Section 2
Enrolment
Enrolment

Victorians responded to the VEC's call for enrolments in the lead-up to the 2010 State election. In the seven days between the issue of the writ and the close of rolls, the VEC received 38,152 new enrolments and updates. At the close of rolls at 8.00pm on Tuesday, 9 November, 3,582,232 people were enrolled to vote in the 2010 election, compared with 3,353,845 in 2006, and 3,228,466 at the 2002 State election.

Enrolment services

With the aim of having as accurate an enrolment register as possible at the close of rolls, the VEC took advantage of the fixed election date to conduct an extended enrolment advertising campaign for a month prior to the issue of the writ. The campaign included television, radio, newspaper and outdoor advertising that reminded eligible electors to enrol or update their enrolment details. The VEC processed 10,801 new enrolments and 30,896 enrolment updates in the month prior to the issue of the writ.

To maintain the accuracy of the enrolment register on an ongoing basis, the VEC has a range of strategic programs to help Victorians to enrol or update their enrolment. The VEC sends enrolment brochures to Victorians when they turn 17 years of age and become eligible to provisionally enrol, and to electors who have changed their address and need to update their enrolment details. Electors are targeted through data-matching initiatives with agencies such as with the Rental Tenancies Bond Authority and VicRoads. This ensures the VEC only mails enrolment forms to those people who have changed address recently.

Receiving an enrolment form may prompt an elector to act when they might otherwise delay enrolling or updating their enrolment until an election is called. Non-response to a mail-out results in follow-up action.

The VEC has ongoing enrolment data collection arrangements with a number of organisations. In 2009-10, the VEC collected 136,330 enrolments through its strategic enrolment programs and arrangements. Enrolment forms are also available year round on the VEC website, at local council offices, Centrelink offices and post offices.

Automatic enrolment

The legislation introduced in August 2010 enabled the VEC to automatically enrol people onto the register of electors in situations where, having regard to information obtained through its compulsory acquisition powers under S.26(4) of the Electoral Act 2002, the VEC considered the person to be entitled to be enrolled on the register of electors.

The VEC opted to take a cautious approach in implementing the new legislation and in the lead-up to the 2010 State election, limited this activity to students registered with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

In October 2010, the VEC wrote to 1,932 students, aged 18 years or older at 30 September 2010 and not enrolled, advising them that the VEC intended to enrol them on the register of electors. The students had 14 days to advise the VEC if they were not entitled to enrol. Fifteen letters were returned marked undeliverable, or no longer at the address. Advice was received in relation to a further 17 students, who did not understand the significance of enrolment and voting, and 105 students were enrolled as a result of receiving the notice and 1,795 more were enrolled by the Commission. Of those electors who were automatically enrolled, 1,557 subsequently voted at the election (see Figure 2). The VEC conducted non-voter follow-up in relation to automatically enrolled electors who apparently failed to vote.

Of the 238 automatically enrolled electors that did not vote, 68 have subsequently been excused, 19 have paid their penalty and 13 have provided invalid responses at the time of writing this report. A further 13 non-voter notices sent to these electors have been received by the VEC, marked return to sender. None of these 238 electors has claimed that they did not know they were enrolled.

![Figure 2: Voting compliance, automatically enrolled electors, 2010 Victorian State election](image-url)
Close of roll

At the issue of the writ, eligible electors have seven days to ensure they are on the electoral roll and that their enrolment details are correct. Electors were able to update their enrolment details or enrol at VEC or Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) election offices throughout the State, collect an enrolment form at any post office, or use the AEC’s online enrolment SmartForm via a link on the VEC’s website. The SmartForm captures an elector’s details online, eliminating the need for data entry. Electors could email, fax, post or hand-deliver enrolment forms to the VEC.

In 2006, the period between the issue of the writ and the close of roll was extended from three days to seven days, with no other changes to the election timeframe. With the federal election held just two months before the close of rolls for the 2010 State election, enrolments were considerably fewer than for the same period in 2006. However, timely production of essential roll products remains an issue, and the VEC was again required to negotiate special arrangements outside the service level agreement to obtain close of roll data from the AEC.

At the close of rolls at 8.00pm on Tuesday, 9 November, 3,582,232 people were enrolled to vote in the 2010 State election, compared with 3,353,845 at the 2006 State election. Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 contain details of region and district enrolments at the close of roll.

The VEC entered into special arrangements with the AEC to facilitate the close of roll for roll production. Electors wanting to enrol via the VEC website were redirected to the AEC SmartForm. The AEC provided two special enrolment transactions and set up a centralised data entry team for processing enrolments in the week leading up to the close of roll. All AEC and VEC offices were open until 8.00pm on close of roll and the AEC provided the close of roll extract within 24 hours of close of roll. The VEC would like to formally record its appreciation for the AEC’s responsive turnaround, which was critical to the success of the VEC’s roll production, nomination checking and dispatch of postal votes.

### Table 1: Enrolments processed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New to Roll (N1)</td>
<td>83,416</td>
<td>57,643</td>
<td>12,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstatement (R1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of Address (C2)</td>
<td>276,511</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>417,570</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Enrolments processed by the VEC, July – December 2010

Australia Post trial

In September 2010, Australia Post met with the AEC in Canberra to discuss a proposal to promote the federal election close of roll through their Customer Service outlets. Due to the timeframe for the 2010 federal election, the proposal could not be implemented. It was suggested that a similar program could be put in place for the upcoming Victorian State election which was to be held later in the year. The matter was referred to the VEC for further exploration.

The VEC met with Australia Post in October. Australia Post proposed promoting the close of roll through their 196 Victorian corporate outlets. Staff would wear T-shirts, caps or badges promoting the close of roll. Customers would be asked if their enrolment details were up-to-date. Posters would be on display in the Post Office. The cost was $70,000 (which was half the cost of the Victorian element quoted for the federal election). The VEC would be required to provide the tee-shirts, caps or badges and the posters.

The VEC approached the AEC as to whether the program could be funded out of the National CRU budget from savings resulting from the suspension of mail-outs due to the federal and State elections, and the AEC agreed to fund the trial.

The program ran from 25 October 2010 to 9 November 2010, with a total of 1131 enrolment applications or updates received as a direct result of the campaign. The number of applications received as a result of the trial was disappointing. However, enrolment activity on the whole was significantly down when compared with the same period in 2006. This was most likely due to the close proximity of the federal election. The VEC considers it unlikely that it will use the service again at the next State election.