

2.2 ELECTRONIC VOTE COUNTING FOR THE 2008 COUNCIL ELECTIONS

(ELECT1:NA)

Responsible Director: Leigh Harder

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council resolves to permit the Returning Officer, appointed to conduct the 2008 City of Monash elections, to undertake the electronic counting of votes at a place outside the municipal district of the City of Monash.

INTRODUCTION

This report recommends that the Council agrees to the counting of votes at the 2008 Council elections outside of the municipality should the opportunity arise, so that the count may be conducted using electronic vote counting.

DISCUSSION

The Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2005 require a formal Council resolution to allow the Returning Officer conducting the election to designate a vote counting place outside of the municipality.

Previously in the 2005 election it was agreed given the size of the election and the use of the Proportional Representation voting method that the Victorian Electoral Commission would conduct the counting of votes electronically. The nearest computer counting venue was Monash University – Clayton Campus, Clayton therefore not requiring a resolution of Council.

Using the same rationale as the 2005 election it is proposed that the counting of votes for the 2008 elections be conducted using electronic counting.

The computer counting venue on this occasion could be located outside of the municipality, at an education facility such as a TAFE. TAFE colleges have the required equipment and space to enable the count to take place.

It is expected that an electronic counting of votes, as compared to a manual count, will provide for a more efficient and accurate count.

Likely electoral services providers, such as the Victorian Electoral Commission and the Australian Electoral Commission have well-developed procedures in place to ensure the security of the ballot papers at each stage of the process.

FINANCIAL

Costs for an electronic count will be lower than for a count conducted manually, due to a reduction in labour costs.

CONCLUSION

It is proposed that the votes for the 2008 Council elections be counted electronically, possibly at a facility outside of the municipality.

It is recommended that the Council allows the Returning Officer engaged to conduct the election, if need be, to appoint a counting place located outside of the municipality to enable the electronic counting of votes to take place.