

# 2020 Local government elections

## East Gippsland Shire Council

### Election Report



© **State of Victoria**

(Victorian Electoral Commission)  
April 2021

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission pays respect to Victoria's traditional owners and their elders past and present who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years. Their living culture and their role in the life of Victoria is acknowledged by the VEC.

# Letter of Transmittal

19 April 2021

Mr Anthony Basford  
Chief Executive Officer  
East Gippsland Shire Council  
PO Box 1618  
BAIRNSDALE VIC 3875

Dear Mr Basford

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warwick Gately', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Warwick Gately AM**  
Electoral Commissioner

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## Introduction

The Victorian local government general elections are held every four years as defined by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (**LG Act**). In 2020, general elections were held for 76 of the 79 Victorian councils<sup>1</sup> with Saturday 24 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 2020 East Gippsland Shire 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 items including compulsory voting enforcement.

## About the Victorian Electoral Commission

The VEC is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 2002* (Vic) (**the 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.

Warwick Gately AM is the appointed Electoral Commissioner and Liz Williams 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 seven Directors, each leading the main functional areas of the VEC. Each Director acts as subject matter expert within their legislative responsibilities under the LG Act and the Electoral Act.

The VEC has a dedicated local government election program which is managed by Katrina Collins and 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 Planning Group and has sponsorship from the Executive Management Group.

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<sup>1</sup> The South Gippsland Shire Council was placed into administration in mid-2019. The Council's general election has been postponed until October 2021. Casey City Council and Whittlesea City Council were placed into

administration in early 2020. The Councils' general elections have been postponed until October 2024.

# Key changes

## Changes in legislation

The new LG Act received royal assent on 24 March 2020 and introduced a number of changes, some requiring immediate implementation and others to be implemented progressively. Those requiring immediate implementation had a significant impact on the 2020 local government election program.

Following the LG Act completing its passage through Parliament, the VEC implemented the necessary changes to the 2020 local government election program in response to the reforms as they applied to the elections.

### The key changes from the LG Act are as follows:

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Local government electoral structures | <p>The default electoral structure for all local councils is single-councillor wards, although some regional and rural local councils may be unsubdivided or divided into wards with equal numbers of councillors in each ward.</p> <p>The VEC is no longer responsible for conducting electoral representation reviews of all local councils in Victoria.</p> <p>An independent Local Government Electoral Representation Advisory Panel will review council electoral structures. The panel includes the Electoral Commissioner and other members appointed by the Minister for Local Government.</p> |
| Voting system                         | <p>The voting system (attendance or postal) is set by the Minister for Local Government.</p> <p>All local council elections are conducted according to the same voting system.</p>  |
| Enrolment and voters' rolls           | <p>Non-resident property owners need to apply to be enrolled (this change will be implemented in stages leading up to the 2024 local government elections).</p> <p>Amendments to the voters' roll are completed by the VEC only (excluding Melbourne City Council).</p>   |
| Candidate qualifications              | <p>It is compulsory for local government candidates to complete mandatory training prior to nominating for local government elections.</p>  |
| Nominations/candidate statements      | <p>When nominating, candidates are required to declare they have completed the mandatory Local Government Candidate Training.</p> <p>The maximum number of words for a candidate statement was increased to 300 (350 for the Melbourne City Council Leadership Team and Councillor Groups).</p>   |
| Election staff                        | <p>The term 'Election Manager' replaced 'Returning Officer' making the term consistent with the <i>Electoral Act 2002</i>.</p>  |
| Extraordinary vacancies               | <p>The VEC will fix the timeline for local council by-elections (previously fixed by the Minister).</p> <p>Changes to the countback process which now draws on a broader pool of ballot papers to determine the successful candidate at a countback.</p>  |
| Compulsory voting                     | <p>From the 2024 local government general elections onwards, it will be compulsory for everyone enrolled on a voters' roll to vote.</p>   |

The LG Act made other changes to the local government electoral landscape, including:

- operational and technical provisions for electoral matters are now prescribed in the Regulations rather than being contained in the LG Act.
- disputed election results are now heard by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (**VCAT**).

On 8 May 2020, the Minister determined<sup>2</sup> all of the 2020 general elections would be held by postal voting. As such, the VEC adjusted preparations in response to the Minister's determination.

In addition, new Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (**the Regulations**) came into operation on 13 July 2020.

### Response to public health crisis: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In response to the coronavirus (**COVID-19**) global pandemic, a State of Emergency was declared in Victoria on 16 March 2020. While the VEC was well advanced in planning for the elections, some uncertainty arose due to speculation that the elections could be rescheduled.

Following the Local Government Minister's confirmation on 15 May 2020 that the 2020 local government elections would proceed, the VEC's operating model was adjusted to deliver a compliant election while meeting health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations to voters, election staff, councils, candidates and all other stakeholders.

On Wednesday 1 September 2020, the Governor in Council made amendments to the regulations to allow certain provisions to be varied in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the amendments allowed the VEC to determine an appropriate method for eligible candidates to lodge their nomination form and pay their nomination fee electronically; and to allow the Election Manager to determine the maximum number of scrutineers that may be present for any activity at any one time. The amended regulations commenced the day after

they were made and remain in place until 26 April 2021.

On 29 September 2020, the Governor in Council made further changes to the Regulations to provide greater clarity of mitigation options for any disruptions to the voting timeline, including delays across the postal network that could threaten the integrity of the elections. The changes allowed the Electoral Commissioner to alter the last day of voting and/or the extended postal vote receipt deadline if necessary, to maintain and protect election integrity.

The VEC developed a COVIDSafe Election Plan<sup>3</sup> in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services which complemented the VEC's Service Plan. The COVIDSafe Election Plan outlined the VEC's actions and strategies to deliver safe and compliant local government elections.

The plan considered all electoral operations and activities and included changes such as (but not limited to):

- acquiring larger election office spaces to accommodate social distancing practices
- moving operations from face-to-face to online (when legislation permitted), for example:
  - the VEC's briefing meetings with individual councils
  - the candidate information sessions
- modifying the timeline for ballot paper extraction and counting activities
- modifying scrutineer practices.

The VEC acknowledges the collaboration and contributions of council officers in navigating the changes required to the program due to COVID-19.

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<sup>2</sup> The Minister published this decision in the Government Gazette on 18 May 2020

<sup>3</sup> 'VEC COVIDSafe election plan' - <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/local-council-election-reports-and-plans>

## Election dates

**The key timelines that applied to the 2020 local government elections were as follows.**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Deadline fixed by the VEC for council primary enrolment data               | Monday 13 July 2020                          |
| Close of roll  | 4 pm Friday 28 August 2020                   |
| Opening of the election office to the public                               | Wednesday 16 September 2020                  |
| Certification of the voters' roll and opening of nominations               | Thursday 17 September 2020                   |
| Close of nominations   | 12 noon Tuesday 22 September 2020            |
| *Ballot draw   | From 1 pm on Tuesday 22 September 2020       |
| *Deadline for lodging candidate statements, photographs and questionnaires | 12 noon Wednesday 23 September 2020          |
| *General mail out of ballot packs to voters                                | Tuesday 6 October to Thursday 8 October 2020 |
| *Close of voting   | 6 pm Friday 23 October 2020                  |
| Day prescribed as Election Day   | Saturday 24 October 2020                     |
| *Close of extended postal vote receipt period                              | 12 noon Friday 30 October 2020               |
| Declaration of election results  | No later than Friday 13 November 2020        |

\*Dates with asterisks relate to contested elections only.

