



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
Electoral Commission

# 2025 WA State Election **Post Election Report**



# Foreword

The 2025 WA State election presented both significant opportunities and considerable challenges for the Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC). As the independent body responsible for delivering free, fair and accessible elections, we are committed to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in all aspects of electoral and enrolment services.



The 2025 WA State election, held on 8 March, was delivered despite significant legislative reforms and ongoing uncertainty regarding the timing of the Federal election. In the face of these challenges, the election was conducted on schedule, with close to 1.9 million electors enrolled and strong voter participation maintained.

The WAEC successfully implemented legislative reforms, including the introduction of enrol and vote on the day, and worked closely with political parties and candidates to support compliance with new requirements for how-to-vote card registration, as well as funding and disclosure obligations. However, the delivery of the election also highlighted critical areas for targeted improvement, particularly in workforce management, polling place logistics, and communication. These aspects will be a focus for reform as we continue to strengthen electoral service delivery in Western Australia.

We welcomed the independent Special Inquiry into the planning and delivery of the 2025 State general election. Its findings will provide important insights to strengthen governance, enhance public confidence and trust in Western Australia's electoral processes, and support leadership stability at the WAEC.

I extend my sincere thanks to our staff, contractors, and the many Western Australians who participated in the democratic process to deliver a successful 2025 State election.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D O'Reilly". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Dennis O'Reilly**  
Acting Electoral Commissioner

## Acknowledgement of Country

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

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# 2025 WA State election at a glance

## The People



59

Legislative Assembly  
returning officers

1

Legislative Council  
returning officer

2

Deputy returning  
officers

6

Returning officer  
liaison officers



**5,773**

Polling staff

698

Early Polling  
centre staff

290

Mobile Polling  
staff

1,416

Vote Processing  
Centre staff

527

Other  
staff

**Voter  
turnout**



**Assisted  
voting**



**Informality**



84.87%

Voter turnout rate  
(close of poll)

1,615

Telephone  
assisted votes

4.32%

Informality -  
Legislative  
Assembly

2.93%

Informality -  
Legislative  
Council

## Candidates



12

Registered parties

398

Legislative Assembly  
Candidates

146

Legislative Council  
Candidates

## Enrolment



**1,868,946**  
**Enrolment**  
 (close of roll)

**12,879**  
**Enrolment on the day**  
 (new voters added to  
 the electoral roll)

**95.68%**  
**Enrolment participation**

## Voting



	Legislative Assembly	Legislative Council
Ordinary votes cast	<b>1,049,968</b> <small>(ordinary and early votes combined for 2025)</small>	<b>1,065,148</b> <small>(ordinary and early votes combined for 2025)</small>
Postal votes	<b>168,561</b>	<b>172,163</b>
Absent votes	<b>288,130</b>	<b>292,713</b>
Provisional votes	<b>21,309</b> <small>(higher number due to introduction of enrol on the day)</small>	<b>24,083</b> <small>(higher number due to introduction of enrol on the day)</small>
Informal votes	<b>69,071</b>	<b>46,860</b>

## Locations



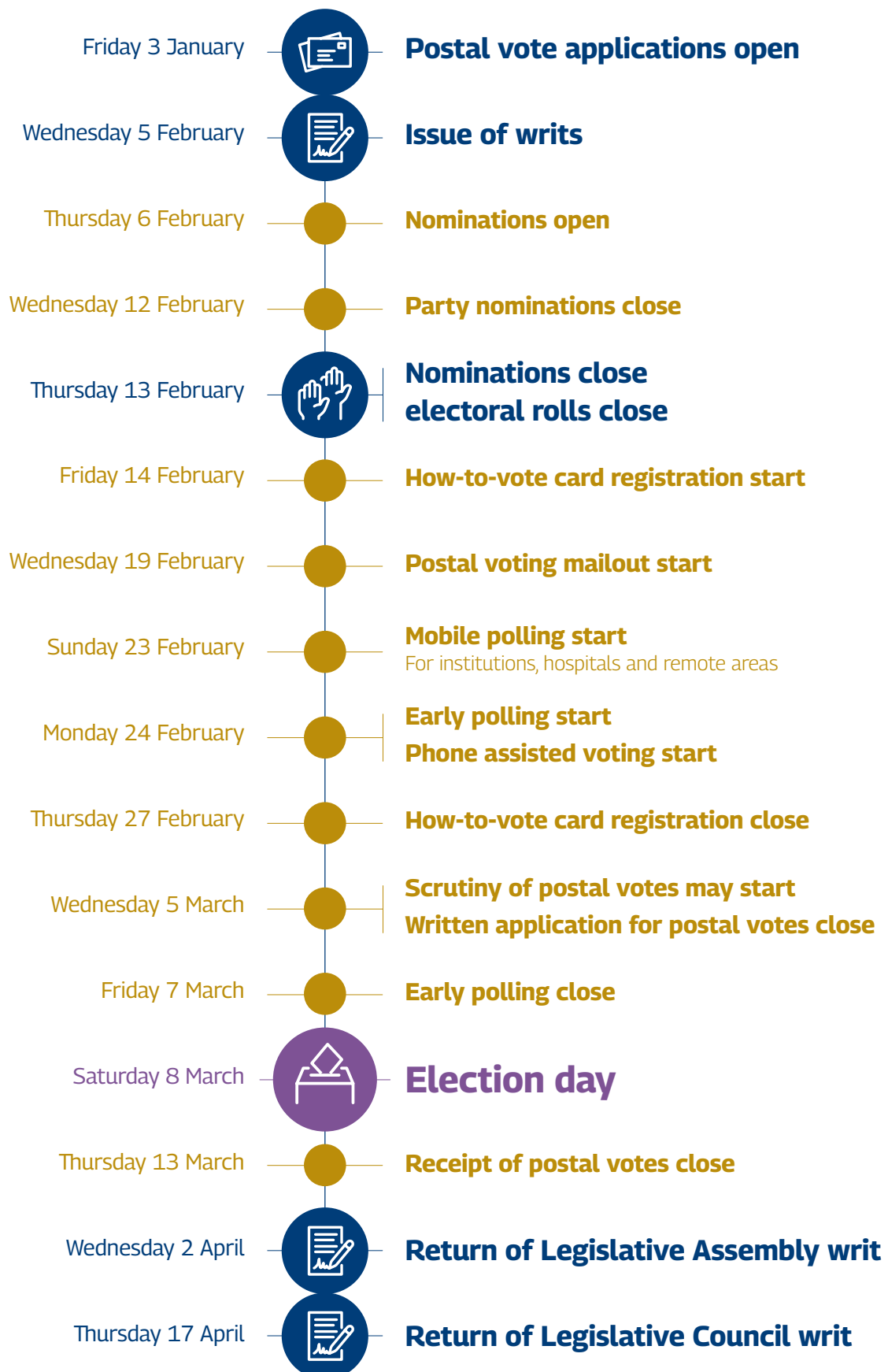
**743**  
**Polling places**

**61**  
**Early voting polling places**

**310**  
**Mobile and remote locations**



# 2025 WA State election timeline



# Election planning



## Budget and funding

The total cost of running the 2025 WA State Election 2025 was \$44.653 million.

