Services to voters
Services to voters

Enrolment

Three-day enrolment period once the election was announced

Once the State election was announced on 24 August 1999, eligible electors had three days to ensure they were on the electoral roll and that their registered address was correct.

The VEC was successful in having television and radio advertisements aired throughout Victoria on the night the election was announced, and newspaper advertising printed over the next two days, ensuring that as many people as possible took the opportunity to check that their enrolment details were correct.

Voters had the opportunity to update their enrolments on the spot at sixty-seven locations throughout the State, or to pick up an enrolment form from any post office. In addition, the VEC web site provided the opportunity to download an enrolment form.

During the three-day period from the issue of writs to the close of rolls, 29,313 new enrolments were received, and 32,381 changes to enrolments occurred, making a total of 61,694 enrolment transactions taking place overall.

The VEC’s web site was used by 1,758 electors to download the enrolment form in that three day period.

Enrolment initiatives in the lead-up to the 1999 State election

The VEC initiated a range of enrolment activities in the lead-up to the State election.

Special initiative to encourage 17 and 18-year-olds to enrol

Young people turning 18 years of age—who become eligible to vote for State, Federal and municipal Council elections the first time—are a major focus of all VEC initiatives encouraging enrolment. Seventeen-year-olds who are Australian citizens are also a target audience as they can enrol provisionally, and then they automatically become fully enrolled at the age of 18. There is a strong advantage in enrolling at the age of 17. If a person who has provisionally enrolled at age 17 turns 18 on or before election day they will be able to vote, even if the electoral roll has closed.

The VEC embarked on a special initiative to enrol 17 and 18-year-olds in August 1999.

A request was made to the Board of Studies of the Department of Education for the name, address and date of birth data for young people enrolled in Years 11 and 12 in Victorian secondary schools. The Board agreed to provide the data in view of the priority it places on encouraging young people to enrol and vote at State, Federal and Council elections. The information was provided solely for the purpose of enabling the VEC to write to these young people and invite them to enrol to vote.
From the Board of Studies data the VEC established that only 25 per cent of 18 year old school students had enrolled, and that only 3 per cent of 17-year-olds had provisionally enrolled.

In the week of 9 August 1999 the VEC wrote to all students in Years 11 and 12 aged 17 years and over, providing them with the motivational leaflet, 20 very good reasons to enrol to vote, and inviting them to complete an enclosed enrolment form.

In addition, the VEC continues to send Year 11 and 12 students a birthday card and enrolment information on their seventeenth birthday.

This initiative resulted in 24,824 enrolments by 17 and 18-year-olds prior to the State election (provisional enrolments for 17-year-olds).

As students comprise the majority of 17 and 18-year-olds, this initiative will make a large contribution to increasing the number of young people enrolled to vote in Victoria.

School leavers

Earlier in 1999, in order to reach school leavers, the VEC’s advertising agency, Leo Burnett Connaghan and May, created an innovative advertisement to appear in Get a Life! magazine, which was mailed to all school leavers in January 1999. The advertisement also appeared in a new education supplement in The Age newspaper.

The advertisement was later adapted, in the form of a postcard, for distribution in universities during orientation week.

Cinema advertising

Advertising research shows that cinema advertising has a very high reach among young people, especially when targeted to appear before movies that are popular with the late-teens age group. The VEC therefore decided to take advantage of this medium to get its enrolment message across to Victoria’s young people.

A cinema advertisement was created based upon the enrolment advertising screened on television for the State election. The cinema advertisement was screened for ten weeks, between February and April 1999, in a range of cinemas across metropolitan and regional Victoria, with films such as Shakespeare in Love, Rush Hour, Meet Joe Black and Paperback Hero.

Press enrolment advertising targeted to all Victorians

The VEC considered that April was an opportune time to remind all Victorians to ensure that they were enrolled correctly. This was shortly before the earliest date the election could be called.

The enrolment campaign comprised an intense burst of advertising from 27 April to 1 May, with full-page advertisements in all Victorian daily newspapers and thirty-second advertisements on all commercial radio stations.

The campaign resulted in a significant increase in the number of enrolments.

Window display at Information Victoria

In August, the VEC arranged for a window display at Information Victoria to encourage enrolments during the pre-election period. The primary focus of the display was to encourage electors who had moved address to update their enrolment, and to offer elderly or disabled voters the opportunity of registering as a general postal voter.