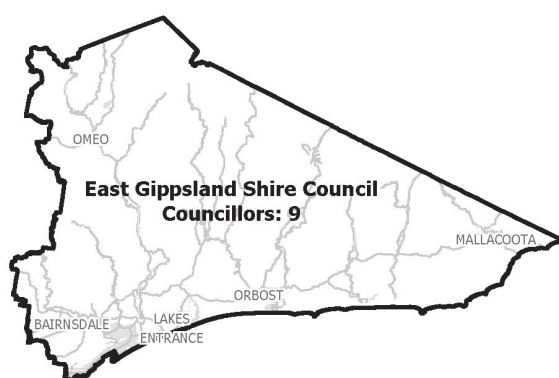


## About East Gippsland Shire Council

East Gippsland Shire Council is comprised of nine councillors elected from an unsubdivided structure.

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

Subsequent to the review, in April 2020 the structure of East Gippsland Shire Council was determined by the Minister to remain as unsubdivided in accordance the new LG Act.



**Figure 1:** The electoral structure of East Gippsland Shire Council at the general election held on 24 October 2020.

## 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 Friday 28 August 2020. Pursuant to section 249(4) of the LG Act, the VEC certified the voters' roll on Thursday 17 September 2020.

At certification, the voters' roll for the 2020 East Gippsland Shire Council general election included 41,335 enrolled voters.

## Composition of the voters' roll

The LG Act specifies that the voters' roll for a local government election is formed by combining two 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 East Gippsland Shire 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. Following the passage of the LG Act, 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 deleted 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 East Gippsland Shire Council voters' roll.

## 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 two phases – enrolment and voting – and through multiple traditional and emerging mediums, including radio, digital and social media, and offline/outdoor advertising.

## Statutory advertising

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

For the 2020 statutory notices, East Gippsland Shire Council nominated the following newspapers for the statutory notices to appear in:

- Bairnsdale Advertiser
- Lakes Entrance Post
- Orbost Snowy River Mail
- Mallacoota Mouth

In 2020, the VEC established a new policy position for statutory advertising in alignment with the updated definition of ‘publish’ in the LG Act. The policy position included the following:

- all statutory and non-statutory election advertising would be published on the VEC website, and
- where available, all statutory and non-statutory election advertising would be published in local newspapers and/or other selected newspapers identified following consultation with the council.

Refer to **Appendix 2** for further information in relation to the statutory advertising.

## VEC website

The VEC provided council specific information regarding the election on its website under the ‘2020 local council election’ page. The VEC website went live for the local government elections in early August 2020. 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 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 media 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.

Media outlets were provided with a media information booklet that outlined the election timeline and key messages, and provided the VEC’s head office media contacts. The VEC’s communication team supported each Election Manager as the primary media spokesperson in relation to each election.

The VEC’s media liaison program principally featured staged media releases aimed to highlight key milestones during the election timeline, and capitalise on existing general news coverage. More information on the VEC’s media release schedule is available at **Appendix 3**.

## Social media campaign

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

## VEC VoterAlert advisories

Electors on the State enrolment register are able to sign up to the VEC’s free SMS or email alert service VoterAlert, to receive reminder messages pertinent to elections that affect them. They can subscribe to receive SMS messages only, email only, or both SMS and email.

During the general election, the VEC used its VoterAlert service to send the following direct messages to those State-enrolled voters on the roll for the election.

The messages were rolled out in the following schedule:

Wednesday 19 August to Wednesday 26 August 2020 – 24,560 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email reminding voters to enrol or update their details by the close of roll.

Friday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2020 – 25,197 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email advising that the VEC had commenced posting ballot packs.

Monday 19 October 2020 – 25,023 VoterAlert messages were sent by SMS and email reminding voters that it was the last week to post their ballot material back to the VEC.

In mid-October, the VEC commenced sending its final VoterAlert – a reminder to post ballot packs by the voting deadline. Whilst approximately 900,000 of the 1.8 million voters scheduled to receive an alert were contacted it was identified that an unanticipated high volume of calls was received by both the VEC and councils as a result of the alert. Therefore the VEC suspended the VoterAlert messages scheduled for the remaining 900,000 voters.

More information on the VEC's VoterAlert advisories is available at **Appendix 4**.

## Voter engagement

The VEC delivered an extensive voter engagement program. The program sessions were implemented throughout Victoria and were specific to local demographics. Please refer to **Appendix 5** to view the full list of initiatives for the 2020 local government elections. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the VEC's programs traditionally offered through face-to-face education and engagement were redesigned to comply with health, safety, social distancing and hygiene obligations.

## Blind and 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 pm on Tuesday 15 September 2020.

The VEC received and processed one request for braille ballot material and one large print ballot material for East Gippsland Shire Council.

## Interpreting services

The VEC engaged 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.

## Telephone enquiry service

A local telephone enquiry service was provided at the election office from Wednesday 16 September 2020 until the close of voting, for enquiries regarding the election.

The local telephone enquiry service was supplemented by an overflow call centre at the VEC's head office. The overflow call centre received calls made directly to the VEC's head office line (131 VEC, 131 832 or +61 3 8620 1100 for callers outside of Australia) and diverted calls from the election office when the election office lines were at capacity. Additionally, email enquiries were received and processed through [info@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@vec.vic.gov.au).

The types of calls that are typical during an election relate to:

- voting entitlements and compulsory voting obligations
- enrolment questions
- ballot pack had not been received
- ballot material was spoilt or destroyed, so replacement ballot material was required
- a voter advising that they were overseas or interstate
- queries regarding the content of the ballot pack.

A breakdown of the daily number of calls received by the telephone enquiry service and the overflow call centre in respect to the election is available at **Appendix 6**.

## Election Manager

The VEC maintains a pool of trained senior election officials located across the state to fill election management roles for State and local government elections. Election-specific training is provided to senior election officials prior to each election management appointment.

The size of the election management team appointed for the conduct of an election is based on the size of the council. As required under the LG Act an Election Manager is appointed to conduct the election and is supported by one or more Assistant Election Managers for larger councils, or a senior election official for smaller councils.

In accordance with section 3 of the LG Act, the Electoral Commissioner appointed Sandra Wood as the Election Manager for the 2020 East Gippsland Shire Council general election.

The appointed Assistant Election Manager was Nigel Swinn.

## Election office

The Election Manager was responsible for the establishment and management of the election office located at 54B Service Street, Bairnsdale. The election office was provided by the VEC.