In the leadup to the election, the WA Government approved additional funds to the WAEC, recognising several key factors were driving increased costs in election delivery. This included measures to improve ballot paper storage facilities at polling places, additional resources and counting staff to ensure swift delivery of election results and the implementation of legislative electoral reforms such as enrolment on the day and How-to-vote-card registration.

Supplementary funding supported cost increases with:

- **Security at Early voting centres:** To safeguard ballot papers, security personnel were deployed at early voting locations. This was a new initiative for the Commission, aimed at enhancing electoral integrity.
- **Additional venues:** Additional temporary facilities were required to accommodate an expanded project team and support IT

functions, as well as extra costs incurred in preparing the central vote processing centre for operational use.

- **Ballot paper scanning:** The WAEC had estimated around 245,000 papers would be required to be scanned from voters who had marked their Legislative Council ballot papers either below the line or had multiple selections above the line. The actual number reached 710,435 due to the wide range of voting preferences expressed by electors.
- **Legislative reforms:** How-to-vote card registration and enrolment on the day were two key reform areas that required extra staff, training and the development of new IT platforms to implement the changes.

Achieving these measures enabled the WAEC to respond effectively to evolving operational demands, legislative changes, and voter behaviours, and helped ensure the delivery of a secure and efficient electoral process.



## Recruitment and training

The WAEC relies on temporary election workers (TEWs) to undertake key roles in running the election across the state. These roles range from working across early polling or election day polling places to being involved in vote processing and counting.

Due to the scale of the workforce required for the 2025 State election, TEW were recruited through a contracted partnership with recruitment agency Persol (formerly PersolKelly). The WAEC underwent a competitive and transparent tender process in 2023 to identify the best solution for our staffing needs and Persol were appointed in January 2024.

Through this agreement, Persol managed the full recruitment process for the 2025 State election temporary workforce. This included promotion of roles, accepting and assessing applications, onboarding, payments and health and safety requirements.

In addition to the recruitment process, online inductions and role specific training was delivered by WAEC. This included face-to-face training and the range of written and online resources, training modules, videos and guides.

## IT planning

To support the legislative changes, new requirements and enhanced voter accessibility, the development of new ICT systems and the updating of existing systems for the 2025 State Election focused on delivering secure, scalable, and user-friendly platforms.

These included:

- **Election Management System Western Australia (EMSWA):** Upgrades to this system which supports the majority of WAEC's election delivery processes.
- **Online Disclosure System (ODS):** A new system developed to enhance transparency and accountability for candidates, agents, registered political parties, donors, and other third parties in disclosing electoral gifts and donations. The new platform provided a streamlined accessible way for information to be publicly available in a timely and consistent manner.

- **Phone Assisted Voting (PAV):** While this system has been used in previous elections, it underwent further enhancements through the integration of services from multiple providers. These improvements resulted in a fully automated, phone-based voting solution that was both highly accessible and user-friendly. It was specifically designed to support electors who may otherwise face barriers to voting due to vision impairment, physical disability, or limited literacy skills, ensuring they could participate in the electoral process with confidence and independence.
- **How-to-vote card portal:** This system was developed following legislative changes to the *Electoral Act 1907* in 2024 which made it mandatory for all How-to-vote cards whether physical or digital to be registered and approved by the Electoral Commissioner before being distributed and published.

Another large project for the IT team was equipping returning officers so they could be operationally and technically mobile due to the nature of the role. For the 2025 State election, each returning officer was provided with a laptop, smartphone and printer which enabled returning officers to securely access the WAEC election systems, as well as deliver services to candidates and voters.

Extra laptops provided early polling locations with the ability to provide electronic elector roll lookup and mark-off capabilities. This system was also used on election day to mark off voters from outside the district.

To provide efficiency and real-time election results, EMSWA allowed for fast, secure and accurate data and information to be accessed from both the public and media outlets. Once counting was underway, regular updates at two to five minute intervals on the WAEC website ensured people could access the latest results from a trusted and secure source. Media outlets were also provided a direct feed to support accuracy in their coverage.

2,100 Laptops	150 Smartphones	180 Printers
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## Polling place locations

### Early polling place locations

A total of 61 early polling places were delivered for the 2025 State Election. Each location had to meet several criteria, including sufficient space to fit the required staff and ballot issuing points, cost within budget, location, facilities for staff, parking and accessibility via public transport.

For the first time, early voting centres also functioned as returning officer venues, where materials and ballot papers were securely stored. This approach was introduced to streamline operations and support returning officers in managing the election process more efficiently.

High-density commercial areas were identified as priority locations for polling venues. However, securing these sites in advance proved challenging due to only short-term leases being required. As a result, several venues were ultimately located outside the preferred areas within the district.

Accessibility was a key consideration, with venues selected for their disabled access and parking availability. In addition, 10 venues were flagged as an accessibility venue with additional

equipment and materials such as reader pens and magnifying sheets supplied.

A total of 61 venues were successfully secured in all districts except Butler, Kalamunda, Forrestfield and Baldivis where suitable venues could not be found. Combined early polling places and Returning Officer venues were hired from 3 February to 24 March 2025, and early polling place only venues were hired from 10 February to 17 March 2025.

Early polling place details were published on the WAEC website once confirmed, to ensure voters could plan their schedule if voting early.

### Ordinary polling place locations

To support voter convenience and familiarity, polling place venues were matched as closely as possible to those used in previous State elections and by the Australian Electoral Commission for federal elections. Schools were prioritised due to their accessibility, central location, and suitability for election operations. Community centres were also utilised where appropriate. In total, 743 polling places operated across Western Australia on election day, ensuring broad coverage and ease of access for voters statewide.

### Community engagement

A focus for the 2025 WA State election was to build the WAEC community engagement function. A Community Engagement Officer was employed for the first time to build, develop and improve relationships with key stakeholders and community groups. Three groups traditionally underrepresented in voter turnout were identified as a priority:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander electors
- CaLD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) electors
- Young people ages 18 to 30.