Other ongoing enrolment initiatives

The VEC had a variety of existing enrolment projects prior to the lead-up to the 1999 State election. These projects are ongoing and aim to keep the roll up-to-date. They include:

(i) Young people obtaining a drivers licence

Under an arrangement with VicRoads, the VEC obtains names and addresses of people in the eighteen to twenty-one age group who have obtained a drivers licences.
Services to voters

The VEC mails out enrolment information and enrolment application forms to those not enrolled at their current addresses.

(ii) People requesting electricity connections and reconnections

The VEC obtains data concerning connections and reconnections by Eastern Energy’s domestic electricity customers. When people request an electricity connection or reconnection, they are asked if they would like enrolment assistance from the VEC. If they consent, enrolment information and enrolment application forms are sent to those not enrolled at their current addresses.

(iii) Electronic lodgement and enrolment using maxi

Since 1997, the VEC has provided an electronic method for Victorians to lodge their enrolment details via the internet (www.maxi.com.au) or at public multi-media kiosks.

Further details about these initiatives are provided in the VEC’s Annual Report 1998-1999.

Arrangements for voting before election day

The VEC made arrangements for voters who could not get to a polling place on election day.

A total of 276,780 Victorians voted before election day. This is a significantly greater number than at previous State elections (177,361 at the 1996 State election and 185,253 at the 1992 State election).

A reason for the increase may be that the election was held at the beginning of the September school holidays, and on the day of an Australian Football League preliminary final. As well, a number of political parties encouraged postal voting by mailing postal voting application forms on a large scale at the start of the election period.

Voting in person

Voting in person was possible at any of sixty-four locations throughout the State prior to election day. These locations are listed in Appendix 3 of this Report. Electors could vote between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm from Monday, 6 September until Saturday, 11 September, and from Monday, 13 September until Thursday, 16 September. Voting at these locations was also possible until 6.00 pm on election eve, Friday, 15 September. Offices in Melbourne and East Malvern remained open until 8.00 pm on Thursdays in recognition of sections of the community requiring the opportunity to vote outside business hours, but not on Saturdays.

In most cases the returning officer’s office was considered to be appropriately located for the purposes of voting prior to election day. However, additional voting centres were established to supplement returning officer’s offices where locations were inconvenient to a large section of voters. These were in Hastings, Korumburra, Melbourne Airport, Portland, Prahran, Sunbury and Wangaratta.

Additional voting facilities were also established in the ski fields areas of Falls Creek, Mount Buller and Mount Hotham, to provide a service to those who might be skiing in these areas during the school holiday period.

A voting facility was established for staff (mainly country electors) working at the Royal Melbourne Show. The centre operated for three days prior to the opening of the Show. Approximately 300 Show staff made use of this voting facility.

There were 152,559 votes cast at the VEC’s election offices prior to election day for the 1999 State election.

Voting at interstate and overseas locations

Voting was possible prior to election day at twelve interstate and thirty-eight overseas locations. These locations are listed in Appendix 4 of this Report.

A total of 17,492 votes were cast at these interstate and overseas locations during the State election. This compares with 9,945 votes cast at the 1996 State election, and 10,649 votes in 1992.
Voting by post

Voters who would not be able to vote at a polling place on election day were able to vote by post by:

- picking up an application form for a postal vote from any post office in Victoria;
- downloading a postal vote application form from the VEC's web site; or
- telephoning the VEC's telephone enquiry service and having an application form posted to them.

There were 112,610 votes cast by post at the 1999 State election. Of the applications received, 6,138 had been downloaded from the VEC's web site. This new facility was considered very successful, given that it was the first time it had been offered at a Victorian State election.

Registered general postal voters

Voters who satisfy certain statutory requirements regarding their ability to vote at a polling place at election time are eligible for registration as general postal voters.

By registering as general postal voters, these people automatically receive ballot papers in the mail for all State elections.

There were 17,452 registered general postal voters at the 1999 State election. This is a significantly greater number than at previous State elections (9,587 at the 1996 State election, and 9,042 at the 1992 State election).

The increase was mainly due to legislative changes increasing eligibility for registration, and initiatives by the VEC and its national counterpart (the Australian Electoral Commission) to increase public awareness of this facility amongst voters who find it difficult to vote at polling places at State and Federal elections.

