Victorian Electoral Commission

Report on the Gippsland South District By-election held on 14 March 2015

August 2015
The Honourable Bruce Atkinson, MLC,
President of the Legislative Council

The Honourable Telmo Languiller, MP,
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

I am pleased to submit to you, for presentation to Parliament, this report on the conduct of the Gippsland South District by-election held on 14 March 2015.

The report is presented in accordance with section 8(2)(b) of the Electoral Act 2002.

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner

September 2015
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A by-election for the Gippsland South (State) District was triggered by the resignation, on 2 February 2015, of the sitting member, the Honourable Peter Ryan, MP.

The fact that this resignation so closely followed the 2014 State election allowed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to reinstate District voting arrangements. The same election management team/staff and venues were utilised. Recent and effective relationships with suppliers and contractors familiar with the District and the VEC requirements, contributed to the success of the by-election.

A communication campaign that included householder letters on enrolment and voting, and a range of newspaper advertisements helped ensure that electors were aware of details of the by-election, their voting options and the result.

Eight candidates nominated for the by-election. Four independent candidates nominated and the Nationals, the Liberal Democrats, the Australian Greens, and the Liberal Party each endorsed a candidate. The Australian Labor Party did not nominate a candidate for this by-election. As no candidate achieved an absolute majority, a preference distribution was required. Mr Danny O’Brien, the candidate for the Nationals, who polled 45.22% of the first preference votes, was elected at the fifth exclusion.

The turnout rate of 87.06% for the by-election was lower than the turnout rate of 94.00% for Gippsland South District in the 2014 State election. However the turnout rate for the Gippsland South by-election was higher than the average turnout of 79.59% for the five preceding State by-elections.

In line with observed trends, the proportion of voters who voted prior to Election Day in person or by post, was 34.13%. This phenomenon has been observed around Australia and will be the subject of consideration by the VEC.

The informality rate of 5.51%, with eight candidates, was a slight increase on the informality rate of 5.50% for the Gippsland South District with six candidates at the 2014 State election. Yet the informality rate was lower than the average informality rate of 8.95% for the five preceding State by-elections.

An analysis of the informal votes has been conducted and a report is included in Appendix D.

The result of the by-election was declared on Wednesday 18 March 2015, and the writ was returned to the Speaker the Hon. Telmo Languiller MP that afternoon. This efficient conclusion to the by-election allowed Mr O’Brien to take his seat in Parliament before the Easter recess. I take this opportunity to thank all VEC staff, contractors and suppliers, and particularly Election Manager, Ms Janine Taylor, Assistant Election Managers, Mr David Egan and Mrs Di Hastings and Election Support Officer, Ms Therese Camm for their contributions to the very successful conduct of the Gippsland South District by-election.

Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commissioner
1. Snapshot

First preference votes (% of first preference votes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SANDERS, Warren</td>
<td>3.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPPER, Viv</td>
<td>3.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEESTER, Deb</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’BRIEN, Danny The Nationals</td>
<td>45.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONOHOUE, Gerard J.</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDOANL, Jim Liberal Democrats</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILLSOM, Andrea Australian Greens</td>
<td>15.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSSETTI, Scott Liberal</td>
<td>26.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results after distribution of preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O’BRIEN, Danny Nationals</td>
<td>50.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILLSOM, Andrea Greens</td>
<td>20.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSSETTI, Scott Liberal</td>
<td>28.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation

Participation at Gippsland South District by-election 2015

- **Informal votes**: 5.51%
- **Formal votes**: 94.49%
- **Votes before election day**: 34.13%
- **Total votes**: 87.06%
- **Total enrolment**: 100%

Voter turnout at Victorian State by-elections 2010–15 (% enrolment)

- **Gippsland South District**: 87.06%
- **Lyndhurst District**: 80.07%
- **Melbourne District**: 68.62%
- **Niddrie District**: 84.80%
- **Broadmeadows District**: 78.45%
- **Altona District**: 86.02%
Informal votes at Victorian State by-elections 2010–15 (% votes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Informal Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland South District</td>
<td>14 March 2015</td>
<td>5.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndhurst District</td>
<td>27 Apr 2013</td>
<td>9.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne District</td>
<td>21 July 2012</td>
<td>9.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niddrie District</td>
<td>24 March 2012</td>
<td>11.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows District</td>
<td>19 Feb 2011</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altona District</td>
<td>13 Feb 2010</td>
<td>4.96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Votes cast prior to Election Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postal votes</td>
<td>3.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early votes</td>
<td>30.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votes cast before election day</td>
<td>34.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Background

The writ

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly issued a writ for the by-election for Gippsland South District on 17 February 2015. The writ set out the timetable for the by-election.

Election timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue of the writ</td>
<td>Tuesday 17 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominations open</td>
<td>9.00 am, Wednesday 18 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close of Roll</td>
<td>8.00 pm, Tuesday 24 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close of Nominations (party candidates)</td>
<td>12 noon, Thursday 26 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close of Nominations (independent candidates)</td>
<td>12 noon, Friday 27 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early voting commences</td>
<td>8.30 am, Monday 2 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of how-to-vote-cards opens</td>
<td>Monday 2 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of how-to-vote cards close</td>
<td>12 noon, Thursday 5 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last chance to apply for a postal vote</td>
<td>6.00 pm, Thursday 12 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Voting closes</td>
<td>6.00 pm, Friday 13 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECTION DAY VOTING</td>
<td>8.00 am - 6.00 pm, Saturday 14 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>From 6.00 pm, Saturday 14 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day for return of writ</td>
<td>Friday 3 April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preliminary arrangements with other agencies

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to ensure that any matters relating to how-to-vote cards could be heard within a 24 hour period. The VEC thanks VCAT for its support.

Victorian Government Solicitor’s Office

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Victorian Government Solicitor’s Office (VGSO) to have a senior legal advisor on standby 24 hours a day during the election period, to ensure that any matters were dealt with in a timely fashion. The VEC thanks the VGSO for its support.

Victoria Police

The VEC contacted the Chief Commissioner of Police to request a discreet police presence at all voting centres during the hours of voting on Election Day. The VEC provided a full list of all voting venues to Victoria Police to assist with this request. The VEC formally records its appreciation for the support received from the Chief Commissioner and Victoria Police.

Supreme Court

The VEC made preliminary arrangements with the Supreme Court to ensure that a Practice Court and presiding judge would be available to hear any applications for injunctions if the need arose on Election Day. The VEC thanks the Supreme Court for its support.
The former member

The Honourable Peter Ryan, MP represented the District of Gippsland South from 1992 to 2015. Mr Ryan was the leader of the Nationals in Victoria between December 1999 and 2014, and a member of several parliamentary committees between 1992 and 1999.

In 2008, he became the Shadow Minister for Regional and Rural Development and the Shadow Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade. Following the summer bushfires of 2009, Mr Ryan was appointed Shadow Minister for Bushfire Response. From 2010 to 2014, Mr Ryan was Deputy Premier of Victoria, as well as the Minister for Rural and Regional Development and Minister for Police from 2010 to 2013.

Profile of the District

Gippsland South District is a rural electorate located south-east of Melbourne. The District extends along the south coast from Venus Bay to Loch Sport. The electorate includes all of South Gippsland Shire and the southern parts of Wellington Shire. It covers an area of approximately 7,429 square kilometres. Gippsland South District includes the towns of Fish Creek, Foster, Golden Beach, Gormandale, Korumburra, Leongatha, Loch, Loch Sport, Longford, Meeniyan, Mirboo North, Nyora, Poowong, Port Albert, Port Welshpool, Rosedale, Sale, Seaspay, Tarwin Lower, Toora, Venus Bay, Welshpool, Woodside and Yarram.