### Regional trips

In late 2024 and early 2025, outreach trips were taken to remote WA communities to build contacts with Aboriginal organisations and promote key election messaging around the State election. Locations visited included Fitzroy Crossing, remote Aboriginal community Yiyili, Merredin and Northam.

Insights gathered from these trips revealed several barriers faced by Aboriginal people in participating in the electoral process. These included a deep mistrust of government organisations, concerns about receiving fines for failing to vote, and limited access to reliable information needed to make informed decisions when trying to participate in elections.

Environmental factors such as floods further disrupted access to polling services, while the transient nature of many remote communities made consistent engagement and enrolment efforts difficult. These findings highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive, targeted communication and need to continually build trust to improve inclusion and participation in future elections.

### Electoral Ambassador Program

Leaders in CaLD communities were invited to volunteer to be part of the 2025 State Election Ambassador Program as an electoral ambassador in their local community. This program aimed to provide the ambassadors with tools and resources to be a point of contact for questions and active promoter of information about participating and voting in the State election. Ambassadors underwent training and were provided with resources such as posters and guides, to support them in promoting the election to their communities.

An evaluation of the ambassador program found over half of the participants felt the program and their work was highly valuable in engaging with their communities. They reported feeling well prepared and confident in delivering resources, leading discussions and conducting presentations, all aimed at encouraging greater participation in the electoral process.





Training workshop given to ambassadors

### Low sensory polling place

A new initiative for the 2025 WA State election was offering a low sensory polling place during the early voting period. The aim was to provide voters who experience sensory sensitivity with a quieter, less stimulating polling place experience, and help reduce barriers that might otherwise discourage or prevent someone from voting.

Features included low sensory lighting, seats available while queuing and access to break-out areas for use before and after voting. Low noise levels were also promoted where practicable and party campaign workers were discouraged from attending with How-to-vote cards available on a table instead for easy access.

In collaboration with several disability agencies, the Hepburn Centre in Marangaroo was secured as a suitable venue for the low sensory polling place.

While vote numbers were low with 74 ordinary votes and 34 Declaration votes taken, the success of this initiative lies in providing a supportive environment for those who might otherwise be excluded from voting. Feedback from voters and their families who used this specialised voting service found the location and experience suited their needs by providing a safe and welcoming environment that reduced stress and increased participation.

### Visibility polling place

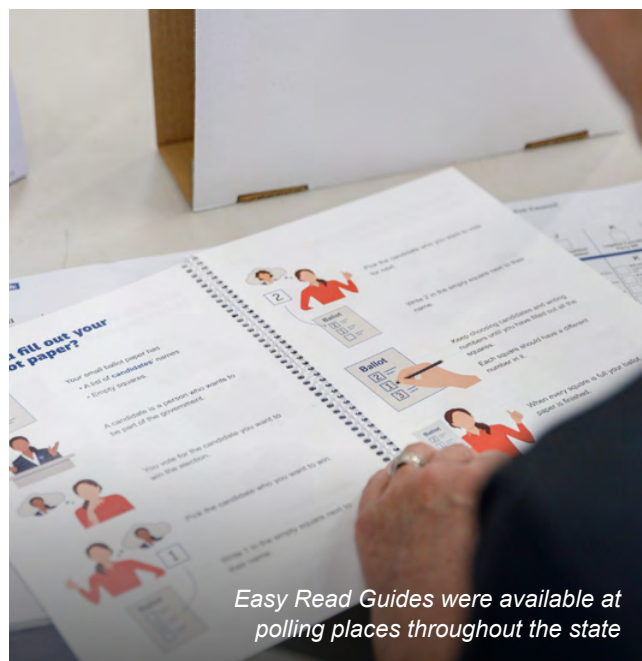
To service the needs of voters with low or impaired vision, the WAEC collaborated with VisAbility WA to use their Victoria Park office as a polling place. The polling place was open during early voting on Saturday, 1 March, with VisAbility WA providing specialist staff to assist voters including space and movement specialists, occupational health therapists, and staff specialising in equipment for people with vision impairment.

### Elector resources

A variety of new resources were developed to provide further accessibility of voting information for key elector groups. A standout initiative was the Easy Read Guide on how to vote at a polling place. Using simplified language and supportive images, the guide provided step by step instructions to help electors understand the voting process.

The WAEC worked collaboratively with its own Disability Reference Panel and disability organisations to ensure the guide was user friendly, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities. Along with being on the WAEC website as a downloadable resource, the guide was also made available as a hard copy at polling places.

Another key resource was the multilingual *How to vote in a State election* guide. Produced in 28 languages, the guide was developed to



Easy Read Guides were available at polling places throughout the state

## Election planning

reduce language barriers and encourage greater voter participation and engagement. Its goal was to ensure that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds could access clear and accurate voting information. By doing so, the guide also helped build trust among communities that may feel disconnected from the electoral process.

This resource proved especially valuable for Electoral Ambassadors, who used it in their outreach activities. It was also distributed to libraries in local government areas with significant CaLD populations, further extending its reach and impact.

### Community presentations

In the lead-up to the 2025 State election, the Community Engagement team delivered a series of face-to-face presentations to promote electoral participation. Several sessions were held at the WAEC Electoral Education Centre, with a strong focus on engaging CaLD communities.

Presentations were organised in collaboration with Umbrella Multicultural Community Care, coordinated through the Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council. With the support of interpreters, sessions held over the course of a week reached more than 300 participants from diverse backgrounds, including Italian, Polish, Burmese, Malay, Macedonian, Croatian, Serbian, and Hindi-speaking communities.

To support people with disabilities in the election process, several presentations to disability organisations was also delivered. These included sessions with VisAbility WA and Deaf Blind WA, aimed at helping people participate more confidently in the election. Participants reported that the information provided was helpful and eased some of their concerns around voting, contributing to a more inclusive and informed experience.

### 18 to 30 year old engagement

The WAEC was invited by the Department of Communities to the State Government's Youth Action Plan launch event in October 2024. The event was held at City Farm in Claisebrook with the WAEC's stall encouraging and promoting participation in the electoral process, particularly around informing young people from 16 years how to enrol to vote.

### Student electoral program

The Student Electoral Officer program provided an opportunity for students 16 to 17 years old to work at polling places, with the aim to increase youth participation and interest in electoral processes. A priority of the project was to encourage participation with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CaLD communities.

A total of 52 schools were contacted with information on how students could register their interest in working at the State election, including schools identified to have high numbers of CaLD and First Nations students.

