

Election Report

2024 Dunstan and Black By-elections

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Executive Summary

DUNSTAN

On Tuesday 6 February 2024, the Honourable Steven Marshall announced his resignation as the Member of the House of Assembly district of Dunstan.

On Friday 16 February 2024, pursuant to section 47 of the *Electoral Act 1985* (the Electoral Act), the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Honourable Dan Cregan, issued a writ instructing the Electoral Commissioner to conduct a by-election to fill the vacancy. The writ specified that polling day for the by-election was Saturday 23 March 2024.

Five candidates, all endorsed by registered political parties nominated for the by-election.

A total of 27,108 electors were enrolled in the district of Dunstan at the close of the electoral roll at 5pm on Monday 26 February 2024. 21,893 electors voted at the by-election, a participation rate of 80.8%

At the end of the final count and distribution of preferences, the Labor Party candidate Ms. Cressida O'Hanlon was elected Member for Dunstan with 50.8% of the votes.

The writ was returned to the Speaker on Friday 5 April 2024, marking the official end of the by-election.

The total cost to administer the by-election was \$865,000, or \$31.91 per elector.

BLACK

On Monday 15 October 2024, the Honourable David Speirs MP announced his resignation as the Member of the House of Assembly district of Black.

On Tuesday 16 October 2024, pursuant to section 47 of the Electoral Act, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Honourable Leon Bignell, issued a writ instructing the Electoral Commissioner to conduct a by-election to fill the vacancy. The writ specified that polling day for the by-election was Saturday 16 November 2024.

Four candidates, all endorsed by registered political parties nominated for the by-election.

A total of 26,540 electors were enrolled in the district of Black at the close of the electoral roll at 5pm on Monday 28 October 2024. 21,913 electors voted at the by-election, a participation rate of 82.6%

At the end of the final count and distribution of preferences, the Labor Party candidate Mr. Alex Dighton was elected Member for Black with 59.9% of the votes.

The writ was returned to the Speaker on Tuesday 26 November 2024, marking the official end of the by-election.

The total cost to administer the by-election was \$690,000, or \$26.00 per elector.

In previous election reports, several recommendations for legislation change were included for Parliament's consideration. No recommendations are made in this report.

By-election timelines

Dunstan

Issue of writ

Friday 16 February 2024

Nominations open

Friday 16 February 2024

Candidate briefing session

Wednesday 21 February 2024

Close of rolls

5:00 pm Monday 26 February 2024

Close of nominations

12 noon Friday 1 March 2024

Early voting opens

Tuesday 12 March to Friday 22 March 2024

Postal vote applications close

5:00 pm Thursday 21 March 2024

Polling Day

Saturday 23 March 2024

Return of writ

Friday 5 April 2024

Black

Issue of writ

Wednesday 16 October 2024

Nominations open

Wednesday 16 October 2024

Candidate briefing session

6:00 pm Monday 21 October 2024

Close of rolls

5:00 pm Monday 28 October 2024

Close of nominations

12 noon Friday 1 November 2024

Early voting opens

Monday 11 November to
Friday 15 November 2024

Postal vote applications close

5:00 pm Thursday 14 November 2024

Polling Day

Saturday 16 November 2024

Return of writ

Tuesday 26 November 2024

By-election highlights

Dunstan



27,108
ELECTORS
ENROLLED

↓ 27,269 in 2022
State election



21,893
VOTES CAST

↓ 24,447 in 2022
State election



80.8%
PARTICIPATION

↓ down from 89.7%
in 2022 State Election



13,083
ORDINARY VOTES

↓ down from 14,875
in 2022 State Election



8,810
DECLARATION
VOTES

↓ down from 9,575
in 2022 State Election



425 (1.9%)
INFORMALITY

437 (1.8%) informality rate
2022 State Election



120
STAFF

Black



26,540
ELECTORS
ENROLLED

↑ 26,437 in 2022
State election



21,913
VOTES CAST

↓ 24,327 in 2022
State election



82.6%
PARTICIPATION

↓ down from 92%
in 2022 State Election



11,130
ORDINARY VOTES

↓ down from 15,469
in 2022 State Election



10,783
DECLARATION
VOTES

↑ up from 8,404
in 2022 State Election



497 (2.3%)
INFORMALITY

643 (2.6%) informality rate
2022 State Election



135
STAFF

Summary of the results

District of Dunstan

Enrolled electors	27,108			
Votes cast	21,893	Participation %	80.8	-8.9*
Informal votes	425	Informal %	1.9	+0.1*
Summary of votes by affiliation				
Candidate	Affiliation	First preference votes		%
Frankie Bray	Animal Justice Party (AJP)	682		3.2
Cressida O’Hanlon	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	6,896		32.1
Katie McCusker	The Greens (GRN)	4,116		19.2
Anna Finizio	Liberal Party (LIB)	9,334		43.5
Nicole Hussey	Aust Family Party (AFP)	440		2.0
TOTAL		21,468		
Two-candidate preferred				
Candidate	Affiliation	Total Voters		%
Cressida O’Hanlon	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	10,914		50.8
Anna Finizio	Liberal Party (LIB)	10,554		49.2

* Compared to district of Dunstan results at the 2022 State Election

District of Black

Enrolled electors	26,540			
Votes cast	21,913	Participation %	82.6	-9.4*
Informal votes	497	Informal %	2.3	0.3*
Summary of votes by affiliation				
Candidate	Affiliation	First preference votes		%
Jonathan Parkin	Aust Family Party (AFP)	1,069		5.0
Amanda Wilson	Liberal Party (LIB)	7,300		34.1
Alex Dighton	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	10,248		47.9
Sarah Luscombe	The Greens (GRN)	2,799		13.0
TOTAL		21,416		
Two-candidate preferred				
Candidate	Affiliation	Total Voters		%
Alex Dighton	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	12,820		59.9
Amanda Wilson	Liberal Party (LIB)	8,596		40.1

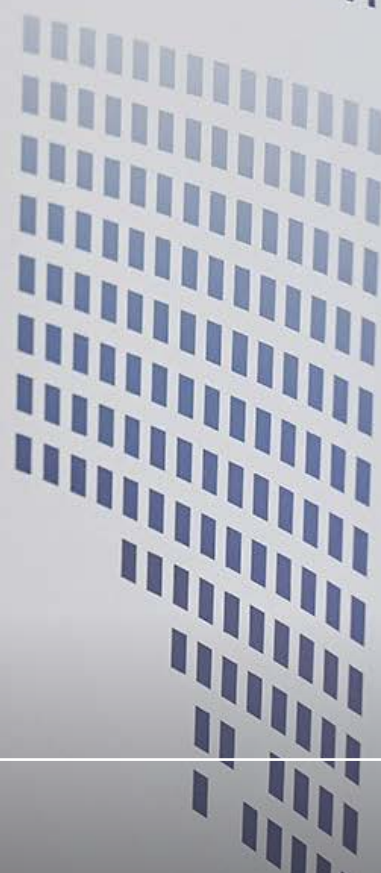
* Compared to district of Black results at the 2022 State Election

CHAPTER 1

By-elections participants and environment



Electoral
Commission
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



By-election triggers

Dunstan

The Dunstan by-election was triggered by the resignation of the member for Dunstan, the Honourable Steven Marshall, on 6 February 2024. Mr Marshall was first elected to represent the district of Dunstan at the 2010 State Election. Mr Marshall was re-elected by the electors of Dunstan at subsequent state elections held in 2014, 2018, and 2022.

Black

The Black by-election was triggered by the resignation of the member for Black, the Honourable David Speirs who resigned on 15 October 2024. Mr Speirs was first elected to represent the district of Bright at the 2014 State Election. Following a boundary redistribution, Mr. Speirs was re-elected by the electors of Black in 2018 and 2022.

Issue of writ

A writ is the formal instrument that instructs the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election, and in the case of a casual vacancy in the House of Assembly it is issued by the Speaker, pursuant to section 47 of the *Electoral Act 1985*.



Dunstan by-election

On 16 February 2024, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Honourable Dan Cregan, informed the Electoral Commissioner of the vacancy by issuing a writ for a by-election.

The activities and dates for the by-election outlined in the writ were as follows:

Close of roll: 5:00pm Monday 26 February 2024

**Close of nominations: 12 noon
Friday 1 March 2024**

Polling day: Saturday 23 March 2024

**Return of the writ: On or before
Monday 8 April 2024**

Black by-election

On 16 October 2024, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Honourable Leon Bignell, informed the Electoral Commissioner of the vacancy by issuing a writ for a by-election.

The activities and dates for the by-election outlined in the writ were as follows:

Close of roll: 5:00pm Monday 28 October 2024

**Close of nominations: 12:00pm
Friday 1 November 2024**

Polling day: Saturday 16 November 2024

**Return of the writ: On or before Thursday
28 November 2024**

Determining the calendar for a by-election is the Speaker of the House of Assembly's prerogative. Speakers exercise this power through the writ they issue, after previously receiving written notice of a vacancy. Speakers choose when to issue the writ, and the timeline for the by-election is also partially at their discretion, although the following timeframes are specified in the Act:

- The close of roll is fixed at 10 days after the date the writ is issued, although if that day falls on a weekend or public holiday, the close of roll moves to the next business day.
- Nomination day is set by the Speaker and can be between three and 14 days after the close of rolls.
- Polling day is set by the Speaker and can be between 14 and 30 days after the close of nominations. However, polling day must also be a Saturday which narrows the options down considerably.

The practical effect of the above timeframes is that ECSA has between a minimum of 27 days to run a by-election, and up to a maximum of 57 days subject to the dates identified in the writ.

For the Black by-election, the election period required by the writ was shorter than usual with 31 days between writ issue and polling day compared to 36 days for the same period for the Dunstan by-election. This shorter election period for the Black by-election had several implications including difficulties arranging advertising on physical structures and newspapers, delivery of EasyVote cards, arranging interstate voting services and securing polling place locations. These implications are further detailed through this report.

Enrolment

Legislative provisions instruct the date for the close of roll at 10 days after the issue of the writ for a by-election.

