

Local Government Elections

May 2000

Report



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Report

To: The Honourable

The Minister for Local Government

The main purpose of this report is to provide a context for the conduct of the May 2000 local government elections (Part 1) and a consolidated record of results (Part 2). The report was written with the understanding that you have announced a formal review of the elections which will heavily involve the Local Government Association and myself. Given that, I have only slightly touched on recommendations for legislative change and believe that your review is the most appropriate forum to consider the issues raised.

A driving factor in conducting the elections was my commitment to provide a local Deputy Returning Officer for all councils and localised facilities for:

- lodgement of nominations
- reissue of ballot material
- in-person deposit of completed ballot material
- as a minimum, conducting preliminary scrutiny and count to first preference

It is also important for me to place on record my sincere appreciation for the support of your Office, the Local Government Association, councils and all electoral officials. Their commitment to fairness was of the highest order.

The commitment of Australia Post, the Council Purchasing Co-operative and the mailing houses to meeting the required timeframes also deserves special acknowledgment as does the efforts of the Crown Solicitor's Office which always responded with timely quality legal advice.



**S.H. Tully
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER**

July 2000

Contents

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS TIMETABLE	1
Periodic Elections May 2000	1
Legislative Provisions	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PART 1 ELECTION CONDUCT	7
Introduction	9
Electoral Commissioner responsibilities under the City of Adelaide Act 1998 Schedule 1	9
Electoral Commissioner responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1999	9
Electoral Commissioner responsibilities under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999	9
Council responsibility	10
Chief Executive Officer responsibility	10
Role of the Returning Officer	11
Administrative Arrangements	13
Integration of operations	13
Project management	13
Partnerships	13
Electoral official appointments	14
Manuals, training and circulars	14
Staffing	15
Systems support	16
Innovations	16
Contractual arrangements with major players	16
Public Information	17
Insurance	18
Risk management	18
The Election Process	19
Roll Closure	19
Equipment and materials	20
Candidate information	21
Nominations	21
Ballot-paper printing and production	22
Profiles	22
Mail out	23
Reissues	23
Return mail processing	24
Scrutiny and count	25
Results	25
Close count management, recounts	26
Complaints	26
Supplementary elections	27
Financial arrangements, costs and expenses	27
City of Adelaide	27
Glossary of Electoral Terms	29
Sample Ballot Materials	31
Ballot-papers	31
Ballot-paper declaration envelope design	32
Council Maps	33
Country	33
Metropolitan	34

PART 2 SUMMARY DATA AND RESULTS	35
Table 1 - State summaries, comparisons with 1997	37
Table 2 - Location, area and Deputy Returning Officer for each council	38
Table 3 - Country elector representation	40
Table 4 - Metropolitan elector representation	41
Table 5 - Electors on roll, returned ballot packs	42
Council election listing:	44
Candidate alphabetical listing	48
Informality	56
Proportional Representation quota guide	56
Candidate summary result statistics	57
Elected candidates	57
Excluded candidates	57
Unsuccessful candidates remaining at the conclusion of the count	57
Results by position in council order	58
Mayoral	58
Area Councillor	62
Councillor at large	63
Ward Councillor	68

Local Government Elections Timetable

Periodic Elections May 2000

Several public notice dates are listed on days less than the full statutory period permitted as the Government Gazette is published on a Thursday

<p>CLOSE OF ROLL Thursday 10 February 2000 (3 February City of Adelaide)</p>
<p>Public notice inviting nominations <i>No later than Thursday 2 March 2000</i></p>
<p>NOMINATIONS OPEN Thursday 9 March 2000</p>
<p>NOMINATIONS CLOSE 12 noon, Thursday 30 March 2000</p>
<p>Draw for position of names of candidates on ballot-papers <i>Immediately after 12 noon, Thursday 30 March 2000</i></p>
<p>Public notice of nominations received and notice in writing to candidates <i>No later than Thursday 13 April 2000</i></p>
<p>Mail out of ballot packs to electors <i>Wednesday 26 April to Tuesday 2 May 2000</i></p>
<p>Public notice of place for counting of votes <i>No later than Thursday 4 May 2000</i></p>
<p>POLLING DAY – CLOSE OF VOTING 12 noon, Tuesday 16 May 2000</p>
<p>Provisional declaration <i>Manual Counts - immediately after the completion of each election count</i> <i>Computer Counts - immediately after the count has been completed</i></p>
<p>Written advice to candidates notifying the election results <i>Immediately after the conclusion of the election</i></p>
<p>Public notice of election results <i>No later than Thursday 15 June 2000</i></p>

Local Government Elections Timetable

Legislative Provisions

	Local Government (Elections) Act 1999
CLOSE OF ROLL	
Second Thursday in February	[S 15 (7)]
<i>[1st Thursday in February for City of Adelaide - City of Adelaide Act 1998 Schedule 1 s6(2)(a)]</i>	
Public notice inviting nominations	
<i>No later than the first Thursday in March</i>	[S 18 (a)]
NOMINATIONS OPEN	
No earlier than 21 days before the day nominations close	[S 19 (4)]
NOMINATIONS CLOSE	
12 noon, the last Thursday in March	[S 23 (a)]
Draw for position of names of candidates on ballot-papers	
<i>Immediately after close of nominations</i>	[S 29 (2)(3)]
Public notice of nominations received and notice in writing to candidates	
<i>Within 14 days of close of nominations</i>	[S 26 (1)(2)]
Mail out of ballot packs to electors	
<i>As soon as practicable after 21 days and not later than 14 days before polling day</i>	[S 39 (1)]
Public notice of place for counting of votes	
<i>No later than 7 days before polling day</i>	[S 30 (2)]
POLLING DAY – CLOSE OF VOTING	
12 noon, the first business day after the second Saturday in May	[S 5]
Provisional declaration	
<i>Immediately after the count is completed</i>	[S 48(1) (c)]
Written advice to candidates notifying election results	
<i>Immediately after the conclusion of the election</i>	[S 50 (3)(a)]
Public notice of election results	
<i>Within one month of the conclusion of the election</i>	[S 50 (3)(b)]

Date of close of polling for the next periodic elections

Monday 12 May 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A formal assessment of the elections will be provided by a Steering Committee set up under the auspices of the Office of Local Government and the Local Government Association to which this office will provide input. While anxious not to pre-empt the terms of reference or conclusions of the Committee, this report seeks to independently record a specifically electoral perspective.

1. Administrative arrangements

The project management approach taken towards the conduct of the elections allowed a speedy response to election appraisal. Within three weeks of the polls closing a preliminary assessment was completed.

The closer working relationship between electoral administrators and councils required new understandings between the organisations at all staff levels as tight timeframes and cooperative agendas were pursued.

Councils responded positively to guidelines for election conduct determined by the Returning Officer and their feedback on service provision will be incorporated in future planning.

Contractual arrangements that provide quality services at optimum costs will continue to be negotiated.

2. Information and training

Feedback was obtained from all information and training forums organised by the Returning Officer. Satisfaction with content and presentation was high, with **all** respondents signifying satisfaction with the value of the sessions. Favourable feedback on training was also obtained from casual staff employed at the central computer processing and count centres. Areas where further resources can be allocated to the training of electoral officials have been identified and additional information on voting and uncontested elections will be added to ballot pack material. Candidate handbook information on profiles and photos will be enhanced.

3. The voters roll

The certified voters rolls supplied by councils incorporate a number of important codes and during the election period a number of adjustments were made to correct roll imperfections due to miscoding:

- ballot packs had to be reissued for the correct entitlement;
- one instance occurred where a part of one street was incorrectly assigned to a council with a small number of electors affected;
- inappropriate duplicate entitlements were withheld from further scrutiny, the latter becoming apparent following the despatch of ballot packs.

Problems encountered during the election period were quickly identified and remedied and any consequent reissues were effected within the statutory period therefore protecting the integrity of the elections. However the office will be urging councils to address entitlement and coding anomalies and adopt uniform procedures for voters roll management.

4. Equipment and materials

The design of forms, envelopes and the content of instructional materials will be revisited to incorporate feedback.

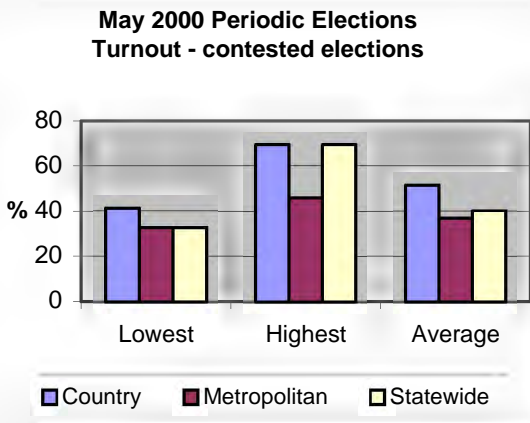
5. Processes and procedures

Reliance on IT support continues to grow and attention will be given to enhancing the functionality of the software to increase process efficiency. The office will be examining proofing procedures to eliminate the need to revisit materials once prepared or to reissue amended ballot-paper or profile material.

