for the Return of the Writ.
Elector confidentiality and vote secrecy, security and authenticity will be maintained	Always	No complaints were received relating to vote secrecy, security or authenticity. 11 complaints were received concerning silent elector confidentiality	Silent electors were erroneously included in the mailout of EasyVote Cards, meaning that their enrolled residential address and postal address were visible in the post. Measures have been taken to ensure this does not occur at future elections.
Political participants will be provided with the information and tools they require to meet their legislative requirements	100%	100%	ECSA made information available to all participants through multiple channels including: guides + sets of guidance notes tailored for different stakeholder groups; information sessions; regular emails informing participants about their obligations; weekly funding & disclosure newsletters; telephone & email assistance; and a dedicated area of ECSA's website.
Complaints will be handled in accordance with the time frames and processes set out in the Complaints Protocol	% of complaints acknowledged and resolved within established time frames: >90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 93% of complaints were acknowledged within two business days 86% of complaints were resolved within five business days 	Most cases not resolved within the established time frame required extensive correspondence with external stakeholders prior to resolution.

Registered political parties at the 2018 State Election

NAME OF REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTY	DATE OF REGISTRATION	ABBREVIATION OF PARTY NAME
Australian Labor Party (South Australian Branch)	17/10/1985	Australian Labor Party
Liberal Party of Australia (SA Division)	17/10/1985	Liberal Party
National Party of Australia (SA) Inc	17/10/1985	The Nationals
Australian Greens SA	13/02/1996	The Greens
Country Labor Party	25/11/1999	Country Labor
Dignity Party Inc	19/11/2009	DIG
Liberal Democratic Party	31/05/2011	Liberal Democrats
Stop Population Growth Now Party	11/04/2013	Stop Population Growth Now
Danig Party of Australia (SA Division)	7/05/2015	
Animal Justice Party	24/11/2016	
Nick Xenophon's SA-BEST Inc	4/07/2017	Nick Xenophon's SA-BEST
Australian Conservatives (SA)	4/07/2017	Conservatives
Advance SA	7/11/2017	
Child Protection Party	12/12/2017	CPP

Outline of legislative changes since 2014

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL ACT 1985

STATUTES AMENDMENT (ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO) ACT 2016

Interpretation	Amended the definition of political expenditure, substituted disclosure period with financial year and amended the prescribed times for furnishing returns within the section for gifts to relevant third parties.	S130A, s130ZH
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ELECTORAL (FUNDING, EXPENDITURE AND DISCLOSURE) AMENDMENT ACT 2016

Funding expenditure and disclosure	Insertion of court power to declare an election void on the grounds of a breach of expenditure spent in excess of the expenditure cap during the capped expenditure period if the court finds on the balance of probability the election was affected by the breach.	s107
Funding expenditure and disclosure	Various amendments to funding, expenditure and disclosure sections of the Act.	Part 13A

ELECTORAL (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT ACT 2017

Interpretation	Inclusion of medical practitioner definition and amendment of the definition of officer to include officers assisting the Electoral Commissioner under any other Act.	s4
Powers and functions of the Electoral Commissioner	Requires the Electoral Commissioner in exercising functions under the Act, to promote and encourage the casting of votes at a polling booth on polling day.	s8
Staff	Amended to allow Electoral Commissioner to engage staff for any legislative responsibility under this act or any other act.	S12
Inspection and provision of rolls	Provides for the Electoral Commissioner to require that a person inspecting the roll must provide their name, address and identification prior to inspecting the roll.	s26
Registration	Precluded a party from registering with a name that contains the word independent.	S42
Annual Returns and other inquiries	Moved the subsection that allows the Electoral Commissioner to de-register a political party for failure to comply with a requirement to furnish an annual return to s45.	S43A
Multiple nominations of candidates endorsed by political party	Allows the registered officer to nominate a party-endorsed candidate or multiple candidates on the same nomination paper. Amendment to the payment of nomination fees to be in a prescribed manner. Provides for the nomination fee for House of Assembly candidates to be \$1,000 or lesser as prescribed by regulation.	s53
Nomination of candidate by a person	Amendment that places a statutory obligation on the relevant district returning officer to where practical, give a Legislative Council candidate, sufficient notice before the hour of nomination that they have not met their requirement to provide 250 signatures of supporting electors.	s53A
Declaration of nominations	Allow the returning officer in the case of a candidate with a suppressed address to announce only the district in which a House of Assembly candidate resides and no address for a candidate for the Legislative Council.	s54
Preparation of certain electoral material	Restricts a candidate from including on a how-to-vote card the word independent and the name or abbreviation or acronym of the name of a Parliamentary party or registered political party or matter that would likely be confused as the name of a political party and restricts the use of the word independent for endorsed candidate.	s66
Manner of voting	Amendment to the eligibility requirements for declaration voting with the substitution of an inmate of a declared institution to a resident of a declared institution.	s71, s82, s83

