

Western Australian
Electoral Commission

Secret Harbour By-Election Media Kit

August 2026



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission

Acknowledgement of Country

The Western Australian Electoral Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our electoral activities take place. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

About the Western Australian Electoral Commission

The Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC) is an independent agency committed to ensuring it meets the highest standards and demands of the electoral services for Western Australians.

The Electoral Commissioner is appointed by the Governor and is required to operate independently in all areas of election operations. The Commissioner is assisted by a Deputy Commissioner.

The WAEC is responsible for the conduct of parliamentary, local government and industrial elections, and referenda, as well as supporting the delivery of elections and polls for community organisations, universities and private companies by agreement.

In conjunction with the management of electoral events, the WAEC also maintains the WA electoral roll and provides a range of roll-related products; administers the registration of political parties and the financial disclosure requirements that govern parties, candidates and third parties; delivers student and community-focuses electoral education and awareness programs; provides advice to the Government and Parliament on electoral reform; and performs important legislative compliance and regulatory functions.

Contents

Media Team Contacts.....	3
Key Dates.....	3
Commentary from the WA Electoral Commission.....	4
Visiting WA Electoral Commission Sites.....	5
Media Filming Restrictions	5
Access to Polling Places	5
Election Processing Centre	5
Ballot Count Access – after 6pm on 29 th of August:.....	6
Misinformation Disinformation	6
Results Feed Access.....	6
More Information	6
Statistics.....	7
Frequently Asked Questions	7

Media Team Contacts

For official up-to-date information about the 2026 Secret Harbour By-election, including early voting numbers, count updates and results, please visit the WAEC website waec.wa.gov.au.

The WAEC media inbox is the primary contact for any enquiries. This includes:

- Interview requests with WA Electoral Commissioner Dennis O'Reilly
- Access to the live results feed, IT briefing and ABC-XML structure testing sessions
- Official imagery and election statistics
- Access permissions for polling places

Please include any deadlines for your response, so we can work with you to provide a timely answer. The media inbox and phones are monitored 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday (including public holidays) and 7am – 11pm on Polling Day. If urgent information is required and your request is outside of monitoring hours, please call the media phone.

To contact the WAEC Media Team

Media Inbox: media@waec.wa.gov.au

Media Phone: 0497 282 668

Rebecca Murphy - WAEC Assistant Director Communications and Engagement

Tessa Dempster - WAEC Media and Communications Manager

For regular updates, please continue to follow our social media or visit the media section on our website: [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Facebook](#)

Key Dates

The 2026 Secret Harbour By-election will be held on Saturday 29 August. Other key dates are as follows:

Tue, 7 July 2026	Postal vote applications open		
Mon, 13 July 2026	Issue of Writs		
Tue, 14 July 2026	Nominations open		
Mon, 20 July 2026	Party nominations close		
Tue, 21 July 2026	Nominations close	Draw for ballot paper	Electoral rolls close
Wed, 22 July 2026	How-to-Vote Card registration for candidates starts		
Tue, 28 July 2026	Postal voting mailout starts		
Sun, 16 August 2026	Mobile polling starts (for areas such as aged care – details on website)		
Mon 17 August 2026	Early polling commences at 7 Sunlight Drive, Port Kennedy open • Monday 17 August - Saturday 22 August, 8am-6pm. • Monday 24 August to Friday 28 August, 8am-6pm. If media would like to access the Early Polling Place for filming or photography, please contact media@waec.wa.gov.au / 0497 282 668		
Fri, 21 August 2026	How-to-Vote Card registration for candidates closes		

Tues, 25 August 2026	Media rehearsal - live results feed test. Please provide any IP addresses for whitelisting and results access	If you haven't received an invitation, contact the media team for details
Wed, 26 August 2026	Scrutiny of postal votes may start at 7 Sunlight Drive, Port Kennedy	Applications for postal votes close
Frid, 28 August 2026	Early polling closes (6pm)	
Sat, 29 August 2026	Election day - see here for polling places open from 8am-6pm The count begins from 6pm. To access the count, you will need to register with the WAEC Media Team by 6pm Thursday 27 th August.	
Sat, 10 October	Last day to return Writ	

Commentary from the WA Electoral Commission

This can be used if required and attributed to WA Electoral Commissioner Dennis O'Reilly

"This by-election allows voters to have their say on who represents their community. We look forward to delivering a positive and transparent experience throughout the election process."