While there were initial challenges with first contact to schools made in Term 4 2024 which is a particularly busy time of year for senior high school students, the number of applicants exceeded the number of positions available.

A total of 220 Student Electoral officers were recruited to work on election day in a variety of roles including ordinary issuing officer, ballot box guard and queue controller.

Most student electoral officers reported an overall positive experience from participating in the program. They found it provided a good insight into the electoral process, was a valuable opportunity to learn and gain work experience and would highly recommend the role to other students for future elections.





## Candidates and parties

To ensure candidates and political parties had the information they needed to meet their obligations for the 2025 State election, the WAEC prioritised accessibility and clarity in its communications. A comprehensive suite of resources was provided, including fact sheets, step-by-step guides, regular newsletters with key updates and date reminders, and targeted webinars offering detailed instruction on specific topics. These efforts played a critical role in supporting candidates through new legislative requirements, covering areas such as party registration, nomination procedures, disclosure of political donations, and the registration of

How-to-vote cards. By streamlining access and delivering timely, practical support, the WAEC helped foster greater confidence and compliance throughout the electoral process.

## Political party registration

Political parties are required to register with the WAEC to participate in WA State elections. From 2022 onwards, registered political parties have had to submit an annual return to maintain their registration. In addition, for the first time registration closed one year prior to the State election.

In total 12 registered political parties contested the 2025 State election, seven less than the 2021 State election.

Registered Political Party Name	Registered Ballot Paper Abbreviation
Animal Justice Party*	Animal Justice Party
Australian Christians*	Australian Christians
Legalise Cannabis Party WA*	Legalise Cannabis Party WA
Liberal Party Western Australia*	Liberal Party
Libertarian Party*	Libertarian
Pauline Hanson's One Nation*	One Nation
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers*	SFFPWA
Stop Pedophiles! Protect kiddies!	Stop Pedophiles! Protect kiddies!
Sustainable Australia Party – Anti-corruption*	Sustainable Australia Party – Anti-corruption
The Greens (WA) Inc*	The Greens (WA)
The Nationals WA*	The Nationals WA
WA Labor*	WA Labor

\*Contested the 2021 State General Election.

# Election planning

## Nominations

Candidate nominations for a State election open the day after the writ is issued and in 2025 this period opened on 6 February. Nominations closed 12 February for party candidates and on 13 February 2025 for non-party candidates and groups.

Non-party nominations were accepted by returning officers within their district or by the Legislative Council Returning Officer. A new requirement required non-party candidates for the Legislative Council to submit a minimum of 250 declarations from electors in support of their nomination, who did not support another candidate in the election. This extended the nomination process for these candidates as each supporter had to be verified on the electoral roll and cross-checked against the supporters of other candidates to prevent duplications.

From the 2021 State election to the 2025 State election, Legislative Assembly nominations decreased from 463 to 398 and Legislative Council nominations decreased from 325 to 146.

	Number	Districts
Most candidates in a district	9	Albany, Bateman, Geraldton, Joondalup, Kalgoorlie, Kwinana, Nedlands, Southern River
Least candidates in a district	4	Cannington, Carine, Hillarys, Perth
Average number of candidates per district	6.75	

## Funding and disclosure

Under Part VI of the *Electoral Act 1907*, all political parties, associated entities, candidates, Legislative Council groups, and third-party campaigners must report gifts received and electoral expenditure to the Electoral Commissioner.

Legislation changes introduced in 2024 significantly increased the scope and requirements for disclosure, including live disclosure of political contributions for all political entities, electoral expenditure caps, the creation

of State campaign accounts, and the registration of third-party campaigners.

To support compliance and streamline these processes, the Commission developed the Online Disclosure System – a secure platform enabling political entities to submit disclosures, election returns, and annual returns, while recording donor details in real time. Information submitted to the Online Disclosure System is published by the WAEC, enhancing greater transparency of political donations and spending.

## Election related disclosure

All political entities were required to disclose political contributions exceeding \$2,600 (including multiple contributions from the same donor totaling more than \$2,600) to the WAEC within seven business days of receipt. However during the election period, this time period was shorter with disclosures needed to be made by the end of the next business day. In the 2025 election period, a total of \$1,368,308.14 in contributions were disclosed.

Disclosure of electoral expenditure incurred during the election period was also required by political parties, including expenditure substantially incurred in a district in an election return. Third-party campaigners, candidates and Legislative Council groups are required to disclose all gifts received and electoral expenditure incurred during the relevant disclosure period for their circumstances in an election return. Election returns are required to be lodged within 12 weeks after polling day, which for the 2025 State election was 31 May 2025. All returns are publicly available on the WAEC website.

## Reimbursement of electoral expenditure

After the State election, one key role for the WAEC is to provide candidates and parties with reimbursement of their electoral expenditure. Candidates who receive at least four percent of valid first preference votes are eligible to claim reimbursement, which is the lesser value of their demonstrated electoral expenditure or the reimbursement amount, calculated at either \$2.26 or \$4.40 per valid vote, depending on the rate they apply for. Registered political parties, whose candidates achieve four per

## Election planning

cent on a state-wide basis, are also entitled to reimbursement for all their candidates based on the same calculation.

To receive funding, candidates and parties must provide evidence of actual electoral expenditure, as defined under section 175AA of the *Electoral Act 1907*. If the actual expenditure is less than the calculated reimbursement, only the lesser amount will be paid. Claims for public funding must be lodged within 20 weeks of polling day, with the deadline for the 2025 State election being 25 July 2025.

### How-to-vote card registration

Registering How-to-vote cards (HTVCs) with the WAEC was a new requirement for candidates and parties in the 2025 State election. How-to-vote cards provide instructions on how to complete a ballot paper to vote for a particular candidate, or a group in an election, which voters will most commonly see handed out by party supporters outside polling places. The aim of introducing the registration requirement was to promote transparency, accuracy, and fairness in the distribution of voting instructions to voters during the election period.

For the first time, the WAEC introduced a formal registration process for HTVCs during the election. To support candidates and parties in meeting the new requirements and delivering a more efficient experience, the WAEC prepared a suite of comprehensive resources, including detailed fact sheets, step-by-step guides, and a dedicated webinar to address common questions. These tools played a crucial role in helping stakeholders understand the criteria for a compliant HTVC and successfully navigate the submission and registration process, reinforcing consistency and transparency across the election.

An online portal was developed to allow candidates and parties to efficiently submit their HTVC applications, which also streamlined the approval process for the WAEC. The registration period for HTVCs for the 2025 State election was 14 February, 8am until 27 February, 5pm 2025. Once approved on the portal, HTVCs were published instantly to the WAEC website for public access, allowing voters to view HTVCs ahead of voting, giving greater access to information when planning their vote.