Voting at special hospitals

The Electoral Commissioner has the power to appoint certain institutions as 'special hospitals' for the purpose of enabling voters in those institutions to vote on the spot when a mobile polling team visits in the lead-up to a State election.

Prior to the 1999 State election, the VEC conducted a review of the election services provided to institutions that were appointed as special hospitals at the 1996 State election.

The VEC contacted the institutions and requested that they consider the type of electoral service that would best meet their residents' requirements. In some cases, the institutions requested that residents be provided with postal voting material as the visit of polling officials caused frail patients to become distressed.

There were 108 institutions requesting this facility.

As a result of the review, 431 special hospitals were appointed for the 1999 State election. (These are listed in Appendix 5 of this report.) This compares with 279 locations at the 1996 State election.

There were 11,611 votes cast at special hospitals in the 1999 State election, a substantial increase on the number of votes cast at special hospitals in the 1996 State election (7,261). (Figures are not available for the 1992 State election.)

Antarctic voting

An 'Antarctic elector' is an elector who has made a request under section 218D of The Constitution Act Amendment Act 1958 to be treated as an Antarctic elector while in Antarctica.

At the close of roll for the 1999 Victorian State election, there were fourteen Antarctic voters.
Arrangements for voting on election day

Voting on election day

Voters could vote at any of the 1,616 polling places established throughout Victoria on election day, Saturday, 18 September 1999. Voting took place between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm.

Polling places were advertised in their electoral District groupings. Voters were able to vote at a polling place within their electorate (that is, cast an ‘ordinary vote’), or vote at any other polling place in the State outside their electorate by casting an ‘absent vote’.

A total of 2,641,766 votes were cast on election day. These included 226,608 absent votes.

The number of absent votes was a significant increase on the number cast at previous State elections (203,908 at the 1996 State election, and 163,358 at the 1992 State election). It is likely that this increase was primarily due to election day being held on the first day of the school holidays, when a number of voters would be away from home.

Assistance for voters from non-English-speaking backgrounds

The VEC advertised information to assist voters from non-English-speaking backgrounds in a range of ethnic media, including newspapers, radio and television (see Appendix 6).

In addition, information regarding how to cast a formal vote was made available in 15 languages at each polling place.

Assistance for disabled voters

The VEC is committed to providing electoral services that provide maximum assistance to enable people with disabilities to vote. In the past, the VEC has implemented procedures such as identifying polling places with the best wheelchair access, providing tabletop screens at all polling places, and instructing polling officials to assist disabled electors to vote in the polling place if requested. The VEC also sends postal voting material to all electors who are registered as general postal voters.

Prior to the 1999 State election, the VEC conducted a review of its procedures in order to identify further ways to assist electors with disabilities to participate in the electoral process.

As part of this review, the VEC consulted with a number of organisations representing disabled people in Victoria. The organisations contacted included:

- National Industry Association for Disability Services (ACROD Victoria);
- Action Resource Network;
- Headway Victoria;
- National Federation of Blind Citizens;
- Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association;
- Regional Victorian Rural Disabilities Association (RVRDA);
- Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID);
- Victorian Council of Deaf People Inc; and
- Vision Australia.
The consultative process explored ways the VEC could enhance the delivery of electoral services to further assist people with disabilities. During the review, organisations raised issues and recommended practical solutions that the VEC could implement at the 1999 State election.

As a result of the review, the VEC introduced voting compartments especially designed for wheelchair access, improved signage at polling places for people with sight impairment and instructed polling officials on how to assist people with hearing disabilities.

The review also resulted in the VEC recommending changes to electoral law to enable polling officials to assist disabled voters to vote outside the polling place. Parliament amended The Constitution Act Amendment Act 1958 to include the changes, which took effect in June 1999. The VEC developed new procedures and advised prospective candidates and political parties of the changes prior to the election. All polling officials throughout Victoria were trained in the new procedures and the procedures were implemented at the 1999 State election.

Information to voters

Advertising during the State election period

For the 1999 State election the VEC based the voter information campaign on the campaign used in the 1996 State election.

The 1996 campaign had been evaluated as highly successful—achieving a very high voter turnout rate (94.1 per cent) and an extremely low rate of informal voting (2.3 per cent). An evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign by AGB McNair showed that the campaign achieved high levels of awareness.