Legislative amendments could provide more ideal print times for nomination information. Despatch procedures will be tightened to allow for practicable and timely starts to the scrutiny and weight will be given to data input for all complex counts. Wherever possible, community involvement in the election process will be assured.

6. Turnout or return of ballot packs issued in contested elections

Turnout	Country	Metropolitan	Statewide
Lowest	41.08	32.71	32.71
Highest	69.44	45.83	69.44
Average	51.18	36.95	40.11



7. Informality

Position		Ballot-papers		Informality %
		Formal	Informal	
Mayoral		331174	2001	0.60
Councillor	Area	19108	507	2.58
	At large	50966	2434	4.56
	Ward	312305	11967	3.69
Statewide		713553	16909	2.31

Informality was generally higher in the councillor at large elections (4.56%) and is attributable to the larger number of vacancies and candidates contesting. These contests ranged from:

Informality	Country %	Metropolitan %	Statewide %
Lowest	0.16	0.26	0.16
Highest	6.87	8.26	8.26
Average informality	2.12	2.37	2.31

The lowest country informality (0.16%) occurred in the Port Augusta Copley ward election of 1 councillor from 2 candidates while the highest (6.87%) occurred in the Barossa councillor at large election of 13 councillors from 18 candidates.

The lowest metropolitan informality (0.26%) occurred in the City of Adelaide Lord Mayoral election with 5 candidates while the highest (8.26%) occurred in the Onkaparinga Hunt ward councillor election of 2 councillors from 3 candidates.

8. Women candidates/elected members

		Total positions	Female Candidates	Female candidates elected			% of total elected
				Uncontested	Contested	Total	
Mayoral		47	22	4	9	13	28
Councillor	Area	13	2	0	1	1	8
	At large	179	65	7	41	48	27
	Ward	527	200	44	102	146	28
Total		766	289	55	153	208	27

Female candidates comprised **25% of total candidates** (289 out of 1162) resulting in **27% of the elected representatives** (208 out of 761 – 5 positions to be filled at supplementary elections). However, as a percentage elected of those standing within each gender category, female candidates achieved a 72% success rate while male candidates achieved the lower rate of 63%.

9. The proportional representation (PR) vote counting system

The new legislation provided for a universal system of voting and vote counting for all council elections. Five complaints related to the PR system of voting which, while assessed as a fair system for counting votes to fill multiple vacancies, is more complex than other counting systems and may take longer to finalise.

The office took several measures to explain the system, ensure competency in its application and minimise count times:

- hand-out sheets were prepared giving a brief overview of the system;
- the LGA website contained a short explanation of the system extracted from SEO material;
- the PR guide and the candidates manual provided both a brief overview and example(s);
- the DRO's manual provided several examples of count situations and all DROs were asked to complete at least one PR exercise under supervision;
- the office used approved software to data enter ballot-paper information for more complex counts, including the councillor at large positions for the City of Adelaide. In general, counts involving more than five candidates for three positions were data entered and councils conducting elections under delegated authority were invited to submit their ballot-papers in complex counts for data entry, an offer accepted in five instances. All data was verified.

The office is designing an interactive package for the Internet, which will contribute to the understanding of the different vote counting processes, including PR.

10. Matters for consideration by the Ministerial Review

There are a number of legislative issues that need to be fully assessed by the Ministerial Review. They include:

- considering the merits of a common roll closure date for all council elections;
- considering the merits of a 5.00pm close for polling;
- reducing the possibility of an election failing because of the death of a candidate after polling day;
- assessing all matters concerning the council voters roll and issues arising out of the automatic mail out to bodies corporate and groups;
- reconsidering the election timetable and in particular the merits of reducing the nomination period and increasing the period for the preparation and return of ballot material;
- reconsidering the nomination process which currently provides for the public display of nominations and encourages late nominations;
- prescribing a fixed time later in the day for the draw for position on the ballot-paper;
- considering the current requirements for candidate profiles particularly the adjudication of content and further relaxing requirements for candidate photographs;
- considering the practicality of devising one nomination form suitable for both individual candidates and those nominated on behalf of bodies corporate or groups;
- considering the practicality of developing one form of words for a single declaration for both individual electors and appointed representatives of bodies corporate and groups;
- reviewing the detail required on prescribed forms;
- providing the capacity for the Electoral Commissioner to remove unauthorised material for use as evidence and to have the capacity to formally caution offenders when it is not in the public interest to prosecute.

Part 1

Election Conduct

Introduction

The South Australian *Constitution Act 1934 s64(a)* guarantees the continuance of a system of local government in the State with the State Parliament determining the powers of the governing bodies. The *City of Adelaide Act (CAA) 1998 Schedule 1*, the *Local Government Act (LGA) 1999*, the *Local Government (Elections) Act (LGEA) 1999* and the accompanying Regulations (*Reg*) increased the statutory responsibilities of the State Electoral Commissioner (the Chief Executive Officer of the State Electoral Office) vis à vis electoral services to the third level of government. Chief amongst these was the requirement to act as returning officer for all council elections.

In addition the 1998 and 1999 legislation provided for:

- postal voting, except outside the metropolitan area where allowed by the returning officer;
- the vote counting system to be proportional representation (PR);
- bodies corporate/groups of persons no longer having to nominate before roll closure a person to exercise their vote;
- the removal of the 'alderman' position (to become 'area' councillors);
- disclosure provisions for candidate campaign donations;
- removal of the provision for mayoral candidates to have previously held office as a member of council.

Electoral Commissioner responsibilities under the City of Adelaide Act 1998 Schedule 1

The Electoral Commissioner is prescribed as the returning officer for the capital city elections under the provisions of Schedule 1. Where that Act is silent, electoral arrangements under the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999* prevail. In practice the singularity of the City of Adelaide elections lies in a voting entitlement which restricts an elector from voting in more than one capacity.

Electoral Commissioner responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1999

The Electoral Commissioner must determine the adequacy of a council's review of its composition or ward structure which all local government authorities are required to undertake at least once in every six year period [LGA ss12, 26, 33].

The Electoral Commissioner certifies the:

- provision of adequate notice and timeframe for the review;
- consideration given to the population and topography of each area or ward, representations from interested persons, resource and service use;
- reflection of community interest in proposed areas or wards;
- feasibility of communication between electors and their elected representatives;
- nature of substantial demographic changes that may occur in the foreseeable future;
- total size and composition of the council in relation to the total number of electors.

Councils choosing to retain or introduce wards are also required to ensure that each elected member represents the same number of electors, subject to the prescribed tolerances.

Electoral Commissioner responsibilities under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999

The Electoral Commissioner:

- a) is appointed as returning officer for all council elections and council initiated polls in South Australia [LGEA ss9, 10];
- b) may appoint deputy returning officers and provide those officers with appropriate training and support [LGEA s10];

- c) provides the council chief executive officer (CEO), within seven days of a roll closure date, a list of persons in the council area who are enrolled for the State House of Assembly (HA) including ward information where applicable.

The lists or rolls must be provided whenever an election or poll is to be held:

- periodic elections - the 2nd Thursday in February in the election year;
- supplementary elections - on a day fixed for the close of roll by the returning officer [LGEA s15].

In practice the Electoral Commissioner will supply councils with additions, deletions and changes to the HA roll on a monthly basis so that the council voters roll may be maintained as prescribed.

The Electoral Commissioner may:

- investigate any matter concerning the operation or administration of the Act, including a matter that may involve a breach of the Act; or
- bring proceedings for an offence against the Act [LGEA s92].

If the Electoral Commissioner decides to take action as a result of an investigation, including bringing proceedings for an offence, and it appears that a council has a material interest in the matter, the Electoral Commissioner must provide council with a written report on the matter.

Council responsibility

Council is responsible for:

- providing information, education and publicity to promote public participation in the electoral processes;
- informing potential voters about candidates standing for election;
- advising the local community about the outcome of elections and polls [LGEA s12(b)].

Chief Executive Officer responsibility

A council chief executive officer (CEO) is responsible for:

- the maintenance and certification of the voters roll which is a combination of House of Assembly electors **and** persons, bodies corporate or groups meeting the qualifications for enrolment;
- providing a copy of the certified roll to the deputy returning officer and to candidates who apply to the council for a copy;
- administering Part 14 of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*, relating to candidates' campaign donations returns (City of Adelaide: Part 8 of the *City of Adelaide Act 1998* – campaign donations and expenditure).