A dedicated HTVC team managed and processed the applications, ensuring timely reviews of the documents and consistent communication with stakeholders. These preparatory steps were essential in laying the groundwork for a successful and transparent registration process. From 1,364 submissions that were assessed, 1,020 HTVCs were successfully registered.

### Ballot draws

To determine the order of the candidates on the ballot papers, the WAEC held ballot draws where the names of each candidate are placed in spheres and randomly drawn from a ballot box. Both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council draws are open for candidates and the public to attend.

For the Legislative Assembly, each of the 59 Returning Officers conducted this draw at the designated Place of Nominations in their district immediately after candidate nominations closed at 12pm, 13 February 2025. With the Legislative Council changed to one whole of state electorate from the previous six regions, one ballot draw was conducted by the Legislative Council returning officer at the central vote processing at 4pm that day. This was to allow more time to process any last minute nominations, due to the legislation change requiring non-party candidates to submit at least 250 signed declarations of support from electors and longer time needed to check those names. The Legislative Council ballot draw included three draws, for political parties, groups and ungrouped single candidates in that order.



# Election delivery



## Enrolment

While voting is compulsory in WA State elections, eligible voters have to enrol with WAEC, through the Australian Electoral Commission’s national roll, to be able to vote. In the lead up to the 2025 WA State election, the WAEC focused on messaging around this enrolment requirement to ensure eligible Western Australians were prepared for voting by election day.

To support enrolment ahead of the 2025 State election, the WAEC launched a comprehensive public messaging campaign commencing 3 January at the start of the election period, and continuing through to the enrolment deadline on 13 February. This campaign utilised paid advertising, social media, media briefings, and direct community engagement to reach electors via email across Western Australia. Messaging focused not only on guiding those not yet enrolled through the enrolment process, but also on encouraging existing electors to check and update their details, particularly if they had changed address since last voting. A change in residence could mean voting in a different electorate, making accurate enrolment essential for ensuring every vote counts in the right place.

The percentage of eligible voters who were enrolled for the 2025 WA State election was 95.68 percent, with the number of people enrolled increasing by 9.62 percent from the 2021 WA State election.

	2025	2021
Enrolment at close of rolls	1,868,946	1,716,732
% increase in enrolments	9.62%	7.75%
Largest district	Butler - 35,677	Swan Hills - 32,573
Smallest district	Kimberley - 18,440	North West Central - 10,432



### Enrolment on the day

Legislation changes meant enrolment on the day was an option for voters for the first time. This new process was introduced to ensure anyone presenting at a polling place who was not correctly enrolled to vote, but was eligible to be enrolled, could apply to enrol and cast a declaration vote at that time.

Enrolment on the day was not promoted until early voting opened, as enrolling before the enrolment deadline is a quicker and simpler process for voters. However, this new option gave a variety of people the opportunity to vote who would not have been able to otherwise. This included those who might go to vote without realising they were enrolled, and people who become eligible to vote after the enrolment deadline and before election day, such as those turning 18 or becoming Australian citizens in that time.

Voters had to complete a form, a written declaration in front of a polling officer, and provide evidence of their identity. The vote was treated as a declaration vote and was assessed for enrolment eligibility after polling day, with their vote included in the ballot if they were found to be eligible to enrol.



To support the introduction of enrolment on the day for the 2025 State Election, the WAEC liaised with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to adjust the declaration vote form and streamline enrolment processing. Since enrolment is managed through a joint roll, voters only need to enrol once to be eligible to vote in federal, state, and local government elections. The WAEC also worked with the AEC to ensure that enrolment claims submitted during early voting and on election day could be processed quickly and efficiently after the election, allowing all eligible votes to be included in the count without delay. Additionally, the WAEC's IT team updated the vote processing system to accommodate this new category of vote, ensuring accurate recording and reporting within the Commission's digital infrastructure.

One challenge was the unknown quantity of new enrolments that would be received through this new reform. A total of 25,771 forms were received with all processed within the required timeframe. Out of those, 12,879 were new electors and their vote was included in the count, allowing a significant amount of voters to be able to have their say. The remainder of the applications were electors who were already enrolled but updating their enrolment details.

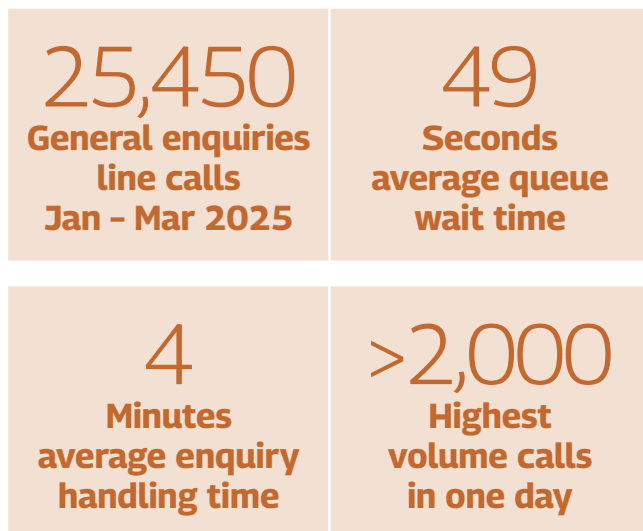
## **Elector services**

### **General enquiries line**

The WAEC runs a General Enquiries Line during elections to serve as a centralised point of contact and support for electors for questions and information on participating in an election.

For the 2025 WA State election, the WAEC partnered with experienced elections contact centre provider Probe CX after a tender process to ensure smooth delivery with the expected large volume of elector communication. The general enquiries team worked closely with the company on all aspects of the project including technology, software, telephony, recruitment and implementation strategies.

The general enquiries Line opened on 29 January 2025, one week before the writs were issued. The centre was then in operation Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm, including the Labor Day public holiday, with longer opening hours on key dates such as the close of the electoral roll and the close of early voting to manage expected enquiry volumes at these key stages of the campaign.



An efficient call queue and enquiry handling time meant callers could access support and information in a timely and effective way. More than 3,000 calls were escalated from the call operators to the onsite WAEC supervisors, showing the complexity of many of the calls. The first day of early voting saw the highest level of calls at more than 2,000, with a significant number also taken on election day at more than 1,000.

Some of the most common queries were around early voting eligibility and options including electors who were interstate or overseas, postal voting enquiries, election day information, employment opportunities and enrolment options. Callers could also request forms to be emailed or posted directly to them, confirm their electoral enrolment, record a reason for non-voting or request a replacement postal voting package. As a result of requests for forms, more than 5,000 forms were posted to electors and more than 5,000 sent by email.