District of Dunstan

The date set for the Dunstan by-election was 5:00pm Monday 26 February 2024. At the close of the roll there were 27,108 electors eligible to vote for the district of Dunstan. This was a decrease of 161 electors or 0.6% since the 2022 State Election.

Dunstan electors enrolled by age group and gender								
Age Group	Male		Female		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
18-19	180	51.4	169	48.3	1	0.3	350	1.3
20-24	980	49.9	972	49.5	13	0.7	1,965	7.2
25-29	1,069	51.6	997	48.1	5	0.2	2,071	7.6
30-34	965	49.5	982	50.4	3	0.2	1,950	7.2
35-39	966	48.7	1,012	51.0	6	0.3	1,984	7.3
40-44	987	50.0	987	50.0	1	0.1	1,975	7.3
45-49	962	49.5	978	50.4	2	0.1	1,942	7.2
50-54	1,076	49.1	1,112	50.8	3	0.1	2,191	8.1
55-59	1,110	49.2	1,147	50.8	1	0.0	2,258	8.3
60-64	1,122	47.2	1,255	52.8	0	0.0	2,377	8.8
65+	3,517	43.7	4,528	56.3	0	0.0	8,045	29.7
TOTAL	12,934	47.7	14,139	52.2	35	0.1	27,108	

District of Black

The date set for the Black by-election was 5:00pm Monday 28 October 2024. At the close of the roll there were 26,540 electors eligible to vote for the district of Black. This was an increase of 103 electors or 0.4% since the 2022 State Election.

Black electors enrolled by age group and gender								
Age Group	Male		Female		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
18-19	178	50.9	172	49.1	0	0.0	350	1.3
20-24	928	47.2	1,037	52.8	0	0.0	1,965	7.4
25-29	998	48.2	1,073	51.8	0	0.0	2,071	7.8
30-34	963	49.4	987	50.6	0	0.0	1,950	7.3
35-39	990	49.9	994	50.1	0	0.0	1,984	7.5
40-44	972	49.2	1,003	50.8	0	0.0	1,975	7.4
45-49	899	46.3	1,042	53.7	1	0.1	1,942	7.3
50-54	1,087	49.6	1,100	50.2	4	0.2	2,191	8.3
55-59	1,132	50.1	1,126	49.9	0	0.0	2,258	8.5
60-64	1,211	50.9	1,166	49.1	0	0.0	2,377	9.0
65+	3,640	48.7	3,830	51.2	7	0.1	7,477	28.2
TOTAL	12,998	49.0	13,530	51.0	12	0.0	26,540	

Nominations

Dunstan by-election

The nomination period opened on Friday 16 February 2024 and closed at 12 noon on Friday 1 March 2024.

On Wednesday 21 February 2024, ECSA held an in-person candidate briefing session for people interested in nominating. These sessions included information relating to:

- Legislative and key dates;
- Nominations;
- Voting services;
- Scrutiny, counting and results;
- Advertising and complaints; and
- Funding and disclosure.

Five candidates, all endorsed by registered political parties nominated for the by-election.

After nominations closed, the returning officer declared all candidates and conducted the draw for ballot paper positions. This involved writing the names of candidates on individual cards and randomly selecting them from a box. Candidates and scrutineers were invited to observe the draw, which took place at the Returning Office in Norwood.

Candidates name	Affiliation
Frankie Bray	Animal Justice Party (AJP)
Cressida O'Hanlon	Australian Labor Party (ALP)
Katie McCusker	The Greens (GRN)
Anna Finizio	Liberal Party (LIB)
Nicole Hussey	Aust Family Party (AFP)

Black by-election

The nomination period opened on Wednesday 16 October 2024 and closed at 12.00pm on Friday 1 November 2024.

On 21 October 2024 ECSA held an in-person candidate briefing session for people interested in nominating. These sessions included the same information as the briefing sessions conducted for the Dunstan by-election.

Four candidates, all endorsed by registered political parties nominated for the by-election.

After nominations closed, the returning officer declared all candidates and conducted the draw for ballot paper positions. This involved writing the names of candidates on individual cards and randomly selecting them from a box. Candidates and scrutineers were invited to observe the draw, which took place at the Returning Office in Hallett Cove.

Candidates name	Affiliation
Jonathan Parkin	Aust Family Party (AFP)
Amanda Wilson	Liberal Party (LIB)
Alex Dighton	Australian Labor Party (ALP)
Sarah Luscombe	The Greens (GRN)

By-election project management

ECSA is in a constant state of readiness as a by-election can be called at any time. However, only limited preparations can occur prior to an actual by-election being announced.

Detailed project planning commenced as soon as it became apparent that the by-elections would be required. Consistent with the 2022 State Election, a functional project management model was used to project manage the delivery of the by-elections. The functional project management model involved grouping projects into functions. Function managers were assigned responsibility for the coordination of the work that project managers were assigned within the function.

The by-elections were managed using a project management framework that divided responsibilities across seven distinct functions and encompassed 30 individual projects. All activities were coordinated through a dedicated project management system, ensuring consistency and oversight. The planning and execution of the by-elections were supervised by an Election Delivery Committee, which included the Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, and all function managers.

Details of the functional model, including the election projects associated with delivering the by-elections can be found at **Appendix 1**.

CHAPTER 2

Preparing for polling day



Returning Officer appointment and arrangement

The Electoral Commissioner appoints a Returning Officer (RO) to administer a by-election in the relevant electoral district. Consistent with the state election procedures, an Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) is also appointed to offer high-level support and to assume the RO's duties if required.

For the Dunstan by-election, Michael Raphael was the RO and Wayne Turner the ARO.

For the Black by-election, Jude Blayney was the RO, and Michael Raphael the ARO.

Staffing

Recruitment of staff is crucial for the successful delivery of an election.

ECSA places great importance on attracting and retaining staff and relies on a pool of experienced and specialised staff for key roles as outlined in the tables over leaf.

At the beginning of 2024, ECSA introduced a Fatigue Management Plan (FMP) to manage fatigue and ensure the well-being of staff. This plan ensures staff are well-rested during critical periods. Key components of the FMP were implemented during both the Dunstan and Black by-elections, including work scheduling that allowed staff ample time to complete their tasks, and sufficient rest periods to recover both physically and mentally.

Following the issue of the writ, district office, early voting and polling day staff were recruited by the RO and ARO from a pool of readily available and capable temporary election staff.

Polling day staff were recruited by accessing individuals who had worked in either the district of Dunstan or Black or nearby districts during the 2022 State Election.

Other staff were employed to perform pre and post polling day activities including kit packing, postal vote application processing, elector enrolment updates, issuing early votes, and rechecking and counting ballot papers.

Dunstan by-election

Staff were employed in 120 separate roles for the by-election. A polling booth manager and deputy polling booth manager were allocated for each polling booth. A total of 58 electoral officers were employed for the 12 booths in Dunstan.

Black by-election

Staff were employed in 135 separate roles for the by-election. A polling booth manager and deputy polling booth manager were allocated for each polling booth. A total of 75 electoral officers were employed for the 9 booths in Black.

Two new roles were incorporated for the Black by-election. Enrolment officers were deployed to drive elector enrolments, and polling place observers undertook field research monitoring the voting process in polling places.



	DUNSTAN	BLACK
Position category	Number of staff	Number of staff
Electoral district staffing	16	21
Returning Officer	1	1
Assistant Returning Officer	1	1
Clerical assistants in district office	14	19
Voting before polling day	13	20
Early voting centre manager	1	2
Deputy manager	1	2
Issuing officer	9	14
Electoral Visitors	-	2
Voting on polling day	82	75
Polling booth manager	12	9
Deputy polling booth manager	12	9
Electoral Officer	58	57
Support functions	9	19
Call centre	3	3
Central processing centre and warehouse	3	8
Project roles	3	8*
TOTAL NUMBER OF POSITIONS	120	135

*includes the two roles – enrolment officers and polling place observers.

Training

All temporary election staff assigned to work at early voting centres or polling booths completed mandatory online training, specific to the by-election.

To be deemed competent and eligible to work at the by-election, all staff had to complete their full training program, achieve 100% on all assessments, and attend any required face-to-face workshops. Managers and deputy managers of polling booths and early voting centres, including declaration vote issuing officers in early voting centres, attended face-to-face training workshops after successfully completing their online training.

The five online training programs included:

- Polling Booth Manager (PBM) and Deputy PBM – 25 modules: 14 learning & 11 assessments.
- Early Voting Centre Manager (EVCN) and Deputy EVCN – 12 modules: 7 learning & 5 assessments.

- Ordinary Vote Issuing Officer (polling booth) – 9 modules: 6 learning & 3 assessments.
- Early Voting Officer (declaration vote issuing) – 4 modules: 3 learning & 1 assessment.
- Clerical Assistant (scrutiny & count in RO office) – 3 modules: 2 learning & 1 assessment.

The three face-to-face workshops included:

- PBM and Deputy PBM
- EVCN and Deputy EVCN
- Early Voting Officer (declaration vote issuing)

100% of temporary election staff engaged for both by-elections completed the required training.

Premises and polling place selection

Arranging accommodation and polling booth locations was challenging due to the short notice of both by-elections as no bookings could be confirmed until the writ was issued.

Consistent with previous by-elections, identifying appropriate early voting locations within both districts posed a challenge for ECSA. Many locations were either unavailable or unwilling to offer short-term leases. Additionally, many locations did not provide appropriate accessibility features to enable electors to safely and conveniently vote.

Dunstan by-election

A premises at 61 Charles St, Norwood was secured as the Returning Officers location. An early voting centre (EVC) was located at 2/260 Magill Road, Beulah Park. Twelve polling day venues were established.

Black by-election

A premises at the Hallett Cove Baptist Church, 1 Ramrod Road Hallett Cove was secured as a RO office. To ensure equitable access for voters because of the geographic nature of the district of Black, two early voting centres were established, one at Lou Kesting Community Hall at South Brighton and the other at the Good Lutheran Church at Hallett Cove. Nine polling day venues were established.

