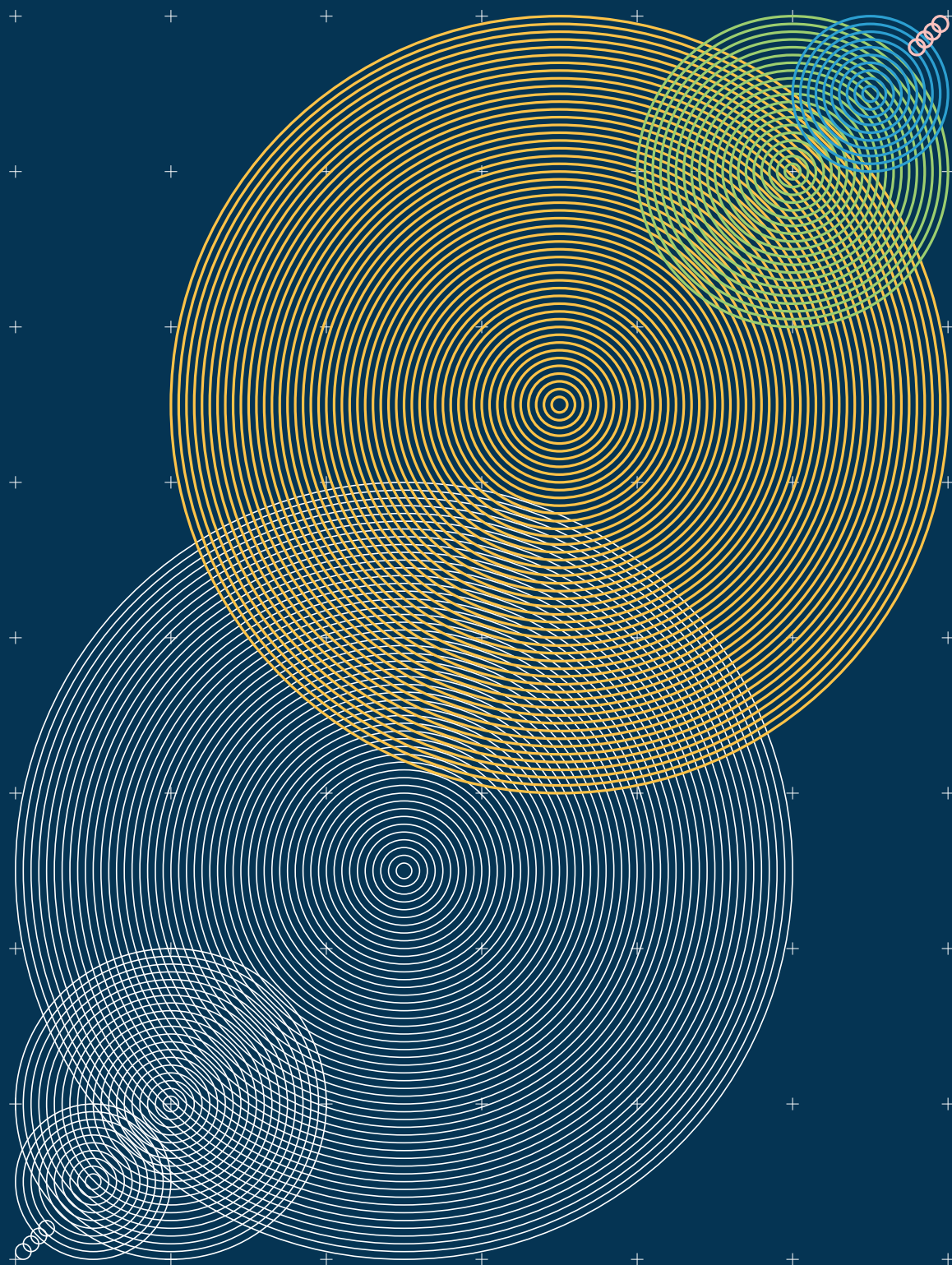


Election report

Ararat Rural City Council

2024 Local government elections

April 2025



Letter of Transmittal

14 April 2025

Dr Tim Harrison
Chief Executive Officer
Ararat Rural City Council
PO Box 246
Ararat VIC 3377

Dear Dr Harrison

Pursuant to Regulation 83 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020, I submit this report to the Chief Executive Officer of Ararat Rural City Council on the general election held in October 2024.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sven Bluemmel', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this nation, as the traditional custodians of the lands on which the VEC works and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present, and emerging. The VEC is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Election report
Ararat Rural City Council
2024 Local government elections

Voter turnout (front cover)

Graphic representation of the Council's voter turnout rate for the 2024 and 2020 Local Government elections.

Rings are grouped into units to visualise the turnout percentage, each ring representing 1%. Data for 2024 is depicted using coloured rings, while data for 2020 is shown in white.

Ararat Rural City Council

Turnout (2024): 83.54%

Turnout (2020): 83.80%

1% 

5% 

10% 

20% 

50% 

Contents

1. Introduction	5	Appendix 7:	
2. Key changes.....	6	Daily breakdown of the general mail out.....	41
3. Election dates.....	7	Appendix 8: Result information.....	42
4. About Ararat Rural City Council.....	8	Appendix 9: Election participation statistics	43
5. Voters' roll.....	9	Appendix 10: Complaints.....	44
6. Advertising and communication campaign	10		
7. Election manager	12		
8. Election office	13		
9. Candidates	14		
10. Voting.....	15		
11. Return of ballot paper envelopes	16		
12. Results.....	17		
13. Election statistics	18		
14. Complaints.....	19		
15. Post-election activities.....	20		
16. Non-voter follow up	21		
17. Evaluating VEC services.....	22		
Appendices.....	23		
Schedule 1:			
Record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes.....	23		
Appendix 1: Breakdown of the voters' roll.....	25		
Appendix 2: Public notices	26		
Appendix 3:			
Schedule of media releases and advisories	31		
Appendix 4: VoterAlert advisories	33		
Appendix 5:			
Voter engagement program and initiatives	36		
Appendix 6:			
Final list of candidates in ballot paper order	37		

1. Introduction

The Victorian local government general elections are held every 4 years as set out in the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (**LG Act**). In 2024, general elections were held for 78 of the 79 Victorian councils with Saturday 26 October marking election day. In accordance with section 263(1) of the LG Act, the Victorian Electoral Commission (**VEC**) is the statutory election service provider for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria.

This report provides information on the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council general election including details of the end-to-end service delivery of electoral activities throughout the election timeline. This report also provides details of post-election activities including compulsory voting enforcement.

About the Victorian Electoral Commission

The VEC is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (**Electoral Act**). The VEC's principal functions are to conduct State elections, local government elections, certain statutory elections and polls, commercial and community elections, and to support electoral representation processes for local councils and the Electoral Boundaries Commission for State electoral boundaries. The VEC is also responsible for maintaining the Victorian register of electors and administering political funding and donation disclosure laws. The VEC has a mandated role to conduct electoral research, provide communication and education services, and inform and engage Victorians in the democratic process.

Sven Bluemmel is the appointed Electoral Commissioner and Dana Fleming is the appointed Deputy Electoral Commissioner. The Electoral Commissioner and Deputy Electoral Commissioner report to the Victorian Parliament in relation to the VEC's operations and activities.

The Electoral Commissioner heads the VEC's Executive Management Group that comprises the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, the Executive Director, Corporate Services and 7 Directors, each leading the main functional areas of the VEC. Each Director acts as subject matter experts and oversees legislative responsibilities under the LG Act and the Electoral Act.

The VEC has a dedicated local government election program framework that incorporates a range of programs, projects and activities that are supported through strategic planning, project management, and process mapping. The program is overseen by the VEC's Delivery Group and has sponsorship from the Executive Management Group.

2. Key changes

Changes in legislation

The *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* (Vic) received royal assent on 25 June 2024 and introduced a number of changes to local government electoral legislation.

The VEC implemented the necessary changes to the 2024 local government election program in response to the reforms as they applied to the elections.