The voters roll must be maintained in a form that allows updating and merging with House of Assembly enrolment information **within four weeks** of a relevant roll closure date. The CEO must certify and supply the returning officer with sufficient copies of that roll for use in the election or poll. [LGEA ss14, 15; CAA Schedule 1 cc5, 6]

The voters roll is a combined roll comprising:

- House of Assembly (State roll) electors and
- other persons, bodies corporate and groups of persons enrolled with the council for a residence or rateable property. The council supplementary roll must set out:
 - the full name of each person, body corporate or group enrolled;
 - in the case of a person – the address of the person's place of residence;
 - the address of the place of residence or rateable property for which the person, body corporate or group is entitled to be enrolled;
 - any prescribed particulars (i.e. details of wards in which the elector is entitled to vote).
 - any additional address nominated by the person, body corporate or group for the service of postal voting papers.

Any person believing that their name has been omitted from the roll in error is issued a vote immediately and if an error has occurred that vote is admitted to the count.

Role of the Returning Officer

The returning officer:

- is not subject to the directives of the chief executive officer, council or council members in regard to the administration of an election or poll, or matters pertaining to the election or poll; is impartial and accountable to council (and ultimately answerable to a Court of Disputed Returns) for any errors, oversight, or breaches of the election provisions;
- is responsible for the management of local government elections and polls;
- may appoint electoral officers to assist in election conduct, some of whom may be council staff who are directly responsible to the returning officer;
- may delegate certain electoral responsibilities to deputy returning officers or electoral officers;
- provides information on election procedures and general matters including:
 - the method of voting and vote counting;
 - the organisation and conduct of the election;
 - the election requirements;
 - the preparation of candidate profiles which must be forwarded to electors with ballot-papers.

The returning officer ***will not***:

- provide any advice to candidates that could be regarded as legally binding. Candidates must seek their own formal legal advice on any matters of contention.
- view, check or comment on electioneering material. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that material complies with the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999* and any other relevant legislation and is, as a consequence, capable of sustaining any legal challenge.

Issue of voting material - Postal voting [LGEA s37-44]

The returning officer must, as soon as practicable after the 21st day before and no later than 14 days before polling day, issue to every elector whose name appears on the voters roll:

- a ballot-paper/s;
- a copy of each candidate's profile;
- an instruction sheet;
- a reply paid envelope;
- an opaque envelope bearing a tear off flap for a declaration by the voter to the effect that:
 - the voter is of or above the age of majority (18);
 - the ballot-paper/s contained in the envelope contains his or her vote;
 - he or she has not already voted at the election or poll in the same capacity *and*
 - he or she is eligible to vote if voting on behalf of a body corporate or group.

Voting records must be maintained and voting material reissued upon request if lost, spoilt or not received.

Recounts [LGEA s49]

The returning officer may initiate a recount within 48 hours after the provisional declaration at his own instigation or at the request of an unelected candidate.

Conclusion of election process [LGEA ss50, 51]

The returning officer concludes the election process by:

- making a final declaration;
- forwarding a return to the council CEO certifying the election of candidates to vacancies;
- notifying all candidates, in writing, of the result of the election;
- giving public notice of the result of the election;
- preparing and certifying a return of ballot-paper and ballot envelope usage.

Administrative Arrangements

Integration of operations

The passage of the legislation, effective 1 January 2000, allowed practical arrangements to be put in place for the conduct of the elections:

- the special needs of all councils had to be accommodated;
- there had to be negotiations of deputy returning officer (DRO) arrangements;
- new partnership understandings were developed.

An additional factor in the lead up to the elections was the certification by the Electoral Commissioner of 30 representation reviews by councils. This necessitated considerable adjustment to the local government identifiers on the House of Assembly electoral roll prior to the February roll close (see Part 2, Tables 3 and 4 for details of the ratio of electors to elected representatives at roll close).

Project management

In mid 1999 the potential for an increased contribution to local government service delivery became apparent and a preliminary task list was drawn up and responsibilities assigned for the key areas of training, instruction manuals, materials, candidate profiles and centralised processes. Following the passage of the legislation, a more substantial list of projects was drawn up and responsibilities were allocated on an intra-agency basis. Staff of the State Electoral Office (SEO) assisted the returning officer provide training, support and advice to DROs for all 67 councils.

A driving factor in conducting the elections was the commitment to provide a local Deputy Returning Officer for all councils and localised facilities for:

- lodgement of nominations;
- reissue of ballot material;
- in-person deposit of completed ballot material;
- as a minimum, conducting preliminary scrutiny and count to first preference.

Partnerships

The Office of Local Government (OLG)

The OLG maintained close contact with the SEO during discussions and preliminary drafting of the new legislation. An officer of the OLG travelled with members of the SEO on regional visits promoting the changed voters roll provisions and outlining the complexities of roll merge and mail requirements in the run-up to the elections.

The Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA co-operated closely with the SEO and advised of its electoral campaign timing and content so that the enquiry service conducted by the SEO could identify at what point in the election cycle callers were likely to make contact. The LGA was consulted over the text for instructions and the information it had released for elections up to that date so that continuity of material was guaranteed. Election advertising and commentary was provided by the LGA including website coverage following the electronic transmission of candidate nomination data and subsequent election results.

Australian Electoral Commission and council nominated DROs

Arrangements were brokered which would permit councils wishing to avail themselves of professional electoral service providers to have DROs nominated by the Electoral Commissioner. Alternatively, councils were able to nominate their own DRO for appointment by the Commissioner to undertake the administration of their elections locally. All council nominees were approved and appointed by the Electoral Commissioner.

Given the geographical location, the size of the task and following risk management assessment, the Electoral Commissioner sought to appoint staff of the AEC to act as DROs, subject to council's view. All such requests were supported.

Guidelines and protocols for election conduct were determined by the returning officer and adopted in full by DROs. Regardless of appointment arrangement, DROs were monitored for compliance to statutory notice placement, candidate profile format and ballot-paper production. All DROs were required to supply the returning officer with nomination and candidate information.

Electoral official appointments

Deputy returning officers (DROs)

A DRO was appointed to each council to manage all aspects of the election program in accordance with best electoral practice. The Electoral Commissioner nominated and appointed 38 DROs from amongst SEO and AEC staff to administer those elections under a centralised model and approved the appointment of 29 council nominated DROs for councils confident in administering their elections on a decentralised or local basis.

DRO responsibilities included:

- managing a specific council's election program;
- production of public notices;
- receiving nominations and checking entitlements;
- receiving, checking and arranging production of profiles and photographs;
- arranging mail out of ballot materials;
- arranging staff requirements;
- preparing for the conduct of the scrutiny and count;
- conducting recounts where necessary;
- conducting supplementary elections as required.

Both the SEO and AEC centralised a number of the tasks listed above, thereby realising gains through volume discounts and productivity while reducing workloads on individual DROs.

Model	DRO Agency	Country	Metro	Total
Centralised	SEO	10	9	19
	AEC	9	10	19
Local	Council	28	1	29
Total		47	20	67

Council liaison officers and electoral officers

In consultation with the councils, a member of council staff was appointed to facilitate liaison and communication between electoral and council authorities and ensure timely response to election requests and demands.

Council staff were also appointed as electoral officers to provide local community support for ballot material reissues, issue of material for omissions in error and receipt of ballot material in council offices.

Manuals, training and circulars

Manuals

Four publications were produced:

Publications Produced	No. produced
Deputy Returning Officer Manuals (2 types)	160
Guidelines for Electoral Officers	200
Guidelines for Prospective Candidates' Briefing	100
Scrutiny and Count Procedures	800

The manuals contained detailed processes and procedures to be followed during the elections. Wherever possible pro-formas for notices and letters were included to ensure a uniformity of approach to election conduct.

Approximately six months was spent on this project with considerable input from all staff to craft the finished products, including a workshop session on the DRO manuals. The office will make available a manual covering attendance voting procedures in case this option is approved for use in supplementary elections.

Training

Training was provided in three segments:

Segment	Date
Roll issues	November and December 1999
Election conduct	Early February 2000
Scrutiny and count	Late April, early May 2000

Training was tailored for the audience. The initial sessions concentrated on roll matters arising from the new legislation, roll merging and the mail out of ballot materials. The second series concentrated on the various processes required during the election period as determined by the election calendar, for example enrolment and voting entitlements, complaints and media handling, the nominations period through to post polling day procedures.

Prior to the sessions conducted during April/May, DROs were asked to complete a PR count exercise; scrutiny and count requirements were reviewed at the final training sessions with further emphasis on the conduct of a PR count.

The AEC, using the Deputy Returning Officer Manual as a guide, developed an accredited training program, involving the returning officer, and an approved model of election conduct that included the centralisation of certain functions such as the placement of statutory notices and the mail out.

Circulars

Close contact was maintained with all DROs during the election period. Eleven written circulars provided timely prompts and addressed emerging issues. It is likely that some of the material can now be incorporated in the manuals.

Staffing

Casuals who were familiar with or had demonstrated aptitude for electoral work and employed on a merit basis to contribute to the local government elections supplemented the normal SEO staff during the election period. Additional casual staffing requirements were met through a nominated service provider contracted by the SEO to recruit temporary staff.