Issue of declaration voting papers by post or other means	Amendment to allow an assistant to complete a postal application, for the issue of declaration voting papers, when accompanied by a certificate from a medical practitioner which states an elector is unable to sign their name due to physical disability.	s74
Voter may be accompanied by an assistant in certain circumstances	Expanded the provision that allows an assistant to aid an elector to complete a declaration vote for an elector who is incapable of signing.	s80
Voting near polling booth in certain circumstances	Expanded the provision for the presiding officer to take votes outside of the polling booth for a person that is unable to enter the polling booth to also include declaration votes.	s80A
Voting by electors to whom declaration voting papers have been issued	Provides for the issuing of ordinary ballot papers at a polling booth to an elector who has previously been issued declaration ballot papers. Any declaration ballot paper received, purporting to be exercised by that elector is to be rejected from the scrutiny.	s81
Electronically assisted voting for sight-impaired electors	The inclusion of the ability to make regulations to allow for sight-impaired electors to vote by an electronically assisted voting method.	s84A, s84B s84C
Preliminary scrutiny	Insertion of detailed procedures for the preliminary scrutiny of declaration envelopes.	s91
Interpretation of ballot papers in Legislative Council	Removed references to 'candidate' given that only groups of candidates were able to have a voting square above the line.	s92
Special provisions relating to how-to-vote cards	Inclusion of the ability for the Electoral Commissioner to request the person who authorised a how-to-vote card distributed in contravention to s112A to cease and retract.	s112A
Certain descriptions not to be used	Restricts a candidate from including on a how-to-vote card the word independent and the name or abbreviation or acronym of the name of a Parliamentary party or registered political party or matter that would likely be confused as the name of a political party and restricts the use of the word independent for endorsed candidate.	s112B
Automated political calls	Introduced requirements for the authorisation of automated political calls including those made by a relevant third party.	s115A
Candidates not to take part in elections	Removed previous restrictions on candidates distributing how-to-vote cards at polling booths on polling day.	s117
Prohibition of advocacy of forms of voting inconsistent with the Act	Inclusion of the ability to distribute how-to-vote cards submitted under 112A. Measure to restrict people from publicly advocating that an elector may exercise a pre-poll vote in a manner inconsistent with the provisions of the Act and inclusion of a defence provision for honest and reasonable misunderstanding or mistake.	s126
Funding, expenditure and disclosure	Amendments to, amongst other things, the definition of capped expenditure period, designated period and political expenditure. Inclusion of expenditure incurred prior to the capped expenditure period, where material is used during the capped expenditure period.	s130A, s130C, s130L, s130M, s130Y, s130Z, s130ZF.