Materials and ballot paper production

ECSA routinely prepares surplus election materials to ensure readiness for potential by-elections occurring between scheduled electoral events. Among these, ballot papers are the most critical component. Following the close of nominations and the completion of ballot draws—held on 1 March 2024 for Dunstan and 1 November for Black—ballot papers were promptly designed, proofed, and printed. This highly coordinated and efficient process ensured timely delivery for the commencement of early voting.

Early voting began on Tuesday 12 March 2024 for Dunstan, following the Adelaide Cup long weekend, and on Monday 11 November 2024 for Black.

Ballot papers were also dispatched to designated interstate voting locations on the same days.

South Australia Issuing Officer Initials

Ballot Paper

Election of one Member for the House of Assembly

DISTRICT OF DUNSTAN

Number the squares from 1 to 5 in the order of your choice.

You are not legally obliged to mark the ballot paper.

<input type="checkbox"/>	BRAY Frankie	Animal Justice Party
<input type="checkbox"/>	O'HANLON Cressida	Australian Labor Party
<input type="checkbox"/>	McCUSKER Katie	The Greens
<input type="checkbox"/>	FINIZIO Anna	Liberal Party
<input type="checkbox"/>	HUSSEY Nicole	Aust Family Party

After voting, fold the ballot paper and place in the ballot box or declaration envelope.

South Australia Issuing Officer Initials

Ballot Paper

Election of one Member for the House of Assembly

DISTRICT OF BLACK

Number the squares from 1 to 4 in the order of your choice.

You are not legally obliged to mark the ballot paper.

<input type="checkbox"/>	PARKIN Jonathan	Aust Family Party
<input type="checkbox"/>	WILSON Amanda	Liberal Party
<input type="checkbox"/>	DIGHTON Alex	Australian Labor Party
<input type="checkbox"/>	HUSSEY Sarah	The Greens

After voting, fold the ballot paper and place in the ballot box or declaration envelope.

ICT

A range of equipment and systems was prepared and tested to support the delivery of both by-elections. EMO (Electronic Mark-Off) devices were deployed with targeted enhancements to assist polling staff and improve efficiency. Each polling booth was equipped with multiple EMO devices operating in real time, enabling eligible voters to be marked off the roll upon registration, with data securely transmitted to the central server.

All EMO devices underwent thorough testing prior to both by-elections, and no technical issues were reported on polling days. The deployment and configuration of equipment were guided solely by operational needs.

Cyber security

No known cyber security incidents were identified.

Getting the message out



The by-elections saw 27,108 electors in the district of Dunstan and 26,540 electors in the district of Black required to head to the polls.

Unlike state elections which have extensive coverage, promoting by-elections presents challenges due to the localised nature of the by-elections. Additionally, these two by-elections were the first parliamentary elections conducted under a legislative change introduced by parliament to ban corflutes on public roads. As a result, ECSA focused on strategies to ensure eligible electors in the districts of Dunstan and Black were aware of the elections including the various voting options available.

For the Black by-election, securing media space and sending unaddressed promotional materials posed a challenge due to the shorter timeline identified in the writ.

This chapter provides an overview of the engagement and communication strategies ECSA implemented for both by-elections.

EasyVote cards and By-election guide

Voters were once again provided with EasyVote cards that included their enrolment details and the details of the early voting centre and their nearest polling booths. The EasyVote cards were sent to all eligible electors. All households received an official guide providing details of where and when to vote and how to vote in the by-election.

These EasyVote cards once again proved worthwhile with 75% of electors surveyed from the Dunstan by-election recalling the EasyVote card and using it.

Another consequence of the shorter time frame identified in the writ, was many eligible electors in the district of Black did not receive their EasyVote cards through Australia Post for the first day of the early voting period.

By-election guides were sent to every household in the districts of Dunstan and Black. A survey of electors from the Dunstan by-election identified that 66% of electors recalled the By-election guide and using it.



Outdoor advertising

As a result of the ban of corflutes on public roads, ECSA focused on outdoor advertising across bus stops, billboards, and digital shopping centre signs.

Outdoor advertising media buys for billboard space requires a three-week lead time which was problematic for the Black by-election due to the shorter time frame identified in the election writ. While this area had many large electronic billboards on major roads leading in to and out of the district, many were not available to book due to the short lead time. Other creative advertising options, such as mobile billboards driving around the District of Black were utilised and found effective.



Email and text (SMS) messages

In addition to traditional media, electors who had registered their email addresses and mobile phone numbers received emails and SMS messages. These messages informed electors that early voting had begun, and follow-up messages sent on the morning of polling day reminded electors to vote if they hadn't already done so.

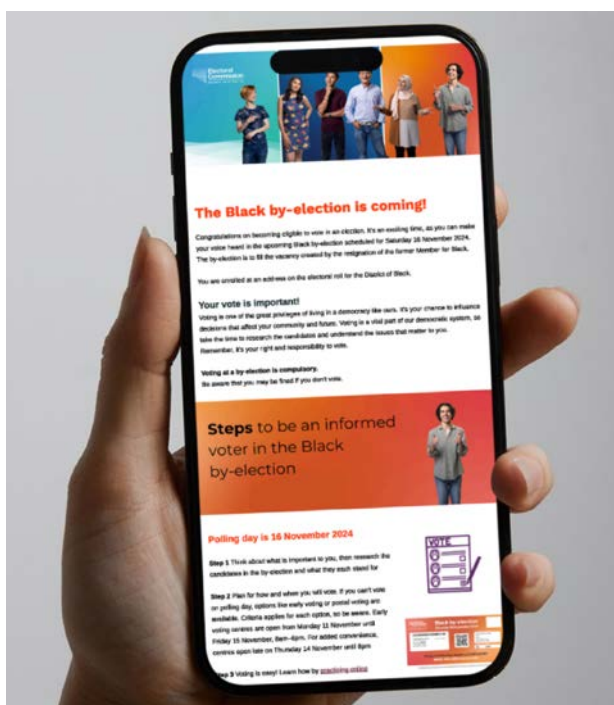
The emailed newsletter included information about the by-election date and the polling locations within the district. For the Dunstan by-election, 12,123 newsletters were sent out, while 10,440 were sent to Black electors. Additionally, the reminder polling day SMS message was scheduled for morning distribution, with 13,722 messages delivered to Dunstan electors and 12,052 sent to Black electors.

For both by-elections, these emails and SMS messages served as timely reminders for eligible electors. Many electors mentioned that without the SMS, they might not have remembered to vote on the day.

A survey from the Dunstan by-election highlighted that 74% recalled the SMS reminder and 31% recalled the email reminder.

Mail-out to first time electors

For the Black by-election, ECSA reached out to electors voting for the first time to explain the voting process including the requirement to vote, voting options and how to cast a formal vote. These voters were defined as those born on or after 19 March 2004, following the previous State Election. 1,152 first time voters were identified with 805 receiving letters and 347 receiving a personalised email. Those electors without an email address on record were sent a letter by post.



Social media

Supporting the advertising campaign was a social media campaign, using X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn as key channels.

Regular updates were published throughout the election period that were designed to engage electors and inform them of various stages of the election. The social media posts reinforced messaging in the advertising campaign, highlighting how to access information resources and accessible polling booths, and depicting 'behind the scenes' elements of preparations for polling day.

Social media played a central role for the by-elections, fostering stronger connections between the public and the election process. Through timely updates on the result and counting schedule, ECSA provided

both the media and the public with clear, accessible insights into the types of votes being counted and their timing, which enhanced transparency and trust in the process.

Community engagement

During an election, meaningful engagement, whether that be through local events, social media, or by direct communication, creates a sense of shared responsibility and belonging. Encouraging this connection boosts turnout and strengthens the legitimacy and inclusiveness of the democratic process.

For the Dunstan by-election, information was delivered to the community through an updated version of the 'Official Guide'. ECSA provided key messaging resources to ensure eligible electors were aware that enrolment and voting in the by-election were compulsory. Additionally, an extra promotional leaflet was distributed during election week to remind people to vote and provide nearby polling locations.

For the Black by-election, a pop-up hub was set up at the Hallett Cove Shopping Centre. ECSA secured a casual lease in the main court, which required additional staffing and promotional materials. This quickly arranged pop-up had a positive impact on the community, with many people asking questions about the by-election and what to do if they were on holidays on polling day. This engagement activity was promptly coordinated once it was recognised that timely media purchases were not possible.

ECSA supported the CALD community in Dunstan and Black, by providing translated materials available via the ECSA website to download. Materials were translated into 21 languages, including Greek, Italian, Mandarin, Korean, Spanish, Polish, Punjabi and Vietnamese.



Website

The ECSA website’s homepage was dedicated to both by-elections, with a call to action located in the primary banner that provided easy access to the by-election landing page. Information featured on the landing page was changed according to the election phase, providing direct links to enrolment, candidates, voting locations and results.

The election website continued to be a valuable source of information with 56,540 views for the Dunstan by-election including 12,544 views on polling day. For the Black by-election there were 33,639 views including 18,501 on polling day.

Public notices

The Electoral Act requires public notices to be placed during the by-election and sets out the publication and timeframes by which these notices must appear. Public notices were printed in The Advertiser and Sunday Mail newspapers and the Government Gazette as required by legislation.

Public Notice details

		DUNSTAN		BLACK	
Subject matter	Electoral Act	Placement	Date	Placement	Date
Issue of the writ	s 48 (7a)	The Advertiser	23 February 2024	The Advertiser	19 October 2024
Polling places – appointment	s 18 (2)	Government Gazette	21 March 2024		
Declared institutions	s 83 (1)	Government Gazette	7 March 2024	Government Gazette	31 October 2024
		The Advertiser	9 March 2024		14 November 2024
Polling places – locations	s 18 (4)	The Advertiser	16 March 2024	Sunday Mail	10 November 2024
				The Advertiser	11 November 2024
Attributed votes	s 96 (1)	Government Gazette	24 April 2024	Government Gazette	5 December 2024

Call centre

ECSA established a call centre for both by-elections as a service for all electors to call regarding any information concerning the by-elections.

The Dunstan by-election call centre operated from 6 February to 5 April 2024 handling 529 calls and with the highest volume of 200 calls received on the Monday after polling day (Saturday 23 March 2024).