DROs nominated by councils and appointed by the Electoral Commissioner appointed their own and/or locally sourced personnel to assist in electoral tasks.

DROs were issued with staffing guidelines for the scrutiny and count and were encouraged to appoint one electoral officer for every 700 accepted ballot-paper envelopes returned by electors.

Equal employment opportunity (EEO)

A criterion in staff selection is to ensure as far as possible equality of employment, principles, which were conveyed, to service providers.

Occupational health & safety (OH &S)

The SEO was cognisant of its duty of care to employees and to ensure that electoral facilities met the appropriate standards. One minor incident at a counting centre was reported which required post-election resolution.

Systems support

Nine systems were developed to capture and process information with development time varying from one to 38 weeks. The integrated software modules benefited from the experience derived in the 1997 government elections when inter-related functionality was first explored.

The software was developed within a common platform and additional functionality has been identified for future events.

System	Purpose
Election build	Build council election information database
Roll build	Used to build combined council voters rolls and create indexes for all fields
Enquiry	Elector search, council, candidate, election dates
Candidate data capture	Record candidate and profile information
Roll extract for mail centre	Extract elector data for each council election grouped according to individuals, sole owners/occupiers and group owners/occupiers.
Returns	Record return of ballot material
Reissue	Reissuing of ballot material
Data entry process	Control sheets, reports and label printing for data entry
Results	Record and report election results

The software was used to automate ballot-paper and profile production, generate nomination letters to candidates and CEOs, extract data for addressing and mail out processing, assist in the reissue of ballot packs, record and report on ballot material returns, produce control reports and stationery for data entry count centres and capture election results for reporting and dissemination.

Innovations

The elections created the opportunity to introduce a number of innovations:

- a comprehensive local government management software system was built to cater for increased services to the sector;
- software generated customised forms and letters to reduce clerical processing and broader use of barcode identifiers and scanning equipment in the issue and return of ballot material;
- 28 electric letter opening machines were purchased to assist in processing envelopes prior to scrutiny;
- 26 ballot-paper counting machines were purchased to assist in count checking;
- one large central and 18 smaller locally sited data entry centres were established using the Easycount software to input data and calculate the result for more complex counts.

All were well received and acknowledged for their assistance.

Contractual arrangements with major players

Australia Post

Arrangements were made with Australia Post to despatch ballot materials staggered over 3 days commencing Wednesday 26 April. Return mail was delivered and processed between Thursday 27 April and Tuesday 16 May.

Ballot material volumes processed by Australia Post:

	SEO	AEC	Other councils	Total
Outgoing	540k +	460k +	130k +	1,130k +
Return	200k +	180k +	70k +	450k +
Total	740k +	640k +	200k +	1,580k +

Continual liaison took place, under the stewardship of the returning officer, between SEO, AEC and Australia Post officials concerning the centralised despatch and delivery processes. Specifications were developed for the centralised despatch and pre-sorted return by council and/or ward election. The latter assisting greatly in the processing of the returned materials.

Council Purchasing Co-operative (CPC)

The CPC provides competitive tendering, contract and project administration services to member councils. The SEO provided artwork, design specifications and volumes for envelopes and forms required by all councils for the elections to the CPC who contracted the work to appropriate providers. DROs managing elections under the delegated authority ordered their supplies through the CPC. In addition, the CPC with the support and knowledge of the Electoral Commissioner assisted council nominated DROs with mailing house arrangements.

Mailing houses

Two mailing houses were selected under the SEO/AEC centralised model to prepare ballot packs ready for mail out on the basis of their proven credentials, ability to bar code envelopes, produce ward codes underneath the declaration flap and insert up to eight items all in a specified and challenging timeframe. An additional mailing house was chosen by the CPC to assist council nominated DROs with the preparation for the mail out of their ballot packs.

Public Information

Public notices

The legislation requires that roll closure, nominations, draw for position on ballot-paper, ballot pack, scrutiny, count and result details are advertised both in the *Government Gazette* and a locally available newspaper. All notices were published in a timely manner although due to the reduced publication frequency for local press wide time margins must be allowed to meet print deadlines. All notice placement was monitored and all statutory provisions relating to notices were met.

Enquiry Service

The SEO established an in-house telephone call centre featuring pre-recorded messages and call forward facilities to cater for elector enquiries. A national (cost of local call only) 1300 number was advertised on the voting instruction sheet sent out in all ballot packs and in LGA material advertising the elections. Call centre staff with access to computer based information responded to queries.

	Number
Calls received	10k +
Reissue forms despatched	369
Information on proportional representation	8
Translated material	0

Key issue areas during the mail out and return period were:

	Week			Polling Day
	1	2	3	16 May
Compulsory voting	51%	41%	47%	38%
Enrolment/ roll close	28%			
Voting entitlement		40%	39%	
Delivery of voting materials to council				58%

Uniformity of materials, processes and procedures amongst all councils will enable elector queries to be answered with greater assurance. The call centre provides an early alert of issues predominant in the community as the election period proceeds. Public domain information will be reviewed to encompass some of the major areas of enquiry.

Handouts

The office prepared a number of information sheets to supplement candidate handbooks, act as hand-out materials at councils and provide a brief explanation of the PR vote counting system:

- local government timetables;
- enrolment and voting entitlements;
- candidature requirements and checklist, profiles and photos;
- ballot-paper formality;
- electoral terminology;
- a quick guide to PR;
- scrutineers guide.

A Guide to Proportional Representation containing five examples of PR counts was also made available to every candidate attending a candidate briefing session.

Election image

Photographs of a long established council building and a crowd scene were used in various pantone colours and formats, vinyl and paper output, for training materials, handbooks and handouts. The images both integrated and distinguished the body of documentation prepared for the election. Website imagery will be developed in consultation with the LGA.

Insurance

The electoral program was disclosed to SAICORP (the South Australian Government Captive Insurance Corporation) and an appropriate premium was struck.

Risk management

Processes and procedures, which could be vulnerable, were identified and steps taken to minimise exposure to risk. Security was provided at the centralised count centre with the computerised processing centre located in a secured complex while other counts were undertaken at approved premises. Safeguards were also put in place at ballot-paper and profile production locations. Advice was given on response to media pressure, storage of ballot materials, close count management, operational back-up and problem resolution. Checking and proofing of materials for reproduction was integral to all operations. The budget was structured to enable cost recovery within parameters which included direct office costs and project management time.

The Election Process

Roll Closure

The voters roll for local government elections comprises the State House of Assembly roll and the supplementary roll of council specific entitlements. The rolls closed on 10 February (City of Adelaide 3 February) and all House of Assembly elector details were supplied to council CEOs within 7 days of roll close via e-mail or diskette. Council CEOs were required to finalise their review and provide written certification of their roll ready for public inspection and/or purchase by Thursday 9 March to coincide with the opening of nominations.

Seven information sessions were organised for metropolitan and country councils throughout November and December 1999 to discuss the new legislation on eligibility and the requirements for file layout and content for the provision of roll data. Updated postal addresses from country councils were supplied to the electoral registrars to update the rolls and considerable liaison took place with computer software consultants on behalf of councils.

However, the importance of the file layout requirements and the new automatic entitlements for bodies corporate and groups were not always fully understood. Only one third of the supplementary rolls submitted for roll building and the mail out were received by the due date. A further third were one week late and the remainder were delayed by more than a week.

Electors on roll for May 2000 elections			
	Country	Metropolitan	Statewide
Lowest	985	5841	985
Highest	18667	111754	111754
Average	6351	45911	18160
Total	298496	918229	1216725

It became apparent that there were a number of issues relating to voting entitlements on the council certified voters roll:

- most commonly, some entitlements were granted for which none existed;
- electors forgetting a property or business interest which entitled them to a vote;
- electors on the House of Assembly roll and also the supplementary roll but with a slight difference in the spelling of the name, sometimes the same spelling ie duplicate records;
- difficulties in differentiating between Crown entities and Corporate Utilities;
- inconsistent adjudication in respect of the inclusion of entitlements for properties administered as deceased estates;
- bodies corporate and, to a lesser extent, groups experiencing difficulty in determining who could exercise the vote.

All council CEOs were asked 2 May 2000 to revisit their roll and to advise the returning officer of any ineligible entitlements on their roll in order to maintain the integrity of the elections by holding out of the count any returned ineligible ballot-paper envelopes.

The SEO will work with councils, rate administrators and software providers to ensure:

- improved comprehension and compliance with procedures;
- attendees for information sessions are those who would most benefit including administration staff who compile the roll;
- a reduction in major problems with duplication on the voters roll and electors who are not eligible (eg persons under 18);
- more timely data for notification of envelope printing requirements.