In accordance with the VEC's COVIDSafe election plan, the election office was open to the public by appointment only. The election office was available for appointments from Wednesday 16 September until Friday 23 October 2020 between 9 am and 5 pm. Opening hours were extended on Thursday 22 October (9 am to 8 pm) and Friday 23 October (9 am to 6 pm) to allow for final enquiries and the hand-delivery of ballots prior to the close of voting. Enquiries regarding the election were also managed by phone.

## Candidates

Nominations for the election opened at 9 am on Thursday 17 September and closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020. Candidates were required to lodge their nomination forms in person at the election office. A \$250 nomination fee applied.

On Wednesday 9 September 2020, the Electoral Commissioner published a determination<sup>4</sup> establishing a framework for prospective candidates who were prevented from attending the election office due to health directions regarding COVID-19 under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The determination outlined

provisions for electronic lodgement of the nomination form and nomination fee for affected candidates.

## Candidate information

The VEC developed a suite of resources that were accessible to prospective candidates prior to the nomination period. From early September, candidates were able to access the VEC's information about the process of nominating and becoming a candidate for the election. The VEC's online *Candidate Helper*, accessible via the VEC website, went live on Thursday 3 September 2020. The *Candidate Helper* enabled candidates to pre-complete their nomination form and other forms online before lodging them with the Election Manager.

For the 2020 elections, the VEC's candidate information session was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website. The session was complemented by three state-wide interactive seminars consisting of a panel from the VEC's leadership and executive teams.

## Nominations

At the close of nominations, 21 candidates had nominated for election to council.

The ballot draw to determine the order in which the names would appear 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 7** for the list of candidates in ballot draw order.

## Candidate statements and photos

In accordance with Regulation 39 of the Regulations, candidates were able to lodge a 300 word statement and submit a recent photograph for inclusion in the ballot packs sent to voters. The deadline for the submission of candidate statements and photographs was 12 noon on Wednesday 23 September 2020.

See **Appendix 7.1** for a breakdown of submitted statements and photos, and **7.2** for the sample website version product.

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<sup>4</sup>VEC 2020 Determination No.1 - Nominations from candidates impacted by COVID-19 Public Health Directions in respect to local government elections -

<https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/determinations>



## Candidate questionnaires

In accordance with Regulation 43 of the Regulations, candidates were able to complete and lodge their answers to a set of prescribed questions in addition to a statement and photograph. The Election Manager accepted questionnaire submissions lodged by 18 of the 21 candidates at the election.

The completed questionnaires were accessible to voters on the VEC website or by contacting the election office.

## Voting

### Redirection of ballot packs

The Regulations provide that a voter may – no later than the day the roll is certified (or a later date if specified by the Election Manager under Regulation 22(2)(f) of the Regulations) – make a request in writing to the Election Manager to have their postal ballot envelope redirected to another address. For the 2020 elections voters had until Thursday 17 September to submit requests for redirection.

The Election Manager received five requests for redirection of ballot packs for the election.

### Early votes

A voter may request an early postal ballot envelope (early vote) prior to the general mail out of ballot packs. The Election Manager processes the request and issues the early vote if the request is assessed as reasonable. Requests for early votes could be processed from Wednesday 23 September 2020, the day after nominations closed, until the commencement of the general mail out of ballot packs on Tuesday 6 October 2020. Due to the timing of early votes, some early voters may not have had access to the candidate statements, photographs or questionnaires.

Due to the impact that COVID-19 restrictions had on election services for the 2020 elections, requests for early votes were managed by

The Election Manager issued 14 early votes for the election.

## Mail-out of ballot packs

The VEC mailed 41,334 ballot packs between Tuesday 6 October and Thursday 8 October 2020. See **Appendix 8** for a breakdown of the packs mailed out on each day during the general mail-out noting that ballot packs were not mailed to any voters that had passed away between the close of the roll and generation of the mail-out file.

This included five ballot packs that were redirected to alternative addresses for voters that had applied to redirect their ballot pack by Thursday 17 September 2020.

In accordance with Regulation 49(3) of the 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. The VEC received confirmation that all ballot packs had been delivered to delivery addresses by Wednesday 14 October 2020.

During the voting period, 1,095 ballot packs were returned to the election office by Australia Post as return-to-sender mail. Most of this mail was due to the addressee not residing at the address.

### Election office counter services

In order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of voters and VEC personnel in the COVID-19 environment, the VEC did not provide an over-the-counter replacement or unenrolled vote service at election offices in the Metropolitan Melbourne region (including Mitchell Shire Council) for the elections. Similar restrictions were initially imposed on election offices in Regional Victoria and were relaxed in the final weeks of voting. Voters were advised to request replacement or unenrolled ballot material by phone, which was sent to them by post.

### Unenrolled votes

Unenrolled votes are issued to people whose name cannot be found on the voters' roll but who claim they are entitled to vote at the election. The unenrolled ballot pack includes a declaration that is signed by the applicant and assessed by the

Election Manager prior to either admitting or disallowing the vote.

The Election Manager issued 26 unenrolled votes and following relevant checks, seven 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 to the Election Manager for a replacement ballot pack. Requests for replacement ballot packs within metropolitan councils were processed and fulfilled at the election office then lodged at the local postal facility. In order to assist in the mail turnaround time for regional councils, the VEC established a centralised postal vote issuing service at head office. Replacement vote requests were processed at the election office and fulfilled and lodged with Australia Post from the VEC in Melbourne.

The Election Manager issued 866 replacement ballot packs during the voting period. Please refer to **Schedule 1** for further information on replacement ballot packs issued.

## Return of ballot paper envelopes

Voters were provided with a priority reply-paid envelope for the return of their ballot paper envelope containing their completed ballot paper. The return mail was delivered to the election office from local postal facilities or mail distribution centres. Voters who chose to hand-deliver their vote to the election office were able to do so by placing their ballot paper envelope containing their completed ballot paper into ballot boxes located at the election office. The ballot boxes allowed voters to drop off their ballot envelopes without interaction with staff, therefore remaining compliant with a COVIDSafe election<sup>5</sup>.

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

The Election Manager received a total of 28,537 returned ballot paper envelopes by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020.

The Regulations provide that the Election Manager can accept returned ballot paper envelopes up until 12 noon on the Friday following the close of voting, if satisfied that the ballot paper envelope was completed by the voter prior to the close of voting. The Election Manager accepted 6,775 ballot paper envelopes during the extended postal vote receipt period.

The total returned ballot paper envelopes for East Gippsland was 35,312.

The Election Manager set aside 1,060 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 East Gippsland Shire Council.

# Results

## Extraction

A total of 34,252 ballot paper envelopes were admitted to the extraction process.

The extraction of ballot papers occurred at the election office commencing on Monday 26 October. The extraction of all admitted ballot paper envelopes was completed on Wednesday 4 November, following the close of the extended postal vote receipt period.

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 two-stage process maintains anonymity and ensures the number of envelopes is tracked for ongoing reconciliation.

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<sup>5</sup> 'VEC COVIDSafe election plan' - <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications/local-council-election-reports-and-plans>

Any returned ballot paper envelopes found not to contain a ballot paper, or that contained more than one ballot paper, were required to be rejected and could not be counted. There were 64 returned ballot paper envelopes rejected during the extraction activity.