The Black by-election call centre operated from 28 October to 20 November 2024, handling 1,126 calls and 200 emails. The call centre extended its hours through early voting week, remaining open an extra hour from Monday to Friday, and operating from 8am to 6pm on polling day. These extended hours proved beneficial, especially on polling day.

Changes to electoral advertising posters

As indicated, following legislative changes passed by Parliament on 8 February 2024, electoral advertising posters must not be exhibited on a public road or road related area. The legislation did however identify limited circumstances when this prohibition does not apply, for example a limited number of electoral advertising posters are permitted within 50 metres of a polling booth while the polling booth is open for polling.

As a result, these two by-elections were the first parliamentary elections conducted under this change in legislation.

The practical impact of this legislative change was to prohibit election corflutes on public roads except in the vicinity of a polling place open for polling. As a result, ECSA had to take into consideration the potential impact regarding the level of awareness of these by-elections and implement other strategies to raise awareness as indicated in this chapter.

The following participation figures for these two by-elections compared to the participation figures of other by-elections not subject to the ban, suggest the ban on corflutes did not have an impact on participation.

By-election	Participation (%)
2019 Enfield by-election	77.5
2019 Cheltenham by-election	78.1
2022 Bragg by-election	83.8
2024 Dunstan by-election	80.8
2024 Black by-election	82.6

A survey conducted after the Dunstan by-election identified that 67% of electors surveyed identified that the ban on corflutes did not impact their awareness of the by-election, while 27% of electors surveyed reported that the absence of corflutes did make them less aware of the by-election.

Chapter 4

Participation and voting



To ensure all eligible electors could exercise their right to vote, ECSA offered a range of convenient voting options subject to eligibility, ensuring an accessible and inclusive electoral process.

Eligible electors who were unable to attend a polling booth on polling day were able to vote at early voting centres (EVC) established for each by-election. Numerous polling booths were established in the districts on polling day for each by-election.

Electors interstate during the voting period were provided with voting services at Electoral Commissions in each Australian capital city.

Special voting opportunities were available in long-term care facilities and eligible electors were able to apply for a postal vote.

Participation

By-elections typically see lower participation due to the shorter timeframe, lack of a full statewide advertising campaign as seen in a state election (ie the 2022 Election) and typically reduced media coverage due to the targeted area being more local.

For the Dunstan by-election, a total of 21,893 votes were cast, resulting in a participation rate of 80.8%, down from 89.7% in the State Election of March 2022.

For the Black by-election, 21,913 votes were cast, with a participation rate of 82.6%, slightly higher than Dunstan but still down from 92.0% in the 2022 State Election.

However as indicated on page 21 of this report, the participation rates for these two elections were similar to the participation rates from the previous three South Australian parliamentary by-elections.

Postal voting

Similar to a state election, eligible electors at the by-elections could apply to vote by post, a convenient option for those who are unable to get to a polling place to vote. Electors could access a postal vote application form from Australia Post outlets in each district, by phoning ECSA to request a form be posted to them, or alternatively by downloading one from ECSA's website.

Dunstan by-election

A total of 3,025 postal voting packs were sent to applicants and a further 882 were sent to electors on the register of declaration voters.

By the Tuesday 2 April 2024 deadline for the return of postal ballot papers, 3,383 had returned their ballot papers. Of these 3,192 votes were accepted and admitted to the count. It is noteworthy that of the 84 voting packs sent by international express post to electors located overseas, only three arrived back in time to be counted.

Black by-election

A total of 2,262 postal voting packs were sent to applicants and a further 657 were sent to electors on the register of declaration voters.

By the Saturday 23 November 2024 deadline for the return of postal ballot papers, 2,764 had returned their ballot papers. Of these 2,636 votes were accepted and admitted to the count. Of the 25 voting packs sent by international express post to electors located overseas, 10 arrived back in time to be counted.

These examples further support ECSA's recommendations from previous election reports to provide telephone assisted voting for electors overseas.

Early voting

Eligible electors who were unable to attend a polling booth on Polling Day were able to vote early by attending early voting centres established for the by-elections.

Dunstan by-election

The EVC was located at Unit 2/260 Magill Rd, Beulah Park and was open for a total of 9 days from 12 to 22 March 2024 operating from 9am to 6pm. The EVC was not opened on Monday 11 March 2024 due to the Adelaide Cup public holiday. In total the EVC was open for 81 hours.

Consistent with previous elections there was a distinct increase in the number of votes issued at the EVC on the day prior to Polling Day.

A total of 5,493 declaration votes were issued during the early voting period.



Dates	Votes
Tuesday 12 March 2024	274
Wednesday 13 March 2024	508
Thursday 14 March 2024	552
Friday 15 March 2024	610
Monday 18 March 2024	536
Tuesday 19 March 2024	649
Wednesday 20 March 2024	707
Thursday 21 March 2024	728
Friday 22 March 2024	929
TOTAL	5,493

Black by-election

As a result of the shortened election time frame required by the writ, the early voting period was reduced from the historical two weeks to one week. As a result of the reduced early voting period and to cater for the geographical nature of the electoral district of Black, two EVC's were established, namely the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hallett Cove and the Lou Kesting Community Hall in South Brighton.

Each EVC was opened for polling for 5 days between 11 November to 15 November 2024. Polling commenced an hour earlier at 8am on each day and concluded at 6pm except for the Thursday night prior to election day when voting hours were extended until 8:00pm.

In total, each EVC was open for 52 hours over five days. Despite the reduced early voting period, a total of 104 hours of early voting was provided due to an additional EVC, opening an hour earlier each day and offering late night voting on the Thursday before Polling Day.

Extending early voting from 6pm to 8pm on the Thursday before polling proved effective as a significant number of electors voted during the extended hours.

A total of 8,554 declaration votes were issued.

Dates	South Brighton	Hallet Cove	Total
	Votes	Votes	
Monday 11 November 2024	425	754	1,179
Tuesday 12 November 2024	515	1,039	1,554
Wednesday 13 November 2024	607	1,028	1,635
Thursday 14 November 2024	735	1,373	2,108
Friday 15 November 2024	772	1,306	2,078
TOTAL	3,054	5,500	8,554



Interstate voting

To accommodate eligible electors traveling interstate, ECSA leveraged its reciprocal relationship with state and territory electoral commissions to set up seven interstate voting centres in every state and territory during the early voting period for each by-election.

Dunstan by-election

Although early voting for the Dunstan by-election officially began on Tuesday 12 March, logistical issues delayed the timely transit of materials, causing one interstate electoral commission to open on 15 March 2024. This delay was communicated on ECSA's website. No electors were disadvantaged. Across the seven interstate early voting centres, a total of 52 declaration votes were issued.

Black by-election

Reducing the early voting period for the Black by-election to one week allowed for the delivery of ballot material to the interstate electoral commissions in time for the commencement of the early voting period. A total of 27 interstate votes were issued at the Black by-election (down from the 52 early votes issued at the Dunstan by-election).

Votes issued at interstate EVCs

Location	Dunstan Votes	Black Votes
ACT Electoral Commission	6	4
NT Electoral Commission	3	3
NSW Electoral Commission	20	7
Victorian Electoral Commission	16	5
Electoral Commission Queensland	4	1
Western Australian Electoral Commission	1	3
Tasmanian Electoral Commission	2	4
TOTAL	52	27

Declared institutions

ECSA was able to reinstate the Electoral Visitor Program for the by-elections. This voting service enables electoral officials to visit aged care facilities and hospitals (declared institutions) within the district, providing voting services to residents unable to attend a polling booth. The program was not in operation during the 2022 State Election or Bragg by-election due to COVID-19 restrictions, making its return a significant step in ensuring accessibility and inclusion for vulnerable voters.

The Returning Officer for each by-election coordinated with the contact person at each facility to arrange convenient times and dates for the visits. A team of two electoral officials was appointed for each district and visited the facilities in the week leading up to Polling Day.

Dunstan by-election

Three facilities were identified and contacted by ECSA to assess their suitability for visits by electoral officials. All three were deemed suitable and were declared in the Government Gazette on 7 March 2024. These facilities are:

- Estia Health - Kensington Gardens
- Eldercare Trowbridge House
- Gaynes Park Suites

A total of 85 votes were issued at these facilities.

Black by-election

Two facilities were identified and deemed suitable and were declared in the Government Gazette on 31 October 2024. These facilities are:

- Calvary Brighton Aged Care
- Anglicare SA - Trott Park

Electoral officials were subsequently unable to attend one of these facilities due to a COVID outbreak. Postal voting options were instead provided to eligible electors at this facility.

A total of 27 votes were issued at the single facility that was visited.

Polling Day

For the Dunstan by-election, voting commenced at 8am on Saturday, 23 March 2024 at 12 polling booths in the district. By the close of polls at 6:00pm, a total of 13,083 votes were issued.

For the Black by-election, voting commenced at 8am on Saturday, 16 November 2024 at 9 polling booths across the district. By the close of polls at 6:00pm, a total of 11,130 votes were issued.

Elector experience Survey results

Dunstan research results

95% of those surveyed **were satisfied** with the time it took to vote.

96% **were satisfied** with the friendliness and professionalism of polling place officials.

91% **were satisfied** with the location of polling places.

92% of those surveyed **were satisfied** with the postal voting process.

Black queue lengths and voter timings research



Average number of people in line on polling day was 2.8. However, this average masks an essential detail: for most of polling day queues were non-existent (i.e. zero).



Although queues were long at the beginning of the day, they dissipated quickly at every booth. **The average wait time on polling day was 0:30 seconds.**



The average time to issue a vote on polling day was just 0:42 seconds.



The average time spent by voters at a polling booth was 2:08 seconds.



Early voters spent an average of 8:15 seconds.



CHAPTER 5

Processing the results



As soon as polling booths closed at 6:00pm, electoral officers began counting the ordinary ballot papers cast on Polling Day. The staff conducted two counts: a first preference count, and a two-candidate preferred count, with preferences distributed to the two candidates expected to receive the most first preference votes.