The original campaign was devised by Grey Advertising, and used the strong central theme ‘Your opinion counts. Make sure your vote does’. Television advertisements featured a range of Victorians expressing opinions, followed by messages on how to make your opinion count. Radio advertisements used the voices of the people featured in the television scenarios, and the newspaper advertisements included photographs of the scenarios.

Following a competitive tendering process, the VEC engaged Leo Burnett Connaghan and May to revamp the advertising campaign.

The campaign comprised:

- advice of the issue of the writs, providing the key election dates (press);
- enrolment advertising (television—beginning on the night that the election was announced, radio and press);
- information for candidates about nominating and the registering of how-to-vote cards (press);
- how to vote if you are away on election day (television, radio and press—including advertising in The Australian for voters travelling interstate);
- voting interstate and overseas (leaflet distributed to all major travel agents in Victoria);
- special voting arrangements at Victoria’s ski fields (press);
- know your candidates (press);
- voting correctly (television, radio and press);
- voting for the Ballarat, Melbourne and Melbourne North Province by-elections (press);
- going to the footy—vote before you go (press);
- going to the Show—vote before you go (press);
- where to vote at the State election (lift-out in metropolitan press and large advertisements in regional press);
- election results (press).

A full list of where the VEC placed advertising during the election is provided in Appendix 6. Sample advertisements for the 1999 State election are provided in Appendix 7.
Advertising coverage in rural Victoria

At the 1996 Victorian State election the VEC was criticised for not advertising in smaller weekly newspapers. The VEC had advertised on statewide television and radio, and in statewide and regional daily newspapers.

Following the 1996 State election, the VEC engaged the market research company, AGB McNair, to evaluate the effectiveness of its voter information campaign, with a particular emphasis on rural Victoria. Particular attention was given to those parts of Victoria that did not receive regional daily newspapers. The evaluation showed that rural Victorians were not disadvantaged by the VEC’s decision not to advertise in weekly newspapers in rural areas. (See pages 30-31 of the VEC’s Report to Parliament on the Administration of the 1996 Victorian State Election.)

During the 1999 State election the VEC received criticism from rural newspaper associations and individual newspapers for not placing advertising in all rural newspapers. Some newspapers thought that one advertisement in particular—advertising arrangements for how to vote before election day—was suited to advertising in all rural newspapers due to its importance and the sufficient lead time for preparation and placement of the advertisement.

The VEC extended advertising beyond that used at the 1996 State election by placing polling place advertisements in all regional daily newspapers and certain rural newspapers which were outside the circulation areas of regional daily newspapers. Previously this advertising had only been placed in The Age and Herald Sun.

The VEC will review its advertising arrangements prior to the next State election.

Information for voters at www.vec.vic.gov.au

The VEC’s web site provided valuable information to voters in a readily accessible format. The site included all the information about arrangements for enrolment and voting in the election, as well as providing the opportunity to download an enrolment application form and a postal voting application form. (See the chapter on Information services to the media in this report for details about the design and development of the VEC’s web site.)

The VEC’s telephone enquiry service

The VEC required a telephone enquiry service (TES) that would be able to deal successfully and efficiently with the large volume of calls that occur during a State election. The TES at previous State elections had not met the demand from the public for information. This had occurred primarily because the VEC does not have the ongoing telecommunication infrastructure nor a large pool of trained staff who can be called on to operate a call centre immediately a State election is announced. In view of these factors, it was decided to outsource this service for the 1999 State election to a commercial call centre provider. Morgan and Banks was selected following a competitive tendering process.

Morgan and Banks established a custom-built call centre at a location near the VEC that had the following key features:

- a 60 seat area allocated to the VEC, with the capacity to expand according to demand. Each workstation had an individual telephone and computer allocated;
- IT infrastructure and support on-site; and
- call centre training specialists.

The TES database was created using data provided by the VEC and was developed into a simple menu based look-up screen product.

Morgan and Banks managed the recruitment process for the establishment of the TES. Some 160 staff were selected and were provided with customised training in consultation with VEC staff. The VEC provided supervisors to ensure that all requests for information were handled correctly. At the announcement of the election, some 140 staff were available to work and to be allocated across the various shifts.
The service initially operated over a 24 hour period which was later reduced to operating between 7.00 am and 8.00 pm, as there were very few calls after 8.00 pm each day. The weekend hours were 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. The performance of the TES is discussed in the performance summary contained in this chapter.