Whilst there are a number of roll matters that need to be considered by the Ministerial review, the Electoral Commissioner is satisfied that all issues of roll imperfections were identified early and quickly remedied. Continuous roll update may eradicate some duplication. Standardised criteria for roll compilation could also reduce difficulties for telephone staff when searching for electors on the database.

Equipment and materials

Envelopes

Declaration envelopes were delivered progressively from 13 March 2000 to the mailing houses to allow the addressing of elector details to commence. Outer reply paid and windowface envelopes were printed in Adelaide and delivered between 16 March and 6 April 2000 for the insertion of ballot materials.

For larger centrally managed elections a separate reply paid box number was allocated to each election with another return to sender box number allocated to each council. All artwork and quantities were provided by the SEO. Due to the volumes to be produced in the short timeframe, all envelopes were pre-printed with reply paid envelopes bearing a clear distinguishing mark for easy identification.

Envelopes printed	Quantity ('000)
<i>Standard Supplies</i>	
Declaration envelopes (individual)	1 485
Declaration envelopes (groups)	490
Omission in error envelope	29
Reply Paid envelopes	1 800
Outer window face envelopes	1 800
<i>City of Adelaide</i>	
Declaration envelopes (individual)	15
Declaration envelopes (groups)	10
Omission in error envelopes	1

The colour and design of declaration envelopes will be reviewed.

Forms

Regulation forms were designed throughout November and December 1999. The Council Purchasing Co-operative was advised of the quantities required, arranged quotes and the majority of forms were printed in February 2000. The voting instruction sheets were finalised late February 2000 to enable printing and folding to be completed by late March. Translation sheets were forwarded to all councils in April 2000 prior to the commencement of the mail out.

Official forms printed	Quantity
Regulation Forms 1 and 2	200 each
Nomination Form 3	10 000
Nomination Forms 4 and 5	2000 each
Forms 6, 7, 8	200 each
Forms 9, 13	5000 each
Voting instructions	1 475 000
Voting instructions (City of Adelaide)	25 000
Translation sheets	100 sets
Scrutineer and polling official cards, scrutineer authority forms	5000 each
Request for reissue forms	5000

Consideration will be given to amending a number of the forms in the light of practical difficulties experienced with the current format and content.

Kits

Nomination packs were forwarded to all DROs by courier or post on 23 February, two weeks prior to the nomination opening date on 9 March 2000. The number of vacancies determined the volume of material in each kit. Packs included nomination forms, reissue forms and candidate handbooks.

Materials for kits were shrink wrapped where possible and accompanied by an inventory of all items. Scrutiny kits for SEO conducted elections, including bulky items such as letter openers and counting machines for larger councils, were provided to DROs at their last training conference or sent by courier.

Election material printing

A number of metropolitan agencies were used to print materials such as the forms specified in the Regulations, scrutineer and request for reissue forms, polling official and scrutineer cards and voting instruction sheets. Other items for the elections were produced in-house by staff members including folders, training materials including ballot-papers, candidate handbooks, manuals and procedure booklets, dividers, count cards, City of Adelaide nomination forms, profile pro-formas, labels and candidate's name cards. DROs in country areas, acting under delegated authority, used print houses within their local communities to produce non-regulated materials.

Distribution of materials

Contractors were used during the election period to despatch and collect cartons of election materials for nominations, ballot pack re-issuing and return and polling day scrutiny. Special air charter arrangements were made for two country locations with complex counts for the delivery of ballot material on polling day and return the following day for data entry processing. Polling day despatch capabilities and process problems will be resolved.

Candidate information

Candidate handbooks

6000 candidate handbooks were printed for distribution to candidates at nomination and/or the candidate briefing sessions plus 200 for Adelaide City Council candidates. Contents included information on:

- the election timetable;
- election protocols;
- nomination requirements and procedures;
- candidate campaigning;
- illegal practices;
- campaign donations;
- provision of scrutineers;
- voting materials for postal ballots;
- assistance to voters;
- the PR voting and counting system.

In its revision of the handbooks, the SEO will:

- include a pro-forma for profiles;
- increase the information on photographic requirements;
- advise candidates to be aware that the profile word count is done manually, not by computer.

Candidates briefing

All DROs were required to conduct a briefing session for prospective candidates, for which written guidelines were provided. The sessions lasted approximately one hour and were mostly held the final week before nominations closed. Attendance varied and the SEO will be examining ways with councils to encourage more response to the sessions.

Nominations

The first nominations were received the day nominations opened while the last were received within minutes of nominations closing. Some 60% were received during the last four days.

After being received locally all nominations were faxed to the returning officer and recorded on the central database.

Candidate information (ALL Elections)	Contested	Uncontested	Total
Mayoral	74	19	93
Area Councillor	17	4	21
Councillor at large	210	34	244
Councillor	635	169	804
Total Received	936	226	1162
%	80.6	19.4	

Councillor at large elections held the greatest number of vacancies and drew the largest field of candidates:

- largest number of vacancies was Barossa: 18 candidates for 13 positions.
- largest number of candidates was Victor Harbor: 23 candidates for 10 positions.

Nine councils required no elections:

1 metropolitan Walkerville

8 country Cleve*, Elliston*, Franklin Harbour, Karoonda East Murray, Kimba, Le Hunte*, Peterborough and Wakefield Regional.

* These councils along with Alexandrina and Clare and Gilbert Valleys each required a single vacancy supplementary election following partial failure due to insufficient nominations.

Concerns to be addressed include:

- the quality of written and facsimile nominations and profiles;
- candidates changing nominations/adding content to profiles a number of times.

Ballot-paper printing and production

Final ballot-paper artwork for the centrally managed elections needed to be in the hands of the printers on the evening of nomination day to meet the demands for printing the required volumes within the specified timeframe. Ballot-papers were printed and forwarded progressively to the mailing houses commencing on the Wednesday following the close of nominations. All printing agencies were provided with instructions and a diskette containing a security pattern and RO's initials to be printed on basic white paper stock.

	Specifications
Mayoral ballot-papers	Black base
Area councillors	Yellow base
Councillor ballot-papers	Green base
Ballot-paper stock	70gsm offset paper or gloopaque
Ballot-paper recommended size	210mm x 99mm produced 3 up A4 landscape. Larger size ballot-papers were required in some elections – Varying sizes in length x 148mm in width.
Printing houses	Six (due to volumes and the tight production timeframes)

Ballot-papers for most elections were printed from photo ready copy taken from the database. Matters that were monitored included:

- the depth of colour of the security pattern;
- differing thickness ballot-paper stock which caused some delays with inserting machine detection devices at the mailing house;
- folding sizes – some sizes have to run at slower speeds.

The possibilities of producing ward ballot-papers in different colours and reducing the number of printers will be investigated.

Profiles

In addition to the formal nomination form, the legislation required all candidates to submit a profile with an optional photograph. A number of candidates were contacted and asked to modify their text in line with legislative requirements.

Accepted profiles were recorded and supplied to six printers engaged to print the profiles for the 38 centrally managed council elections. All copy was supplied as A4 artwork with text and photo boxes correctly placed in draw order. The number of candidates determined the size of the profiles (maximum 5 candidates per page). City of Adelaide profiles were contained in a booklet.

Profiles without photos (SEO/AEC)	125 (* 89 in contested elections, 36 not contested)
Received in the last 4 days	60%

* 28 were elected – 4 Metropolitan – 24 Country

A small number of profiles had to be reprinted due to:

- dark shading from poor quality photographs;
- non-removal of 'see over' instruction for single page profiles;
- omission of address/contact details.

The number of printers and their ability to scan photographs will be reviewed and an extension sought to the period between the close of nominations and the mail out to alleviate the very tight printing timeframes. Content requirements for the candidate profile will need to be considered by the Minister for Local Government's review. A vetting process involving considerable judgement, administered by electoral officials does not sit comfortably with the returning officer.

Mail out

The centrally managed component of the mail out of ballot material took place between 26 April and 2 May 2000 with two mail houses involved in the task. Other councils managed the mail out manually with seven utilising arrangements put in place by the Council Purchasing Co-operative with a third mail house located in Adelaide. The office maintained close liaison with all of the mailing houses.

Written instructions were provided to the mailing houses regarding the variety of materials to be inserted, quantities and anticipated arrival dates of material. Addressing of envelopes, individual then group, commenced prior to nominations closing (in the week commencing 20 March 2000) and continued throughout the insertion process.

All profiles and some ballot-papers were pre-folded. Envelope contents mostly comprised six insertions: instruction sheet, 2 ballot-papers, profile, reply paid envelope, declaration envelope.

Insertion of election materials commenced 5 April 2000 lasting 20 days. One to three shifts operated under the supervision of electoral staff. All materials, kept separately for each council, were checked prior to insertion and records kept of completion dates.

A small number of issues required action, namely:

- machinery breakdown;
- differing ballot-paper thicknesses and envelope quality causing minor delays;
- the quality of barcode printing – ink cartridges require more frequent changing;
- duplicate printing of envelopes – less than 1 in 100k.