By 10:00pm on election night all polling booth counts for both by-elections were completed and published on the ECSA website. Live stream of the election results on the ECSA results website continued until the final distribution of preferences was conducted a little over a week after Polling Day.

After Polling Day. The Returning Officers and staff conducted a recheck of all votes cast on Polling Day to confirm their accuracy. During the following week, declaration votes were counted, and the results published on the ECSA website as they became available.

For the Dunstan by-election, the final distribution of preferences to determine the result was held on 3 April 2024. At the conclusion of the final distribution of preferences, Ms. Cressida O’Hanlon obtained 10,914 votes, equating to an absolute majority of 50.8% of the vote.

For the Black by-election, the final distribution of preferences to determine the result was held on 25 November. At the conclusion of the final distribution of preferences, Mr. Alex Dighton obtained 12,820 votes, equating to an absolute majority of 59.9% of the votes.



Summary of results

District of Dunstan

Electors enrolled	27,108
Votes cast	21,893
Formal votes	21,468 (98.1% of total ballot papers)
Informal votes	425 (1.9% of total ballot papers)
Turnout	80.8%

First Preferences by Polling Place

	BRAY, Frankie (AJP)		O'HANLON, Cressida (ALP)		MCCUSKER, Katie (GRN)		FINIZIO, Anna (LIB)		HUSSEY, Nicole (AFP)		Formal Votes		Informal Votes		Total Votes
Polling Location	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	
Joslin	25	2.6%	312	31.9%	199	20.3%	421	43.0%	22	2.2%	979	98.0%	20	2.0%	999
Kensington	38	4.8%	242	30.5%	220	27.7%	276	34.8%	17	2.1%	793	97.9%	17	2.1%	810
Kensington Park	42	2.7%	504	32.7%	296	19.2%	676	43.9%	23	1.5%	1,541	97.5%	39	2.5%	1,580
Kent Town	26	3.0%	239	27.5%	236	27.1%	349	40.1%	20	2.3%	870	97.3%	24	2.7%	894
Marden	29	4.4%	239	36.2%	167	25.3%	212	32.1%	14	2.1%	661	96.8%	22	3.2%	683
Maylands	21	1.8%	467	38.9%	287	23.9%	400	33.3%	25	2.1%	1,200	98.3%	21	1.7%	1,221
Norwood	42	4.5%	304	32.7%	211	22.7%	349	37.5%	24	2.6%	930	98.5%	14	1.5%	944
Norwood West	42	2.9%	451	31.5%	367	25.6%	559	39.0%	14	1.0%	1,433	98.2%	26	1.8%	1,459
St Morris	31	4.3%	238	33.1%	166	23.1%	271	37.6%	14	1.9%	720	95.5%	34	4.5%	754
St Peters	35	3.5%	252	25.3%	220	22.1%	478	48.0%	11	1.1%	996	99.1%	9	0.9%	1,005
St Peters East	26	2.3%	387	33.6%	181	15.7%	534	46.4%	23	2.0%	1,151	96.5%	42	3.5%	1,193
Trinity Gardens	59	3.9%	492	32.7%	318	21.1%	584	38.8%	52	3.5%	1,505	97.7%	36	2.3%	1,541
Polling Place Totals	416	3.3%	4,127	32.3%	2,868	22.4%	5,109	40.0%	259	2.0%	12,779	97.7%	304	2.3%	13,083
Declaration Ballot Papers	266	3.1%	2,769	31.9%	1,248	14.4%	4,225	48.6%	181	2.1%	8,689	98.6%	121	1.4%	8,810
District Total	682	3.2%	6,896	32.1%	4,116	19.2%	9,334	43.5%	440	2.0%	21,468	98.1%	425	1.9%	21,893

Two Candidate Preferred by Polling Place

Polling Location	FINIZIO, Anna (LIB)	Percentage	O'HANLON, Cressida (ALP)	Percentage	Total Votes
Joslin	486	49.6%	493	50.4%	979
Kensington	330	41.6%	463	58.4%	793
Kensington Park	757	49.1%	784	50.9%	1,541
Kent Town	406	46.7%	464	53.3%	870
Marden	266	40.2%	395	59.8%	661
Maylands	473	39.4%	727	60.6%	1,200
Norwood	399	42.9%	531	57.1%	930
Norwood West	635	44.3%	798	55.7%	1,433
St Morris	322	44.7%	398	55.3%	720
St Peters	541	54.3%	455	45.7%	996
St Peters East	585	50.8%	566	49.2%	1,151
Trinity Gardens	678	45.0%	827	55.0%	1,505
Polling Place Totals	5,878	46.0%	6,901	54.0%	12,779
Declaration Ballot Papers	4,676	53.8%	4,013	46.2%	8,689
District Total	10,554	49.2%	10,914	50.8%	21,468

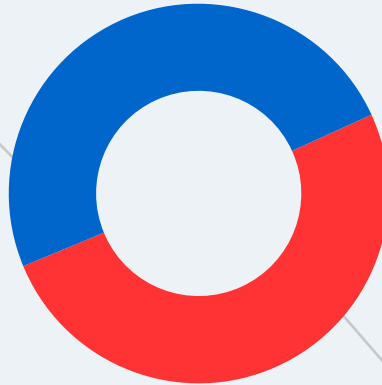
Final Distribution of Preferences for the District of Dunstan

		CANDIDATES					TOTAL FORMAL VOTES
		Names of Candidates with Affiliations, in ballot paper order					
Absolute Majority (50% + 1) = 10735		BRAY AJP	O'HANLON ALP	McCUSKER GRN	FINIZIO LIB	HUSSEY AFP	
1st preference votes		682	6,896	4,116	9,334	440	21,468
1st excluded candidate HUSSEY 440		+88	+61	+52	+239	-440	
Progressive Total		770	6,957	4,168	9,573	Excluded	21,468
2nd excluded candidate BRAY 770		-770	+177	+430	+163		
Progressive Total		Excluded	7,134	4,598	9,736		21,468
3rd excluded candidate McCUSKER 4598			+3,780	-4,598	+818		
FINAL DISTRICT TOTALS			10,914	Excluded	10,554		21,468
FINAL %			50.8%		49.2%		
ELECTION RESULT			ELECTED				

Count conducted on 3 April 2024

Two Candidate Preferred Result

FINIZIO, Anna (LIB)
49.2%



O'HANLON, Cressida (ALP)
50.8%



District of Black

Electors enrolled	26,540
Votes cast	21,913
Formal votes	21,416 (97.7% of total ballot papers)
Informal votes	497 (2.3% of total ballot papers)
Turnout	82.6%

First Preferences by Polling Place

	PARKIN, Jonathan (AFP)		WILSON, Amanda (LIB)		DIGHTON, Alex (ALP)		LUSCOMBE, Sarah (GRN)		Formal Votes		Informal Votes		Total Votes
Polling Location	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	
Hallett Cove	87	5.8%	498	33.3%	696	46.5%	216	14.4%	1,497	96.8%	50	3.2%	1,547
Hallett Cove East	82	5.7%	434	30.4%	713	49.9%	200	14.0%	1,429	97.7%	34	2.3%	1,463
Hallett Cove South	35	4.3%	272	33.5%	381	46.9%	124	15.3%	812	98.3%	14	1.7%	826
Seacliff	66	4.6%	477	33.5%	607	42.7%	273	19.2%	1,423	98.1%	28	1.9%	1,451
Seacliff South	36	5.5%	229	35.0%	266	40.6%	124	18.9%	655	97.5%	17	2.5%	672
Seaview Downs	79	6.1%	435	33.6%	528	40.8%	251	19.4%	1,293	96.6%	45	3.4%	1,338
Sheidow Park	94	6.7%	434	31.1%	699	50.1%	167	12.0%	1,394	96.6%	49	3.4%	1,443
Sheidow Park South	88	5.2%	524	31.0%	882	52.1%	198	11.7%	1,692	96.8%	56	3.2%	1,748
South Brighton	35	5.6%	198	31.8%	255	40.9%	135	21.7%	623	97.0%	19	3.0%	642
Polling Place Totals	602	5.6%	3,501	32.4%	5,027	46.5%	1,688	15.6%	10,818	97.2%	312	2.8%	11,130
Declaration Ballot Papers	467	4.4%	3,799	35.8%	5,221	49.3%	1,111	10.5%	10,598	98.3%	185	1.7%	10,783
District Total	1,069	5.0%	7,300	34.1%	10,248	47.9%	2,799	13.1%	21,416	97.7%	497	2.3%	21,913

Two Candidate Preferred by Polling Place

Polling Location	DIGHTON, Alex (ALP)	Percentage	WILSON, Amanda (LIB)	Percentage	Total Votes
Hallett Cove	890	59.5%	607	40.5%	1,497
Hallett Cove East	864	60.5%	565	39.5%	1,429
Hallett Cove South	496	61.1%	316	38.9%	812
Seacliff	857	60.2%	566	39.8%	1,423
Seacliff South	376	57.4%	279	42.6%	655
Seaview Downs	736	56.9%	557	43.1%	1,293
Sheidow Park	852	61.1%	542	38.9%	1,394
Sheidow Park South	1,063	62.8%	629	37.2%	1,692
South Brighton	376	60.4%	247	39.6%	623
Polling Place Totals	6,510	60.2%	4,308	39.8%	10,818
Declaration Ballot Papers	6,310	59.5%	4,288	40.5%	10,598

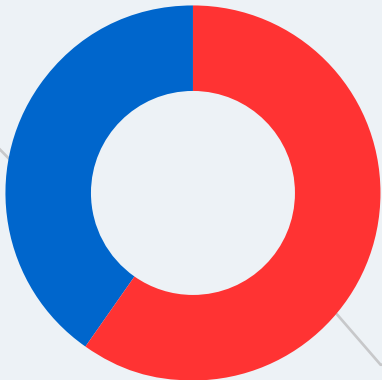
Final Distribution of Preferences for the District of Black

		CANDIDATES				TOTAL FORMAL VOTES
		Names of Candidates with Affiliations, in ballot paper order				
Absolute Majority (50% + 1) = 10709		PARKIN AFP	WILSON LIB	DIGHTON ALP	LUSCOMBE GRN	
1st preference votes		1,069	7,300	10,248	2,799	21,416
1st excluded candidate PARKIN 1069		-1,069	+676	+203	+190	
Progressive Total		Excluded	7,976	10,451	2,989	21,416
2nd excluded candidate LUSCOMBE 2989			+620	+2,369	-2,989	
FINAL DISTRICT TOTALS			8,596	12,820	Excluded	21,416
FINAL %			40.1%	59.9%		
ELECTION RESULT				ELECTED		

Count conducted on 25 November 2024

Two Candidate Preferred Result

Wilson, Amanda (LIB)
40.1%



Dighton, Alex (ALP)
59.9%

Informality

Any ballot papers that have not been marked correctly by voters are placed into a separate pile, counted, and the total number recorded. These ballot papers were carefully rechecked to determine if they were valid votes (formal votes) or invalid votes (informal votes).