Key changes from *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*

Close of roll	<p>The date for the close of roll was extended from 57 days to 80 days before the election. For all elections after the October 2024 general elections, including by-elections, the date for the close of roll will be 73 days before election day.</p> <p>The previous timelines were no longer viable due to an increase in the scale and complexity of local government elections, including changes to enrolment entitlements, population growth, higher number of wards, likely increase in the number of candidates, and reduction in mail services offered by Australia Post.</p> <p>By moving this date earlier, other key dates including nomination day, the lodgement date for candidate statements and questionnaires, and the period for mailing out of ballot materials have been brought forward through the <i>Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020</i> (Vic) (LG Regulations) providing more time to ensure they are sustainable.</p>
Certification of the roll	<p>The timeframe for roll certification was increased to 23 business days (previously 13 business days) to ensure CEOs (or their delegates) and the VEC have adequate time to process enrolment applications and complete related roll certification processes.</p>
Candidate statement word limit	<p>In response to the pandemic, the LG Regulations permitted candidate statements to be increased from 200 to 300 words for the 2020 local government elections, acknowledging that candidates at the 2020 elections would face restrictions in campaigning.</p> <p>As candidates would no longer face pandemic-based barriers to campaigning activities, the word limit was reverted to 200 words. Equivalent amendments were also applied to the <i>City of Melbourne (Electoral) Regulations 2022</i> (Vic).</p> <p>Returning to the original word limit allowed the VEC to produce smaller candidate statement booklets, reducing associated printing costs and administrative burden.</p>
Rejection and amendment of candidate statements	<p>The time allowed for a candidate to amend their statement was reduced by one day to now be the day after the close of nominations (or 38 days before election day). This aligned the periods for rejections and amendments with the earlier deadline for lodging a candidate statement, allowing additional time to print ballot packs.</p>
Close of candidate statements, photos and questionnaires	<p>The deadline for submitting a candidate statement, photograph and questionnaire was amended to close the same day as the close of nominations at 12 noon, facilitating a more efficient process for candidates and allowing the VEC more time to print ballot packs.</p>
Mailout of ballot pack	<p>The timeline for conducting the mailout of ballot materials was extended from occurring over 3 business days to 4 business days, allowing the VEC to manage the risk of mail service level reductions and provide additional safeguards against election fraud.</p>

3. Election dates

Key timelines for the 2024 local government elections

Deadline fixed by the VEC for council primary enrolment data	Monday 15 July 2024
Close of roll	4 pm Wednesday 7 August 2024
Opening of the election office to the public	Monday 9 September 2024
Certification of the voters' roll and opening of nominations	Monday 9 September 2024
Close of nominations	12 noon Tuesday 17 September 2024
*Deadline for lodging candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires	12 noon Tuesday 17 September 2024
*Ballot draw	From 10 am Wednesday 18 September 2024
*General mail out of ballot packs to voters	Monday 7 October to Thursday 10 October 2024
*Close of voting	6 pm Friday 25 October 2024
Day prescribed as Election Day	Saturday 26 October 2024
*Close of extended postal vote receipt period	12 noon Friday 1 November 2024
Declaration of election results	No later than Friday 15 November 2024

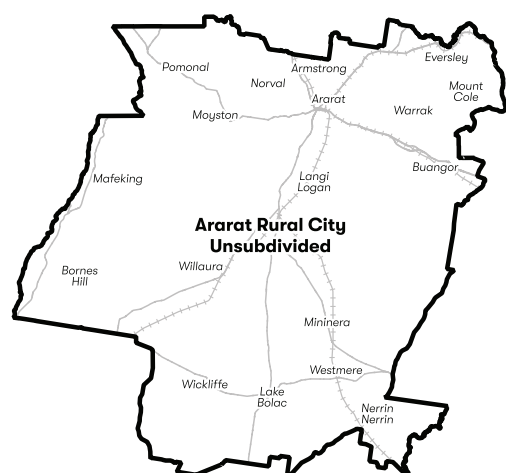
*Dates with asterisks relate to contested elections only.

4. About Ararat Rural City Council

Ararat Rural City Council is comprised of 7 councillors elected from an unsubdivided structure.

The structure was last reviewed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* through an electoral representation review in 2019.

Figure 1: The electoral structure of Ararat Rural City Council at the general election held on 26 October 2024.



5. Voters' roll

The VEC prepared the voters' roll for the election under section 8(2)(c) of the Electoral Act and in accordance with section 249 of the LG Act. The close of roll for the election was 4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024. Pursuant to section 249(4) of the LG Act, the VEC certified the voters' roll on Monday 9 September 2024.

At certification, the voters' roll for the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council general election included 8,331 enrolled voters.

Composition of the voters' roll

Section 249 of the LG Act specifies that the voters' roll for a local government election is formed by combining 2 separate lists of voters:

1. The Electoral Commissioner's list (EC list) – list of State electors that are enrolled within that local government area.
2. The Chief Executive Officer's list (CEO list) – list of council-entitled voters.

Refer to **Appendix 1** for a breakdown of the Ararat Rural City Council general election voters' roll.

Amendments to the voters' roll

In accordance with section 250 of the LG Act, the VEC is able to amend any error or omission in the preparation, printing or copying of the voters' roll, or correct any misnomer or inaccurate description of any person, place or thing on the voters' roll. Amendments to the voters' roll are to be certified by the VEC.

All voters added to the roll were issued with a ballot pack. Where a voter was removed from the roll after the mail-out of ballot material, the VEC had systems in place to ensure that returned ballot papers from the deleted voters could be identified and excluded from the extraction and count. Where roll amendments were required, the total number of voters on the roll was updated.

Following the close of roll, no amendments were required to the council's voters' roll.

6. Advertising and communication campaign

State-wide advertising

The VEC delivered a state-wide advertising campaign to maximise public awareness and participation amongst all eligible voters. Campaign activities and consistent messaging were delivered across 2 phases – enrolment and voting – and through multiple traditional and emerging mediums, including radio, digital and social media, and offline/outdoor advertising.

Public notices

The VEC published a series of public notices on the VEC website throughout the election as required by the LG Act. The notices included critical information relevant to each milestone of the election timeline.

For the 2024 general election, Ararat Rural City Council nominated the following newspapers for the public notices:

- › The Ararat Advocate
- › The Ararat Advertiser | The Stawell Times News

Refer to **Appendix 2** for further information in relation to the public notices.

VEC website

The VEC provided council specific information regarding the election on its website. The VEC website went live for the local government elections in early July 2024. Whilst some council-specific data remained static during the election, the website was regularly updated with content relevant to the election and at each key milestone such as close of roll, nominations, voting and results.

Media liaison

An online media briefing was held on Monday 29 July 2024. The briefing was made available to view on the VEC website for media representatives unable to join the live event. The media briefing provided an overview of the planning, timeline, legislative changes and other key information for the 2024 local council elections.

Media outlets were provided with a media handbook that outlined the election timeline and key information, and provided the VEC's head office media contacts. This was made available along with other resources from the VEC's media centre webpage. The VEC's communication team supported each election manager with managing media interest locally in their council area.

The VEC's media liaison program principally featured scheduled state-wide and tailored council-specific media releases aimed at highlighting key milestones during the election and capitalise on existing general news coverage.

More information on the VEC's media release schedule is available at **Appendix 3**.

The media program also involved a responsive media enquiry service, as well as the translation and distribution of 3 key media releases for multiple non-English news outlets in Victoria.

Social media campaign

As part of its state-wide advertising campaign, the VEC used paid promotions on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and WeChat, targeting voters through audience segmentation.

This advertising was supported by a defined timeline of organic social media posts on the VEC's channels, designed to cover each of the key messages of the communication campaign to further extend the reach to the community and promote conversation about the democratic process.

VoterAlert advisories

State-enrolled voters can sign up to VoterAlert, our free SMS and email service, to receive reminder messages about elections that affect them. They can subscribe to messages via SMS, email, or both.

During the general election, we used VoterAlert to send direct messages on:

Wednesday 17 to Wednesday 31 July 2024 –

4,059 voters were contacted by VoterAlert messages sent by SMS and/or email reminding voters to enrol or update their details by the close of roll.

Monday 7 October to Monday 14 October 2024 –

4,053 voters were contacted by VoterAlert messages sent by SMS and/or email advising that we had commenced posting ballot packs.

Tuesday 22 October to Wednesday 23 October 2024 –

2,727 voters were contacted by VoterAlert messages sent by SMS and/or email reminding voters that it was the last week to post their ballot material back to us.