Natural features include Wilsons Promontory National Park, Corner Inlet, the Gippsland Lakes and the Strzelecki Ranges. Industries in Gippsland South District include agriculture (largely dairying), timber production and tourism.

Map of the District

### Historical pattern of the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859-75</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-77</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-86</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-89</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-93</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894-99</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1902</td>
<td>Conservative Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-07</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-08</td>
<td>Fusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-09</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-27</td>
<td>Fusion Liberal/Liberal/National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-29</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-70</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-73</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-80</td>
<td>Country/Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-82</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-present</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past Results for Gippsland South District

2014 State election results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elected member</th>
<th>RYAN, Peter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total enrolment</td>
<td>40,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal votes:</td>
<td>35,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal votes:</td>
<td>2,082 (5.50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total votes:</td>
<td>37,827 (94.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formal votes: 35,745
Informal votes: 2,082 (5.50%)
Total votes: 37,827 (94.00%)

Candidate                                  | First preference votes | %   |
--------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----|
WINTERTON, Patrick (Rise Up Australia)     | 1,076                  | 3.01%|
PSAILA, Lynn (ALP)                          | 7,819                  | 21.87%|
PIPER, Phil (Australian Country Alliance)   | 1,093                  | 3.06%|
MEESTER, Deb (Australian Country Alliance)  | 1,853                  | 5.18%|
RYAN, Peter (Nationals)                     | 20,468                 | 57.26%|
ONLEY, Ian (Australian Greens)              | 3,436                  | 9.61%|

2010 State election results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elected member</th>
<th>RYAN, Peter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total enrolment</td>
<td>39,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal votes:</td>
<td>35,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal votes:</td>
<td>1,615 (4.38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total votes:</td>
<td>36,838 (93.94%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candidate                                  | First preference votes | %   |
--------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----|
RYAN, Peter (Nationals)                     | 22,479                 | 63.82%|
JACKSON, Kate (Greens)                      | 3,495                  | 9.92%|
BOYCE, Steve (ALP)                          | 6,647                  | 18.87%|
HIRT, John (CA)                             | 2,602                  | 7.39%|

3. Participation

The VEC uses three measures to determine participation in the electoral system:

- enrolment: the proportion of the eligible voting population that enrols to vote
- turn-out: the degree to which those who are enrolled actually vote in elections
- Informality of voting: the degree to which those who vote cast an informal vote

Enrolment

At the close of roll, there were 40,649 electors enrolled, 408 more than at the close of roll for the 2014 State election.

See Section 5 of this report for information about enrolment.

Turnout

The turnout for the Gippsland South District by-election was 87.06%. This participation rate is considered satisfactory, particularly since the Labor party did not endorse a candidate for the by-election.

Informal voting

The informality rate of 5.51% was a marginal increase on the informality rate of 5.50% for Gippsland South District at the 2014 State election.

The informality rate for Gippsland South District is lower than the average informality rate of 8.95% for the five preceding State by-elections.

An analysis of informal voting at the Gippsland South District by-election is included in Appendix D.
4. Election Personnel

Election Manager

Ms Janine Taylor was appointed the Election Manager for Gippsland South District. The Election Manager was responsible for:

- staffing the election office
- receiving candidate nominations
- conducting the draw for ballot paper positions
- dealing with electoral enquiries
- appointing voting centre managers and election officials
- training voting centre managers
- receipt of how-to-vote cards for registration by the VEC
- supervising voting, and receiving and recording results
- declaring the election

The Election Manager was assisted by VEC staff and other election officials.

Support for Election Manager

Mr David Egan and Mrs Di Hastings were appointed as Assistant Election Managers, and Ms Therese Camm was appointed Election Support Officer.

The VEC supported the Election Manager through the provision of:

- training and advice on election management
- office equipment and furniture, computers, telephones and electronic fax, ballot boxes, voting screens and voting centre furniture
- help desk support and assistance for the VEC’s election management system and with other technical issues
- electoral materials, including voting centre and office forms and manuals
- telephone enquiry manual and a voter information campaign for the by-election
- assistance with public and media relations
- netbooks for use in voting centres

Recruitment and training

A total of 207 staff, including the Election Manager, two Assistant Election Managers and an Election Support Officer were appointed for the by-election. Of these, 149 were appointed as election officials at voting centres on Election Day.

A further 54 election casuals were appointed by the Election Manager to assist with early voting at the early voting centres, mobile voting, and administrative duties including counts conducted at the election office.

A three-hour training session was conducted for the voting centre managers, assistant voting centre managers, early voting centre managers and election liaison officers. The Election Manager and Assistant Election Manager had previous recent election experience and did not require additional training.

Mobile early voting centre team leaders received training prior to commencing work.
5. Services to Electors

Enrolment
The day after the issue of the writ for Gippsland South District, the VEC sent written notification of the by-election to every household in the electorate. The letter advised that, since a by-election would be held soon, eligible people who were not on the electoral roll should enrol, and those who had recently moved should update their enrolment details. This provided four working days for electors to ensure that they were correctly enrolled and eligible to vote in the by-election.

Enrolment advertisements were placed in both major daily papers (see Appendix C for the advertising schedule and sample communication products).

Electors were able to update their enrolment or enrol on the VEC website (vec.vic.gov.au). Printed enrolment forms were also available from the VEC website, Australia Post offices, Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) divisional offices and by contacting the VEC election office.

The VEC election office remained open until 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 February. The VEC also made arrangements with the AEC divisional offices at Warragul and Sale to remain open until 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 February.

At the close of roll, there were 40,649 electors enrolled, 408 more than at the close of roll for the 2014 State election.

Services for electors from non-English speaking backgrounds
According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census, English was stated as the only language spoken at home by 91% of people usually resident in Gippsland South District.

Electors could also access voting instructions translated into 21 languages (including English) placed inside each voting screen.

Accessibility of voting centres
All voting centre premises are rated for wheelchair accessibility using a rating assessment tool developed by the VEC, and ratings are included in advertisements, EasyVote letters and on the VEC website.

Both early voting centres were rated Accessible with Assistance (AWA). Of the 46 Election Day voting centres, 12 were rated as Fully Wheelchair Accessible (FWA), 25 were rated as Assisted Wheelchair Access (AWA) and the remaining nine were rated as No Wheelchair Accessibility (NWA).
Voting before Election Day

Early voting

Electors unable to vote on Election Day had the opportunity to vote early at early voting centres established within the Gippsland South District.

The early voting centres were located at:

- Leongatha – 1 Church Street
- Sale – 348 Raymond Street

Early voting centres were open between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday from Monday 2 March to Friday 13 March 2015. Extended opening hours were available on Saturday 7 March and Thursday 12 March. Both centres were rated Accessible with Assistance.

A total of 10,738 electors (30.34% of total voters) voted early, in person, for the by-election, compared with 10,321 (27.28% of total voters) for the District at the 2014 State election.

Mobile voting

A total of 399 electors took advantage of mobile voting, with a mobile voting team visiting 17 venues in the week prior to Election Day.

Voting interstate and overseas

Early voting services were provided at eight interstate locations and one overseas location- London.

A total of 28 early votes were cast outside Victoria for the Gippsland South District by-election. This compares with 89 for the District for the 2014 State election.

Postal voting

Electors unable to attend a voting centre on Election Day could apply for a postal vote. Postal vote applications were available for download at vec.vic.gov.au, and could be obtained at any post office in the District or by calling the VEC. Three postal votes were issued outside the State for the Gippsland South District by-election. This compares with 17 at the 2014 State election.

