Services to the Media
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Media Briefing

The media were invited to a briefing on Thursday 9 October. Nineteen State political reporters and journalists attended, representing 3AW, AAP, ABC, Financial Review, Herald Sun, Nine Network, The Age, and The Australian.

Senior VEC staff provided an outline of the State election timeline, voter information campaign, State electoral boundaries, legislative changes, complaints process and the methods of accessing results on election night. Attendees were also provided with a range of resources, such as a media handbook, the Electoral Boundaries Commission 2012-2013 Report, candidate handbooks for both the Upper House and Lower House, various maps and the State Election Service Plan for their reference.

Media Handbook

A media handbook was developed and distributed to Victorian metro and regional media outlets prior to the election period.

The handbook contained State election information such as timelines, key facts and figures, State boundary and legislative changes, maps, an electoral pendulum, and details about various VEC programs and the voter information campaign.

Media Releases

Forty-four media releases and advisories were issued to targeted contacts of metro and regional media outlets to keep them informed of key electoral information during the election.

Four media releases, based on the main phases of the election cycle, were translated into 17 languages and distributed to over 200 ethnic media publications.

In addition, the VEC organised the pre-recording of five radio grab sets for the State election. Each grab set corresponded to the main phases of the election cycle, while also taking into consideration the best timing for optimal airplay. These grabs were downloaded for broadcast by 259 syndicates and broadcast stations.

Media Interviews

More than 350 State election media enquiries and interviews were logged during the election period.

The highlights included an interview on ABC’s 7.30 program, where the Electoral Commissioner discussed the VEC’s preparations in the lead up to Election Day and the reasons for discontinuing the Tally Room.

During the election period, 10 metro media outlets, including SBS Radio, interviewed community educators and covered the VEC’s Democracy Ambassador Program.

Media Centre

A dedicated media centre was created on the VEC website, providing a hub of useful links, resources, and information for the media.

The media centre received 4,697 page views during the election period, with the State election releases landing page receiving an additional 725 views, and media releases receiving a collective total of over 1,000 views.

Results Feed and Virtual Tally Room

Election results were provided as downloadable data files in a form that could be programmed for media coverage. These files included information on candidates, party affiliation (where applicable) and voting locations. The XML feed drilled down to the provisional results at individual voting centres within each district.

The results data files were also published at regular intervals on the Virtual Tally Room, which was hosted on a secure site dedicated to the publication of results. The Virtual Tally Room site received a total of 1,268,502 page views.

Tally Room

Stakeholder requirements for a Tally Room have varied as technology has led to more flexible options for the media, analysts and interested parties to access results data directly.

In mid-2013, the Electoral Commissioner wrote to all the mainstream media outlets, political parties and analysts to gauge the level of interest in continuance of a central Tally Room on election night for the 2014 State election.

Feedback from a number of stakeholders indicated a preference to access data directly from their own premises, and the VEC decided to discontinue the tally room on election night.

This decision accords with the situation in other states and the Commonwealth, where the Tally Room is no longer part of the electoral landscape.