The office will consider whether information on any uncontested election is sent with ballot material to assist with elector enquiries when either no mayoral nor ward councillor ballot material is supplied.

Reissues

The legislation allows an elector to be issued with fresh voting papers in the case of loss, non-receipt, or spoiling of ballot material. Reissues as a percentage of the total mail out were negligible, approximately 1 in every 1000.

	Number reissued
Centralised (SEO/AEC)	871
Councils	481
Total	1352

Omission in error

Voting papers must also be issued in the case of persons, bodies corporate or groups who claim to have an entitlement but whose name does not appear on the roll.

	Number issued
Centralised (SEO/AEC)	252
Councils	39
Total	291

Return mail processing

Centrally managed elections

The return mail for 19 of the 38 centrally managed elections was processed in a facility established on the 6th floor of the ABC studios at Collinswood. This centralised facility processed all returned mail, reissue of ballot packs to electors and despatch of returned ballot material to the various count centres after the close of the poll. The centre operated from the commencement of the mail out of ballot material on 26 April until material was despatched to the count centres as soon as practicable after 12.30pm on polling day.

Some delays during despatch were experienced due to logistical challenges to be addressed in future planning forums.

The return mail for the remaining 19 centrally managed elections was processed at the various divisional office locations of the AEC under the direct supervision of the relevant DRO.

Arrangements were made with Australia Post for the daily delivery and/or pick up of ballot material with special deliveries organised for the public holiday (15 May) where necessary. Ballot material was either scanned or manually sorted by council, ward and category.

Ballot boxes in councils for personal delivery of ballot material were cleared on the business day before polling day. Couriers were arranged for the delivery of the centrally returned ballot material to local scrutiny and count locations. Ballot material returns were completed and supplied to DROs.

Returned Mail	Rate
Successful	40.11 %
Return to Sender (RTS)	1.43 %
Accepted	96.89 %
Rejected	3.10 %
Reissues	
Not received, lost or spoilt	1352
Omission in error	291

A number of unidentifiable ballot-paper envelopes were received at Australia Post with no reply paid envelope and the declaration flap damaged or missing. These are included in the rejected total. Following the elections all RTS mail for House of Assembly entitlements was forwarded to the AEC to attend to enrolment follow-up.

The extraction of returned ineligible duplicate entitlements following the returning officer's request to councils to revisit their roll caused some minor delays on polling day.

Locally managed elections

Each council administering their elections under delegated authority was responsible for processing return to sender mail (RTS) and sorting returned mail into accepted and rejected categories for further scrutiny.

Scrutiny and count

Scrutiny

At the May 2000 elections, all ballot-paper envelopes accepted into the count were opened, the contents extracted and ballot-papers accepted or rejected depending on admissibility. Accepted ballot-papers were sorted into first preferences for each candidate or set aside as informal. This notional manual sort to first preferences was undertaken for all 192 contested elections followed by either a manual or data entered distribution of preferences.

	Manual	%	Computerised	%	Total
SEO/AEC	96	64	54	36	150
Councils	37	88	5	12	42
Total	133	69	59	31	192

Manual counts

Prior to polling day, it was determined that 129 counts would be manually conducted. However, following the count of first preferences, four additional ward counts were completed manually as the distribution of the primary vote reduced the complexity of the count and allowed for the early election of candidates. 83% of councils (24 out of the 29) conducting their elections under delegated authority opted for a manual count. All 28 mayoral counts were conducted manually accounting for almost 15% of the overall total of 69% for counts conducted manually.

Conducted by	Mayoral	Councillors			Total
		Area	At large	Ward	
SEO/AEC	21	2	-	73	96
Council	7	-	3	27	37
Total	28	2	3	100	133

Computer counts

Due to the potential in many elections for a large number of counts to obtain a result, an early decision was made to data enter those counts expected to be more complex. A final decision in some elections had to await the close of nominations to determine where there were a large number of candidates for available positions. Hardware and software capacity for data input centres was dispersed between one large SEO central location in the Old Methodist Meeting Hall, Adelaide equipped with 36 PCs and 18 AEC regional locations using a smaller number of data entry points.

Conducted by	Mayoral	Councillors			Total
		Area	At large	Ward	
SEO/AEC	-	-	9	45	54
Council	-	1	3	1	5
Total	0	1	12	46	59

Extra security was employed to safeguard premises and ballot materials at locations which were not subject to night security. At the next elections it is anticipated that all complex counts will be data entered, thereby reducing count time and demands on deputy returning officers.

Results

All results were transmitted to the SEO for input to the central database, mostly by fax. The first result was received by 1.42pm Tuesday 16 May with all mayoral results in by midday Wednesday 17 May. The 192 contested elections were completed by Thursday night 18 May.

78% of counts were completed within 12 working hours of the poll closing, 19% within 24 hours with the remaining 3% following shortly after. Data was supplied to the LGA for posting on their website. Final results were provided to The Advertiser for a double-page results feature on Saturday 20 May.

Close count management, recounts

Nine recounts were undertaken and completed by 4.30pm Friday 19 May, three by computer data entry and six manually. Four were requested by the Returning Officer.

Council	Election	Requested by	Time	Variance
Burnside	Mayoral	Candidate	Friday am	+2
	Rose Park/Toorak Gardens	Returning Officer + candidate	Friday am	+1
Charles Sturt	Beverley	Candidate	Friday am	+1
Onkaparinga*	McLaren	Returning Officer	Thursday am	+1
Prospect *	Fitzroy	Returning Officer	Wednesday pm	+2
Tumby Bay	At large	Returning Officer	Friday pm	+1
Unley	Goodwood	Candidate	Friday pm	+1
West Torrens	Keswick	Candidate	Thursday pm	+1
	Plympton	Candidate	Thursday pm	-1

Three recounts were undertaken by data entry: Burnside (Rose Park/Toorak Gardens), Tumby Bay (area), Unley (Goodwood). The computerised recounts were undertaken at the SEO premises at Rose Park within 3 hours using 12 operators. * Two recounts were for elections where the original result was a tie.

Complaints

A total of 112 complaints were received across 32 councils. In most cases, alleged offenders were written to the same day and in all instances a direct approach was taken to complaint handling.

Nature of Complaint	No Received
Inaccurate and misleading electoral material [LGEA s28]	39
Authorisation as required by [LGEA s27]	29
Candidate behaviour	13
System of voting (Proportional Representation)	7
Ballot-papers allegedly not received	4
Security of voting system	4
Voters roll and entitlement issues	4
Profiles	4
Fraud / intimidation	3
Eligibility to nominate as a candidate	2
Media treatment	2
Damage / defacing of electoral material	1
Total	112

At the end of the election period two serious issues were being investigated which can be dealt with in the Ministerial Steering Committee Review.

Candidates or authorisers of material were notified of complaints raised against them. All complaints were reassessed in consultation with specialist Crown Law staff and prosecution action may occur in a small number of cases.

The joint assessment of complaints concentrated on:

- what mischief, if any, had actually occurred;
- whether, regardless of any technical matter, it was clear who was taking responsibility for the material;
- the response of the authoriser following notification of the complaint;
- the public interest and costs involved in mounting a prosecution.

It would be helpful in gathering evidence if the Office of Electoral Commissioner had the authority to remove unauthorised material. In cases where prosecution action is not in the public interest it may be appropriate for the Electoral Commissioner to have the capacity to caution offenders and maintain a record of cautions for future reference and follow-up.

Supplementary elections

Five single vacancy supplementary elections were created due to the partial failure through insufficient nominations being received for the following elections:

- Alexandrina - Strathalbyn Ward;
- Clare & Gilbert Valleys - South Ward;
- Cleve – At large;
- Elliston - Anxious Bay Ward;
- Le Hunte - At large.

The supplementary timetable

Close of roll:	Friday 28 April 2000
Nominations open:	Thursday 1 June 2000
Nominations close:	Thursday 22 June 2000
Ballot packs sent out:	Tuesday 4 - Monday 10 July 2000
Polling close:	Monday 24 July 2000

Within six weeks of the close of polling for the periodic elections, two resignations occurred in Le Hunte and Streaky Bay, both councillor at large positions, necessitating further supplementary elections to fill those casual vacancies. Neither council had adopted a policy of not filling single member vacancies allowed under the legislation [LGEA s6].

Financial arrangements, costs and expenses

All costs and expenses incurred by the returning officer in carrying out official duties must be defrayed from funds of the council [LGEA s13]. Accordingly, councils are charged for electoral services on the basis of cost recovery.

To enable the Office to meet expenditure incurred on a progressive basis during the election cycle the Returning Officer requested progress payments from councils in April 2000. The balances of costs incurred were invoiced to councils in June 2000.