Following the extraction of ballot papers from the ballot paper envelopes, a total of 34,188 ballot papers proceeded to the count.

## Computer count

Following the extraction of ballot papers admitted to the count for East Gippsland Shire 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. The computer count information session explaining the process was recorded and available for online streaming from the VEC website from Monday 19 October 2020. Results were calculated at the election office on Monday 9 November.

The provisional results were published to the VEC website as they became available. Results were updated as finalised<sup>6</sup> once declarations had taken place.

For a breakdown of the first preference results, refer to **Appendix 9**.

## Recounts

At any time before a candidate is declared as elected, a recount may be initiated by the Election Manager or requested in writing by a candidate stating the reasons for their request. Such requests are assessed by the Election Manager supported by the VEC and either accepted or declined.

The Election Manager did not receive any requests for a recount following the count for East Gippsland Shire Council.

## Declaration of results

The declaration of results was scheduled later than at previous elections, due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on extraction and counting

timelines. As per the Service Plan, the latest date for all results declarations to have been completed was Friday 13 November 2020.

The results of the 2020 East Gippsland Shire Council general election were declared at 3 pm on Monday 9 November 2020 at the Bairnsdale Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale.

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

# Election statistics

## Participation

Participation is measured by the number of marks on the roll as a percentage of the total enrolment and can vary from turnout. The overall participation rate in the East Gippsland Shire Council election was 84.97%, which is higher than the State average of 84.12% (excluding Melbourne City Council) and higher than the 76.32% rate at the 2016 East Gippsland Shire Council general election.

Analysis of voter participation for the different enrolment categories shows that participation is higher for voters who are enrolled on the EC's List (87.02%) compared to voters enrolled on the CEO's List (69.24%).

Refer to **Appendix 10** 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 2020 East Gippsland Shire Council general election was 82.71%. This is compared to the State average turnout of 81.47% (excluding Melbourne City Council). The voter turnout at the 2016 general election for council was 74.87%.

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<sup>6</sup> A preference distribution report can be found at [2020 council election results | Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.2020council.election.results.vic.gov.au/).

## Informality

The overall informal voting rate recorded at the 2020 East Gippsland Shire Council general election was 9.96%, compared with the State average of 4.76%. An informality rate of 16.79% was recorded at the East Gippsland Shire Council general election held in October 2016.

# Complaints

## Type of complaints

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

### 1. The conduct of participants in the election.

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

### 2. The administration of the election.

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

The majority of complaints at the 2020 local government elections related to category one, often where the complainant alleged inappropriate or illegal action by another person or group associated with the election.

## Complaints process

The VEC operates a streamlined complaints process during elections, developed in consultation with local councils and enforcement agencies. The process requires complaints to be lodged in writing, and they are then processed through the VEC's head office. For the 2020 local government elections, customers were able to provide feedback and complaints through an online submission form on the VEC's website.

Each complaint is evaluated, and an appropriate course of action is determined. Complaints alleging a breach of the LG Act, for example, are forwarded to the Local Government Inspectorate (LGI). 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. In these cases, the VEC investigates the matter and determines the most appropriate response. The VEC committed to responding to each complaint within five working days, however due to the unanticipated high volume of

complaints received this extended in some instances.

## Complaints received

The VEC received 21 written complaints relating to the election for East Gippsland Shire Council. Please see **Appendix 11** for a description of complaints received by the VEC.

# Post-election activities

## Storage of election material

All records from the election will be kept by the VEC safely and secretly in accordance with Regulation 79 of the Regulations.

## Refund of nomination fees

Nomination fees were refunded to eligible candidates on Thursday 10 December 2020. Eligible candidates included elected candidates or those who received at least 4% of the first preference vote. Any forfeited nomination fees were remitted to Council on 10 December 2020.

## 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 election 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 the VCAT disputing the result of the East Gippsland Shire Council general election.

# 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. Apparent non-voters have 28 days in which to respond.



People who do not respond to that notice, or do not provide a satisfactory response to the notice, may be issued with an Infringement Notice that will incur a penalty. Further follow-up by way of a Penalty Reminder Notice may also take place – 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 Penalty Reminder Notice stages.

Additionally, during the Infringement and Penalty Reminder Notice stages, non-voters may request for their matter to proceed directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Any such 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 conclusion of the Penalty Reminder Notice stage.

## Evaluating the VEC's services

The VEC is committed to providing high quality election services to its local government clients. Through the VEC's formal feedback and debriefing program, the VEC is able to 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 2020 and acknowledges the receipt of feedback provided by East Gippsland Shire Council. Additional feedback can be provided to the Program Manager for Local Government elections by emailing [LGProgram2020@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:LGProgram2020@vec.vic.gov.au).

### Internal debriefing program

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. This report will be tabled in Parliament and available on the VEC website.

# Schedule 1: Record of ballot papers and declaration envelopes

## East Gippsland Shire Council 2020 general election

### BALLOT PAPERS PRINTED

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Victorian Electoral Commission | 47,000        |
| Election Manager               | 9             |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>47,009</b> |

### BALLOT PAPERS ISSUED

|                              |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| General mail out             | 41,334        |
| Early and replacement votes  | 880           |
| Unenrolled declaration votes | 26            |
| Spoilt                       | 0             |
| <b>Sub total</b>             | <b>42,240</b> |
| Unused                       | 4,769         |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>47,009</b> |

### DECLARATIONS RETURNED

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| General mail out admitted to the extraction             | 33,469        |
| Early and replacement votes admitted to the extraction  | 776           |
| Unenrolled declaration votes admitted to the extraction | 7             |
| Returned declarations unable to admit to extraction     | 1,060         |
| Declarations returned to sender                         | 1,095         |
| <b>Sub total</b>  | <b>36,407</b> |
| Declarations not returned                               | 5,833         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>42,240</b> |

## Schedule 2: Certification statement

In accordance with Regulation 77, I certify that Schedule 1 of this report on the conduct of the 2020 East Gippsland Shire 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 'MM Gately', with a stylized, cursive script.

Warwick Gately AM  
Electoral Commissioner

# Appendix 1: Breakdown of the voters’ roll

| East Gippsland Shire Council  |               |
|---|---------------|
| Voters enrolled through an entitlement under section 241 of the LG Act      | 36,576        |
| Voters enrolled through entitlements under sections 242 – 245 of the LG Act | 4,759         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>41,335</b> |



## Appendix 2: Statutory advertising

### East Gippsland Shire Council election Schedule of public notices

#### Close of roll notice (see Appendix 2.1 for example)

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| VEC Website               | 8 August 2020  |
| Bairnsdale Advertiser     | 12 August 2020 |
| Lakes Entrance Lakes Post | 12 August 2020 |
| Mallacoota Mouth          | 13 August 2020 |
| Orbost Snowy River Mail   | 12 August 2020 |

#### Notice of election (see Appendix 2.2 for example)

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| VEC Website               | 31 August 2020   |
| Bairnsdale Advertiser     | 2 September 2020 |
| Lakes Entrance Lakes Post | 2 September 2020 |
| Mallacoota Mouth          | 3 September 2020 |
| Orbost Snowy River Mail   | 2 September 2020 |