The general enquires WAEC supervisory team also processed all inbound email enquiries to the WAEC mailbox. Standard enquiries were answered by this team and more complex, sensitive or specialised enquiries were forwarded to other WAEC staff for action.

The general enquiries line was a key source of information and conduit between the general public and WAEC staff, with daily updates provided to key personnel on feedback from callers to assist with operations.

## Feedback

The team oversaw all feedback received during the State election period with all election enquiries responded to or acknowledged within 24 hours or by the next business day.

During the eight week period, a total of 1,460 enquiries were received, with 97% answered to within a day.

Many submissions raised multiple points, resulting in 3,157 distinct matters being identified and addressed. Of these, 792 items related to issues that emerged on or after Election Day, including:

- Polling place operations
- Recruitment processes
- Training delivery and effectiveness

### Top feedback categories:

- 191 enquiries – incorrect voting instructions from polling officials
- 177 enquiries – campaign advertising (e.g. non authorisation of electoral material, signage placement)
- 164 enquiries – queues at polling places
- 138 enquiries– postal votes
- 95 enquiries – election information provided by WA Electoral Commission (e.g. difficulties navigating the website)

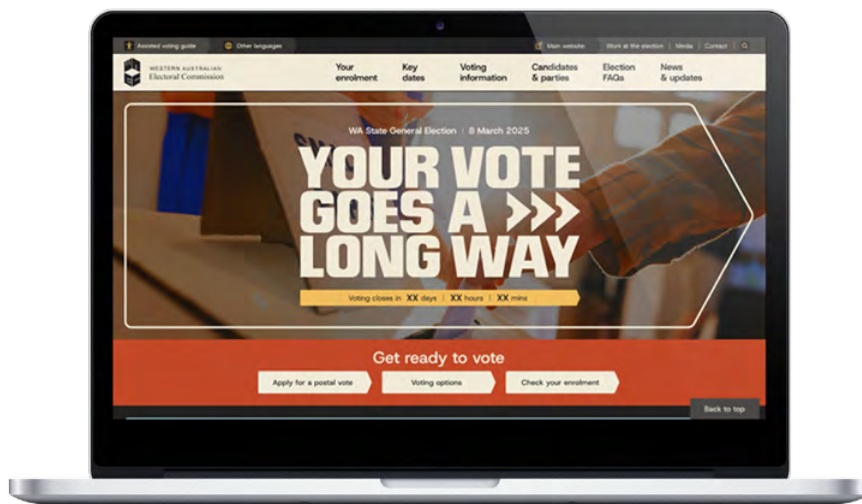
## Website

To ensure information was accessible for voters, candidates and other stakeholders visiting the WAEC website, a dedicated landing page was developed to function as the homepage during the election period. This landing page was designed to provide a user-friendly experience, providing relevant and current information as the election cycle progressed.

The landing page aligned with the “Your vote goes a long way” advertising campaign and was regularly updated to align with the campaign stages.

The website offered guidance on how to vote, where to vote, assistance for voters in other languages, important deadlines, and a list of published statutory notices as required under the Electoral Act. Resources to help with the voting process were also accessible on the site such as videos explaining how to vote, frequently asked questions and a misinformation disinformation campaign to support voters with reliable and trustworthy information.

From 3 January to 17 April 2025, the WAEC website hosted more than 1.5 million users who made more than 2.6 million visits (sessions).



Traffic acquisition data revealed most website visitors arrived by organic search, direct or paid search. The majority of people accessing the site did so via their mobile device followed by their desktop.

It was essential that resources and information was readily available on the WAEC website to ensure transparency and fairness for political parties and candidates. Clear, accessible guidance to understand nomination procedures, regulations, party registrations, key deadlines and legal obligations were centralised on the website ensuring that all participants, regardless of location or background, could engage in the election process efficiently and equitably.

### Total views of the top website pages 3 January to 17 April 2025

WAEC website pages	Views	No. active users	Views per active user
Election Overview page 2025 State election	1,606,828 (30.7%)	683,278 (44.42%)	2.35
WAEC Campaign landing page	768,935 (14.69%)	469,805 (30.54%)	1.64
Online Elector Services (Enrolment, Postal voting)	716,333 (13.69%)	403,390 (26.22%)	1.78
Your voting options	534,704 (10.22%)	353,986 (23.01%)	1.51
Postal voting	260,270 (5.09%)	172,404 (11.21%)	1.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,887,070 million</b>	<b>2,082,863</b>	<b>3.40</b>



## Digital newsletters and SMS

During the election campaign, the WAEC engaged directly with electors to share key information and important dates.

Two electronic newsletters were distributed during the election period. The first focused on enrolling to vote and available voting options. The second was sent to electors who had not yet applied for a postal vote, reminding them of their voting options, how to correctly mark their ballot papers, and highlighting resources available to assist voters.

This type of communication is important for promoting transparency, engagement and participation in the electoral process. It provided timely and accurate information, countered misinformation and was effective in reaching large audience groups.

On election day, 104,003 SMS were sent to electors who had not already voted early reminding them that it is their last opportunity to vote and directing them to the website.

## Voting options

### Postal voting

Postal voting gives electors the option to apply for a postal voting package to be sent to their address, allowing them to conveniently fill out their ballot papers and send them back to the WAEC in advance of election day.

Applications for postal voting for the 2025 WA State election opened on 3 January 2025. Voters could apply for a postal voting package via the postal voting portal on the WAEC website, downloading the application form or requesting the form to be mailed to them and returning it either by email or post. This option was communicated to voters through social media posts, paid advertising, media and electronic newsletters.

Following the close of candidate nominations, ballot papers were printed and postal voting packages began dispatch from 19 February 2025. Ballot papers, postal vote envelopes, and voter details were securely transferred to an external mailhouse provider for packing and delivery via Australia Post. Electors could apply for a postal vote until 5 March 2025, and all applications received by the deadline were processed accordingly.





*Polling Place official Michelle McKenzie at Doon Doon, Kimberley*

From 24 February 2025, returned postal votes packages could begin to be processed, with the voter marked off the electoral roll and the voter details removed from the envelope to ensure the vote remains secret. Postal votes were stored in a sealed ballot box until they could be counted from 6pm on election day.