For the Dunstan by-election there were 425 informal votes cast representing 1.9% of all votes counted. By comparison, the informality rate for the district of Dunstan at the 2022 State Election was 1.8%

For the Black by-election, there were 497 informal votes cast representing 2.3% of all votes counted. The informality rate for the district of Black at the 2022 State Election was 2.6%

Declaration of results

The Returning Officer for the Dunstan by-election, Mr. Mike Raphael, concluded the by-election with the declaration of the poll ceremony on Friday, 5 April 2024, at Norwood Town Hall. The Labor candidate, Ms. Cressida O'Hanlon, was declared elected as the Member for Dunstan.



The Returning Officer for the Black by-election, Mr. Jude Blayney, concluded the by-election with the declaration of the poll ceremony on Tuesday, 26 November 2024, at Cove Civic Centre. The Labor candidate, Mr. Alex Dighton, was declared elected as the Member for Black.



Return of the writ

For the Dunstan by-election, the writ was returned on Friday, 5 April 2024, marking the official end of the by-election. As required under section 96(11) of the Electoral Act, a statutory notice advising the return of the writ and the results of the by-election was published in the Government Gazette on 24 April 2024.

For the Black by-election, the writ was returned on Tuesday, 26 November 2024. A statutory notice advising the return of the writ and the results was published in the Government Gazette on 5 December 2024.



The writ was returned to the Hon. Leon Bignell MP, marking the official end of the Black by-election.

CHAPTER 6

After the by-election



Multiple voting

Electronic Mark Off (EMO) devices were utilised during the by-election to mark electors off the electoral roll. After voting concluded, a review of the records was conducted to identify any instances of apparent multiple voting.

Multiple voting often occurs due to confusion between early voting. A small proportion of multiple voting cases result from administrative errors however modifications to the EMO system and staff education greatly reduces the likelihood of these instances.

Fourteen instances of apparent multiple voting were detected for the Dunstan by-election with six identified for the Black by-election.

Following investigations, it was determined that all instances resulted from an honest misunderstanding or mistake.

Non-voters (Enforcement of compulsory voting)

A key task following a by-election is to follow up electors who appeared not to have voted. Under section 85 of the Electoral Act, electors who appear to have failed to vote are issued a notice within 90 days of Polling Day. The notice gave electors 28 days to respond with a valid and sufficient reason for their apparent failure to vote before further action would be taken. Valid and sufficient reasons are determined in accordance with the legislation and may include reasons such as the person having been absent from the state or unwell.

Dunstan by-election

A total of 3,572 electors who appeared not to have voted were issued a notice. At the conclusion of this period, expiation notices were then issued to 1,853 electors who failed to respond to this notice or provided an invalid excuse for not voting. Of these 1,152 were sent reminder notices and a further 923 were sent for fines enforcement.

Black by-election

A total of 3,174 electors who appeared not to have voted were issued a notice. At the conclusion of the 28-day period to respond, expiation notices were then issued to 1,836 electors who failed to respond to this notice or provided an invalid excuse for not voting. Of these 1,118 were sent reminder notices and a further 892 were sent for fines enforcement.

Court of disputed returns

No petitions were lodged with the Court of Disputed Returns following the Dunstan and Black by-elections.

Complaints

The feedback and complaint policy and online complaint form were available on the website and in candidate handbooks. In handling complaints, the Electoral Commissioner was supported by complaint management staff as well as solicitors from the Crown Solicitor's Office who were on call to provide legal advice.

Dunstan by-election

Fourteen complaints were received containing 20 allegations of breaches of the *Electoral Act 1985* (Act). These included five complaints about misleading advertising, 13 complaints regarding appropriate authorisations, and individual complaints on undue influence and canvassing near polling booths.

In relation to the five complaints regarding misleading advertising, two matters required retractions to be issued. No breach of the legislation was determined for the remaining three matters.

It was found there were significantly more authorisation complaints than usual, particularly in relation to social media content.

Categories	Number of allegations received	Outcome
Misleading advertising s113	5	3 no breach 2 breaches 2 retractions
Publication of advertisements and notices s112 (Authorisations)	13	11 requests to correctly authorise 1 warning 1 no breach
Undue influence s110	1	No breach
Canvassing near polling booths s125	1	Warning

Black by-election

Ten complaints were received, containing 13 allegations of breaches of the Electoral Act.

In relation to the seven complaints regarding misleading advertising, it was determined two were breaches and five were not breaches of section 113 of the Act.

Categories	Number of complaints received	Outcome
Misleading advertising s113	7	2 breaches – Withdraw advertising Withdraw advertising and publish a retraction 5 non breaches
Publication of advertisements and notices s112 (Authorisations)	4	1 request to correctly authorise 3 no breaches
Canvassing near polling booths s125	1	No breach
Candidate not to take part in elections s117	1	No breach

ECSA's complaints protocol is to acknowledge complaints within two business days and resolve most complaints within five business days of being received. For both by-elections, all complaints were acknowledged within two business days. Most of the complaints were resolved within five business days however a number took longer due to the complexities of the matters.

Consistent with previous elections, at the conclusion of both by-elections, an assessment of all complaints received was undertaken to determine if any matters would be referred for prosecution under the higher burden of proof of beyond a reasonable doubt. At the conclusion of these assessments, it was determined that no matters from either by-elections would be referred for prosecution.

Candidate and political party feedback

Dunstan by-election

All candidates were offered the opportunity to participate in a survey to provide feedback regarding the conduct of the election. All bar one candidate completed the survey.

From the survey results, Candidates reported a high level of overall satisfaction with ECSA's delivery of the by-election. All candidates who responded reported that ECSA had conducted the by-election impartially and without bias. The District Returning Officer and ECSA staff were commended as were the information resources ECSA provided.

Candidates identified areas for improvement including complaints management and authorisation requirements for social media or online advertising.

Candidates also provided feedback regarding strategies to enhance engagement in future by-elections. These included emphasising the compulsory nature of voting, leveraging social media platforms popular among younger voters, and installing ECSA-branded corflutes throughout the by-election district to inform electors of key details such as polling dates, locations, and candidate information.

The Registered Officers of the five political parties that fielded candidates at the by-election were also invited to provide their feedback. Unfortunately, no Registered Officers responded.

Black by-election

All candidates at the Black by-election were invited to participate in a post-election survey, however no responses were received.

The Registered Officers of the four political parties that participated in the Black by-election were also invited to provide feedback. One Registered Officer responded providing constructive feedback about interactions between polling place staff and party volunteers, as well as raising awareness of elections in the post-corflute environment.

Elector surveys

For the Dunstan by-election, ECSA commissioned Verian to conduct a telephone and online survey of Dunstan voters and non-voters after the by-election. Feedback from 280 randomly selected Dunstan electors was overwhelmingly positive about the voting experience and services provided by ECSA. Aspects of the by-election delivery which received near unanimous praise from electors included the time

it took to vote, the friendliness and professionalism of polling officials, the instructions about how to vote, and the location of polling places. The overall level of satisfaction was 92% for both in-person voters and postal voters.

The survey did uncover some areas for improvement, particularly regarding community awareness issues. 24% of electors were unable to identify the reason why the by-election had taken place, despite extensive media coverage of the incumbent MP's retirement from Parliament, and despite ECSA writing to every household in Dunstan to inform them. This number was significantly higher among non-voters, just 47% of whom could identify why the by-election was required.

Despite significant communication and engagement activities as outlined in this report, a sizeable number of electors remained unaware of alternative voting options available if they were unable to attend a polling booth on Polling Day. 32% were not aware of the early voting centre option, and 17% were not aware of postal voting.

Due to the proximity of both by-elections, no survey of electors was conducted for the Black by-election.

Staff surveys

As with other elections, ECSA sought feedback from the staff involved in the by-elections.

Dunstan by-election

Separate surveys were undertaken of managers and officers who worked at polling booths and the early voting centre, the majority of whom were veterans of previous elections. The feedback from these surveys has been used to closely analyse and improve ECSA's planning and procedures, particularly regarding training, procedures and employment.

Positive highlights among the findings of the surveys include:

96.7%

stated that they were interested in working again for ECSA at future elections

96.7%

considered that the training they received prepared them to confidently undertake their duties during polling hours

97.5%

found the process of looking electors up and marking them off the roll electronically easy.

95.0%

were satisfied with their polling place manager's knowledge, communication and people management skills

73.8%

of staff stated they were satisfied with the pay they received for their work, an improvement on the 64.5% satisfaction rate from staff at the 2022 State Election.

Black by-election

Surveys were conducted with the managers and officers who worked at the two early voting centres and nine polling stations.

Notable positive aspects among the survey findings include:

100.00%

of managers and officers stated they were interested in working again for ECSA at future elections

94.6%

of managers and officers considered the training they received prepared them to confidently undertake their duties during polling hours

94.3%

of managers and officers found the process of looking electors up and marking them off the roll electronically easy.

100.00%

of officers were satisfied with their polling place manager's knowledge, communication and people management skills.

Less positive findings from the surveys suggested two areas for improvement at future elections. 68.8% of managers felt that the location and building of the polling place they managed was suitable, with just 50% satisfied that their polling place was accessible for voters that are elderly or living with a disability.