#### Voting details notice (see Appendix 2.3 for example)

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| VEC Website               | 28 September 2020 |
| Bairnsdale Advertiser     | 30 September 2020 |
| Lakes Entrance Lakes Post | 30 September 2020 |
| Mallacoota Mouth          | 1 October 2020    |
| Orbost Snowy River Mail   | 30 September 2020 |

#### Reminder notice (see Appendix 2.4 for example)

|                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| VEC Website               | 12 October 2020 |
| Bairnsdale Advertiser     | 14 October 2020 |
| Lakes Entrance Lakes Post | 14 October 2020 |
| Mallacoota Mouth          | 15 October 2020 |
| Orbost Snowy River Mail   | 14 October 2020 |


**Notice of result (see Appendix 2.5 for example)**

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| VEC Website               | 23 November 2020 |
| Bairnsdale Advertiser     | 25 November 2020 |
| Lakes Entrance Lakes Post | 25 November 2020 |
| Mallacoota Mouth          | 26 November 2020 |
| Orbost Snowy River Mail   | 25 November 2020 |

Appendix 2.1: Close of roll notice for East Gippsland Shire Council

## East Gippsland Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote



### You must be enrolled to vote

A general election will be held for East Gippsland Shire Council in October 2020. To be able to vote in the election, you must be enrolled by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020. Two categories of voters can be enrolled to vote in the East Gippsland Shire 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 24 October 2020 AND
- you live in East Gippsland Shire 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 24 October 2020 AND
- you live in East Gippsland Shire and you are not on the State electoral roll OR
- you have lived at your current residential address within East Gippsland Shire 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](http://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 Friday 28 August 2020.

##### How can I check my State enrolment?

You can check your enrolment details online at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) at any time, or call 1300 805 478.

#### Council-enrolled voters

##### Am I enrolled to vote?

To be a Council-enrolled voter, you must be:

- 18 years of age or over on Saturday 24 October 2020 AND
- not a State-enrolled voter within East Gippsland Shire.

You are automatically enrolled for this election if you were enrolled as a non-resident owner at the most recent election for your local area. This includes any by-elections held since the last general election.

If your circumstances have changed since the most recent election and you are no longer a non-resident owner of that property, you will not be automatically enrolled for this election. Depending on your circumstances, you may still be eligible to apply to be enrolled as a Council-enrolled voter.

##### Who else can enrol & vote?

You may also apply to enrol if:

- you have purchased a rateable property in East Gippsland Shire since the last election or by-election and you are not automatically enrolled OR
- you are not an Australian citizen and you live in, and pay rates for, a property within East Gippsland Shire OR
- you pay rates on a property you occupy in East Gippsland Shire, for example you are a shop tenant and pay rates to the Council for the tenancy, and you have no other voting entitlement within East Gippsland Shire OR
- you are a director or company secretary of a corporation that pays rates to East Gippsland Shire Council and you have no other voting entitlement within East Gippsland Shire.

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

If you meet any of the mentioned criteria and wish to enrol, contact East Gippsland Shire Council on (03) 5153 9500 for a council enrolment form. Council enrolment forms must be received by the Council by the close of roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

#### How can I check if I am Council-enrolled?

You can check your enrolment details by contacting the Council on (03) 5153 9500.

#### Thinking about standing for election?

Candidate requirements have recently changed. To nominate as a candidate for East Gippsland Shire Council, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for East Gippsland Shire 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.

For further information, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)




### Enrolment closes

## 4 pm Friday 28 August

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

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 131 832


@electionsvic



For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

• 普通话 9209 0190 Amharic • العربية 9209 0100 Arabic • Bosanski 9209 0191 Bosnian • 粵語 9209 0101 Cantonese • Hrvatski 9209 0102 Croatian • داري 9209 0193 Dari • Dinka 9209 0119 Dinka • Ελληνικά 9209 0103 Greek • Italiano 9209 0104 Italian • ភ្នំ 9209 0192 Khmer • 한국어 9209 0194 Korean • Македонски 9209 0105 Macedonian • 國語 9209 0106 Mandarin • العربية 9209 0195 Persian • Русский 9209 0196 Russian • Српски 9209 0107 Serbian • Somali 9209 0108 Somali • Español 9209 0109 Spanish • Türkçe 9209 0110 Turkish • Việt-n 9209 0111 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorized by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.



Victorian  
Electoral  
Commission

## Appendix 2.2: Notice of election for East Gippsland Shire Council

### East Gippsland Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote



#### Vote by post this October

##### Voting

Ballot packs will be mailed to voters enrolled in the East Gippsland Shire Council election from Tuesday 6 October 2020. Return your completed ballot material by mail ASAP or hand-deliver it to the Election Manager by the close of voting at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020.

##### If you will be away

If you will be away when ballot packs are mailed, or your address has changed since Friday 28 August 2020, you can request for your ballot pack to be redirected by writing to:

Election Manager  
East Gippsland Shire Council election  
c/- Victorian Electoral Commission  
Level 11, 530 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Alternatively, you can email your request to:

[redirections@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:redirections@vec.vic.gov.au)

Please include the address for redirection. Each voter requesting redirection must sign their request.

Requests for redirection must be received by Thursday 17 September 2020.

##### 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 Tuesday 15 September 2020. To register, call (03) 8620 1222 during business hours.

#### Request an early postal vote

To apply for an early postal vote, contact the Election Manager from Wednesday 23 September 2020 on 1300 112 723 and make an application. You must provide a valid reason.

#### How to nominate as a candidate

Candidate requirements have recently changed. To nominate as a candidate, you must:

- be an Australian citizen and enrolled on the voters' roll for East Gippsland Shire 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 Thursday 17 September 2020 until 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September 2020 at:

54B Service Street, Bairnsdale

Visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://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 Thursday 3 September 2020.

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 Wednesday 16 September 2020 on 1300 112 723 to make a nomination appointment.



#### Online candidate information session

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the VEC's recorded candidate information session can be streamed online from Thursday 3 September 2020 complemented by state-wide interactive candidate seminars based on the information video. To watch the information session or find out how to join an online interactive seminar, visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

#### Nominations close

12 noon Tuesday 22 September

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

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 131 832

@electionsvic

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

• 普通话 9209 0180 Amharic • العربية 9209 0100 Arabic • Bosanski 9209 0191 Bosnian • 粵語 9209 0101 Cantonese • Hrvatski 9209 0102 Croatian • داری 9209 0193 Dari • Dinka 9209 0119 Dinka • Ελληνικά 9209 0103 Greek • Italiano 9209 0104 Italian • ភាសាខ្មែរ 9209 0192 Khmer • 한국어 9209 0194 Korean • Македонски 9209 0105 Macedonian • 國語 9209 0106 Mandarin • فارسی 9209 0195 Persian • Русский 9209 0196 Russian • Српски 9209 0107 Serbian • Soomaali 9209 0108 Somali • Español 9209 0109 Spanish • Türkçe 9209 0110 Turkish • Việt-n 9209 0111 Vietnamese • All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.