To help ensure the efficient delivery of ballot packs, postal vote applications were processed on the day they were received by the VEC. As postal vote applications may be received up until 6.00 pm on the Thursday prior to the election, the VEC contacted anyone whose application was received on that day to advise them that their vote had to be postmarked before or on election day to be included in the count, and to inform them of their voting options.

A total of 393 ballot packs were mailed to General Postal Voters and 1,259 election-specific postal vote applications were processed. In total, 1,339 postal votes were counted for the by-election. Figure 1 shows the proportion of total votes that were cast before Election Day.

Voting on Election Day

Electors could vote at any of the 46 voting centres open across the District on Election Day.

Provisional votes

People who were not on the roll but who claimed to be entitled to enrol and vote, were able to cast a provisional vote. They are required to show a proof of identification such as a driver licence or learner permit, or to nominate a service provider to be contacted for identity verification. Votes cast in this manner are classified as ‘provisional’ votes until the person’s enrolment details can be verified.

A total of 114 provisional votes (44.7% of the 255 provisional votes received) were admitted to the count. Most of the excluded provisional votes were rejected because the voters were enrolled in districts other than Gippsland South District.
6. Services to registered political parties and candidates

Eight candidates nominated for the Gippsland South District by-election compared with six candidates in the 2014 State election.

Candidate nomination forms could be completed on the VEC website or by calling the VEC directly. Parties nominated their candidates directly with the VEC and independent candidates nominated through the election office.

The VEC provided a handbook explaining aspects of electoral law directly relating to candidates. Candidates also received a VEC Candidates’ Kit containing:

- a how-to-vote card declaration
- an 'Appointment of Scrutineer' form
- an Electoral Roll Confidentiality Agreement
- a list of voting centres in the District (and early voting centres)
- estimated votes and the number of issuing points at each voting centre
- Election Manager contact details
- a nomination form
- a District fact sheet

After nominating and upon request, candidates were provided with a copy of the electoral roll for the District, on CD ROM, for the purposes of campaigning – in compliance with section 33(6) of the Electoral Act 2002.

By-election briefings for parties and candidates

Registered political parties were invited to attend individual briefing sessions before the close of nominations. One party participated.

Prospective independent candidates were invited to attend a briefing session conducted on 24 February 2015 at the election office. No prospective independent candidates attended.

Registration of how-to-vote cards

How-to-vote cards that are distributed within 400 metres of a voting centre on Election Day must be registered with the VEC. Political parties were required to register how-to-vote cards directly with the VEC. Independent candidates could submit their cards with the Election Manager for registration by the VEC.

A how-to-vote card checklist was provided in each candidate’s handbook, to ensure that all cards were correct, authorised and properly registered.

A total of 16 how-to-vote cards were registered for the Gippsland South District by-election (see Figure 2). As required by legislation, registered how-to-vote cards were published on the VEC website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party/Candidate/Stakeholder</th>
<th># HTVC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIAN GREENS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIAN GREENS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>AUSTRALIAN GREENS</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIAN GREENS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NATIONALS</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIBERAL</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</td>
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<td>PEPPER, Viv</td>
<td>1</td>
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FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF HOW-TO-VOTE CARDS REGISTERED, GIPPSLAND SOUTH DISTRICT BY-ELECTION 2015
7. Communication services

The Gippsland South District by-election communication campaign consisted of direct mail, newspaper advertising, a telephone enquiry service, proactive media relations, Facebook and Twitter posts, and information and services provided via the VEC website.

Direct mail

The VEC distributed 26,419 enrolment information letters to households in Gippsland South District from 18 February 2015.

An EasyVote letter was sent to each elector on the roll (excluding General Postal Voters). The EasyVote letter provided information about early voting, postal voting, overseas and interstate voting and Election Day voting arrangements. It also provided the location and accessibility rating of all voting centres, and a suggestion that the elector take the letter to the voting centre to help streamline the voting experience.

A total of 40,256 EasyVote letters were lodged with Australia Post for distribution on 27 February 2015. General postal voters were sent ballot material two business days after nominations closed.

Newspaper advertising

A series of advertisements that met the requirements set out in the Electoral Act 2002 appeared in local newspapers, as well as in The Age and Herald Sun throughout the election period (see Appendix C for placement details and advertisement samples).

Telephone enquiry service

The election office operated a dedicated telephone enquiry service from 18 February. Calls to the office peaked each time a mailout occurred, with electors calling to:
- check enrolment details
- ask for advice about what to do if they could not attend a voting centre on election day
- enquire about the location of election day voting centres

Email information

Electors could also email the VEC with requests and queries via its info@vec.vic.gov.au email address.

The main types of queries received during the election period related to:
- voting overseas
- who must vote, and
- where to vote

The VEC received a relatively low number of emails (28) through its info@vec.vic.gov.au email address.

Website

From the day the writ was issued, the VEC website provided information about the by-election for electors in the District, candidates and the general public. Traffic to the website increased marginally just prior to Election Day, with a total of around 5,000 page views of the primary by-election information page. There were 170 sessions on the voting centre lookup, 173 sessions on the registered how-to-vote cards and then 224 sessions looking at results on election night and the following two days.

Electors were able to update their enrolment details online via the VEC’s website. Online information detailed voting obligations and options for electors if they could not vote on Election Day. During the by-election period, 642 postal vote applications were downloaded directly from the site, and a total of 291 sessions involved the download of the list of voting centre locations (including interstate and overseas).

During the entire period, the most frequently accessed content was – in order of user sessions: results; how-to-vote cards; the election timeline; and voting centre locations. Candidate information and nomination forms were also available on the website.

Results were made available progressively on the VEC website after 6.00 pm on election night.
Social media

Facebook and Twitter were used by the VEC to help disseminate key election information and updates throughout the election.

When compared to the recent 2014 State election, social media activity was very quiet throughout the by-election.

The VEC posted a number of standard Tweets during the campaign; however, public posts regarding the by-election were the main activity seen on Twitter for the Gippsland South by-election.

There were only 159 posts to Twitter using the generally accepted tag #GippSthVotes and visits to the VEC’s Facebook page were only marginally higher than when no election is being conducted.

Media relations

The VEC distributed four media releases to local and State-wide media outlets throughout the election period. The releases aimed to inform the public of key electoral information, including the deadline for enrolments, the opening of candidate nominations, the final candidate list, the opening of the early voting period and voting options for Gippsland South District electors. A media advisory was also issued, offering the media the opportunity to film and photograph on election day and detailing the availability of results.

The VEC received media enquiries relating to the by-election from several local and two State-wide media outlets. The majority of queries concerned the timing of the by-election, registration of interest to film on the day, and availability of results. In addition, the VEC received media queries regarding an alleged candidate complaint.

8. Complaints

The VEC received three formal complaints about the Gippsland South District by-election. One complaint related to the lack of full wheelchair accessibility at a voting centre, one about an application available via the VEC website and another querying the processes employed in the conduct of the by-election. All complaints were managed in accordance with the VEC process and where relevant, appropriate response action was taken.

9. Counting the votes

After the 6.00 pm close of voting, the first-preference count took place in the voting centres and the results were phoned through to the election office.

A two-candidate-preferred (2CP) count, to distribute preferences to the two candidates considered most likely to be in the lead after the distribution of preferences, was conducted following each count of first-preference votes. The VEC had selected the Nationals and the Greens for the 2CP count. It became apparent on election night that the leading two candidates were the National and Liberal candidates. The VEC did not adjust the original 2CP figures, but extended the final preference distribution to achieve the 2CP split between the National Party and the Liberal Party.