These figures are much lower than ones found in the survey of Dunstan by-election managers which indicate for future elections ECSA will need to consider alternative venues in the district of Black or provide temporary improvements that could make existing venues easier to access.

Similar to other electoral commissions around Australia, ECSA noted an increase in poor behaviour around polling places with 68.8%

of managers indicating they had experienced difficulties or had concerns about the behaviour of candidates, party volunteers or scrutineers at their polling place. As such, ECSA will request polling place managers document incidents of aggression, harassment or intimidating behaviour among and towards campaigners, candidates and voters, as well as towards ECSA staff. Recent legislative reforms, specifically section 119 of the Electoral Act, empowers authorised officers to maintain order at and near voting and counting centres. The reforms prohibit obstructive or disorderly conduct, allow for the removal of disruptive individuals (including candidates and scrutineers), and impose penalties of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment.

Dunstan



97%

of staff surveyed are interested in working for ECSA at future elections



97%

of staff were satisfied that ECSA training prepared them to confidently undertake their role

Black



100%

of staff surveyed are interested in working for ECSA at future elections



95%

of staff were satisfied that ECSA training prepared them to confidently undertake their role

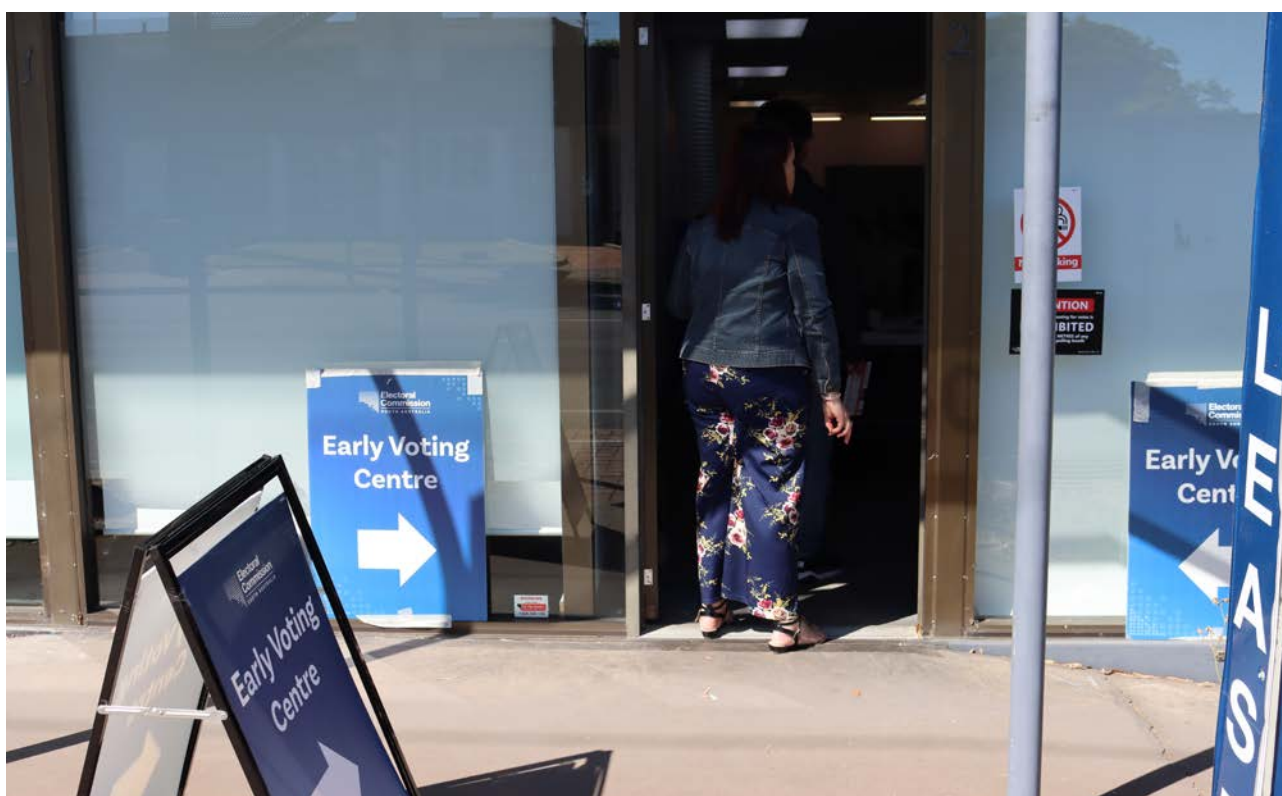
Queue lengths and voter timings research

Research on voter queue lengths and processing times at polling places during the Black by-election revealed insights to improve electoral service efficiency. The study measured wait times and voter flow at early voting centres and polling booths to guide resource allocation and staffing decisions.

As part of this project, an observer was deployed at five pre-selected polling locations: two early voting centres and three polling booths. Each observer recorded queue lengths every half hour, and with the aid of a stopwatch, discretely timed voters as they moved through each step of the voting process.

A full report on the results of this research project is available on ECSA's website. Highlights of the findings are summarised below.

- **Polling Day queue and wait times:** Average queue length was low at 2.8 people, inflated by early morning lines before booths opened. Wait times averaged 30 seconds, dropping to 20 seconds after 8:30am. Voter processing took about 2 minutes, with officials issuing votes in 42 seconds on average. Peak voting occurred between 10am and 11am.
- **Staffing recommendations:** Data suggests potential to reduce full-day polling officials and introduce half-day roles focused on busy morning hours without harming voter experience, due to low queues and efficient processing.
- **Early voting dynamics:** Early voting took longer, averaging eight minutes per voter, mainly due to longer wait times rather than the processing of declaration votes. Waits were about ten times longer than on Polling Day, with late afternoon surges causing queues up to 69 people. Traffic patterns differed markedly from Polling Day, with quiet mornings and busy late afternoons.
- **Future planning:** With changes planned for the 2026 State Election, including new vote types and the First Nations Voice election, ongoing data collection will support more sophisticated, data-driven resourcing and queue management strategies.



Funding and disclosure

Election funding

As with the state election, participants in these by-elections had the opportunity to receive public funding. The election funding scheme allows for reimbursement of political expenditure for eligible participants who keep within the expenditure limits set out in the Electoral Act.

Dunstan by-election

Four of the five registered political parties nominating candidates in the by-election opted to participate in the election funding scheme before the deadline closed. Following on from the results of the by-election, three of the four participating registered political parties qualified for election funding by receiving over four percent of the total primary vote and lodged their returns on time.

Registered political party	Total spent on political expenditure (\$)	Total eligibility per 2024 Dunstan by-election result (\$)	Total election funding payment (\$)
Australian Labor Party (ALP)	89,645.94	26,066.88	26,066.88
Liberal Party (LIB)	88,666.44	35,282.52	35,282.52
The Greens (GRN)	32,678.00	15,558.48	15,558.48
Total	\$210,990.38	\$76,907.88	\$76,907.88

Black by-election

Three of the four political parties nominating candidates in the by-election opted to participate in the election funding scheme by the cut-off date specified in the Electoral Act. Of these three, one political party submitted a non-compliant 130Y certificate and the remaining party did not opt-in to the scheme. Of these three parties, all qualified for funding entitlements by receiving over four percent of the total primary vote and lodging their disclosure returns in time. Two of the eligible parties spent more on political activities than their funding entitlements based on their share of the total primary vote. However, none of the parties exceeded their agreed political expenditure cap as outlined in section 130Z of the Electoral Act. As a result, no financial penalties were imposed.

Registered political party	Total spent on political expenditure (\$)	Total eligibility per 2024 Black by-election result (\$)	Total election funding payment due (\$)
Liberal Party (LIB)	75,783.35	28,762.00	28,762.00
Australian Labor Party (ALP)	98,428.91	40,377.12	40,377.12
The Greens (GRN)	10,437.00	11,028.06	10,437.00
Total	\$184,649.26	\$80,167.18	\$79,576.12

Lodgement of disclosures

Part 13A of the *Electoral Act 1985* establishes a public funding scheme in which candidates for a by-election are eligible for a contribution towards the funding of their election campaigns. While there is no obligation to participate in the election funding scheme, once a candidate elects to be a participant, they are required to disclose certain information to the Electoral Commissioner and are held to legislated deadlines.

This disclosure period is known as the ‘capped expenditure period’. The capped expenditure period commences from the date the vacancy is announced in the House of Assembly by, or on behalf of, the Speaker and ending 30 days after Polling Day for that election. During this period, all registered political parties, candidates, or third parties that

incurred political expenditure over \$5,000 (indexed) are required to lodge a ‘Capped Expenditure Period Return’ within 60 days of Polling Day.

For the Dunstan by-election, this period was from 6 February 2024 until 22 April 2024, while for the Black by-election, this period was from 16 October 2024 until 16 December 2024. During this period eligible participants of the scheme were required to disclose to the Electoral Commissioner information relating to the allocation of funding (the maximum they would spend within their capped expenditure limit), donations received, and political expenditure incurred. With the exception of the capped allocation agreement, all disclosure returns are inputted into ECSA’s systems and published on the ECSA website for public inspection.

By-election costs



Dunstan by-election

The budget allocation for the conduct of the Dunstan by-election was \$869,000.

The total cost of the by-election was \$865,500, \$3,500 less than budget.

The Dunstan by-election was conducted in the same timeframe as the initial First Nations Voice to Parliament election (Polling Day 16 March 2024). As a result of these competing activities, the following additional resources and costs were required to deliver the Dunstan by-election:

- Activation and support for ICT election systems
- Extended call centre coverage and issues with processing and follow-up of apparent non-voters
- Administration costs incurred for unforeseen legal and complaints processing costs and conduct of elector surveys.

For the Dunstan by-election, there were 27,108 electors on the roll, with a cost per elector of \$31.91.

Black by-election

The budget allocation for the conduct of the Black by-election was \$869,000.

The total cost of the Black by-election was \$682,000, \$179,000 less than budget.