In the 2025 State election, postal voting activity declined significantly, with only 64% as many postal voting packages issued compared to the 2021 election. This reduction was largely attributed to legislative changes that streamlined the application process, where political parties and candidates were no longer permitted to receive postal vote applications directly. Instead, all applications were submitted directly to the WAEC. To maintain transparency, the WAEC was required to provide applicant details to political parties and candidates upon request.

	2025	2021
Postal vote applications received	221,293	333,377
Postal voting packages sent	214,743	311,598
Postal votes returned to WAEC	182,334 (82.4% of postal votes sent)	246,120 (73.8% of postal votes sent)

### Remote polling

To ensure Western Australians who live in remote locations have the opportunity to vote, remote polling teams visited communities during the early voting period which were a considerable distance from polling place locations. The WAEC planned for remote polling in 62 locations across four districts, Kimberley, Pilbara, Kalgoorlie and Mid-West. Some locations had to be rescheduled with two cancelled due to flooded roads as a result of Tropical Cyclone Zelia and three cancelled due to sorry business.

### Mobile polling

Mobile polling teams visited facilities such as hospitals, aged care homes and prisons on designated days and times to ensure people unable to visit polling places had access to vote in the State election. The mobile polling teams visited 247 locations during the early voting period. A total of 7,243 votes were cast through remote and mobile polling.

### Phone assisted voting

Phone assisted voting allows eligible electors to vote over the phone. This option was available for voters who are visually impaired, have some other physical impairment, or have reading difficulties. Eligible voters could apply and vote over the phone between 8am, 24 February and 4pm, 8 March. When applying, the elector was confirmed to be on the electoral roll, issued a secret PIN and later received a Voting ID via email, SMS or a phone call to confirm. When voting via phone assisted voting, the elector then needed to provide their PIN and Voting ID, hear all voting instructions and ballot paper details and use their phone keypad to mark their ballot paper selections. When the vote was completed and confirmed, it was securely stored in a virtual ballot box. A total of 1,615 votes were cast through phone assisted voting.

### Early voting

Changes to legislation meant early voting could start 11 consecutive days before election day, excluding Sundays, running from 24 February to 7 March 2025. Early polling places were open 8am to 6pm every day except Sunday 2 March and Monday public holiday 3 March 2025.

A total of 61 early polling places operated across the State. This included a low sensory polling place open at select times and days to provide voters who experience sensory sensitivity with a quieter, less stimulating polling place experience.

Early polling places were also established interstate at each state and territory electoral commission office, and internationally at the New Zealand Electoral Commission and Invest and Trade Western Australia offices located in London, Dubai, Singapore, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City, Tokyo, and Shanghai.

Previously votes cast on early polling days were transported to the processing centre for counting after 6pm on election night. This was changed to allow all in-district votes cast during early voting to be counted on the night with the ordinary votes cast, meaning there are no separate figures for the number of people choosing to vote at early polling places.



## Advertising campaign

The WAEC engaged Rare creative agency to create an advertising campaign that would raise awareness and understanding of enrolling and voting in the 2025 State election. The aim was to normalise participation with an impactful and positive campaign around the voting experience, show the value of participation and promote trust in the electoral process. The campaign also needed to reach traditionally under-represented priority cohorts including people aged 18 to 30, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people from CaLD communities.

“Your vote goes a long way” was a statewide, multi-platform campaign which highlighted the distances travelled to provide all Western Australians the opportunity to vote. The TV commercial focused on the journey a ballot paper takes from being printed and shipped out across WA to polling places giving every voter the chance to have their say. This served to educate viewers on what goes into the delivery of an election, as well as emphasise the transparency of this process. The catchphrase ‘Your vote goes a long way’ was important to highlight how far each person’s votes goes to making their voice heard on who our representatives are in parliament and sending a message about the future we want for our State.

The campaign ran from 3 January to election day 8 March, across multiple digital and traditional channels, social media and out of home advertising such as billboards.



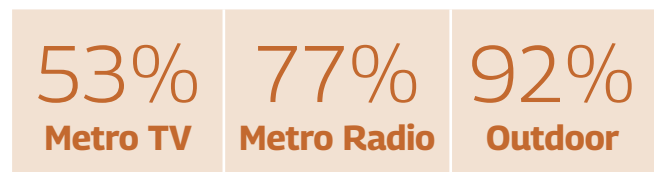
It followed a timeline of three stages which informed the messaging:

1. Raising awareness of a State election on 8 March and motivating people to feel engaged with the process. This stage includes messaging on how to enrol to vote.
2. Preparing and educating people on how to plan their vote with the different options for voting such as postal voting, early voting and accessibility options.
3. Motivating people to vote early, vote by post or vote on the day.

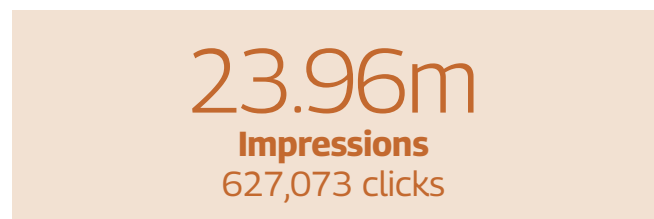
## Key media campaign results

TV, Radio and Outdoor performed strongly as mass awareness channels reaching a broad WA audience. For digital advertising, people aged 25 to 34 were the largest age demographic accounting for 30% of the total audience exposed to WA State Election paid social ads. This was followed by 18 to 30 year-olds with 25 percent. This illustrates success in achieving strong distribution to younger priority audiences.

### Reach



Measured against all 18+





DO YOU HAVE A HEARING LOSS?

Please let our staff know if you need assistance



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN Electoral Commission

# Multilingual guide to voting





## Media engagement

The WAEC took a proactive approach to media liaison in the leadup to the 2025 State election with a focus on building relationships with local media to amplify key messages, broaden reach and reputation and combat election misinformation/disinformation through media coverage.

The WAEC conducted a series of media briefings to enhance engagement and improve public understanding of the electoral process. A total of five briefings were held across the election period, delivered both online and in-person to accommodate a range of media outlets.

These briefings were supported by a comprehensive media kit, which provided key information, resources, and messaging to assist journalists in accurately reporting on the election. The initiative was highly successful in guiding public narratives, educating media representatives, and fostering direct communication between the Commission and the press.

Media releases and alerts were sent weekly throughout the election period covering key topics such as changes to legislation and ballot papers, early polling, engagement of 18 to 30 year olds, accessibility, indigenous participation, cyclone response, temporary election workforce, election results and post-election feedback. These were supplemented with media pitches on potential stories targeted at key media to support our campaign objectives and advertising narrative of 'Your vote goes a long way'.