ELECTORAL (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VOTING AND OTHER MEASURES) AMENDMENT ACT 2017

Interpretation	Inclusion of a definition of group and group voting square.	s4
Voting tickets	Restricts the lodgement of a voting ticket to House of Assembly candidates through the deletion of section 63 and insertion of section 60A. Further amendments to all references of voting tickets to limit them to candidates of the House of Assembly only.	s53, s60A, s63
Deposit to be forfeited in certain cases	Amends the return of deposit for candidates where the candidate is a member of a group and the total number of votes polled in favour of members of the group, as first preference votes, exceeds 2 per cent of the total number of formal votes cast in the election.	s57
Grouping of candidates in Legislative Council election	Allows for the inclusion of a request for a group voting square on a nomination form and the order of candidates on the ballot paper included in each group will be the order specified by the candidates on their nomination form.	s58
Printing of Legislative Council ballot papers	Directs that where a voting square is requested it must be included on the ballot paper.	s59
Preparation of certain electoral material	Amendments to the display of materials in polling booths to reference how-to-vote material and removal of reference to the requirement of the booklet.	S66
Method of voting	Amendment to voting for the Legislative Council which provides that a voter may vote for a Group or Groups 'above-the-line' by placing the number 1 and any further preferences they may chose or below-the-line by placing at least the numbers 1 to 12 against the candidates of their choice. Provides a saving provision for Legislative Council ballot paper where an election has more than 6 candidates and the elector has indicated preferences for at least 6 candidates below-the-line. Further provides that where a formal ballot paper is marked (starting with the number one) any repeated number and subsequent higher numbers are to be disregarded, as well as any missing numbers and all numbers higher than that number missing.	s76, s92, s94, s95
Capped expenditure period	Definition of group deleted; amendments to the determination of eligibility for public funding for Legislative Council group which obtains 2% of the total primary votes; deletion of s130ZU; insertion of 130ZZH to allow for regulations to amend the scope of information required by the Act.	s130A, s130Q, s130ZU, s130ZZH

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORAL REGULATIONS 2009

ELECTORAL VARIATION REGULATIONS 2015

Funding, expenditure and disclosure	Insertion of regulations for funding, expenditure and disclosure.	Reg 18 - 24
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ELECTORAL VARIATION REGULATIONS 2016

Prescribed Authorities	Insertion of Independent Commissioner Against Corruption and the Office for Public Integrity as prescribed authorities able to request information for elector details.	Reg 5
Funding, expenditure and disclosure	Insertion of regulations for funding, expenditure and disclosure.	Reg 25 - 27

ELECTORAL (SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING) VARIATION REGULATIONS 2017

Special Assistance Funding	Increased the amount for half-yearly entitlement of special assistance funding for registered political parties with 5 or less current Members or 6 or more current Members.	Reg 21A
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ELECTORAL (FUNDING, EXPENDITURE AND DISCLOSURE) VARIATION REGULATIONS 2017

Funding, expenditure and disclosure	Amendment and insertion of regulations for funding, expenditure and disclosure.	Regs 18A, 23, 23A, 26
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ELECTORAL (DISCLOSURE OF DONATIONS) VARIATION REGULATIONS 2017

Disclosure of donations	Insertion of regulations to allow for the request of additional information for returns for the disclosure of donations.	Reg 22
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ELECTORAL (MISCELLANEOUS) VARIATION REGULATIONS 2017

Deposit to be paid on nomination	Insertion of the ability to pay nomination deposits by Electronic Funds Transfer in lieu of cash.	Reg 6
Procedure for lots	Regulation for the draw for allocation of split ticket votes in Legislative Council removed.	Reg 7
How-to-vote cards	Insertion of prescribed requirements for how-to-vote cards lodged under s66 in line with the changes to the Legislative Council voting method.	Reg 9
Declaration Vote	Insertion of an entitlement for residents of three high security correctional institutions for declaration voting.	Reg 9A
How-to-vote cards	Insertion of prescribed requirements for how-to-vote cards lodged under s112A in line with the changes to the Legislative Council voting method.	Reg 15
Return in respect of gifts to relevant entities	Insertion of regulations for the ability to request additional information for returns in respect of gifts to relevant entities.	Reg 21B
Variation to forms	Amendments to Form 1, Form 1A, Form 3, Form 4, Form 5 and Form 6. These changes included amendments to address the changes in Legislative Council voting method and inclusion of information on various declaration forms to allow an assistant to sign on behalf of an elector who is unable to sign a declaration.	Sch 1

ELECTORAL (ELECTRONICALLY ASSISTED VOTING) VARIATION REGULATIONS 2018

Electronically assisted voting	Insertion of regulations to allow for the use of VoteAssist.	Regs 12A, 12B
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