The total actual expenditure was \$179,000 less than the budget allocation primarily due to:

- Significantly less support required for ICT election systems compared to the other by-election as the Dunstan by-election was conducted in the same timeframe as the initial First Nations Voice to Parliament election
- Lower postal declaration processing activities required
- Lower call centre and apparent non-voters processing activities required
- Partly offset by higher packing and distribution labour costs to replenish polling place kits and deliver to district of Black and more costly premises costs than expected.

For the Black by-election there were 26,540 electors on the roll, with a cost per elector of \$26.00.

Final costs for the by-elections

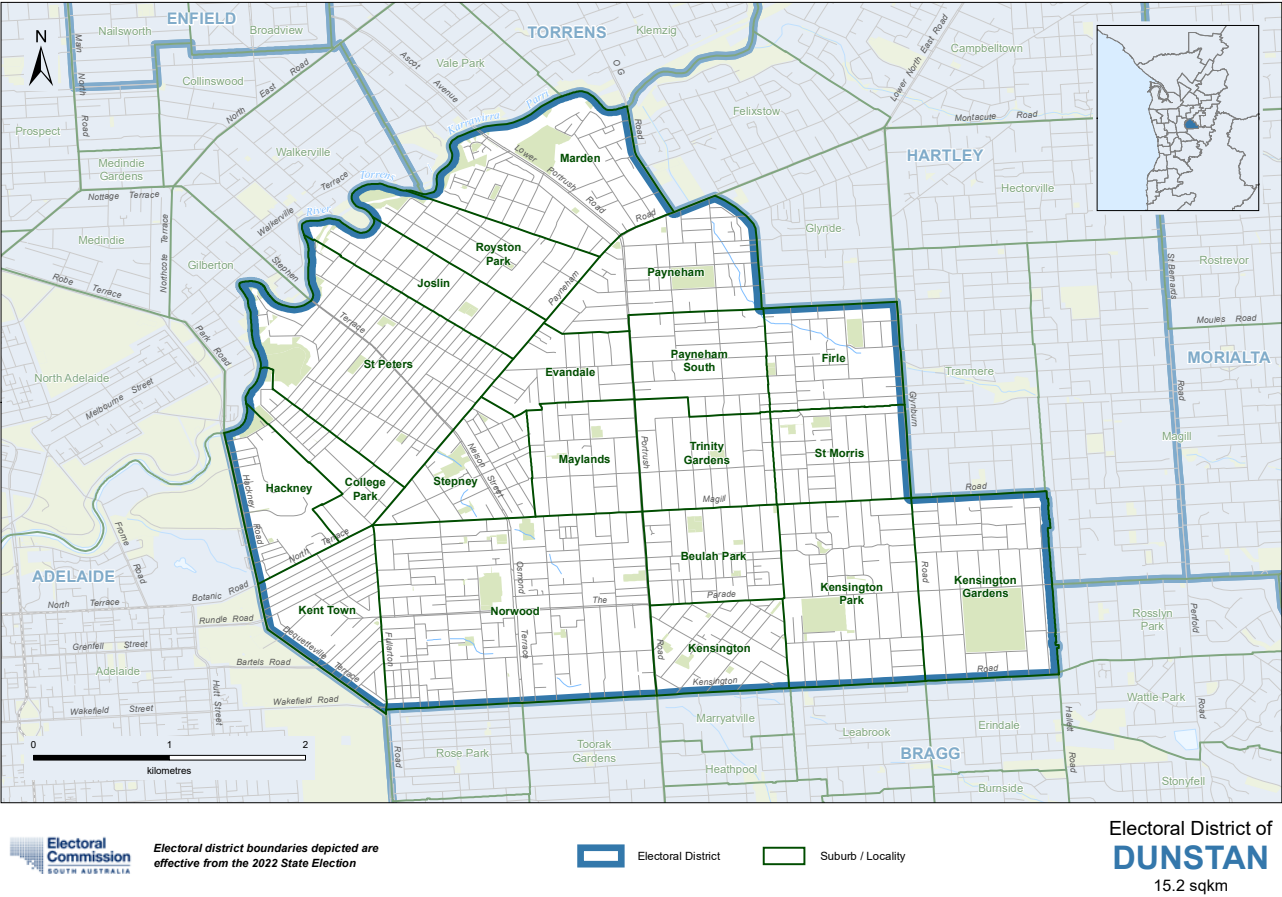
Expenditure	DUNSTAN \$000s	BLACK \$000s
Staffing costs		
Staff – Returning officers, Polling Day, and early voting services	187	180
Total staffing costs	187	180
Other costs		
Voting services expenses, equipment, and premises	50	57
Election materials (printing and stationery items)	11	2
Transport, freight and storage	9	53
Advertising and public awareness	143	137
Postal and declaration vote processing and management	59	42
Telephone enquiry service	34	19
ICT services	199	66
Electoral administration	61	53
Non-voter processing (including printing electoral rolls)	112	81
Total other costs	678	510
Total expenditure	865	690
Electors on the roll	27,108	26,540
Cost per elector	\$31.91	\$26.00

APPENDICES

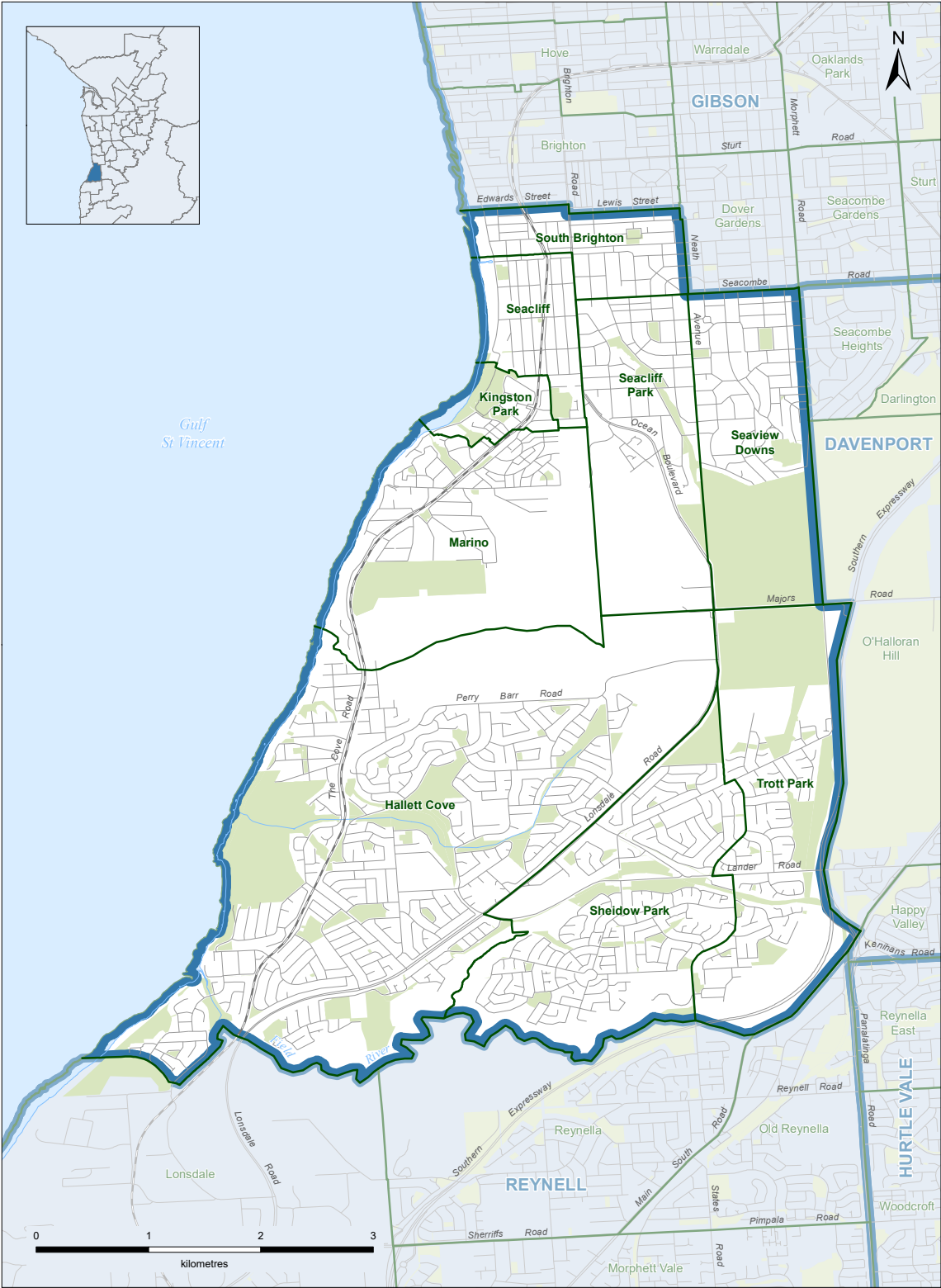
Appendix 1 - By election program

Election oversight, evaluation and reporting	Workforce	Systems and ICT	Election procedures, printing, procurement and property management	Voting services	Compliance and candidate services	Communication and engagement
Election governance	Employment management	Hardware management	Leased facilities	Fixed polling place review / resourcing	Party and candidate briefings	Communication
Budget	Work Health and Safety	Applications support	Election procedures	Postal voting	Funding and disclosure	Results
Election evaluation	Training	Service Desk	Election materials and equipment, printing and procurement	Declaration Vote Management	Electoral complaints	Information guides, translations and engagement
Election report		Roll build	Materials management	Early voting	Nominations	Call centre
				Mobile and electoral visitors	Multiple and non voters	
				Vote counting and polling day		

Appendix 2 – District of Dunstan



Appendix 3 – District of Black



Electoral district boundaries depicted are effective from the 2022 State Election

- Electoral District
- Suburb / Locality

Electoral District of
BLACK
26.6 sqkm



Sat. 7th Dec. Parade 1:30pm

Murray Bridge
Pageant Sat. 16th
Nov.
4:00pm

For I'll have more
Single bell R...
Frosty the S...
Just Caliz Navidad
Span...
Single Bells
White Xmas
Blue Xmas
Santa Baby
Let it snow
Have you ever
a Merry

SECOND PLACE

SC-South-4