## Appendix 2.3: Voting details notice for East Gippsland Shire Council

### East Gippsland Shire Council postal election

Your council, your vote



#### Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material will be mailed to enrolled voters from Tuesday 6 October 2020.

This is a postal election only.

If you do not receive your ballot pack by Friday 16 October 2020, please call 1300 112 723 during office hours to arrange a replacement.

#### 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 most 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 completed ballot paper

Follow the instructions on your ballot paper to complete your vote. To return your completed ballot paper, put it in the ballot paper envelope then use the reply-paid envelope provided or hand-deliver it during office hours to:

54B Service Street, Bairnsdale

#### Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were on the State roll at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.

You may be fined if you do not vote — this includes homeowners and tenants.

You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you don't vote, if:

- you live outside this local council area OR
- you are enrolled directly with the Council to be on the voters' roll for this election.

#### Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand-delivered by 6 pm\* Friday 23 October

\*Local mail clearance times vary. Ballot packs must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Don't risk a fine.

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

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 1300 112 723

@electionsvic

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Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.



## Appendix 2.4: Reminder notice for East Gippsland Shire Council

### East Gippsland Shire Council postal election

*Your council, your vote*



#### Check the mail for your ballot pack

Ballot packs containing voting material were mailed to enrolled voters from Tuesday 6 October 2020.

**This is a postal election only.**

If you do not receive your ballot pack by **Friday 16 October 2020**, please call 1300 112 723 during office hours to arrange a replacement.

#### 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 most 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 completed ballot paper

Follow the instructions on your ballot paper to complete your vote. To return your completed ballot paper, put it in the ballot paper envelope then use the reply-paid envelope provided or hand-deliver it during office hours to:

54B Service Street, Bairnsdale

#### Voting is compulsory

Voting is compulsory for all voters who were on the State roll at **4 pm** on **Friday 28 August 2020**.

**You may be fined if you do not vote – this includes homeowners and tenants.**

You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you don't vote, if:

- you live outside this local council area **OR**
- you are enrolled directly with the Council to be on the voters' roll for this election.

#### Your completed ballot pack must be in the mail or hand-delivered by 6 pm\* Friday 23 October

\*Local mail clearance times vary. Ballot packs must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Don't risk a fine.

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


[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 1300 112 723

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## Appendix 2.5: Notice of results for East Gippsland Shire Council

### East Gippsland Shire Council election

#### Declaration of results



The following candidates were elected to the East Gippsland Shire Council at the general election held in October 2020:

VAN DIGGELE, Kirsten (1st elected)

URIE, Mendy (2nd elected)

BUCKLEY, Sonia (3rd elected)

ALLEN, Arthur (4th elected)

STOW, Trevor (5th elected)

GREACEN, Jane (6th elected)

WHITE, John (7th elected)

CROOK, Tom (8th elected)


REEVES, Mark (9th elected)

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

**Sandra Wood**  
Election Manager  
Monday 9 November 2020

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) | 131 832

@electionsvic



Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

## Appendix 3: Schedule of media releases and advisories

### East Gippsland Shire Council Council-specific media releases and advisories

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Enrol now for the East Gippsland Shire Council election                    | 7 August 2020     |
| Call for candidates for the upcoming East Gippsland Shire Council election | 24 August 2020    |
| Candidates announced for the East Gippsland Shire Council election         | 23 September 2020 |
| Ballot packs mailed this week for East Gippsland Shire Council election    | 5 October 2020    |
| Voting closes soon for the East Gippsland Shire Council election           | 12 October 2020   |
| New councillors for East Gippsland Shire Council                           | 9 November 2020   |

### Statewide media releases and advisories

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Victorians urged to enrol for upcoming council elections                                     | 7 August 2020     |
| October local council elections to proceed under COVIDSafe election plan                     | 19 August 2020    |
| Last chance to enrol for Victorian council elections   | 21 August 2020    |
| Enrolment closes tomorrow for October's council elections                                    | 26 August 2020    |
| Nominations open soon for Victorian local council elections                                  | 31 August 2020    |
| Council election information one click away on VEC website                                   | 4 September 2020  |
| Accessing candidate information for the 2020 Victorian local council elections               | 14 September 2020 |
| Victorian voters encouraged to sign up for free election reminders                           | 16 September 2020 |
| Nominations are in for the October council elections   | 23 September 2020 |
| Authority granted for postal vote contingency  | 30 September 2020 |
| Voting underway for Victoria's local council elections                                       | 5 October 2020    |
| Mobile numbers not from VEC  | 12 October 2020   |
| Local council elections voting deadline looms  | 19 October 2020   |
| Strong voter response to local council elections   | 20 October 2020   |
| Results timeline for Victorian local council elections (media advisory, not for publication) | 21 October 2020   |
| Final day of voting shows high voter turnout for council elections                           | 23 October 2020   |
| VEC won't risk public health for quick results in record turnout                             | 28 October 2020   |
| A win for democracy in a challenging year  | 13 November 2020  |
| Didn't vote in the election? Please explain.   | 8 February 2021   |



## Appendix 4: VoterAlert advisories

### Appendix 4.1: SMS alerts

#### 4.1.1 close of roll – sent from Wednesday 19 August to Wednesday 26 August 2020



Council elections will be held by post in October. Make sure you are correctly enrolled by 4pm 28 Aug. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/tohMhA5l>

Wed 11:08 AM

#### 4.1.2 mail out of ballot pack Friday 9 October to Friday 13 October 2020



VEC has posted a ballot pack to your enrolled address. Voting in council elections is compulsory. More info or unsubscribe at: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/ufDvSR07>


#### 4.1.3 reminder close of voting - Monday 19 October 2020



Council elections: voting closes 6pm Friday. Post your vote or return it to your election office ASAP. More info or unsubscribe: <https://voteralert.vec.vic.gov.au/s/usSUBkIM>

## Appendix 4.2: Email alerts

### 4.2.1 Close of roll email

**VoterAlert** Victorian Electoral Commission

### 2020 Local council elections

Hello,

Local council elections will be held in Victoria by post this October. It is important that you are correctly enrolled so you receive a ballot pack at your correct address.

**Enrolment closes at 4 pm on Friday 28 August 2020.**

If you haven't changed your postal address, residential address or name, there is no need to do anything.

#### Are your details up to date?

You can check your details online on the VEC's Check My Enrolment portal. Complete all fields, making sure you:

- enter your first and middle names in the 'Given names' field
- start to enter your suburb and pick it from the list suggested
- start to enter your street name only and pick it from the list suggested.

CHECK MY ENROLMENT

Do you need to update your details?

CHANGE MY DETAILS

#### Are you eligible to vote in another council?

In a council election, there are two types of enrolment: State enrolment and council enrolment.

You are receiving this message because you are State-enrolled.

But if you own property or pay rates in another council, you may be enrolled or eligible to enrol directly with that council.

Find out more: [Enrolling for council elections](#)

#### Do I have to vote at these elections?

Voting is compulsory for State-enrolled voters. Don't risk a fine!

If you are on the roll for Melbourne City Council, it is also compulsory for council enrolled voters to vote.