The total election costs for all councils for the conduct of the May 2000 elections was in the order of \$2.682 million and these costs are summarised in the following table under major expense categories.

Expense Category	Costs ('000)
Advertising	114
Printing (including statutory notices)	670
Mail out	590
Mail return	415
Count & scrutiny	238
Project management	210
Manuals, training, support, enquiries & poll results	441
Storage	4
Total Costs	2,682

City of Adelaide

Elections for the Adelaide City Council (ACC) are conducted under the provisions of the *City of Adelaide Act 1998*. The May 2000 elections were the second conducted under this legislation and were completed at the computerised count centre located at the Old Methodist Meeting Hall, Adelaide:

- the mayoral election (five candidates) was conducted manually;
- the councillor at large election (14 candidates for eight positions) was counted manually to first preferences then, for the first time, data input to obtain the final result.

A number of particular arrangements were in place for the ACC elections.

1. The Deputy Returning Officer is a staff member of the SEO. This facilitates timely planning and preparation of materials for this election.
2. Currently the legislation provides for periodic election roll close to take place on the first Thursday in February. It is recommended that this is aligned with the timetable for other councils.
3. Voting entitlements differ for the ACC in that an elector may only vote once in any capacity. Special voting instructions, declaration envelopes and candidate handbooks were prepared to recognise the different stipulations.
4. The candidate briefing session was conducted at the State Electoral Office.
5. Profiles were produced in a booklet format.

379 ballot-paper envelopes were rejected at preliminary scrutiny due to multiple voting (64% of the total rejected, a nearly 40% reduction in this occurrence from 1998). Both counts were completed within 12 working hours of the close of polling. It is intended that at subsequent elections, all ballot-papers for the councillor at large election will be data input to obtain further time efficiencies. Turnout increased from 37.01% to 39.92%.

Glossary of Electoral Terms

ACTS

The *City of Adelaide Act 1998 Schedule 1, Local Government Act 1999, Local Government (Elections) Act 1999* & Regulations.

AREA COUNCILLOR

Formerly called alderman, a person elected to represent a council at large rather than for a particular ward.

BALLOT PACK

Voting material mailed to each eligible elector comprising:

- ballot-paper(s);
- a broadsheet containing candidates' profiles;
- a ballot-paper envelope (incorporating the voter's declaration);
- an instruction sheet;
- an addressed reply paid envelope to contain the voter's completed ballot material.

BODY CORPORATE

An entity legally incorporated in a corporation eg company, incorporated association, co-operative, trade union, friendly society or other like incorporated body; excludes partnerships, private trusts or unincorporated bodies.

BRIBE

Includes any pecuniary sum or material advantage including food, drink and entertainment.

CANDIDATE

A person nominated for election who is eligible to be a mayor, ward councillor or area councillor (formally known as an alderman). Qualifications for and disqualifications from candidature are set out on the nomination form.

COUNCIL VOTERS ROLL

The roll is compiled from House of Assembly electors and additional council entitlements including persons, bodies corporate and groups of persons entitled to vote in respect of place of residence or rateable property for the area (supplied by the council). The roll is certified by the council chief executive officer.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

The chief executive officer of a council has specific electoral functions to perform including certifying the voters roll and administering Part 14 of the Act relating to candidates' campaign donations returns.

CLOSE OF VOTERS ROLL

The closing time for enrolment and enrolment changes. For the May 2000 periodic elections the voters roll closed at the close of business on Thursday 10 February 2000 (3 February for the City of Adelaide).

CLOSE OF VOTING

The closing time for the receipt of returned voting material. For the May 2000 periodic elections - 12 noon, Tuesday 16 May 2000.

COUNCIL

An area constituted under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

COUNCILLOR

A person elected to represent a council ward or area.

COURT OF DISPUTED RETURNS

The Court has the jurisdiction to hear and determine any petition addressed to it disputing the validity of an election under the Act. The procedure and powers of the Court are the same as those of the District Court when exercising its civil jurisdiction.

DECLARATION OF THE RESULTS

A return forwarded to the council chief executive officer prepared by a deputy returning officer certifying the election results and the names of the elected candidates.

DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICER

A person appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to manage certain delegated election responsibilities.

ELECTION

The choosing of representatives to occupy official positions by voting. The successful candidature of a participant in a ballot.

ELECTOR

A person, body corporate or group of persons enrolled on the voters roll for a council. In the cases of a body corporate or group of persons, an elector is an authorised person who exercises the right to vote.

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

The person responsible for the administration of local government and parliamentary State electoral legislation in South Australia. The Electoral Commissioner has been appointed as the returning officer for each council.

ELECTORAL MATERIAL

An advertisement, notice, statement or representation calculated to affect the result of an election or poll.

ELECTORAL MATERIAL AUTHORISATION

Electoral material must contain the name and address of the person authorising publication and in the case of printed material, the name and address of the printer or person responsible for production must be included.

ELECTORAL OFFICER

In the general sense, means a person appointed as an electoral officer under the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999* and includes the returning officer, deputy returning officer and other persons appointed to assist in election conduct.

FORMAL BALLOT-PAPER

If one candidate is to be elected, a ballot-paper is formal if the number 1 appears opposite the name of one candidate. If more than one candidate is to be elected, a ballot-paper is formal if commencing with the number 1, the numbers opposite the names of candidates are at least consecutive up to the number of candidates required to be elected (ie if three candidates are to be elected, the numbers 1, 2 and 3 must appear). A tick ✓ or cross ✕ appearing beside a candidate's name on a ballot-paper is equivalent to the number 1.

GIFT

Disposition of property – not by will - which includes money and services (other than voluntary labour) to another person without consideration, or inadequate consideration, of money or monetary value.

GROUP

Consists of natural persons or bodies corporate or a combination of both.

ILLEGAL PRACTICE

An offence under Part 7 and Part 12 of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*. The deputy returning officer must forward to candidates, within 14 days of the close of nominations, a written statement in the prescribed form detailing illegal practices.

INFORMAL BALLOT-PAPER

A ballot-paper which does not comply with the formality rules governing the election and cannot therefore be accepted into the count.

LEGISLATION (SEE ACTS)

NAME

Name of a candidate for election includes a name by which the candidate is generally known.

NOMINATION

The completion and lodgement of the prescribed form. The nomination must contain a declaration of eligibility by the candidate and information required by the Regulations including the candidate's profile. A photograph of the candidate is optional.

OFFICER OF A BODY CORPORATE

Director, manager, secretary, public officer of the body corporate or person taking part in the management of the affairs of the body corporate.

POLLING DAY

The day on which voting closes. For the May 2000 periodic elections - Tuesday 16 May 2000.

PRESCRIBED PERSON

A person who has held office as a member of a council at any time between 5 May 1997 and 1 January 2000.

PROVISIONAL DECLARATION OF THE RESULT

A public announcement by the deputy returning officer of the names of candidates provisionally elected after the conclusion of counting.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A notice placed in the *Government Gazette* and in a newspaper circulating in the council area. All prescribed election notices are public notices with the exception of the notice relating to the use of postal voting.

RECOUNTS

A candidate may request a recount within 48 hours of a provisional declaration by writing to the returning officer. The returning officer will then decide if a recount is required. In addition the returning officer may initiate a recount during the 48 hour period.

REGULATIONS

Regulations under the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*.

RETURNING OFFICER

The Electoral Commissioner is the returning officer for each council.

SCRUTINEER

A person appointed in writing, by a candidate, to represent the candidate at the scrutiny and count. A candidate may appoint a number of scrutineers but no more than two of them may be present at the scrutiny and count at the same time. A scrutineer may also be appointed for a poll and has the right to request a recount.

STATE ELECTORAL OFFICE

The State Electoral Office is responsible for the conduct of State parliamentary elections. The Electoral Commissioner is the chief executive of the State Electoral Office and the returning officer for all local government elections. State Electoral Office staff assist the Electoral Commissioner in the discharge of his duties.

VOTERS ROLL See Council voters roll

Contains full names, residential and rateable property addresses for natural persons, bodies corporate or groups entitled to vote.

VOTING MATERIAL See ballot pack

Also includes ballot-papers; applications for voting papers and records relating to their issue; declarations made by persons voting or claiming to vote; voters rolls.

WARD




A division of a council area.

WITHDRAWAL OF NOMINATION

A nominated candidate may, by notice in the prescribed form, withdraw the nomination at any time before the close of nominations. Similarly, a body corporate or group of persons who have nominated a candidate may, by notice in the prescribed form, withdraw the nomination at any time before the close of nominations.