Postal and early votes were counted in the election office on election night in the same count order as in the voting centres. Provisional votes were checked on the Monday after Election Day and those entitled to be admitted were counted.

A recheck was conducted on all ballot papers on the Monday and Tuesday following the election. A preference distribution was conducted to determine the result of the election.

10. Declaration of result, return of the writ

Mr Danny O’Brien (The Nationals) was declared the successful candidate on Wednesday 18 March 2015.

The writ was returned on 18 March 2015.
11. Actual cost

At 30 June 2015 the actual direct costs incurred by the VEC in conducting the Gippsland South District by-election was $337,233. This includes direct expenses and obligations related to salaries of temporary election personnel, advertising and associated infrastructure including office accommodation, transport and office requisites. These costs exclude the election entitlement payments shown in Figure 3.

12. Refund of nomination deposits

Upon nominating for an election, candidates (or their party) must provide a deposit of $350. This deposit is refunded if the candidate obtains at least 4% of the first preference vote or is elected. Deposits were refunded between April and June 2015.

Of the eight candidates, three were refunded their deposit, and five candidates forfeited the deposit with the funds being forwarded to consolidated revenue.

13. Electoral entitlements

An amount of $1.661 per vote was payable to political parties and independent candidates for this election where candidates obtained at least 4% of the first-preference votes.

An entitlement existed for three party candidates. There were no entitlements for independent candidates. All the entitlements were paid by 30 June 2015.

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FIGURE 3: ELECTORAL ENTITLEMENTS, GIPPSLAND SOUTH BY-ELECTION 2015
14. Enforcement of compulsory voting

Postal vote declarations received too late for the count, and elector information reports completed at voting centres on Election Day — detailing elector excuses for not voting — were processed through the compulsory voting module of the VEC’s Election Management System.

The first stage of the non-voter follow-up process is conducted under Part 9, Division 2 of the Electoral Act 2002. Subsequent follow-up of electors who do not respond to the ‘Apparent Failure to Vote’ notice, or who provide an invalid response, is conducted under the Infringements Act 2006.

- Electors who are deemed to be non-voters may receive two further notices from the VEC. An Infringement Notice providing notification of liability for a penalty amount (currently set at $74).
- A penalty reminder notice that includes costs as well as the original penalty.

Payment of penalties may be by cheque, money order, cash, via the internet using BPAY, or at any Australia Post outlet using the PostBillPay facility.

The first stage of compulsory voting follow-up for the Gippsland South by-election commenced on 20 May 2015, with 3,743 Apparent Failure to Vote notices mailed.

On 3 July 2015, 2,353 Infringement notices were mailed to apparent non-voters who either did not respond to the Apparent Failure to Vote notice, or provided an invalid excuse.

It is anticipated that enforcement of compulsory voting provisions will be completed by early 2016.

Further details of enforcement of compulsory voting provisions at the Gippsland South District by-election will be included in the VEC’s Annual Report.
15. Appendices
Appendix A:
Detailed voting statistics

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<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>165</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarram</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1250</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SANDERS, Warren</td>
<td>PEPPER, Viv</td>
<td>MEESTER, Deb</td>
<td>O'BRIEN, Danny</td>
<td>DONOHUE, Gerard J.</td>
<td>McNAB, Jim</td>
<td>LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</td>
<td>MILLSOM, Andrea</td>
<td>AUSTRALIAN GREENS</td>
<td>ROSSETTI, Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Ordinary Votes</strong></td>
<td>737</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>9915</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>3620</td>
<td>5474</td>
<td>1412</td>
<td>23198</td>
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<td><strong>Early Vote</strong></td>
<td>307</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>4672</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1369</td>
<td>3029</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>10738</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Postal Vote</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1339</td>
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<td><strong>Marked As Voted</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>Provisional</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Declaration Votes</strong></td>
<td>392</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>5205</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1638</td>
<td>3416</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>12192</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ALL VOTE TYPES</strong></td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>15120</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>5258</td>
<td>8890</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>35390</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Formal Vote Polled By Candidate</strong></td>
<td>3.38%</td>
<td>3.31%</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>45.22%</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
<td>15.72%</td>
<td>26.59%</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix B:
Distribution of preference votes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total valid first preference votes polled for all candidates:</th>
<th>33,439</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of votes required to constitute an absolute majority on first count:</td>
<td>16,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of informal votes:</td>
<td>1,951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates’ Names (in ballot paper order)</th>
<th>SANDERS, Warren</th>
<th>PEPPER, Viv</th>
<th>MEESTER, Deb</th>
<th>O’BRIEN, Danny</th>
<th>DONOHUE, Gerard J.</th>
<th>McDONALD, Jim</th>
<th>MILLSOM, Andrea</th>
<th>ROSSETTI, Scott</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total first preference votes recorded for each candidate</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>15120</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>5258</td>
<td>8890</td>
<td>33439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of 330 ballot papers of DONOHUE, Gerard J. (1st excluded candidate)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>330</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressive Total</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>1151</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>15175</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>5297</td>
<td>8927</td>
<td>33439</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer of 489 ballot papers of McDONALD, Jim (2nd excluded candidate)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>489</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressive Total</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>15307</td>
<td>5379</td>
<td>9037</td>
<td>33439</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer of 1172 ballot papers of PEPPER, Viv (3rd excluded candidate)</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Total</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>15415</td>
<td>5497</td>
<td>9098</td>
<td>33439</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer of 1700 ballot papers of SANDERS, Warren (4th excluded candidate)</td>
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<td>141</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressive Total</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>15556</td>
<td>5632</td>
<td>9177</td>
<td>33439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer of 3074 ballot papers of MEESTER, Deb (5th excluded candidate)</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>3074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressive Total</td>
<td>17040</td>
<td>6871</td>
<td>9528</td>
<td>33439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of 6871 ballot papers of MILLSOM, Andrea (6th excluded candidate)</td>
<td>4840</td>
<td>2031</td>
<td>2031</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL TOTAL</td>
<td>21880</td>
<td>11559</td>
<td>33439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O’BRIEN, Danny (The Nationals) elected at 5th exclusion
## Appendix C: Communication products

### Advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertisement</th>
<th>Outlets</th>
<th>Publish date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue of the writ</td>
<td>The Age and Herald Sun</td>
<td>18 February 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early voting</td>
<td>Latrobe Valley Express; Leongatha Star; Sale Gippsland Times; Wonthaggi South Gippsland Sentinel Times; Yarram Standard; Foster Mirror</td>
<td>2-4 March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to vote on election day</td>
<td>Latrobe Valley Express; Leongatha Star; Sale Gippsland Times; Wonthaggi South Gippsland Sentinel Times; Yarram Standard; Foster Mirror</td>
<td>9-11 March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote today</td>
<td>The Age and Herald Sun</td>
<td>14 March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result and return of the writ</td>
<td>The Age and Herald Sun (public notices)</td>
<td>21 March 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gippsland South District State by-election

I have received the writ from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Tim Long, MLC, issued on Tuesday 17 February 2015, for the election of one member of the Legislative Assembly for Gippsland South District.

The writ specifies the following dates for the by-election:

- **Close of roll:** 8.00 pm, Tuesday 24 February
- **Nominations close:** 12 noon, Friday 27 February
- **Election day:** Saturday 14 March
- **Return of the writ:** On or before Friday 3 April

**W. Cately, AM, Electoral Commissioner**

**Make sure you’re enrolled to vote!**

You are already enrolled for the Gippsland South District by-election if you’re on the State or Federal roll for your present address within the area shown on the map.