"The Special Inquiry provided an important opportunity to identify areas where the WAEC could strengthen its systems and processes. We have already implemented several recommendations including enhancements to election planning, governance and operations as part of our broader transformation strategy."

"Interestingly, we've seen a strong shift towards convenient and flexible voting options in this by-election, with postal vote applications increasing significantly compared to the 2025 State General Election. There is no special reason required to apply for a postal vote, and eligible voters can apply online through the WAEC website until 6pm on 26 August."

"While we understand the strong interest in the outcome of the by-election, the results published on election night will be indicative only and should not be regarded as final. The full count can only be completed after the 9am postal vote deadline on 3 September. Once all eligible postal votes have been received, checked and counted, the full distribution of preferences will be available on the website. This will be followed by the return of the Writ."

Visiting WA Electoral Commission Sites

To visit a polling place or official election site, media must request and obtain permission prior to the visit. If your visit has not been confirmed as approved by the WAEC Media Team in writing, you will not be permitted to access the venue for the purposes of filming, photography or interviews. This is to protect the privacy of voters and staff.

Media Filming Restrictions

To ensure the health and safety of staff and voters and ensure the integrity of the electoral process, media must follow the below restrictions:

- Do not touch ballot papers or ballot boxes
- Do not capture or record information written on a ballot paper or a person's details that may be visible on a paper or screen
- Do not impede voters, scrutineers or staff during voting or counting
- Do not speak to anyone while they are completing their ballot paper or ask how they voted while still inside the polling place
- Consent must be obtained from electors before filming or photographing, please respect the wishes of staff or voters who decline to be photographed or filmed
- Note no interviews are allowed with WAEC election staff
- Do not obstruct access to the entrance or exit at a polling place
- Use of drones must comply with the [required regulations](#), and no drones are to be flown over people at any time

Access to Polling Places

- To attend the Port Kennedy **Early Polling Place**, permission must be obtained at **least 24 hours before** the proposed visit
- To attend **polling places on polling day**, permission must be obtained in advance by contacting the WAEC Media Team **by 6pm Thursday 27th of August**
- Upon arrival at a polling place, media need to request either the Returning Officer or Presiding Officer to confirm permission to attend and/or any other arrangements put in place for the visit
- Media must be always supervised by the Presiding Officer while inside the polling place
- Media passes will be provided and must be worn so that media are easily identifiable by staff and general public

Election Processing Centre

The polling location at 7 Sunlight Drive in Port Kennedy will be the central hub for the receipt of postal and declaration votes, management of central vote processing, and where full distribution of preferences counts take place.

Media that want to access inside the Processing Centre to film the official start of the count, **must obtain permission in advance** by contacting the WAEC Media Team **before 6pm Thursday 27th of August**. The WAEC Media Team will greet and escort media throughout the entire visit.

Pool vision may be requested if there are high numbers of media wanting vision as space may be limited. Speak to the WAEC Media Team or this can be arranged between individual outlets.

Ballot Count Access – after 6pm on 29th of August:

5:45pm-5:55pm	Media to arrive for registration at Processing Centre at front entrance
5:55pm	WAEC Media Team to brief all media with expected behaviour and restrictions
6:00-6:25pm	Ballot box opening and vote sorting
6:25pm	Crews notified to wrap up last shots
6:30pm	Crews escorted out of Processing Centre

Misinformation Disinformation

The WAEC Misinformation and Disinformation webpage includes information to help voters determine if information is factual before they share it online.

We appreciate the media's support to deliver transparent and factual information to the public. The WAEC's official channels are where to find up to date information about the by-election.

Results Feed Access

The WA Electoral Commission will be providing data feed and results for media outlets for the 2026 Secret Harbour By-election. When requesting access, please provide individual IP addresses.

An IT briefing will occur on Tuesday 25th of August. To attend the briefing, please contact the WAEC Media Team, noting invitations have been sent to outlets who have already expressed interest.