More information on VoterAlert is available at **Appendix 4**.

Voter engagement

The VEC delivered an extensive voter engagement program throughout Victoria, specific to local demographics.

Appendix 5 contains the full list of initiatives for the 2024 local government elections.

Democracy ambassadors

The VEC delivered education sessions conducted by our Democracy Ambassadors to a range of councils. The sessions focused on enrolment and voting for the election. These sessions were offered to councils in priority areas and delivered at no cost to council. Where resourcing allowed, requests for sessions that were not in the priority area were also fulfilled.

One session was delivered for the Ararat Rural City Council election.

Blind and low-vision services

Braille and large print ballot material was available to blind and low-vision voters who registered for these products by 5 pm on Tuesday 17 September 2024.

The VEC received and processed no requests for braille ballot material and one request for large print ballot material for Ararat Rural City Council.

Interpreting services

The VEC engaged the Victorian Interpreting and Language Services' Language Loop to provide a telephone interpreting service for telephone enquiries from voters who had a first language other than English. The VEC advertised direct lines for 20 languages other than English and a general line for all other languages.

Public enquiry service

A centralised contact centre was established to respond to telephone public enquiries. This ensured consistency in messaging, early identification of themes and trends along with the opportunity to enable election offices to focus on election administration. The call centre was also responsible for emails received during the local government elections. Any calls regarding CEO list applications were referred to the relevant councils. Outside the call centre hours of operation, a recorded service was available that provided information on enrolment and voting.

Election offices fielded phone queries from local candidates on issues directly related to their candidacy (as separate to general queries about running as a candidate).

A total of 121 telephone calls were recorded for Ararat Rural City Council during the 2024 local government elections. An overall total of 11,758 email queries were received for all councils.

7. Election manager

The VEC maintains a pool of trained senior election officials from across Victoria to fill election management roles for State and local government elections. Election-specific training is provided to senior election officials before they are appointed for each election.

The size of election management teams depends on the size of the council. Under the LG Act, an election manager is appointed to conduct each council's election and is supported by one or more assistant election managers.

In accordance with regulation 21(1) of the LG Regulations, the VEC appointed Alan Dennis as the election manager for the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council general election.

The appointed assistant election manager was Robyn Shaw.

8. Election office

The election manager was responsible for establishing and managing the election office at Gum San Chinese Heritage Centre, 31-33 Lambert Street, Ararat. The premises were provided by the Council.

9. Candidates

Nominations opened at 9 am on Monday 9 September and closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September 2024. Candidates were required to lodge their nomination forms in person at the election office. The nomination fee was \$250.

Candidate information

The VEC developed resources to support prospective candidates with the nomination process, including a candidate handbook. From mid-July, candidates could access information about nominating as a candidate for the election. The online Candidate Helper, accessible via the VEC website, went live on Tuesday 20 August 2024. Candidate Helper enabled candidates to complete most of their nomination forms and other forms online before lodging them in person with the election manager.

For the Ararat Rural City Council 2024 election, the VEC's candidate information session was delivered in person by the election manager. Additionally, a candidate information video was available on the VEC website from Tuesday 20 August 2024.

Nominations

At the close of nominations, 12 candidates had successfully nominated for the election, which includes any candidates who retired after the close of nominations. Candidates who withdrew before the close of nominations are not included.

The ballot draw to determine the order of the names on the ballot paper was held at the election office following the close of nominations using the VEC's computerised ballot draw application.

See **Appendix 6** for the list of candidates in ballot draw order.

Candidate statements and photos

In accordance with regulation 39 of the LG Regulations, candidates were able to submit a 200-word statement and a recent photograph for inclusion in the ballot packs sent to voters. The deadline for these items was 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September 2024.

See **Appendix 6.1** for a breakdown of submitted statements and photos and **6.2** for sample ballot material.

Candidate questionnaires

In accordance with regulation 43 of the LG Regulations, candidates could also submit answers to a set of prescribed questions. The election manager accepted questionnaires from 12 of the 12 candidates at the election.

Voters could read the completed questionnaires on the VEC website or access them by contacting the election office.

Retirement of a candidate

In accordance with the LG Regulations, at any time after the close of nominations and before election day, a candidate may retire, or be retired by the VEC. A candidate can only retire if it will result in an uncontested election or if they are not qualified to be a Councillor. If the VEC believes a candidate was not entitled to nominate, it must formally query the candidate's qualification and invite written reasons why they are entitled. If the VEC remains satisfied that the candidate is not entitled, it must retire the candidate from the election.

When a candidate is retired from an election, the VEC is required to take all practicable steps to remove the retired candidate's name from ballot papers. If it is not practicable to do so, during the counting of votes the retired candidate's votes are passed on to other candidates according to voters' preferences.

There were no candidate retirements at the Ararat Rural City Council election.

10. Voting

Ballot pack preparation and redirection

Artwork for ballot papers and candidate statements is generated using the VEC's automation tool. This tool selects from a range of pre-defined artwork templates and populates them with the relevant candidate information directly from the VEC's election management system database.

Following an extensive quality assurance process, print-ready artwork files were securely transmitted directly to the VEC's contracted ballot material printer ready for production. The VEC's contracted mail house directly printed the voters' addresses (mailing and entitlement address) and barcodes on the ballot paper envelopes in preparation for assembly and delivery of ballot packs. The VEC utilised multiple third party providers to assemble the ballot packs prior to the mail house lodging with Australia Post. The mail house allocated a secure area within its operations that was used solely for the printing, insertion, and dispatch of ballot material. This ensured the highest standards of security were met.

Electors could apply to have their ballot material redirected to an address other than their entitlement address. Voters had until the certification day for the voters' roll (also the day that nominations open) to apply for their ballot material to be redirected. The VEC arranged for ballot material to be delivered to any voter applying for redirection to the address specified in their request. For the 2024 local government elections, voters had until Monday 9 September 2024 to submit redirection requests.

The election manager received 2 requests for redirection of ballot packs for the election.

Early votes

Voters could request an early postal ballot envelope (early vote) before the general mail out of ballot packs. The election manager processed requests and issued early votes where the request was assessed as reasonable. Requests for early votes could be processed from Wednesday 18 September 2024, the day after nominations closed, until the start of the general mail out of ballot packs on Monday 7 October 2024.

Due to the timing of early votes, some early voters may not have had access to the candidate statements, photographs or questionnaires.

The election manager issued a total of 10 early votes for the election.

Mail-out of ballot packs

The VEC mailed 8,331 ballot packs between Monday 7 and Thursday 10 October 2024.

See **Appendix 7** for a breakdown of the packs sent on each day of the general mail out. The VEC did not mail ballot packs to voters who passed away between the close of roll and generation of the mail-out file.

This included 2 ballot packs which were redirected to alternative addresses for voters who had applied to redirect their ballot pack by Monday 9 September 2024.

In accordance with regulation 49(3) of the LG Regulations, no more than 35% of ballot packs were mailed or delivered to voters on any one day during the mail-out period. All ballot packs were lodged with Australia Post under the priority paid delivery timetable.

The VEC liaised closely with Australia Post during the mail-out period to confirm that ballot packs had been delivered to voters. Australia Post confirmed all ballot packs had been delivered by Tuesday 15 October 2024.

During the voting period, 189 ballot packs were returned to the election office by Australia Post as return-to-sender mail. In most cases, this was likely due to the addressee no longer residing at the address.

Unenrolled votes

The election manager issued unenrolled votes to people whose names could not be found on the voters' roll but said they were entitled to vote at the election. The unenrolled ballot pack included a declaration for the voter to sign. The election manager assessed the declaration and decided to admit or disallow the vote.

The election manager issued 2 unenrolled votes and following relevant checks, none were admitted to the count.

Replacement ballot packs

Following the general mail out of ballot packs, a voter who claimed that their ballot pack had not been received, or had been lost, spoilt, or destroyed, could apply for a replacement vote by completing an online application form or contacting the public enquiry service.

A centralised team processed applications and mailed replacement ballot packs to the postal address provided. Voters also had the option to attend the election office in the council for which they hold entitlement, to have a replacement vote issued over the counter.