If you’re an Australian citizen, aged 18 years or more and are not enrolled, you must enrol to vote immediately.

If you have recently moved or changed your name, you must update your enrolment by 8.00 pm on Tuesday 24 February.

**How do I check if I’m on the roll?**

You can check your enrolment details to see if they are current at vec.vic.gov.au or by calling 1300 805 478.

**Upcoming events**

- **Voting is compulsory for all enrolled electors.**
- **Updating or enrolling your details online**
  - To enrol or update your details online, visit vec.vic.gov.au and use the online application to complete an electronic enrolment update; there is no need for paper forms.
  - If you are enrolling for the first time, you will need a driver licence number, Australian passport number or a person who is already on the electoral roll in Victoria to confirm your identity.

**Candidate information**

Registered political parties must nominate candidates at the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), Level 15, 330 Collins Street, Melbourne. Nominations close at 12 noon on Thursday 26 February. Late nominations cannot be accepted.

Candidates not endorsed by a registered political party must nominate with the Election Manager, Jannine Taylor, at 1 Church Street, Leongatha. The Election Manager will supply a Candidate Information Kit, which includes a nomination form. Nominations close at 12 noon on Friday 27 February. Late nominations cannot be accepted.

The Election Manager will conduct an information session for prospective non-party candidates at 4:00 pm on Tuesday 24 February at the election office, 1 Church Street, Leongatha.

For more information on nominating, please contact the Election Manager, Jannine Taylor, on 5642 8522.

**How-to-vote cards**

If a person or organization intends to distribute how-to-vote cards on election day, Saturday 14 March, the cards must be registered by the VEC.

Registered how-to-vote cards are the only form of printed electoral material that may be distributed within 400 metres of a voting centre on election day.

The period for submitting how-to-vote cards for registration is from Monday 2 March to 12 noon on Friday 6 March.

Organisations or individuals other than registered political parties can submit how-to-vote cards to the Election Manager, Jannine Taylor, or to the VEC.

Registered political parties must submit their how-to-vote cards for registration to the VEC at Level 15, 330 Collins Street, Melbourne.

How-to-vote cards submitted for registration after 12 noon on Friday 6 March cannot be accepted.

---

**Gippsland South District State by-election**
Early voting advertising

**Gippsland South District**
**State by-election: Early voting**

Election day for the Gippsland South District by-election is Saturday 14 March.

**Voting options**
If you can’t get to a voting centre on election day, there are two ways you can vote in advance.

**Vote in person**
Early voting locations are open between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday, until Friday 13 March. There are two locations:
- 1 Church Street, Leongatha
- 348 Raymond Street, Sale

Both venues are wheelchair accessible with assistance.

Both venues will be closed on Labour Day (Monday 9 March) but will have extended opening hours on:
- Saturday 7 March, 9.00 am to 2.00 pm
- Thursday 12 March, 8.30 am to 8.00 pm

**Vote by post**
Postal vote applications are available:
- online at vec.vic.gov.au
- at any post office within Gippsland South District
- at the election office: 1 Church Street, Leongatha
- at the Warragul and Sale Australian Electoral Commission offices
- by calling 131 832.

Post, fax or email a scanned copy of your correctly completed application immediately, using the details listed on the form.

Once your application has been processed, a ballot pack will be sent to you.

Follow the instructions to complete and post your ballot paper.

Ballot papers posted after 6.00 pm on Saturday 14 March cannot be counted.

**Voting if you will be interstate or overseas**
If you will be outside of Victoria on election day, you can vote before you leave or while you are away.

**Before you leave**
You can vote by post or in person as described opposite.

**While you’re away**
You can vote by post as described opposite.

Alternatively, voting services outside Victoria are available until the close of business on Friday 13 March at Victoria House, London (UK) or at selected locations in each Australian state and territory.

For locations, visit vec.vic.gov.au or call the Gippsland South District by-election office on (03) 5662 0522.

**Who can vote**
Everyone on the State electoral roll for Gippsland South District can cast a vote at any voting centre.

If you are an Australian citizen, over the age of 18, and you live in Gippsland South District but have never enrolled, you can enrol and vote on the spot. When you visit a voting centre within the District, simply bring one of the following documents:
- a driver licence or learner permit
- a council rates notice in your name
- an electricity bill in your name for your current home address
- a current Victorian identification, such as a Proof of Age card.

If you are on the State electoral roll for another district then you cannot vote in this by-election.

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**Contact Information**

131 832  vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.
How to vote on Election Day advertising

Gippsland South District
State by-election: Vote correctly this weekend

Election day for the Gippsland South District by-election is this Saturday 14 March

Who can vote?
Everyone on the State electoral roll for Gippsland South District can cast a vote at any voting centre.

If you are an Australian citizen, over the age of 18, and you live in Gippsland South District but have never enrolled, you can enrol and vote on the spot. When you visit a voting centre, simply bring one of the following documents:

• a driving licence or learner permit
• a council rates notice in your name
• an electricity bill in your name for your current home address
• a current Victorian identification, such as a Proof of Age card.

If you are on the roll for another district, you cannot vote in this by-election.

How to vote correctly
For your vote to count, you must complete your ballot paper correctly.

Put the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number 2, and the other boxes in order of your preference.

You must number every box for your vote to count. Use numbers only.

Candidates
The candidates, in the order in which they will appear on your ballot paper, are:

SANDERS, Warren
PEPPER, Viv
MEESTER, Deb
O’BRIEN, Danny
THE NATIONALS
DONOHUE, Gerard J.
MCDONALD, Jim
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
MILLSOM, Andrea
AUSTRALIAN GREENS
ROSETTLE, Scott
LIBERAL

The member elected to the Victorian State Parliament Lower House (or Legislative Assembly) as a result of this by-election will serve until the next State election in November 2018.

Voting is compulsory
Voting is compulsory if you were on the electoral roll for Gippsland South District at the close of the roll (8:00 pm on Tuesday 24 February 2015). You may be fined if you do not vote.

For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call 5662 0522

Voting centres will be open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm this Saturday 14 March