FIND OUT MORE

*Authorised by W. Gately, AM, 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.

UNSUBSCRIBE



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

4.2.2 Ballot Pack mailout email

Please do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. For any queries, [contact us](#).

VoterAlert

VEC

Victorian Electoral Commission

2020 local council elections

Hello

You are enrolled to vote in the 2020 local council elections in Council Name

Voting in this election will be by post. We posted you a ballot pack between Tuesday 9 and Thursday 8 October 2020.

Please follow the instructions in your ballot pack to cast your vote and mail it back to us as soon as possible. Voting closes at 6 pm on Friday 23 October 2020, but local mail clearance times may be earlier than the cut-off. We recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

Didn't get a ballot pack?

If you don't get a ballot pack by Friday 16 October, call your local Election Office to request a replacement. You can find [Election Office contact details](#) on our website.

Are you away from your enrolled address?

If you are away from your enrolled address call your local Election Office to request a replacement ballot pack. You can find [Election Office contact details](#) on our website.

Do I have to vote?

Voting is compulsory for everyone on the State and Melbourne City Council voters' rolls. Don't risk a fine!

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ELECTION

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Our mailing address is:

Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

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Election Report Local Government elections 2020

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### 4.2.3 Last week to vote email

Please do not reply to this email. Replies go to an unmonitored inbox. For any queries, [contact us](#).

**VoterAlert**



## 2020 local council elections

Disregard this email if you have already voted.

Hello

You are enrolled to vote in the 2020 local council elections in **Council Name** Council.

Voting closes 6 pm this Friday 23 October.

### How to vote

As soon as possible, make sure you:

mail your completed ballot paper in the reply-paid envelope provided

OR

drop your completed ballot paper off at [your local Election Office](#).

Please note: voting closes at 6 pm on Friday 23 October. However, local mail clearance times vary and we recommend you return your completed vote as soon as possible.

### Didn't get a ballot pack?

If you haven't received a ballot pack, [check our website to understand your options](#).

### Do I have to vote?

Voting is compulsory for everyone on the State and Melbourne City Council voters' rolls. Don't risk a fine!

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ELECTION](#)

*Authorised by W. Gately, AM, Electoral Commissioner, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.*

**Our mailing address is:**

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[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)



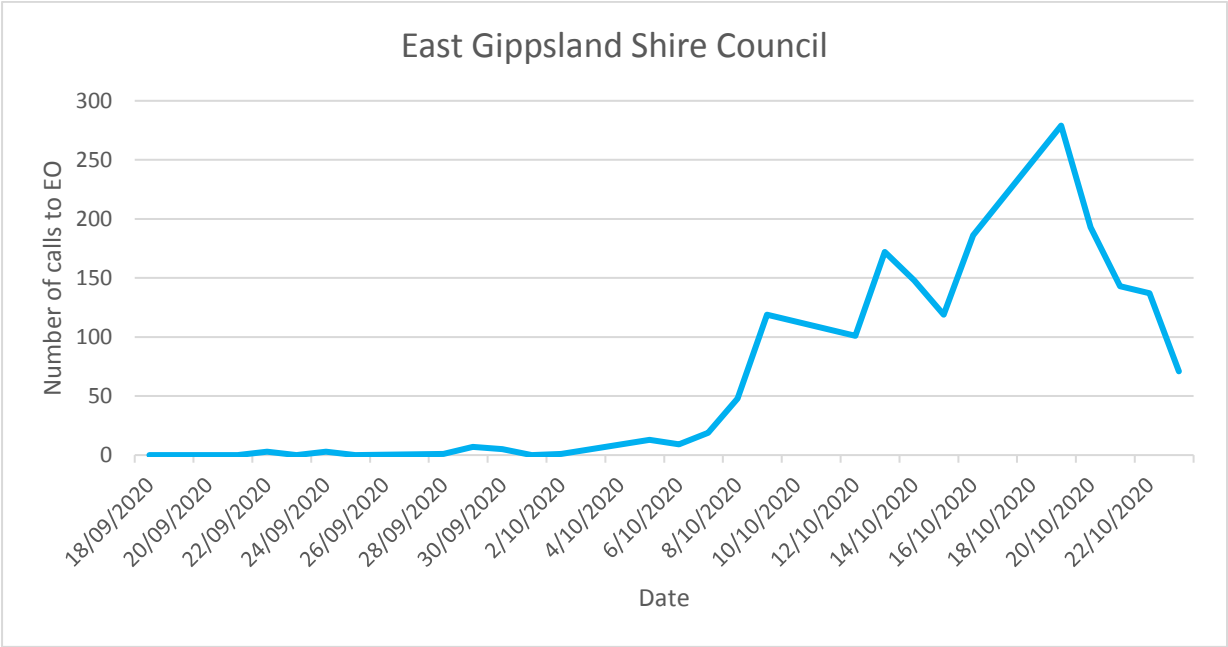
[VEC website](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

## Appendix 5: Voter engagement program and initiatives

| Program  | Program Details   |
|--|---|
| Be Heard Democracy Ambassador program                      | This program normally provides face-to-face electoral education sessions and was adapted to an online delivery model, providing peer-led electoral education to residents in specialist disability services and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. A total of 47 sessions were provided to people with disabilities and a total of 80 sessions were provided to CALD communities through councils and community organisations hosting online sessions.   |
| Myth busting campaign.                                     | This offline campaign addressed myths around enrolling and voting for those experiencing homelessness or with unstable housing. Four myths were dispelled and displayed on billboards and street posters, in metropolitan Melbourne areas with high populations of people experiencing homelessness. During the enrolment period, no-fixed-address enrolment forms were distributed with 4,500 meals to those suffering financial hardship, through a sponsorship with StreetSmart. This partnership included social media and Electronic Direct Mail distribution to StreetSmart's database of homeless services and community partners. A 1800 freecall number was also established to support those with financial hardship to provide support for enrolling and voting. This phone number was advertised on posters distributed through homelessness agencies, drug and alcohol services and services providing COVID-19 testing in hotels. |
| CALD in-language social media videos.                      | This project produced a series of three videos in 10-12 different languages which 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 and community networks.  |
| Aboriginal short videos.                                   | This project produced five videos in collaboration with Reconciliation Victoria. Two videos featured Aboriginal Elders and other leading Aboriginal community members discussing the value and ways to engage with local council elections. A further three videos, using culturally relevant animation, explained what services councils are responsible for, how to vote and the role of a councillor. These were shared through Aboriginal community channels and organisations.   |
| DemGraphics young people co-designed social media project. | This project involved conducting research to identify barriers to enrolling and voting with a diverse group of young people. This information was then used to pilot a social media campaign in selected councils to encourage engagement in the elections for those aged 18-29.  |
| Easy English tutor guide and worksheets.                   | These were produced for people with low English proficiency and designed as a co-read product where a person supports the learner through the worksheets. The tutor guide and worksheets were based on the VEC's Easy English guides for local council elections and were available for download from the VEC's website in PDF and Word formats.  |

## Appendix 6: Daily telephone enquiries

The following graph shows the number of telephone calls recorded by the election office telephone enquiry service including those received by the VEC’s overflow call centre and tagged as relating to East Gippsland Shire Council during the 2020 local government elections.