272 replacement ballot packs during the voting period were issued. Please refer to **Schedule 1** for further information on replacement ballot packs issued.

11. Return of ballot paper envelopes

VEC provided voters with a priority reply paid envelope to return their completed ballot paper and ballot paper envelope. The return mail was delivered to the election office from local postal facilities or mail distribution centres. Voters could also put their ballot papers and envelope in a ballot box at the election office.

As ballot paper envelopes were returned, they were progressively checked by the election manager to ensure they had been signed by the voter. Additionally, processes were in place to ensure that only one returned ballot paper from any one voter could proceed to the extraction and count.

The election manager received a total of 6,315 returned ballot paper envelopes by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 25 October 2024.

In accordance with regulation 57(3) of the LG Regulations, the election manager could accept returned ballot paper envelopes until 12 noon on the Friday following the close of voting, if they thought the voter had signed the envelope before voting closed.

The election manager accepted 820 ballot paper envelopes during the extended postal vote receipt period.

The total returned ballot paper envelopes for Ararat Rural City Council was 7,135.

The election manager set aside 155 returned ballot paper envelopes that were not admitted to the extraction and counting process due to the voter not having signed the declaration envelope or, in the case of unenrolled declaration votes, an entitlement was not found for the person, or the declaration envelope was not returned with the vote.

Refer to **Schedule 1** for the total certified record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes for Ararat Rural City Council.

12. Results

Extraction

The extraction process involved separating the declaration flaps containing voters' details from each admitted ballot paper envelope, and then extracting the ballot papers from the envelopes. This 2-stage process maintains anonymity and ensures the VEC can track the number of envelopes for ongoing reconciliation.

A total of 6,980 ballot paper envelopes were admitted to the extraction process.

Ballot papers were extracted at the election office from Tuesday 29 October 2024. The extraction of all admitted ballot paper envelopes was completed on Wednesday 6 November 2024, following the close of the extended postal vote receipt period.

If the VEC found any returned ballot paper envelopes that did not contain a ballot paper, contained more than one ballot paper, or did not contain the correct ballot paper, these were required to be rejected and not counted. There were 20 returned ballot paper envelopes rejected during the extraction activity.

Following the extraction of ballot papers from the ballot paper envelopes, a total of 6,960 ballot papers proceeded to the count.

Computer count

A computer count information session explaining the process was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website from Friday 18 October 2024.

Following the extraction of ballot papers admitted to the count for Ararat Rural City Council, preferences on ballot papers were data entered into the VEC's computer counting application at the election office. The application distributes preferences using the proportional representation method once data entry of ballot paper preferences is complete. Results were calculated at the election office on Thursday 7 November 2024.

The VEC published provisional results on its website as they became available. Results were updated as finalised once declarations had taken place.

For a breakdown of first preference results, refer to **Appendix 8**.

Recounts

At any time before a candidate is declared elected, the election manager or a candidate may initiate a recount. Election managers initiate recounts if margins

in a preference distribution are close or critical. Candidates must ask for a recount in writing, with the reasons for their request. The election manager and head office staff assess candidate recount requests and either accept or deny them.

The election manager received one request for a recount for Ararat Rural City Council. This request did not proceed to the recount process.

Scrutineers

Scrutineers help deliver fair and transparent elections by observing election activities. They contribute to electoral integrity and help build public trust. Scrutineers can observe all activities involved in ballot paper and envelope processing.

Candidates are not permitted in election venues during extraction and counting activities and instead appoint scrutineers. Each candidate could appoint one scrutineer per election official involved in an activity. To appoint scrutineers, candidates completed a hardcopy 'Appointment and declaration of scrutineer form', which the candidate signed and submitted to the election manager. All scrutineers then had to sign the form's formal declaration in front of an election official. The declaration meant the scrutineers committed to eligibility and legal requirements and the VEC's conditions of entry.

A *Scrutineer handbook* was made available to all candidates and scrutineers with information on the role and responsibility of scrutineers during election activities. It included overviews of the activities so that scrutineers could understand what to expect during election activities they may attend. When scrutineers attended election venues they were briefed on their responsibilities and the processes they would witness. Scrutineers were instructed when and how they could challenge activities when ballot paper formality was being decided and votes were being counted. Scrutineers were allowed to notify election managers if they disagreed with the decision made by an election official on ballot paper formality or whether votes were counted for the selected candidate. Election managers reviewed the challenge and made a final decision on the ballot paper.

Declaration of results

In the Service Plan, the VEC committed to complete all results declarations by Friday 15 November 2024.

The results of the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council general election were declared at 3 pm on Friday 8 November 2024 at Steps of the Municipal Offices, 59 Vincent Street, Ararat.

The VEC website was updated following the declaration to reflect the elected candidates.

13. Election statistics

Participation

Participation is measured by the number of voters marked off the roll as a percentage of the total enrolment and can vary from turnout. The overall participation rate in the Ararat Rural City Council election was 84.85%, which is higher than the state average of 83.79% (excluding Melbourne City Council) and lower than the 85.68% rate at the 2020 Ararat Rural City Council general election.

Analysis of voter participation for the different enrolment categories shows that participation is lower for voters who are enrolled on the EC's list (84.67%) compared to voters enrolled on the CEO's list (94.67%).

Refer to **Appendix 9** for further information on participation, including a breakdown by enrolment category.

Turnout

Voter turnout is measured by the number of formal and informal ballot papers counted in the election as a percentage of voters on the voters' roll for the election.

The overall voter turnout for the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council general election was 83.54%. This is compared to the state average turnout of 81.46% (excluding Melbourne City Council). The voter turnout at the 2020 general election for the council was 83.80%.

Informality

The overall informal voting rate recorded at the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council general election was 4.78%, compared with the State average of 3.47%. An informality rate of 4.10% was recorded at the Ararat Rural City Council general election held in October 2020.

14. Complaints

Type of complaints

At local government elections, complaints generally fall into 2 broad categories:

1. Election Administration

Complaints about the conduct of the election and services to voters.

2. Election participation and conduct

Complaints about candidates and other participants in the election, at times alleging a breach of the LG Act or local laws.

Most complaints at the 2024 local government elections related to the second category, and often alleged inappropriate or illegal action by a person or group associated with the election.

Complaints process

The VEC have a streamlined complaints process during elections, developed with local councils and enforcement agencies. Complaints must be lodged in writing, then processed at head office. For the 2024 local government elections, customers could provide feedback and complaints online.

Complaints alleging a breach of the LG Act are forwarded to the Local Government Inspectorate. Complaints relating to local laws are referred to council. Complaints about the VEC's services, or the behaviour or actions of VEC staff and election officials, are the responsibility of the VEC.

The VEC is committed to responding to each complaint within 5 working days.

Complaints received

The VEC received 2 written complaints relating to the election for Ararat Rural City Council.

Please see **Appendix 10** for a description of complaints received by the VEC.

15. Post-election activities

Storage of election material

The VEC will keep all records from the election safely and secretly in accordance with regulation 79 of the LG Regulations.

Refund of nomination fees

Nomination fees were refunded to eligible candidates on Tuesday 17 December 2024. Eligible candidates include those elected or who received at least 4% of the first preference vote. Any forfeited nomination fees were remitted to the council on Tuesday 17 December 2024.

Courts and tribunals

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) is responsible for hearing disputes on the validity of an election under section 311 of the LG Act.

Applications for a review of the declaration of the results of an election must be lodged within 14 days of the declaration and can be made by a candidate in the election, 10 persons who were entitled to vote at the election, or the VEC.

There were no applications to VCAT disputing the result of the Ararat Rural City Council general election.

16. Non-voter follow up

In accordance with section 267 of the LG Act, the VEC has commenced its compulsory voting enforcement program. Any person who was required to vote at the election and failed to vote will be issued with an 'Apparent failure to vote' notice in February/March. Apparent non-voters have 28 days to respond.

People who do not respond to the notice, or do not provide a satisfactory response, may be issued with an infringement notice in April/May that will incur a penalty. Further follow-up with a penalty reminder notice in July may also occur – this stage includes the original penalty and a penalty reminder notice fee. Penalties collected on behalf of council will be reimbursed at the end of the infringement and reminder notice stages.