Sample Ballot Materials

Ballot-papers

<p> BALLOT-PAPER PROA01 City of Prospect ELECTION OF MAYOR</p> <p>DIRECTIONS: You must vote for at least 1 candidate on this ballot paper by placing the number 1 in the square opposite the name of the candidate so as to indicate your preference for them. If you wish, you may then vote for any other candidate(s) by placing consecutive numbers beginning with the number 2 in the square(s) opposite the name(s) of the other candidate(s) so as to indicate your preference(s). After voting, fold the ballot paper and place it in the Ballot Paper Envelope.</p> <p>CANDIDATES</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BARNETT, Kristina M.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DEDES, John</p>	<p> BALLOT-PAPER PROA02 City of Prospect ELECTION OF 3 AREA COUNCILLORS</p> <p>DIRECTIONS: You must vote for at least 3 candidates on this ballot paper by placing the numbers 1, 2 and 3 in the squares opposite the names of the candidates so as to indicate your preference for them. If you wish, you may then vote for any other candidate(s) by placing consecutive numbers beginning with the number 4 in the square(s) opposite the name(s) of the other candidate(s) so as to indicate your preference(s). After voting, fold the ballot paper and place it in the Ballot Paper Envelope.</p> <p>CANDIDATES</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NEWALL, Jim</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MITCHELL, Matthew</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BLAIKIE, David</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> STOCK, Frank</p>	<p> BALLOT-PAPER BURW02 City of Burnside ELECTION OF 2 COUNCILLORS FOR BURNSIDE WARD</p> <p>DIRECTIONS: You must vote for at least 2 candidates on this ballot paper by placing the numbers 1 and 2 in the squares opposite the names of the candidates so as to indicate your preference for them. If you wish, you may then vote for any other candidate(s) by placing consecutive numbers beginning with the number 3 in the square(s) opposite the name(s) of the other candidate(s) so as to indicate your preference(s). After voting, fold the ballot paper and place it in the Ballot Paper Envelope.</p> <p>CANDIDATES</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> KERSHAW, Hollie</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> McGOVERN, Bill</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GILBERT, Rob</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BILLS, Graham</p>
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Top left: Returning Officer's initials
Top right: Council and wardcode
Security printed 'LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2000' in white
Black print for instructions, candidate names and voting boxes

Ballot-paper declaration envelope design

Sample Individual Envelope

DO NOT SEAL ENVELOPE OVER THIS SECTION

IMPORTANT - This declaration form must be signed by you or your vote **WILL NOT BE VALID**. **DO NOT** tear off this flap. The envelope will not be opened until the declaration flap below has been removed by the Returning Officer and **ALL** of the envelopes have been rearranged to ensure vote confidentiality.

Please complete date of birth and sign below

I hereby declare that


A the ballot paper/s which I have placed in this envelope contain my vote and that I have not already voted in this election or poll in the capacity under which I am voting **AND**

B I am of or above the age of 18 years **AND**

C I am the person named below

Date of Birth _____
Sign Here _____

0010233040

 ADEW01 BOTH 01 RES

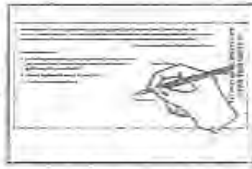
JOHN F CITIZEN
1 ANYWHERE STREET
UTOPIA SA 5555

BOTH 01

Sample Instructions Under Flap

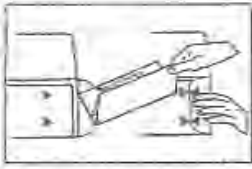
HOW TO USE THIS ENVELOPE

1



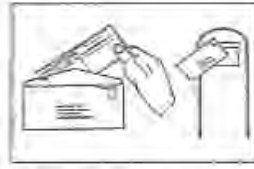
Put in the ballot on the other side of this flap.

2



After voting, place your folded ballot paper in this envelope and seal down the **SIDE** flap as the red arrows.

3



Place this envelope in the Reply Paid envelope and post it as usual.

Sample Group Envelope

DO NOT SEAL ENVELOPE OVER THIS SECTION

IMPORTANT - This declaration form must be signed by you or your vote **WILL NOT BE VALID**. **DO NOT** tear off this flap. The envelope will not be opened until the declaration flap below has been removed by the Returning Officer and **ALL** of the envelopes have been rearranged to ensure vote confidentiality.

I hereby declare that -

A the ballot paper/s which I have placed in this envelope contain my vote and that I have not already voted in this election or poll in the capacity under which I am voting **AND**

B I am of or above the age of 18 years **AND**


C (to be completed only if you are an appointed representative):

I, _____
(Print Surname)

_____ (Print Given Names)
am the person authorised by the body corporate or group named opposite to vote on its behalf, and I am an officer of the body corporate, a member of the group, or an officer of a body corporate which is a member of the group.

Please complete date of birth and sign below

Date of Birth _____
Sign Here _____

0010102320 ADEW01
 BOTH 01 DWM

CONSOLIDATED NOMINEES PTY LTD
1 ANYWHERE STREET
UTOPIA SA 5555

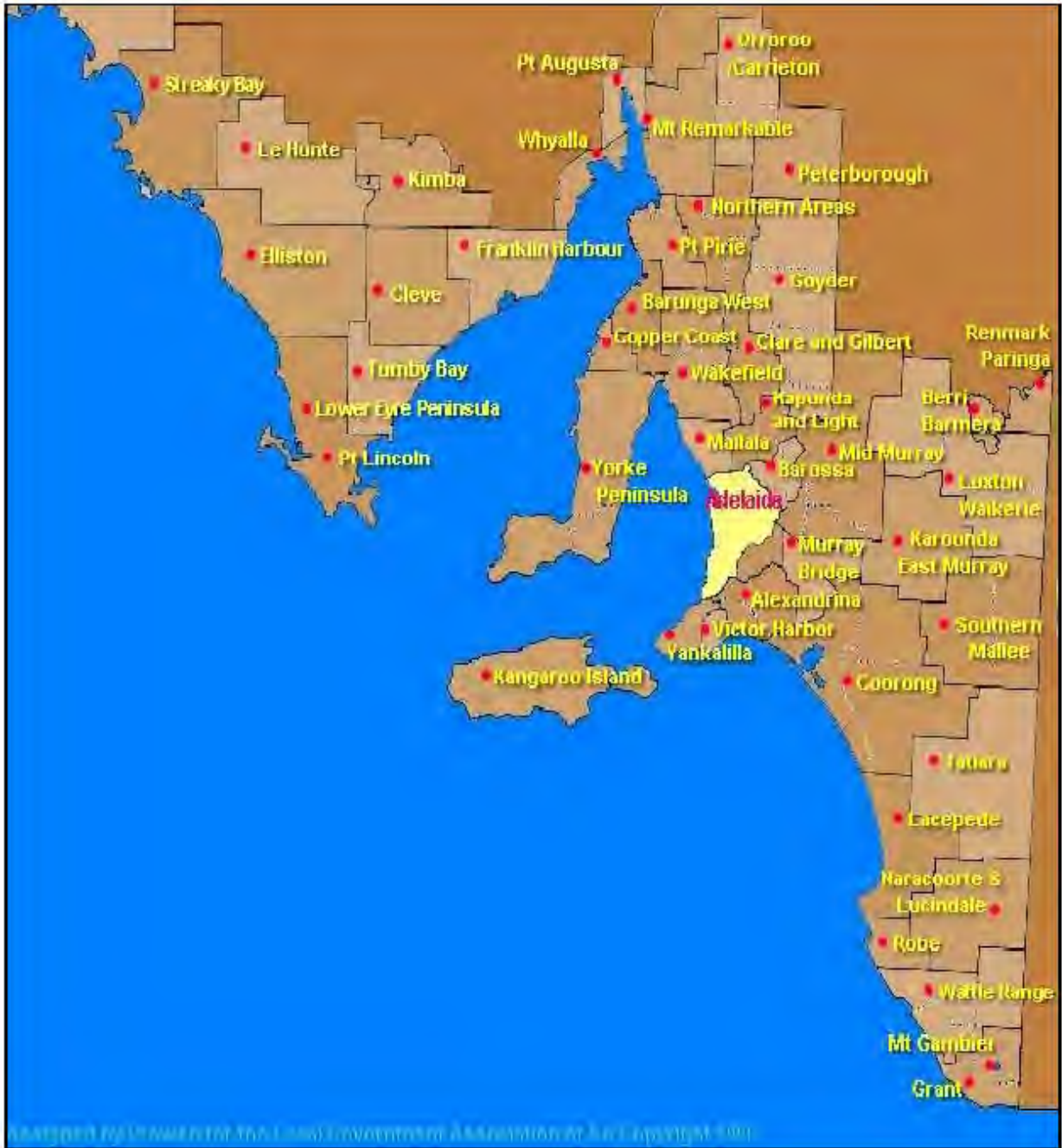
BOTH 01

Note: not to actual size

Black print: instructions
Red print: VOTING IS COMPLETELY SECRET and DO NOT SEAL ENVELOPE OVER THIS SECTION
Paper: White stock with fine lined grey security printing to conceal voting papers

Council Maps

Country



Reproduced with the permission of the Local Government Association of South Australia.

Metropolitan



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