1. Alberton Primary School
   21 Thornett Street
   Alberton ANN

2. Aroona Public Hall
   377 Fanklark Road
   Aroona ANN

3. Beenb district Hall
   41 Main Road
   Beenb NWA

4. Berrys Creek Public Hall
   28 Berrys Creek Road
   Berrys Creek AVA

5. Devon North Public Hall
   St Mary’s Valley Road
   Devon North FWA

6. Dunblane Public Hall
   Fairview Road
   Dunblane FWA

7. Fish Creek Memorial Hall
   Fish Creek Ann

8. South Gippsland Secondary College
   2 Flower Street
   Fish Creek AVA

9. Golden Beach Community Hall
   1/11 Surf Edge
   Golden Beach AVA

10. Gordon Vale Mechanics Institute
    corner Main Street and Highwood Highway
    Gordon Vale FWA

11. Kiminy Public Hall
    21 Freshwater Road
    Kiminy NWA

12. Koonwarra Primary School
    1443 Wonthaggi-Raamby Road
    Koonwarra AVA

13. Koonwarra Fire Station
    Koonwarra - Innisfail Road
    Koonwarra AVA

14. Leongatha Anglican Parish Hall
    5 Bridge Street
    Leongatha FWA

15. Leongatha Secondary College
    Nerimba Road
    Leongatha AVA

16. St Peters Anglican Church
    corner Bruce and McCarrin Streets
    Leongatha NWA

17. Leongatha South and District Community Centre
    Bass Highway
    Leongatha South AVA

18. Loch Public Hall
    Smith Street
    Loch AVA

19. Loch Stow Public Hall
    National Park Road
    Loch Stow FWA

20. Longford Primary School
    6360 South Cappochee Highway
    Longford AWA

21. Margan Public Hall
    Cullens Road
    Margan FWA

22. McLean’s Union Church Hall
    Goate Street
    McLean’s AWA

23. Metung North Town Hall
    30 Ridgeley Street
    Metung North FWA

24. Mount Belloch Mechanics Institute
    Mount Belloch Hall Road
    Mount Belloch AWA

25. Nambrook Demon Primary School
    447 Saff-Clayton Road
    Nambrook NWA

26. Nemrana Public Hall
    Nemrana Road
    Nemrana AVA

27. Nyora Primary School
    Gundy Avenue
    Nyora AVA

28. Paeroa Consolidated School
    Main Street
    Paeroa AWA

29. Yacht Club Port Albert
    Bay Street
    Port Albert AVA

30. Port Franklin Public Hall
    Tramway Street
    Port Franklin AVA

31. Rosedale Public Hall
    37 Prince Street
    Rosedale NWA

32. Sale Primary School
    99 Patton Street
    Sale FWA

33. Sale Public Hall
    Gymkhana Cutoff
    Sale FWA

34. Sale Memorial Hall
    82-88 MacArthur Street
    Sale FWA

35. CIA Sandy-Point
    Surfside Walk
    Sandy Point NWA

36. Seagrap Public Hall
    Eton Street
    Seagrap AVA

37. Stacey’s Bridge Public Hall
    248 Albert River Road
    Stacey’s Bridge NWA

38. Steadman Hall
    4971 South Gippsland Highway
    Steadman FWA

39. Tarra Valley Mechanics Institute
    27 Riverlade Drive
    Tarra Valley NWA

40. Toora Community Hall
    23 Gray Street
    Toora AVA

41. Wattletree Fire Station
    40 Main Street
    Wattletree AVA

42. Warrua Public Hall
    Napier Road
    Warrua AVA

43. Woodside Public Hall
    Woodside Beach Road
    Woodside AVA

44. Warrua Primary School
    15-17 High Street
    Warrua FWA

45. Yanakie Public Hall
    Yanakie-Promontory Road
    Yanakie AVA

Yarram Guide and Scout Hall
79 Commercial Road
Yarram NWA

FWA - Full wheelchair access
AVA - Assisted wheelchair access
NWA - No wheelchair access
Vote today advertising

**Gippsland South District**
State by-election: Vote today

*Today is election day for the Gippsland South District by-election*

**Who can vote?**
Everyone on the State electoral roll for Gippsland South District can cast a vote at any voting centre.

If you are an Australian citizen, over the age of 18, and you live in Gippsland South District but have never enrolled, you can enrol and vote on the spot. When you visit a voting centre, simply bring one of the following documents:
- a driver licence or learner permit
- a council rates notice in your name
- an electricity bill in your name for your current home address
- a current Victorian identification, such as a Proof of Age card.

If you are on the roll for another district, you cannot vote in this by-election.

**How to vote correctly**
For your vote to count, you must complete your ballot paper correctly.

Put the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you most want to see elected, then number ALL the other boxes in your order of preference.

You must number every box for your vote to count. Use numbers only.

**Candidates**
The candidates, in the order in which they will appear on your ballot paper, are:

- SANDERS, Warren
- MEECHER, Gerard J
- McDONALD, Jim
- WILLOUGHBY, Andrew
- AUSTRALIAN GREENS
- ROSSETTI, Scott
- LIBERAL

The member elected to the Victorian State Parliament Lower House (or Legislative Assembly) as a result of this by-election will serve until the next State election in November 2018.

**Voting is compulsory**
Voting is compulsory if you were on the electoral roll for Gippsland South District at the close of the roll (8:00 pm on Tuesday 24 February 2015). You may be fined if you do not vote.

For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call 5662 0522

---

**Voting centres are open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm today**

1. Alberton Primary School
   21 Thomson Street
   Alberton FWA

2. Altona Public Hall
   377 Trafalgar Road
   Altona FWA

3. Benalla Public Hall
   41 Main Road
   Benalla FWA

4. Benny Creek Public Hall
   20 Benny Creek Road
   Benny Creek FWA

5. Devon North Public Hall
   599 Taroona Road
   Devon North FWA

6. Dumbok Public Hall
   Farmers Road
   Dumbok FWA

7. Fish Creek Memorial Hall
   Fish Creek Road
   Fish Creek FWA

8. South Gippsland Secondary College
   2 Palmer Street
   Sorell FWA

9. Golden Beach Community Hall
   319 Surf Side
   Golden Beach FWA

10. Gonnordale Mechanics Institute
    corner Main Street and Hyland Highway
    Gonnordale FWA

11. Kilmany Public Hall
    21 Freshwater Road
    Kilmany FWA

12. Korora Public School
    1445 Whiting/Korumburra Road
    Korora FWA

13. Korumburra Fire Station
    Korumburra Avenue
    Korumburra FWA

14. St Paul's Anglican Parish Hall
    5 Bridge Street
    Korumburra FWA

15. Leongatha Secondary College
    91 Borrow Road
    Leongatha FWA

16. St Peter's Anglican Church
    corner Bruce and McCarty Streets
    Leongatha FWA

17. Leongatha South and District Community Centre
    Bass Highway
    Leongatha South FWA

18. Loch Public Hall
    Smith Street
    Loch FWA

19. Loch Public Hall
    National Park Road
    Loch Sport FWA

20. Longford Primary School
    6380 South Gippsland Highway
    Longford FWA

21. Merinda Public Hall
    Colleen Road
    Merinda FWA

22. Meersyndra Uniting Church Hall
    Craig Street
    Meersyndra FWA

23. Milford North Town Hall
    30 Ridgeway Street
    Milford North FWA

24. Mount Eccles Mechanics Institute
    Mount Eccles Hall Road
    Mount Eccles FWA

25. Nambrok-Diogen Primary School
    947 Sale-Cowwarr Road
    Nambrok FWA

26. Nermine Public Hall
    Nermine Hall Road
    Nermine FWA

27. Ngunia Primary School
    Curran Avenue
    Ngunia FWA

28. Poowong Consolidated School
    Main Street
    Poowong FWA

29. Yacht Club Port Albert
    Bay Street
    Port Albert FWA

30. Port Franklin Public Hall
    Tennis Court Road
    Port Franklin FWA

31. Rosedale Public Hall
    37 Prince Street
    Rosedale FWA

32. Andrews Primary School
    99 Paton Street
    Sale FWA

33. Sale College Gymnasium
    Guthridge Captop
    Guthridge FWA

34. Sale Memorial Hall
    82-90 Macaulay Street
    Sale FWA

35. CAHA Sandy Point
    Sullivan Walk
    Sandy Point FWA

36. Seaweed Public Hall
    Fletcher Street
    Seaweed FWA

37. St Marys Bridge Public Hall
    348 Albert River Road
    St Marys Bridge FWA

38. Strathbogie Hall
    4971 South Gippsland Highway
    Strathbogie FWA

39. Trafalgar Lower Mechanics Institute
    27 Riverside Drive
    Trafalgar FWA

40. Toora Community Hall
    23 Grey Street
    Toora FWA

41. Wonthaggi Fire Station
    40 Main Street
    Wonthaggi FWA

42. Wonthaggi Public Hall
    Nagle Road
    Wonthaggi FWA

43. Woodside Public Hall
    Woodside Beach Road
    Woodside FWA

44. Wurrum Primary School
    39 Fish Street
    Wurrum FWA

45. Yanakie Public Hall
    Yanakie Promenade Road
    Yanakie FWA

46. Yarram Guide and Scout Hall
    80 Commercial Road
    Yarram FWA

FWA - Full wheelchair access
AWA - Assisted wheelchair access
NWA - No wheelchair access
Result and return of the writ notice

Gippsland South District
State by-election

DECLARATION OF RESULT

The candidate elected in the Gippsland South District by-election held on Saturday 14 March 2015 was:

Danny O’Brien
The Nationals

I have returned the writ to the Hon. Telmo Languiller, MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The writ was issued on Tuesday 17 February 2015 for the election of one member to the Legislative Assembly to represent Gippsland South District.