Additionally, during the infringement and penalty reminder notice stages, non-voters may ask for their matter to proceed directly to the Magistrates' Court.

These requests will be actioned at the conclusion of the infringement and penalty reminder notice stages. The VEC will lodge the file of any remaining non-voters with Fines Victoria at the end of the penalty reminder notice stage.

17. Evaluating VEC services

The VEC is committed to providing high quality election services to its local government clients. Through a formal feedback and debriefing program, the VEC can gauge its performance and seek advice for future local government election projects.

Feedback from councils

The VEC invited feedback from councils on its services in December 2024. Additional feedback can be provided to the LG2024 Program Manager by emailing LGProgram2024@vec.vic.gov.au

Internal debriefing program

After every electoral event, the VEC conducts an internal debriefing program that includes input from all areas of its workforce. Internal debriefing following the local government elections began in December 2024. The VEC will publish a consolidated report on its performance and key statistics from the elections. This will be tabled in Parliament and available on the VEC website.

Appendices

Schedule 1: Record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes

Ararat Rural City Council election	
Ballot papers printed	
Victorian Electoral Commission	10,001
Election manager	15
Total	10,016
Ballot papers issued	
General mail out	8,331
Early and replacement votes	282
Unenrolled declaration votes	2
Spoilt	0
Sub total	8,615
Unused	1,401
Total	10,016
Declarations returned	
General mail out admitted to the extraction	6,774
Early and replacement votes admitted to the extraction	206
Unenrolled declaration votes admitted to the extraction	0
Returned declarations unable to be admitted to the extraction	155
Declarations returned to sender	189
Sub total	7,324
Declarations not returned	1,291
Total	8,615

Schedule 2: Certification statement

In accordance with Regulation 77, I certify that Schedule 1 of this report on the conduct of the 2024 Ararat Rural City Council local government election is a true and correct account of the number of ballot papers issued, returned and not used in this election and declarations not returned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sven Bluemmel', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner

Appendix 1: Breakdown of the voters' roll

Ararat Rural City Council election	Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act	Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242–245 of the LG Act	Total voters enrolled
Ararat Rural City Council	8,181	150	8,331

Appendix 2: Public notices

Schedule of public notices

Close of roll notice

VEC website/public notices	24 July 2024
The Ararat Advocate	26 July 2024
The Ararat Advertiser I The Stawell Times News	26 July 2024

Notice of election

VEC website/public notices	12 August 2024
The Ararat Advocate	16 August 2024
The Ararat Advertiser I The Stawell Times News	16 August 2024

Voting details notice

VEC website/public notices	20 September 2024
The Ararat Advocate	4 October 2024
The Ararat Advertiser I The Stawell Times News	4 October 2024

Reminder notice

VEC website	13 October 2024
The Ararat Advocate	18 October 2024
The Ararat Advertiser I The Stawell Times News	18 October 2024

Notice of result

VEC website/public notices	8 November 2024
The Ararat Advocate	22 November 2024
The Ararat Advertiser The Stawell Times News	22 November 2024

Appendix 2.1: Sample public notices

Close of roll

Sample Council postal election

My council, my vote

You must be enrolled to vote

A general election for Sample Council will be held in October 2024. To be able to vote in the election, you must be enrolled by the close of roll at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024**. Two categories of voters can be enrolled to vote in the Sample Council election: State-enrolled voters and Council-enrolled voters.

State-enrolled voters

Am I enrolled to vote?

You are automatically enrolled for this election if:

- you will be 18 years of age or over on Saturday 26 October 2024 and
- you live in the Sample Council and you are on the State electoral roll for your current address.

You need to enrol if:

- you are an Australian citizen aged 18 or over on Saturday 26 October 2024 and
- you live in the Sample Council and you are not on the State electoral roll or
- you have lived at your current residential address within the Sample Council for at least a month and have not yet updated your enrolment details, including any changes to your postal address.

How do I enrol?

You can enrol online at [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

You can also download an enrolment form from the website.

All enrolment applications must be received by the Victorian Electoral Commission by the close of roll at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024**.

How can I check my State enrolment?

You can check your enrolment details online at [vec.vic.gov.au](#) at any time, or call 131 832.

Sample Council logo

How do I apply to be a Council-enrolled voter?

If you meet any of the above criteria and wish to enrol, contact Sample Council on 0000 0000 for a council enrolment form. Council enrolment forms must be received by the Council by the close of roll at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024**.

How can I check if I am Council-enrolled?

You can check your enrolment details by contacting the Council on 0000 0000.

Thinking about standing for election?

To nominate as a candidate for Sample Council, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for Sample Council and
- be eligible to become a councillor and
- have completed the mandatory candidate training provided by Local Government Victoria before lodging your nomination with the Election Manager.

For further information, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

Enrolment closes

4 pm Wednesday 7 August 2024

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832

For enquiries in languages other than English:

• Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0100 • Assyrian (Assyrian) 9209 0160 • Burmese (Burmese) 9209 0161 • 简体中文 (Mandarin) 9209 0106 • 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101 • Croatian (Croatian) 9209 0102 • Dari (Dari) 9209 0193 • **Thưongjān** (Dinka) 9209 0119 • **Ελληνικά** (Greek) 9209 0103 • **Հայերէն** (Hazragi) 9209 0162 • **Italiano** (Italian) 9209 0104 • **ភាសាខ្មែរ** (Khmer) 9209 0192 • **한국어** (Korean) 9209 0194 • **македонски** (Macedonian) 9209 0105 • **नेपाली** (Nepali) 9209 0163 • **فارسی** (Persian) 9209 0195 • **ภาษาไทย** (Thai) 9209 0164 • **Türkçe** (Turkish) 9209 0110 • **اردو** (Urdu) 9209 0165 • **Tiếng Việt** (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 • All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorised by S. Bluemel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionsvic

VEC Victorian Electoral Commission

Notice of election

Sample Council postal election

My council, my vote

Vote by post this October

Ballot packs will be mailed to voters enrolled in the Sample Council general election from Monday 7 October. Complete and return your ballot material ASAP. Ballot material must be in the mail or delivered to the election manager by **6 pm on Friday 25 October**.

If you will be away

If you will be away when ballot packs are mailed, or your address has changed since Wednesday 7 August, you can request for your ballot pack to be redirected by completing the online redirection form at [vec.vic.gov.au/redirections](#), or call 131 832.

Requests for redirection must be received by 5 pm on Monday 9 September.

Large print and braille ballot papers

Large print or braille ballot papers are available for voters who are blind or have low vision – please register by 5 pm Tuesday 10 September. To register, call 03 8620 1314 during business hours.

Early votes

If you will be away during the voting period (7–25 October), you can go to your local election office to vote in person, from 10 am on Wednesday 18 September.

The Sample Council election office is at:

Sample election office address

Sample Council logo

How to nominate as a candidate

To nominate as a candidate, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters roll for Sample Council AND
- be eligible to become a councillor should you be elected AND
- have completed the mandatory candidate training before lodging your nomination with the election manager.


To nominate, complete the nomination form and lodge it with the election manager together with the \$250 nomination fee. Nomination forms can be lodged by appointment during business hours from Monday 9 September until 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September at the election office.

Visit [vec.vic.gov.au](#) for more information and to pre-complete your nomination form using the online Candidate Helper. The online Candidate Helper will be available from Tuesday 20 August.

If you use the online Candidate Helper, print your pre-completed form and make an appointment to lodge it with the election manager along with the nomination fee.

Call the election manager from Monday 9 September on 131 832 to make a nomination appointment.

Nominations close 12 noon Tuesday 17 September.



Candidate information session

Sample time sample date at sample venue name, sample address

Candidate information kits containing nomination forms and other electoral information will be available online and from the election manager.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

For enquiries in languages other than English:

• Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0100 • Assyrian (Assyrian) 9209 0160 • Burmese (Burmese) 9209 0161 • 简体中文 (Mandarin) 9209 0106 • 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101 • Croatian (Croatian) 9209 0102 • Dari (Dari) 9209 0193 • **Thưongjān** (Dinka) 9209 0119 • **Ελληνικά** (Greek) 9209 0103 • **Հայերէն** (Hazragi) 9209 0162 • **Italiano** (Italian) 9209 0104 • **ភាសាខ្មែរ** (Khmer) 9209 0192 • **한국어** (Korean) 9209 0194 • **македонски** (Macedonian) 9209 0105 • **नेपाली** (Nepali) 9209 0163 • **فارسی** (Persian) 9209 0195 • **ภาษาไทย** (Thai) 9209 0164 • **Türkçe** (Turkish) 9209 0110 • **اردو** (Urdu) 9209 0165 • **Tiếng Việt** (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 • All other non-English languages 9209 0112

[vec.vic.gov.au](#) | 131 832 | @electionsvic

Authorised by S. Bluemel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

VEC Victorian Electoral Commission

Voting details notice

Sample Council postal election

My council, my vote

Sample Council logo

An election will be held for Sample Council.

Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material will be mailed to enrolled voters from **Monday 7 October**.

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Tuesday 15 October** please visit vec.vic.gov.au to complete the online replacement form, or call **131 832** to arrange a replacement.

Candidates

Candidates who have nominated for election are listed in the ballot packs and at vec.vic.gov.au

A photo and candidate statement will also be included if provided by candidates. Responses to a candidate questionnaire, if provided, are available at vec.vic.gov.au

How to vote correctly

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you want to see elected, then number all the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number **every box** and only use each number once.

How to return your ballot pack

Put your completed ballot paper in the ballot paper envelope, complete the declaration, then post it ASAP using the reply-paid envelope provided, or hand deliver it during election office hours to:

Sample election office address

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were enrolled at 4 pm on Wednesday 7 August. This includes state-enrolled and council-enrolled voters.

If you don't vote and don't have a valid excuse, you may be fined.

Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand delivered by **6 pm Friday 25 October**.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | **131 832**

For enquiries in languages other than English:

* Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0100 * Assyrian (Assyrian) 9209 0160 * Burmese (Burmese) 9209 0161 * 普通话 (Mandarin) 9209 0106 * 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101




* Croatian (Croatian) 9209 0102 * 丹麥語 (Danish) 9209 0193 * Dinka (Dinka) 9209 0119 * Ελληνικά (Greek) 9209 0103 * Հայերէշ (Hazaragi) 9209 0162 * Italiano (Italian) 9209 0104


* Khmer (Khmer) 9209 0192 * 한국어 (Korean) 9209 0194 * македонски (Macedonian) 9209 0105 * नेपाली (Nepali) 9209 0163 * فارسی (Persian) 9209 0195 * ภาษาไทย (Thai) 9209 0164

* Türkçe (Turkish) 9209 0110 * اردو (Urdu) 9209 0165 * Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 * All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorised by S. Bluemel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionsvic

 **Victorian Electoral Commission**

Reminder notice

Sample Council postal election

My council, my vote

Sample Council logo

An election is being held for Sample Council.

Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material were mailed to enrolled voters from **Monday 7 October**.

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Tuesday 15 October** please visit vec.vic.gov.au to complete the online replacement form, or call **131 832** to arrange a replacement.

Candidates

Candidates who have nominated for election are listed in the ballot packs and at vec.vic.gov.au

How to vote correctly

You must complete your ballot paper correctly for your vote to count. Put the number **1** in the box next to the candidate you want to see elected, then number all the other boxes in order of your choice. You must number **every box** and only use each number once.

How to return your ballot pack

Put your completed ballot paper in the ballot paper envelope, complete the declaration, then post it ASAP using the reply-paid envelope provided, or hand deliver it during election office hours to:

Sample election office address

Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were enrolled at 4 pm on Wednesday 7 August. This includes state-enrolled and council-enrolled voters.

If you don't vote and don't have a valid excuse, you may be fined.

Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand delivered by **6 pm Friday 25 October**.

State-enrolled voters can register for free VoterAlert SMS and email reminders at vec.vic.gov.au

vec.vic.gov.au | **131 832**

For enquiries in languages other than English:

* Arabic (Arabic) 9209 0100 * Assyrian (Assyrian) 9209 0160 * Burmese (Burmese) 9209 0161 * 普通话 (Mandarin) 9209 0106 * 廣東話 (Cantonese) 9209 0101




* Croatian (Croatian) 9209 0102 * 丹麥語 (Danish) 9209 0193 * Dinka (Dinka) 9209 0119 * Ελληνικά (Greek) 9209 0103 * Հայերէշ (Hazaragi) 9209 0162 * Italiano (Italian) 9209 0104


* Khmer (Khmer) 9209 0192 * 한국어 (Korean) 9209 0194 * македонски (Macedonian) 9209 0105 * नेपाली (Nepali) 9209 0163 * فارسی (Persian) 9209 0195 * ภาษาไทย (Thai) 9209 0164

* Türkçe (Turkish) 9209 0110 * اردو (Urdu) 9209 0165 * Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) 9209 0111 * All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorised by S. Bluemel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

@electionsvic

 **Victorian Electoral Commission**

Declaration of results

Sample Council election

Declaration of results

Sample Council logo

The following candidates were elected to Sample Council at the general election held in October 2024:

Sample Ward 1	Sample elected candidate 4	Sample Ward 8
Sample elected candidate 1	Sample Ward 5	Sample elected candidate 8
Sample Ward 2	Sample elected candidate 5	Sample Ward 9
Sample elected candidate 2	Sample Ward 6	Sample elected candidate 9
Sample Ward 3	Sample elected candidate 6	
Sample elected candidate 3	Sample Ward 7	
Sample Ward 4	Sample elected candidate 7	





Further details about the results are available at [vec.vic.gov.au](#)

Sample Election Manager name


Election Manager

Sample declaration date

vec.vic.gov.au | 131 832 | @electionvic



Authorized by S. Blumel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.



Victorian
Electoral
Commission

Appendix 3: Schedule of media releases and advisories

Ararat Rural City Council council-specific media releases and advisories

Enrol now for the Ararat Rural City Council election	Monday 29 July 2024
Call for candidates for Ararat Rural City Council election	Thursday 22 August 2024
Ballot packs mailed for Ararat Rural City Council election	Monday 7 October 2024
Voting closes soon for Ararat Rural City Council election	Tuesday 15 October 2024
New councillors for Ararat Rural City Council	Friday 8 November 2024

Statewide media releases and advisories

Victorians urged to enrol for upcoming local council elections	Monday 22 July 2024
Media advisory: 2024 local council elections briefing	Monday 22 July 2024
Last chance to enrol for Victorian council elections	Friday 2 August 2024
News alert: Enrolment closes tomorrow for October's council local elections	Tuesday 6 August 2024
Nominations open soon for Victorian local council elections	Monday 26 August 2024
Media advisory: Accessing candidate information for the 2024 Victorian local council elections	Friday 6 September 2024
Nominations for the 2024 Victorian local council elections now open	Monday 9 September 2024
Over 4.6 million enrolled for local council elections	Tuesday 10 September 2024
Time is running out to nominate for this year's local council elections	Monday 16 September 2024
Electoral Commissioner calls for transparency in the use of AI in upcoming local council elections	Tuesday 17 September 2024
Media advisory: Media attendance at local council election ballot draw	Tuesday 17 September 2024
Nominations are in for October local council elections	Wednesday 18 September 2024
Democracy ambassadors help community voices 'Be Heard'	Thursday 19 September 2024
VEC retires 16 local council election candidates	Monday 30 September 2024
Voting starts next week for Victoria's local council elections	Friday 4 October 2024

Statewide media releases and advisories

Police investigate break-in at the Ballarat election office	Thursday 10 October 2024
Voters urged to request a replacement ballot pack following van theft	Friday 18 October 2024
Local council elections voting deadline looms	Monday 21 October 2024
Voters urged to request a replacement ballot pack following theft	Thursday 24 October 2024
Final day of voting	Friday 25 October 2024
Media advisory: Results timelines for Victorian local council elections	Friday 25 October 2024
Media advisory: Media attendance at results declarations	Wednesday 6 November 2024
Suspected postal vote tampering in 2 local council elections referred for inquiry	Wednesday 13 November 2024
Didn't vote in the 2024 local council elections?	Monday 17 February 2025
Non-voters asked to explain why they didn't vote in the 2024 local council elections	Friday 7 March 2025
Infringements sent to 2024 local council election non-voters	Scheduled for Monday 14 April 2025
Act on penalty reminder notice or risk enforcement action	Scheduled for Thursday 1 July 2025