More Information

[By-election microsite](#)

[Candidate How to Vote Cards](#)

[Candidate information](#)

Statistics

Secret Harbour By-Election 29 August 2026

Number enrolled (at close of rolls on 21 July 2026): 36,407 electors

Candidates: 16

Postal votes issued (13 Aug 2026): 5,756

2025 State General Election 8 March 2025

Number enrolled: 1,881,825

Enrolment Participation: 86.21%

Secret Harbour from 2025 General Election

Number enrolled (at close of rolls on 13 February 2025): 34,284 electors

Voter Turnout: 84.5%

Candidates: 7

Postal votes issued: 3,843

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the role of the WA Electoral Commission?

The WAEC is an independent agency responsible for conducting fair, impartial and transparent elections and referendums in Western Australia. The WAEC also maintains the electoral roll, delivers voter education programs, and regulates key aspects of the State's electoral system.

Is this a record number of candidates for a by-election/state election?

The number of candidates in the Secret Harbour By-election is the highest recorded for a Western Australian state by-election or election since electronic records began in 1996.

How does the count work?

The ballot boxes are opened and counted after 6pm on polling day. Ballot papers are then sorted by first preference votes, followed by a two-candidate preferred count to provide an early indication of the likely result.

The official result is declared after all eligible votes, including postal votes, have been received, checked and counted, which for this by-election will be after 3 September 2026.

When and where will first preference results be available?

Updates will be provided through the election results feed and can be accessed online on the WAEC website. Exact timing cannot be advised as there are several factors that determine when count results can be released. However, given the high number of candidates, we expect counting to take more time.

Will results be available on election night?

No, the official results will NOT be available on election night. Following the completion of the first preference and the two-candidate preferred count, it is expected that an indicative result will be available on the night. However, declared results will not be available until the full distribution of preferences has been completed.

The full distribution of results can only be completed after the 9 am postal vote deadline on 3 September. Once all eligible postal votes have been received, checked and counted, the result will be announced on the WAEC website.

What is a two-candidate preferred count and how does it work?

A two-candidate preferred count provides an indication of the likely result by showing how votes would flow to those two candidates. After first preference votes are counted, votes for all other candidates are checked to see which of the two preferred candidates each voter nominated. These preferences are then added to the totals, providing an early indication of who is likely to win.

Are votes counted by hand or using machines?

Votes in the Secret Harbour By-election are counted by hand by trained election staff. Ballot papers are manually sorted and counted under strict procedures, with scrutineers to observe the process to ensure transparency and integrity. Ballot paper counting machines are also used to verify the count is correct after the first manual count is complete.

Is any technology used in this by-election process?

For the Secret Harbour By-election, the Electoral Roll Solution (ERS) will be used by Issuing Officers to check voter enrolment details and electronically mark them off the roll before issuing a ballot paper. Ballot paper counting machines are also used to verify the count is correct after the first manual count is complete.

How can you vote in this by-election?

To participate, you must be an enrolled voter in the Secret Harbour district. Eligible voters have a range of convenient options available such as voting early, applying for a postal vote with no special reason required, or casting their vote in person on polling day. These options are designed to provide flexibility and convenience, making it easier for voters to participate in the by-election in a way that best suits their circumstances.

Does the WAEC assess all complaints?

All complaints are submitted online and assessed by the WAEC Complaints Team. This is common during election periods, and all complaints are assessed in accordance with the Electoral Act.

What is the latest update regarding the Special Inquiry recommendations?

WAEC has implemented a range of improvements to strengthen election delivery and ensure we are better prepared for future electoral events. These include building stronger in-house capability, enhancing voter information through new tools such as the Voter Gateway and an interactive district eligibility map, and increased training for temporary election staff.

What decision has been made on working with Persol?

No decision has been made on the contract with Persol. This is currently in place until after the 2027 local government elections.

Has this election been funded?

Funding has been provided from the Government for this by-election.

How much will the by-election cost?

The Rockingham By-election cost more than \$900,000 to deliver. Due to the raising costs of goods and services experienced across Australia, we anticipate the cost of this by-election will be higher. The final cost will be reported in due course following the completion of the by-election.