Detailed results are available at vec.vic.gov.au

Warwick Gately AM
Victorian Electoral Commission

Media releases and advisories

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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Headline</th>
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<td>Date set for Gippsland South by-election</td>
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<td>Nominations</td>
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<td>Close of roll (District enrolment figures)</td>
<td>Gippsland South District prepares for by-election</td>
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<td>Close of nominations and start of early voting period</td>
<td>Candidates announced for Gippsland South District by-election</td>
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Direct mail

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product</th>
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<th>Dispatch</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment letter to households</td>
<td>Key election dates and how to check and update your enrolment</td>
<td>26,419</td>
<td>18 February 2015</td>
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<td>EasyVote letter</td>
<td>Voting options, voting locations, contact information and an EasyVote Card</td>
<td>40,256</td>
<td>27 February 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Important information:
Gippsland South District by-election

To the householder

Are you correctly enrolled?
A by-election for your District is being held on Saturday, 14 March 2015. By law, if you are an Australian citizen over the age of 18, you must be enrolled at your current address once you have lived there for one month.
If you’ve moved since you last enrolled, or have changed your name or post office box, you must ensure your enrolment details are up to date by 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 February.
If you are an Australian citizen, aged 18 or over and you are not enrolled, you need to enrol immediately.

How do you check if you are on the roll?
Check online at vec.vic.gov.au or call 1300 805 478.

Enrolling or updating your enrolment online
To enrol or update your details online, just visit vec.vic.gov.au and use the online application to complete an electronic enrolment update; there is no need for paper forms.
If you are enrolling for the first time, you will need a driver licence number, Australian passport number or a person who is already on the electoral roll in Victoria to confirm your identity.

Enrolling or updating your enrolment with a paper form
Paper enrolment forms are available at any post office, Centrelink or Australian Electoral Commission office. Alternatively, visit vec.vic.gov.au to download a printable form.
Completed enrolment forms should be mailed immediately to the Victorian Electoral Commission, Reply Paid 66506, Melbourne, Victoria, 8001 (no stamp is required). You can also fax it to (03) 9277 7126, email a scanned copy to elector@vec.vic.gov.au or deliver the form in person to one of the offices listed below:
- Australian Electoral Commission, 79-91 Raymond Street, Sale
- Australian Electoral Commission, Shop 4, 76 Smith Street, Warragul
- Victorian Electoral Commission, Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne
You must ensure that you’re enrolled and that your details are correct by 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 February.

Do you have to enrol?
Enrolling and keeping your enrolment details up-to-date are compulsory. However, if you have never enrolled or have let your details lapse, you will not be penalised if you enrol for this by-election.

Voting in the by-election
The VEC will write to all enrolled voters before election day providing information about the various voting options that will be available.
If you are registered as a General Postal Voter, your ballot material will be mailed to you from Monday, 2 March.

Check your enrolment online at vec.vic.gov.au or call 1300 805 478

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.
Your EasyVote Letter:

Gippsland South District by-election

The Gippsland South District by-election will be held on

Saturday 14 March 2015

Voting is between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm

VOTING IS COMPULSORY - AVOID A FINE

Where can I vote?

You can vote at any voting centre within Gippsland South District between 8.00 am to 6.00 pm on Saturday 14 March.

A complete list of voting centres is available on the back of this letter.

Can I vote early?

If you can’t get to a voting centre on election day, you can vote at any early voting centre listed below:

- 1 Church Street, Leongatha AWA
- 348 Raymond Street, Sale AWA

Early voting is also available at Victoria House, London, UK, and at various interstate locations.

Early voting centres are open between 8.30 am and 6.00 pm on weekdays until Friday 13 March (excluding Labour Day, Monday 9 March), with extended hours on Saturday 7 March (9.00 am to 2.00 pm) and Thursday 12 March (8.30 am to 8.00 pm).

Can I vote by post?

Postal vote applications are available:

- online at vec.vic.gov.au
- at any post office within Gippsland South District
- at the election office: 1 Church Street, Leongatha
- at the Warragul and Sale Australian Electoral Commission offices
- by calling 131 832.

The VEC must receive your postal vote application by 6.00 pm on Thursday 12 March.

Is voting compulsory?

Yes. Voting is compulsory if you were on the State or Federal roll for Gippsland South District at 8.00 pm on Tuesday 24 February.

You may be fined if you do not vote.

For more information, visit vec.vic.gov.au or call (03) 5662 0522.
Election day is Saturday 14 March. Voting is between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm.