Information services for voters from non-English-speaking backgrounds

The VEC is aware of the need to provide information to voters from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The voter information campaign for the State election included advertisements in 18 ethnic newspapers, on five ethnic radio stations and on two ethnic television channels, advertising in a total of eleven languages. The proportion of the voter information campaign budget spent on ethnic advertising was well above the five per cent minimum required by government policy.

Advertising in both the ethnic media and in the English-language press referred people needing more information to the VEC’s multi-lingual telephone enquiry service. The service was provided by Victorian Interpreting and Translating Services (VITS). VITS provided pre-recorded messages on a range of election matters in twelve languages other than English. Callers dialling a language-specific number heard a message in their own language on the subject of their choice, such as enrolment, postal voting, or how to vote correctly. If they needed more information after listening to the message they were put through to an interpreter, who in turn connected to the VEC’s mainstream telephone enquiry service for a conference call. People calling the advertised number for all other languages were connected directly to an interpreter and the VEC’s mainstream service. In addition, the mainstream telephone enquiry service included a number of bilingual staff. Telephone enquiry services for non-English speaking voters worked much better than at previous elections, when it had been difficult to establish conference calls. Over the 25 day election period the multi-lingual enquiry service received a total of 6,218 calls, of which 1,936 were calls connected to an interpreter.

Information services for voters with a visual impairment

The VEC commissioned Vision Australia Foundation to recommend an approach to assist those electors who are visually impaired or blind.

The recommended approach was to produce audiocassettes containing information about the arrangements for the State election. Approximately 6,200 audiocassettes were distributed by Vision Australia Foundation to Victorian voters. Of these, some 5,725 were distributed to individuals with print disabilities. The remaining cassettes were distributed to blindness agencies and Vision Australia branches.

This service was supported by a successful media campaign including media releases and campaigns on 3RPH (Radio Print Handicapped). The Electoral Commissioner was interviewed on 3RPH regarding the service being offered to print handicapped voters. Over 200 audiocassettes were distributed to individuals in response to publicity through the media (including 3RPH).
Non-voter follow-up


The VEC’s election management system, EMS 2000, was used to streamline the processing of the non-voter database for the purposes of excusing voters providing a valid reason for not voting, and for the service of notices to apparent non-voters.

The number of electors who did not vote at the 1999 State election was 211,792. Pursuant to section 271A of the Act, electors who fell into certain categories were not sent failure to vote notices. Such electors included those who had provided a valid and sufficient excuse to returning officers or the VEC during or after the election period, and those electors who were over 70 years of age, deceased, absent from Victoria on election day or itinerant.

Of the 211,792 electors who did not vote, 115,949 were sent non-voter notices. The majority of these provided satisfactory reasons for not voting. However, 29,468 were issued with penalty notices, and, as at the end of April 2000, only 5,203 had paid the required penalty.

The non-payment of penalties for failure to vote has been a continuing problem at State elections. The VEC is considering ways to improve the enforcement of penalty payments.

The maximum fine for not voting at a State election is $50. The penalty for not voting at the 1999 State election was fixed at $40, the same as at the previous State election.
Voter turnout

Voter turnout at the State election (held in a school holiday period) was 93.23 per cent. This is slightly below the turnout of 94.08 per cent at the 1996 State election, but close to the long term average for Victorian State elections (93.81 per cent for the seven elections held since 1979.)

Rate of informal voting

The rate of informal voting was 3.02 per cent, compared with 2.30 per cent at the 1996 State election and 3.81 per cent at the 1992 State election. The comparatively low rate of informal voting at the 1996 State election is thought to be because that election was held only a few weeks after the Federal election, and the messages about voting correctly were fresh in voters' minds. The rate of informal voting in 1999 was very close to the long term average for Victorian State elections (3.05 per cent for the seven elections held since 1979.)

Enrolment

The total enrolment at the 1999 State election was 3,130,338, compared with 3,000,076 at the 1996 State election. An analysis of recent enrolment trends in Victoria is provided in the VEC's Annual Report 1998-1999 (pp 20–23).

Voter satisfaction survey

The VEC engaged ACNielsen to conduct a telephone survey of voters following the 1999 State election. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain voters' satisfaction with the services provided by the VEC to assist them during the election.

The survey covered voters in Melbourne, regional centres and rural areas, as well as voters who voted before election day in person or by post, and voters who cast ordinary and absent votes on election day. Interviews took place from 22 October until 1 November 1999.