Appendix 4: VoterAlert advisories

Appendix 4.1: SMS alerts

Close of roll – sent from Wednesday 17 July to Wednesday 31 July 2024

VoterAlert: Vic council elections will be held by post this Oct. Make sure your details are correct before 4pm Wed 7 Aug. More info <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>. If you'd rather not open links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832 to check. Unsubscribe <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Reminder close of voting – sent from Tuesday 22 October to Wednesday 23 October 2024

VoterAlert: return your council election ballot pack by 6pm Fri Oct 25. If your ballot pack hasn't arrived, find out how to get a replacement at <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>. Ignore if you've already voted or asked for a replacement. If you'd rather not visit links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Uncontested election – sent from Wednesday 25 September to Tuesday 1 October 2024

VoterAlert: the election in your area is uncontested, as only one person nominated per vacancy. You do not need to vote. More info: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>. If you'd rather not visit links in this message, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>


Mail-out of ballot packs – sent from Monday 7 October to Monday 14 October 2024

VoterAlert: ballot packs for the local council elections are on their way, arriving by 15 Oct. Complete and return before 6pm on Fri 25 Oct. For more info visit <https://vec.vic.gov.au/LG24>, look up the VEC website or call 131 832. Unsubscribe: <https://vec.vic.gov.au/voteralert>

Appendix 4.2: Email alerts

Close of roll email

Do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. [Contact us](#) with any questions.

VoterAlert 

Hi

Victorian local council elections are being held by post this October. You must be correctly enrolled by **4 pm on Wednesday 7 August**.

What you need to do

Not sure if your enrolment details are up to date? You can check online at vec.vic.gov.au/enrolment

If you've changed your address or name since you last voted in an election, you should update your details. Please also check the postal address listed on your enrolment, as this is where we will send your ballot pack.

[CHECK MY DETAILS](#)

If your details **haven't changed** since the last time you voted, get ready to vote. All voting in this election is by post. We will start posting ballot packs out from Monday 7 October.

The full list of candidates will be available on our website from 12 noon on Tuesday 17 September.

[Find out more about your council election.](#)

Voting is compulsory – don't risk a fine.

If you own properties in more than one Victorian council

Some people are eligible to enrol in more than one council. If you own or pay rates on a property in a Victorian council other than where you normally live, you can apply to enrol with that council. This is known as council enrolment.

Contact the council directly for more information about council enrolment.

[Find out more about council enrolment.](#)

You **must** vote for all councils you are enrolled in.

Electoral structure changes

Over half of Victoria's local councils have new electoral structures or have changed internal ward boundaries. You may be voting in a new ward this October.

You can check your council's ward boundaries on our [interactive map](#).

Information in your language

You can find election information in 20 languages other than English on our website.

[Find in-language information.](#)

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website at vec.vic.gov.au. You can also hover over links to confirm they go to a vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have 'Victorian Electoral Commission <voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au>' as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information




Visit vec.vic.gov.au or call us on [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday.

Authorised by S. Bluemmel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll. Responses are not monitored.


[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)

[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Uncontested election email

Do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. [Contact us](#) with any questions.

VoterAlert 

Hi

The , Ward election is uncontested as there were the same number of candidates as vacancies at the close of nominations.

You are not required to vote this October.

If you own properties in any other Victorian councils

You will still get a ballot pack for any other councils you are enrolled in. Please complete and return all ballot packs you receive before **6 pm on Friday 25 October**.

If you don't vote you may risk a fine.

Check your enrolment online or contact the council directly to check your enrolment details.

[Check my enrolment](#)

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website at vec.vic.gov.au. You can hover your mouse over links to make sure they go to a vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have 'Victorian Electoral Commission <voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au>' as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information




For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call us on [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Authorised by S. Bluemmel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll. Responses are not monitored.

[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)


  

[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Ballot pack mail-out email

Do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. Contact us with any questions.

VoterAlert

Victorian Electoral Commission

Hi

You are enrolled to vote in the 2024 local council elections.

Your vote matters. Local council elections are your chance to vote on who represents you on the local community issues that you care about.

How to vote

Voting in these elections is by **post**.

We have started posting ballot packs to all enrolled voters. They will arrive by **Tuesday 15 October**.

Please follow the instructions in your ballot pack to complete your vote and mail it back to us as soon as possible.

If you're unsure, you can learn [how to fill out a ballot paper](#) on our website.

Voting closes at **6 pm on Friday 25 October**, but your local mail collection times may be earlier than this. We recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

You can also drop your vote off at your local election office.

If you don't get a ballot pack

Ballot packs are in the mail and will arrive by **Tuesday 15 October**.

If you don't get a ballot pack by then, you can ask us to send you a replacement by calling [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Moved house or away from your address

If you are away from your mailing address you can request a replacement ballot pack. You can:

- call us on [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday
- visit the election office of your **old address** to get a replacement on the spot. If you will be away during the election, you can fill in your vote there and return it straight away.

Find my election office

Find candidates

Information about candidates, including statements and candidate questionnaire responses are on our website.

Find candidates

Information in your language

Our website has information in more than 20 languages. There are also videos explaining how to vote in 10 different languages.

Find information in your language

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website: vec.vic.gov.au. You can hover your mouse over links to confirm they go to a vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have 'Victorian Electoral Commission <voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au>' as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information




For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call us on [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Authorised by S. Bluemmel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll. Responses are not monitored.

UNSUBSCRIBE




[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Last week to vote email

Do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. Contact us with any questions.

VoterAlert

Victorian Electoral Commission

Reminder: voting for the 2024 local council elections closes at 6 pm this Friday 25 October.

Please ignore this email if you've already voted or asked for a replacement ballot pack.

How to vote

Voting in these elections is by **post**.

Please follow the instructions in your ballot pack to complete your vote and mail it back to us as soon as possible. You can find instructions on [how to fill out a ballot paper](#) on our website.

Voting closes at **6 pm on Friday 25 October**, but your local mail collection times may be earlier than this. We recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

You can also drop your vote off at your local election office.

Find my election office

If you don't get a ballot pack

If you haven't received your ballot pack in the mail yet, you can ask us to send you a replacement by:

- visiting your election office* to get a replacement on the spot. You can fill in your vote there and return it straight away.
- calling us on [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday
- filling in our [online form](#).

*This must be the election office for your enrolled address. [Check your enrolment details](#) if you've recently moved.

Find my election office

Information in your language

Our website has information in more than 20 languages. There are also videos explaining how to vote in 10 different languages.

Find information in your language

Security

If you would rather not click any links in this email, all this information and more is on our website: vec.vic.gov.au. You can hover your mouse over links to confirm they go to a vic.gov.au website before you click them.

Be aware of scams: all emails we send you will have 'Victorian Electoral Commission <voteralert@info.vec.vic.gov.au>' as the sender. We will never ask you to enter credit card details or make payments through a website.

More information




For more information visit vec.vic.gov.au or call us on [131 832](tel:131832) between 8:30 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday.

Authorised by S. Bluemmel, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

Our mailing address is:
Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

This message was sent to you by the Victorian Electoral Commission because your contact details are listed on the Victorian electoral roll. Responses are not monitored.

UNSUBSCRIBE



[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

Appendix 5: Voter engagement program and initiatives

Program	Program details
Be Heard Democracy Ambassador program	This program provides free peer-led electoral education and information sessions to those under-represented in the electoral process. This includes people with disability and their carers, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, people experiencing homelessness and young people. A total of 238 sessions were provided across the state reaching over 10,000 participants.
Specialist mobile enrolment	This program delivered peer-led enrolment sessions in prisons, homeless services, schools and tertiary education settings to reach young people and Aboriginal community settings across Melbourne and regional Victoria.
CALD in-language social media videos	This project produced a series of videos in 11 different languages including Auslan. Languages were chosen to reach language groups most in need of additional support. The videos provided electoral information on how to enrol, how to vote by post, and how to respond to an Apparent Failure to Vote Notice. These were widely distributed and shared through the VEC's social media platforms, community networks, and partner organisations.
Active Citizenship program	Electoral and civics education workshops were delivered to CALD community leaders in 3 locations across regional Victoria.
Aboriginal engagement	This program delivered information and engagement sessions across the greater Melbourne area and regional Victoria. These were designed to raise awareness that voting was compulsory and taking place via post. Culturally appropriate resources were produced to provide information on how to respond to an Apparent Failure to Vote Notice, including a video which was distributed and shared through the VEC's social media platforms and partner organisations.
Easy English guide	This was produced for people with low English proficiency and designed as a co-read product where a person supports the reader. These were distributed by Democracy Ambassadors as a key resource, and also available for download from the VEC's website.