Election day voting centre locations

1. Alberton Primary School
   21 Thomson Street
   Alberton FWA

2. Aranuata Public Hall
   371 Fairbank Road
   Aranuata AWA

3. Beni Public Hall
   41 Main Road
   Bena NWA

4. Benrys Creek Public Hall
   20 Benrys Creek Road
   Benrys Creek NWA

5. Devon North Public Hall
   599 Tarra Valley Road
   Devon North FWA

6. Dumbalki Public Hall
   Farmers Road
   Dumbalki FWA

7. Fish Creek Memorial Hall
   Falls Road
   Fish Creek AWA

8. South Gippsland Secondary College
   2 Pioneer Street
   Foster FWA

9. Golden Beach Community Hall
   1/1 Surf Edge
   Golden Beach AWA

10. Gormandale Mechanics Institute
    corner Main Street and Hyland Highway
    Gormandale FWA

11. Kilmany Public Hall
    21 Freshwaters Road
    Kilmany NWA

12. Kongwai Primary School
    1445 Wonthaggi-Korumburra Road
    Kongwai AWA

13. Koonwarra Fire Station
    Koonwarra - Inverloch Road
    Koonwarra AWA

14. St Paul's Anglican Parish Hall
    5 Bridge Street
    Korumburra AWA

15. Leongatha Secondary College
    Nerrina Road
    Leongatha AWA

16. St Peter's Anglican Church corner Bruce and McCalear Streets
    Leongatha FWA

17. Leongatha South and District Community Centre
    Bass Highway
    Leongatha South AWA

18. Loch Public Hall
    Smith Street
    Loch AWA

19. Loch Sport Public Hall
    National Park Road
    Loch Sport FWA

20. Longford Primary School
    6380 South Gippsland Highway
    Longford AWA

21. Mandon Public Hall
    Coulters Road
    Mordan FWA

22. Meeniyan Uniting Church Hall
    Goulde Street
    Meeniyan AWA

23. Mirboo North Town Hall
    39 Ridgeway Street
    Mirboo North FWA

24. Mount Eccles Mechanics Institute
    Mount Eccles Hall Road
    Mount Eccles AWA

25. Nambrook-Denison Primary School
    947 Sale-Cowwarr Road
    Nambrook AWA

26. Nerrina Public Hall
    Nerrina Hall Road
    Nerrina AWA

27. Nyora Primary School
    Grundy Avenue
    Nyora AWA

28. Poowong Consolidated School
    Main Street
    Poowong AWA

29. Yacht Club Port Albert
    Bay Street
    Port Albert NWA

30. Port Franklin Public Hall
    Tramway Street
    Port Franklin AWA

31. Rosedale Public Hall
    37 Prince Street
    Rosedale NWA

32. Araik Primary School
    99 Pasten Street
    Sale FWA

33. Sale College Gymnasium
    Gulgurie Campus
    Gulgurie Parade
    Sale FWA

34. Sale Memorial Hall
    82-88 MacAlister Street
    Sale FWA

35. CFA Sandy Point
    Surfers Walk
    Sandy Point NWA

36. Seaspray Public Hall
    Fitcher Street
    Seaspray AWA

37. Stacey's Bridge Public Hall
    248 Albert River Road
    Stacey's Bridge NWA

38. Stadbrooke Hall
    4971 South Gippsland Highway
    Stadbrooke AWA

39. Tarwin Lower Mechanics Institute
    27 Riverside Drive
    Tarwin Lower AWA

40. Toora Community Hall
    23 Gray Street
    Toora AWA

41. Welshpool Fire Station
    40 Main Street
    Welshpool AWA

42. Won Wron Public Hall
    Napier Road
    Won Wron AWA

43. Woodside Public Hall
    Woodside Beach Road
    Woodside AWA

44. Wuruk Primary School
    13-19 Fish Street
    Wuruk FWA

45. Yanakie Public Hall
    Meeniyan-Promontory Road
    Yanakie AWA

46. Yarram Guide and Scout Hall
    80 Commercial Road
    Yarram NWA

FWA - Fully wheelchair accessible
AWA - Assisted wheelchair access
NWA - Not wheelchair accessible
Appendix D: Analysis of informal votes

Informal votes at the Gippsland South by-election

There were 1,951 informal votes at the by-election, comprising 5.51% of total votes. The informal voting rate was practically identical to the 5.5% informal vote in Gippsland South at the 2014 State election. Informal voting at the Gippsland South by-election was the lowest at a by-election since the 2010 Altona by-election (4.96%). This report examines the incidence of the informal vote at the by-election. The report also describes the types of mistakes that informal voters made and how they varied from those at the 2014 State election.

The range of candidates can affect the informal voting rate. In district by-elections over the past decade where both major parties were standing, the informal vote was a median of 1.33 percentage points lower than at the preceding State election. In contrast, where a major party was not standing, the informal vote was 3.14 percentage points higher than at the State election. It appears than some party supporters prefer to vote informally than to vote for another party or candidate. However, in this case the absence of a Labor candidate at the by-election had no apparent effect on the informal voting rate.

Informal voting rates ranged from 1.6% at Mardan to 11.1% at Tarwin Lower. Broadly, informal voting rates tended to be higher in the larger towns and the coastal communities and very low in small rural localities. The informal voting rate at the voting centres fluctuated marginally between the State election and the by-election, with little apparent pattern in the variations between voting centres.

In the survey of informal ballot papers, the VEC used the same categories as in its analyses of informal ballot papers since the 2006 State election. These categories are described in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>The bulk of these ballot papers were presumably deliberately informal, though they might include ballot papers lodged by people who had difficulties with the whole voting process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – 1 only</td>
<td>Ballot papers including insufficient numbers to constitute a formal vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – insufficient</td>
<td>Ballot papers including number sequences such all ‘1’s, or ‘0’, or ‘1’, ‘10’, ‘300’, which indicate an intention to cast an informal vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – apparently deliberate</td>
<td>Ballot papers with ticks or crosses in every square, indicating an intention to reject all the candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing – apparently deliberate</td>
<td>Ballot papers with writing or drawings indicating opposition to all the candidates, including those with a cross over the whole paper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1: CATEGORIES USED BY THE VEC IN ANALYSIS OF BALLOT PAPERS
Table 2 shows the results of the survey for the by-election and for Gippsland South at the 2014 State election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2015 by-election</th>
<th>2014 State election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>577 (29.6%)</td>
<td>754 (36.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – 1 only</td>
<td>124 (6.4%)</td>
<td>603 (29.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – insufficient</td>
<td>91 (4.7%)</td>
<td>172 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – deliberate</td>
<td>153 (7.8%)</td>
<td>140 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers – other</td>
<td>413 (21.2%)</td>
<td>49 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticks/crosses – preference</td>
<td>52 (2.7%)</td>
<td>135 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticks-crosses – deliberate</td>
<td>116 (5.9%)</td>
<td>52 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticks/crosses – other</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>45 (2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing – deliberate</td>
<td>420 (21.5%)</td>
<td>96 (4.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing – other</td>
<td>5 (0.3%)</td>
<td>29 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,951</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,075</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Results of survey of informal ballot papers cast for Gippsland South at 2015 by-election and at 2014 State election - detailed categories

Blank ballot papers were the largest category of informal votes, with 577 votes, or 29.6% of the total. This was a significant reduction from the 754 blank ballot papers (36.3%) cast by Gippsland South voters at the 2014 State election.

Writing – deliberate was the second largest category of informal votes (21.5%) – an enormous increase from the 4.6% in this category at the State election.

The third largest category was ‘numbers – other’, with 21.2% of the total. In this category, voters appear to have attempted to vote correctly, but skipped or duplicated numbers. The number of votes in this category was more than eight times larger than at the State election (2.4%).

As at other by-elections, the proportion of informal ballot papers with a single 1 (6.4%) was much lower than at the State election (29.1%). Without the confusion of the Upper House ballot paper (on which most voters do vote ‘1’), very few Gippsland South by-election voters made this mistake.

Table 3 shows the results of the survey in broader categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2015 by-election</th>
<th>2014 State election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>577 (29.6%)</td>
<td>754 (36.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>781 (40%)</td>
<td>964 (46.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticks/crosses</td>
<td>168 (8.6%)</td>
<td>232 (11.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>425 (21.8%)</td>
<td>125 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,951</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,075</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Results of survey of informal ballot papers cast for Gippsland South at 2015 by-election and at 2014 State election - broad categories

There were slightly fewer numbering errors and many more in the writing category than at the State election. Ticks and crosses were a relatively small group in Gippsland South. In the State election as a whole, 13.01% of informal votes were in this category, with the incidence being higher in districts with larger proportions of recent immigrants, many of whom would have voted using a tick or cross in their former homelands.
Table 4 groups the various categories of deliberately informal votes and shows the result when the blank ballot papers are added to the marked ballot papers that were deliberately informal. It also groups the ballot papers that indicated a clear preference (either through the number “1” or a single tick or cross).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2015 by-election</th>
<th>2014 State election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apparently deliberate</td>
<td>689 (35.3%)</td>
<td>288 (13.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparently deliberate including blank</td>
<td>1,266 (64.9%)</td>
<td>1,042 (50.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicating preferences</td>
<td>267 (13.7%)</td>
<td>910 (43.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,951</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,075</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4: RESULTS OF SURVEY OF INFORMAL BALLOT PAPERS CAST FOR GIPPSLAND SOUTH AT 2015 BY-ELECTION AND AT 2014 STATE ELECTION - DELIBERATELY INFORMAL AND PREFERENCE VOTES**

The proportion of apparently deliberate informal votes was much higher than at the State election, and the number of preference votes was greatly diminished. There appears to be a trend to a substantial protest vote at by-elections, particularly in normally safe seats.