Overall, there was a very high level of satisfaction with the way in which the VEC conducted the 1999 State election, with 94 per cent of voters reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the VEC's arrangements and performance.

Arrangements for voting before election day

Eighty-eight per cent of voters who voted before election day, either in person or by post, reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the arrangements made by the VEC.

Almost all (97 per cent) of these voters considered that the pre-polling centres were suitably located.

Arrangements for voting on election day

Ninety-seven per cent of voters who voted at a polling place on election day were satisfied or very satisfied with the helpfulness of the VEC's polling place staff.

Almost all (97 per cent) considered that the location of polling places was convenient.

Ninety per cent of absentee voters reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the efficiency and effectiveness of the arrangements made for absentee voting by the VEC.

Awareness of advertising

The VEC's voter information campaign for the State election was assessed by Leeds Media to have reached the following proportions of Victorians over 18 years of age:

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The satisfaction survey of voters confirmed a very high voter awareness of the VEC's advertising for the 1999 State election. Seventy-four per cent of voters were aware of the VEC's advertising regarding such matters as who was eligible to vote, and arrangements for voting.

The VEC's performance in providing services to voters

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before and on election day. This was a considerable improvement on the level of advertising awareness following the 1996 State election (64 per cent).

The age group most successfully reached was 25-39 years (79 per cent awareness), followed by 40-54 years (74 per cent); 18-24 years (72 per cent); and 55 years and over (69 per cent).

Television was the most successful advertising medium, with 70 per cent of voters who reported being aware of the VEC’s advertising having seen television advertising. Fifty-three per cent of the voters who were aware of the VEC’s advertising had heard radio advertising and 30 per cent had seen newspaper advertising.

Amongst voters who recalled VEC advertising, all messages were conveyed effectively, with at least three-quarters of voters evaluating the advertising for each message as effective or very effective in providing them with all the information they needed.

Usage of the VEC’s website

Use of the VEC’s web site during the State election

The web site was accessed by a total of 32,989 users over the 66 day period covering the State election and the Frankston East supplementary election. (A user is anyone who visits the web site at least once. Each user has a separate identifier to ensure that the user is not counted more than once per day. As many organisations use internet gateways that mask hostnames, the number of users identified here is quite conservative.)

A profile of the usage of the web site over this period is provided in the chart below.

One per cent of voters surveyed by ACNielsen reported using the VEC’s web site to gain information before the election, with 83 per cent of these being satisfied with the information provided. The use of web sites to gain electoral information will no doubt increase in line with the broader community use of web sites.
Effectiveness of the VEC’s telephone enquiry service

The performance of the telephone enquiry service was a considerable improvement on the service provided at the 1996 State election. A record number of calls were answered due to the capacity of the telephone enquiry service to expand according to demand. A comparative summary between the 1996 and 1999 state elections is presented below.

The vast majority of calls (over 80 per cent) were questions about enrolment or pre-poll and postal voting arrangements. In simple terms, ‘How do I get on the roll or check my enrolment details?’ and ‘How do I vote if I am unable to vote on election day?’, were the main concerns of Victorian voters. The remaining 20 per cent of calls were about the location of polling places and general questions about voting and the election. There were very few calls about nomination matters (1.27 per cent), indicating that returning officers and the VEC were satisfactorily answering nomination questions directly.

Of voters surveyed by ACNielsen following the State election, only 3 per cent reported using the VEC’s telephone enquiry service. Of these, more than 80 per cent reported being satisfied with the service.

Complaints about services to voters

The VEC received a total of 37 written complaints about its services to voters. This compares very favourably with the total of 45 complaints received by the VEC about the conduct of the 1996 State election. The 37 complaints received in 1999 comprised:

- Seventeen complaints from postal voters who had not received ballot papers. In each case, the VEC explained the arrangements it had in place for the daily mailout of ballot papers.
- Thirteen complaints about voting facilities and access to voting. These included complaints about polling places, special hospital facilities and signage.
- Seven complaints about the VEC’s conduct of the election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Number of calls received</th>
<th>Number of calls answered</th>
<th>Left after message</th>
<th>Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>139,553*</td>
<td>45,346</td>
<td>6,371</td>
<td>87,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>71,696</td>
<td>67,945</td>
<td>3,392</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number of calls received in 1996 was much greater because the TES operated during the Federal and Council elections, which were held within the period of the State election.