Appendix 6:

Final list of candidates in ballot paper order

The candidates, in ballot paper order, were as follows:

Ararat Rural City Council election
ARMSTRONG, Rob
BEALES, Peter
TIPPING, Fiona
PRESTON, Luke Matthew
SCHERGER, Daryl
MEAD, Amanda
SANDERS, Bob
KOKCU, Osman
WATERSTON, Bill
KAUR, Teli
JOYCE, Peter
ARMSTRONG, Jo

Appendix 6.1: Candidate statements and photographs

Ararat Rural City Council election	Total number of candidates at close of nominations	Number of candidates that lodged a candidate statement	Number of candidates that lodged a candidate photograph
Ararat Rural City Council	12	12	12

Appendix 6.2: Sample ballot material

Outer envelope

Sample Council


If undeliverable, return to
Locked Bag 0000
LOCALITY VIC 0000

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA
PRIORITY

STAT-ENVM938 06/24

Local council elections 2024
Postal ballot pack



Voting closes 6 pm
Friday 25 October


 Victorian
Electoral
Commission


Reply-paid envelope

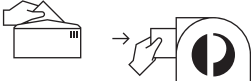
Sample Council
Sample Ward

Delivery address:
Locked Bag 0000
LOCALITY VIC 0000




No stamp required
if posted in Australia


Sample Council
Sample Ward
STAT-ENVM937 07/24



Post your completed ballot pack
before 6 pm on Friday 25 October


Local post box collection times vary. Check the
collection time on your post box to make sure your
vote is in the mail on time.

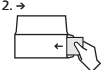



Election Manager
Sample Election Office
Sample Ward
Reply Paid 00000
LOCALITY VIC 0000


Ballot paper envelope


Ballot paper
envelope

1. →

2. →

3. →

4. →

5. →

How to vote

1. Complete your ballot paper/s.


2. Put your completed ballot paper/s inside this envelope and seal it.

3. Sign the declaration on the back of this envelope.
We remove it before counting to keep your vote secret.

Voters unable to sign: Blind or low vision voters, or voters with low literacy or limited English can ask someone to sign for them. The authorised person must sign and write their name on the back of this envelope.

4. Put this ballot paper envelope into the reply-paid envelope and seal it.

5. Post it straight away.

 Victorian
Electoral
Commission

STAT-ENV-LG-003 06/24

38

Victorian Electoral Commission

Candidate leaflet

Voting closes

6 pm Friday

25 October 2024

All voting in this election is by post.

Post your vote before voting closes.

We cannot accept late votes.

Local post box collection times vary. Check the collection time on your post box to make sure your vote is in the mail on time.

You can also drop your vote off during business hours to:

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

For more information, visit vec.vic.gov.au or call 131 832 during business hours.

Voting is compulsory

You are enrolled to vote in this election.


Voting is your right. By voting, you get to have a say in who represents you on your local council.

Voting is also a responsibility. If you don't vote, you may get a fine.

If your enrolment details have changed, it is your responsibility to update them. Visit vec.vic.gov.au/update for more information.

Sample Council

Sample Ward




Candidate leaflet

Sample Council

election 2024

Sample Ward

Sample Ward




Notice

The contents of candidate statements are provided by the candidates. Any enquiries about candidate statements should be directed to the relevant candidate.

Candidate statements are not verified or endorsed by the election manager.


Candidate statements are also available at vec.vic.gov.au

Candidates may also provide answers to a questionnaire. Responses are available at vec.vic.gov.au

 Victorian Electoral Commission

How to vote multi-language leaflet
If applicable


How to vote leaflet

Interpreter

Language support

Visit vec.vic.gov.au/languages for more information in your language.

For interpreter assistance, call us. See the phone numbers on the next page.

 Victorian Electoral Commission

STAT-LEAMUL01 07/24

Ballot paper

Sample Council

Sample Ward

Election of 1 Councillor

Number the boxes 1 to 4 in the order of your choice.

Number every box to make your vote count.

You must not use any number more than once.

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

☐

CANDIDATE, Name

Victorian Electoral Commission

39

Appendix 6.3: Sample uncontested ward leaflet

Sample Council election 2024 Sample Ward

At the close of nominations for the Sample Council, Sample Ward election, one nomination was received for one vacancy. Therefore, Candidate Name will be elected unopposed.

You are not required to vote.

Election Manager Name
Election Manager

For more information call 131 832



Appendix 7:

Daily breakdown of the general mail out

Ararat Rural City Council election	7 October 2024	8 October 2024	9 October 2024	10 October 2024	Total general mail out
Ararat Rural City Council	2,833	2,833	1,333	1,332	8,331

Appendix 8: Result information

Ararat Rural City Council count summary

Enrolment	8,331
Formal votes	6,627
Informal votes	333 (4.78% of the total votes)
Voter turnout	6,960 (83.54% of the total enrolment)

Candidates (in ballot paper order)	First preference votes	Percentage
ARMSTRONG, Rob	343	5.18%
BEALES, Peter	180	2.72%
TIPPING, Fiona	134	2.02%
PRESTON, Luke Matthew	663	10.00%
SCHERGER, Daryl	286	4.32%
MEAD, Amanda	497	7.50%
SANDERS, Bob	688	10.38%
KOKCU, Osman	258	3.89%
WATERSTON, Bill	486	7.33%
KAUR, Teli	743	11.21%
JOYCE, Peter	592	8.93%
ARMSTRONG, Jo	1,757	26.51%

Successful candidates

ARMSTRONG, Jo (1st elected)

SANDERS, Bob (2nd elected)

KAUR, Teli (3rd elected)

JOYCE, Peter (4th elected)

PRESTON, Luke Matthew (5th elected)

WATERSTON, Bill (6th elected)

ARMSTRONG, Rob (7th elected)

Appendix 9: Election participation statistics

Participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of total enrolment and can vary from turnout (total ballot papers counted as a percentage of total enrolment).

Ararat Rural City Council election participation	2020	2024	Statewide LG 2024 – excluding Melbourne City Council
18–19	85.91%	83.93%	86.64%
20–24	76.23%	75.59%	80.02%
25–29	72.55%	71.51%	74.09%
30–34	78.59%	70.63%	73.31%
35–39	79.68%	79.17%	76.18%
40–44	80.58%	77.19%	78.99%
45–49	83.28%	81.68%	81.92%
50–54	87.44%	85.47%	84.69%
55–59	89.49%	89.94%	87.46%
60–64	91.59%	90.24%	89.16%
65–69	93.64%	92.46%	90.41%
70+	89.87%	91.30%	88.77%
Voters enrolled through section 241 of the LG Act	87.45%	84.67%	86.27%
Voters enrolled through sections 243–245 of the LG Act	66.40%	94.67%	60.96%
Total voters enrolled	85.68%	84.85%	84.12%

Appendix 10: Complaints

Written complaints received by the VEC

Where an outcome is a follow-up response, the customer may have replied to the VEC's response and the VEC has therefore replied to that follow-up email.

Where an outcome has no action taken, this could be an anonymous submission that doesn't contain feedback and therefore can't be passed on to another team.

Date	Nature of complaint	Action taken by the VEC
Tuesday 22 October 2024	VEC Complaint - VEC comms other channels; Postal voting process	Response provided
Wednesday 23 October 2024	VEC Complaint - Voting centre procedures; Postal voting process	Response provided

This work, the 2024 Local government elections Ararat Rural City Council Election report, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence [<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>]. You are free to share this work under that licence, on the condition that you do not change any content and you credit the State of Victoria (Victorian Electoral Commission) as author and comply with the other licence terms. The licence does not apply to any branding, including Government logos.



Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
T 131 832
info@vec.vic.gov.au
vec.vic.gov.au
