

5.2 MONASH CITY COUNCIL 2020 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS – VEC ELECTION REPORT
(FILE NO.)

Responsible Senior Officer: Jarrod Doake, Chief Operating Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Election Report from the Victorian Electoral Commission, on the 2020 Local Government Elections for the City of Monash, as attached to this report.

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Electoral Commissioner has provided the Chief Executive Officer with his Commission's report on the 2020 Local Government elections for the City of Monash, as required by Regulation 83 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020.

Under Regulation 83(3), the Chief Executive Officer must submit the report to Council, at the earliest practicable meeting of the Council held after the report is received.

DISCUSSION

The report provides details on the conduct of the City of Monash elections for 2020.

It notes, among other things:

1. Changes to the legislation and its impact on the conduct of the election.
2. The impact and the VEC's response to COVID-19.
3. Details on:
 - The Voters' roll
 - The Commission's advertising and communication campaign
 - Election statistics, including participation levels and informal voting.

which are outlined below.

Voters' roll

The VEC prepared the voters' roll for the election under section 8(2)(c) of the *Electoral Act 2002* and in accordance with section 249 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The close of the voters' roll for the election was 4.00 pm, Friday 28 August 2020.

Pursuant to section 249(4) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the VEC certified the voters' roll on Thursday 17 September 2020.

At certification, 120,823 enrolled voters were on the voters' roll for the 2020 Monash City Council election.

Advertising and communications campaign

The advertising and communications campaign comprised State-wide and statutory advertising on the VEC web site and in the 'The Age' newspaper.

As part of its State-wide advertising, the VEC used paid promotions on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and WeChat.

An on-line media webinar was held on Friday 21 August 2020. The webinar could be downloaded or accessed at a later time for those who were unable to participate live. The briefing summarised the planning and timeline for the 2020 local government elections, and also provided a specific update in relation to the availability of election results in light of COVID-19.

VEC 'VoterAlert' advisories

Electors on the State enrolment register were able to sign up to the VEC's free SMS or e-mail alert service 'VoterAlert', to receive reminder messages relevant to elections that affect them. They could subscribe to receive either SMS messages only, e-mail only, or both SMS and e-mail.

Low vision services

Braille and large print ballot material was available to blind and low vision voters who had registered for these products by 5.00 pm on 15 September 2020.

Interpreting services

The VEC used the Victorian Interpreting and Language Services' 'Language Link' 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.

Election statistics

Nominations

At the close of nominations, 50 candidates had nominated for the election, as follows:

| WARD | NO. OF NOMINATIONS |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Glen Waverley | 9 |
| Mount Waverley | 12 |
| Mulgrave | 15 |
| Oakleigh | 14 |

The Commission makes a distinction between voter participation and voter turnout.

Voter participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of the total enrolment.

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.

Voter participation

The overall participation rate in the 2020 Monash City Council election was 86.21%.

This is higher than the State average of 84.12% (excluding Melbourne City Council).

It's also higher than the 78.66% participation rate at the 2016 Monash City Council general election.

Voter turnout

The voter turnout for the 2020 Monash City Council general election was 84.49%.

The State average turnout for 2020 was 81.47% (excluding Melbourne City Council).

The voter turnout at the 2016 general election for Council was 77.69%.

Informal votes

The informal voting rate was 4.98% for the 2020 Monash City Council general election, compared to 7.76% in 2016.

The State average for 2020 was 4.76%.

Report on VEC performance

The VEC invited feedback from councils on its services in December 2020.

Also, after every electoral event, the VEC conducts an internal debriefing program, which includes input from all areas across the VEC's workforce.

Internal debriefing following the local government elections commenced in December 2020.

In due course, the VEC will publish a consolidated report on its performance and key statistics from the elections which will be tabled in Parliament and made available on the VEC website.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications to this matter.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council receives and notes the election report from the Victorian Electoral Commission, on the 2020 elections for the City of Monash, as attached to this report.