## Misinformation and disinformation campaign

As the 2025 State election campaign progressed, the WAEC implemented a proactive strategy to counter misinformation and disinformation, reinforcing its role as a trusted source of electoral information.

The 'Check the Facts' campaign was launched across all WAEC communication channels and promoted through media outlets. Its objectives were to:

- Raise public awareness of the risks and consequences of misinformation during elections
- Support voters in identifying misleading or inaccurate content
- Provide accessible, downloadable digital resources to help electors verify information and make informed decisions

WAEC launched a dedicated webpage explaining the definitions of misinformation and disinformation, featuring a checklist to help voters assess the reliability of content, particularly on social media and examples of common election-related falsehoods.

A digital campaign was rolled out across social platforms, including a custom-developed video, downloadable social tiles, and active moderation efforts to respond to and correct misleading comments about election processes and commonly misunderstood topics.



## Election results

Following the close of polls at 6pm on election day, 8 March 2025, counting commenced at polling places. This included the Legislative Council first preference count and the Legislative Council above-the-line first preference count for votes cast within each district.

Recent legislative changes allowed for in-district early votes, cast at early voting centres that also operated on election day, to be counted on the night. Previously, these early votes were transported to the Central Vote Processing Centre for counting. As a result of this change, approximately 379,000 early votes were able to be counted on election night, significantly improving the timeliness of preliminary results.

Once the initial counts were completed, Two Candidate Preferred (2CP) counts were also conducted on election night. These counts used a prediction of the likely final two candidates in each Legislative Assembly district, based on factors such as previous election results and opinion polling. Votes with first preferences for other candidates were then distributed between the predicted top two. The purpose of the 2CP count is to provide the earliest possible indication of the likely outcome in each district.

The results from these counts were either entered into the WAEC's vote processing system by the Returning Officers or phoned through to the Results team to enter into the system. The first preference results for the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council were then published on the Commission's website at five minute intervals. The 2CP results were only published if the two candidates selected were the candidates who had the highest number of first preference votes. As in the case in Fremantle, an alternative 2CP count was undertaken on Monday 10 March 2025, when the two candidates with the highest first preference votes were the Labor and Independent candidates rather than the Labor and Greens candidates as had been identified initially.

## Central vote processing

The first preferences and 2CP for declaration votes were counted over the following week after election day at the Central Vote Processing Centre. These included votes cast at polling places by electors outside their district, postal votes, interstate and overseas votes and votes from electors who successfully enrolled on the day. This process was completed on 25 March 2025.

### Full distribution of preferences

The Full Distribution of Preferences is the final stage of the count. For the Legislative Assembly, all ballots were hand counted, including checking whether the ballot had been correctly filled out. Then all formal votes were counted in order of preferences, eliminating the lowest-scoring candidates and redistributing their votes, until one candidate had received an absolute majority, or 50 per cent plus 1 of the total votes. The full distribution of preference count began on 19 March 2025, with six districts counted a day, two automatic recounts were conducted during this time for Kalamunda and South Perth when the result of the district was less than 100 votes between the last two candidates.

For the Legislative Council, significant changes were made to the counting process due to several legislation changes. Previously the Legislative Council was divided into six regions. This was changed to one whole of state region with 37 members instead of 36. The group voting ticket system, where parties and candidates

could choose where preferences were distributed if electors voted above the line, was abolished and optional preferential voting was introduced. These changes increased the complexity and length of the Legislative Council count, particularly the ability for voters to mark multiple preferences above-the-line where previously voters could only choose to vote for one party or group.

Ballot papers that contained a single preference and informal votes were recorded in the Commission's CountWA software system. Due to the complexity of ballot papers containing preferences, either above or below-the-line, these were sent for scanning to an external provider and data entered. Of the total votes cast for the Legislative Council, 44 percent voted with preferences below the line, which was greater than anticipated. Results were finalised and formally declared by the Legislative Council Returning Officer on 16 April 2025.



# Post election



## **Return of the writs**

Once the results of the election have been formally declared by the Returning Officers, the writs can be returned to the Governor of Western Australia at Government House.

The Legislative Assembly writ was returned to His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM, Governor of Western Australia on 2 April 2025, 55 days after it was issued. This was the earliest the writ was returned for the Legislative Assembly in 17 years. The writ outlined the elected candidates in the 59 seats, and the date each result was returned.

The writ for the Legislative Council was returned to Government House on 17 April 2025, the day after the results were formally declared, identifying the candidates elected to the Legislative Council. The writ was returned to Justice Paul Tottle, acting as a deputy to the Governor, marking the completion of the 2025 WA State election.

## **Non-voter processing**

Voting in State elections, by-elections, and referenda is compulsory in Western Australia. Electors who fail to vote without providing a valid and sufficient reason may be subject to a penalty. The WA Electoral Commission follows a structured process to identify and contact non-voters if this has occurred.

Legislation changes meant the fine for non-voting has gone up to \$50 from \$20 for a first offence. The fine for repeat non-voting is \$75.

The WAEC will continue to send out notices to electors after the 2025 State election in line with legislative requirements to seek a valid and sufficient reason for not voting or payment of the penalty amount where that does not exist.

## **Special Inquiry into the planning and delivery of the 2025 State election**

On 2 April 2025, Premier Roger Cook announced a special inquiry into the planning and delivery of the 2025 State Election, appointing the Honourable Malcolm McCusker AC CVO KC to lead the investigation. The inquiry was established in response to widespread concerns about how the election was conducted, particularly issues on Election Day such as staffing shortages at polling places, ballot paper supply problems, vote processing, and the WAEC responsiveness to emerging challenges on the day.

The Terms of Reference for the inquiry outlined seven key areas for examination, with a strong emphasis on identifying the root causes of Election Day disruptions. These included the adequacy of polling place resourcing, the recruitment and training of staff, the decision to outsource temporary election worker recruitment, and the management of ballot paper distribution. The inquiry also assessed how electoral boundary changes were communicated, the accessibility of polling locations for voters, wait times and queuing, the efficiency of vote processing systems, and the WAEC's response to operational issues. Funding arrangements were also reviewed to understand their impact on election delivery.

A comprehensive report was completed by 30 June 2025 and tabled in Parliament on 12 August 2025. It made 24 recommendations, with 22 specifically aimed at addressing the issues experienced during the 2025 State election. These recommendations focused on strengthening internal governance, improving procurement practices, and enhancing transparency and operational readiness.

The WAEC has accepted the recommendations and begun implementing reforms. These changes are intended to rebuild public trust in the electoral process and ensure future elections in Western Australia are conducted with greater efficiency, reliability, and integrity.





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