## Appendix 7: Final list of candidates in ballot paper order

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

### East Gippsland Shire Council election

URIE, Mendy

GREACEN, Jane

CROOK, Tom

BEHAN, Tim

NEAL, Peter

STOW, Trevor

BARLING, Ray

DUTTON, Kim

SCHRODER, Jeremy

McNEILL, Jeff

NEOPHYTOU, George

ROWE, Jane

ELLIS, Dick

BUCKLEY, Sonia

ROBERTS, Luke

ALLEN, Arthur

WHITE, John

REEVES, Mark

KENDALL, Sally

ELLIS, Simon

VAN DIGGELE, Kirsten



Appendix 7.1: Candidate statements and photographs

East Gippsland Shire 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 |
|--|--|---|
| 21   | 21   | 21  |

## Appendix 7.2: Candidate statement leaflet for East Gippsland Shire Council election

**Don't Risk a Fine**

**VOTING CLOSSES 6.00 PM**  
**Friday 23 October 2020**

Your ballot paper is attached to this leaflet.  
Complete and return as soon as possible.  
See the ballot paper envelope for voting instructions.


**VOTING IN THIS ELECTION IS BY POST ONLY**

Your completed ballot material must be posted or in the hands of the Election Manager on or before **6.00 pm on Friday 23 October 2020**.  
Local mail clearance times may vary. Ballot material must be mailed before final clearance times in the last week of voting. Late votes cannot be included in the count.  
Alternatively, you may hand-deliver your envelope during business hours to:  
54B Service Street  
Bairnsdale

**CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES**  
Completed candidate questionnaires are available at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) or alternatively from the Election Manager.

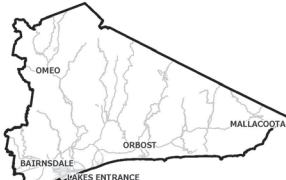
**COMPULSORY VOTING PROVISIONS APPLY**  
You have received this ballot pack because you are enrolled for this election. Voting is compulsory if you were on the Victorian State electoral roll for this council on Friday 28 August 2020.  
Further information on voting entitlements can be found at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

You may receive an Apparent Failure To Vote Notice if you complete and return your ballot material after the close of voting.



**2020 Council Election**


**VOTING CLOSSES 6.00 PM**  
**Friday 23 October 2020**



**East Gippsland Shire Council**

**THIS IS A POSTAL ELECTION ONLY.**

**Voting is compulsory for residents.**  
For further information visit [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) or phone 1300 112 723

 **Victorian Electoral Commission**  
Printed on 100% Australian made recycled stock

**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.



**URIE, Mendy**

As a Councillor I can offer a wealth of experience and a collaborative, inclusive leadership style for Council. I believe I have the skills, experience and energies to help build an East Gippsland which is focused on our future. I want to help create a region with strong, creative, connected communities and which actively mitigates against and adapts to climate change. With many people in our community struggling after drought, massive bushfires and months of Covid lock-down, a new Council must begin meaningful engagement with its diverse communities. A positive future for all of us can be built by listening with respect and care, exchanging information and tapping into vast local knowledge, innovation, creativity and shared visions. I will promote the understanding of our past, particularly aboriginal history as an aspect of building a healthy, inclusive society. Council needs to provide efficient and effective services, build strong partner relationships and advocate for East Gippsland outside our region. These are key aspects of Council's work which I am very experienced in. Council must provide leadership in understanding and disseminating the best scientific information about climate change along with the risks and many opportunities for East Gippsland. I would actively advocate for new projects which deliver multiple benefits of building community resilience, protecting and enhancing our natural environments and providing local employment. Since stepping down from serving 7 years on Council in 2012, including 3 years as Mayor, I have obtained a MBA and Masters of Strategic Foresight along with an Advanced Diploma in Group Facilitation. I have served on the Board of Management of Bairnsdale Regional Hospital for 7 years and the "Tip Shop" Committee of Management for 7 years. I ask you to vote 1 Urie, followed by Kendall and Greacen. Remember to fill in all boxes.

1

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**GREACEN, Jane**

Healthy people, healthy country. Vote 1 Dr Jane. I am a GP and Occupational Physician working in Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance for over 20 years. I serve on the Board of Mallaacoota District Health Services and have worked in Bairnsdale and Omeo hospitals. I am committed to the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly the Aboriginal Community, and to our country. This election is critically important coming during a pandemic and following devastating fires and drought. We must recover our physical, mental, and spiritual health, and rebuild and renew our lives, our country, and our industries. And this should be without increasing rates for 5 years, to give people some relief and assist this recovery. If elected, I wish to act fast, working with a good team of Councillors, supporting each other and Shire staff to represent the community, work efficiently, and achieve what is needed, particularly in the more remote towns. The Shire can recruit more health professionals and advocate to increase health services throughout the region; build more social housing for people, which will also help construction and associated industries; ensure industries are safe places to work; create new sustainable locally owned businesses that protect our environment and climate and create many long-term jobs; create arts, culture, recreation and sporting hubs throughout East Gippsland, supporting healthy creative lifestyles that bring joy into our lives. The Shire can become a leader in Aboriginal employment; it can invite universities here to establish education and science hubs, partnering with TAFE and investing in university-industry collaborations, providing skills training, supporting our farms to be as sustainable as possible, and monitoring and protecting the health of our air, water, forests and lakes. We need leadership with the vision and determination to make this region rich in culture with a sustainable future.

2

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**CROOK, Tom**

Vote 1 Tom Crook! I'm an independent 42 year-old father from Eagle Point. I've lived and worked in East Gippsland most of my life. I have an Environmental Science Degree, run a small business, previously worked in tourism and renewable energy and now work for both government and the community sector as a land manager. I'm frustrated by government decision making. Please vote for me to help make our region a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable community. I will Listen, Care and Act. For A Better East Gippsland. We've had serious challenges lately, drought, bushfires and now Covid-19. Our Council can help lead the way back to a healthy economy and environment. Vote for me and I will work for: 1 = Economy & Jobs; Local government contracts to employ local people & support local business; Revive East Gippsland's tourist economy by promoting our unique natural places and improving infrastructure like campgrounds, parking, walking & bike tracks; Advocate for increased funding for Parks Victoria; Create more Shire-driven social enterprises, like the tip shop, that use our rates to create local jobs. 2 = Strong action on Climate Change. Looking after the Bush, Better preparation for drought and bushfires; Let Science and sustainability drive Council land use & development decisions; Create local jobs in renewable energy and land management; Stand up for farmers' rights over their land. 3 = Work for Communities, Fairness and Equality; Invest in local creative events, arts and music to make our communities happier, healthier and more vibrant. Improve access for all to sport and recreation facilities; East Gippsland deserves a Council we can trust - with open, transparent processes. A Council that provides genuine support for Senior citizens, First Nations people, Veterans, homeless people and Youth. More details at: <https://www.facebook.com/forABetterEastGippsland> Or search: Vote 1 Tom Crook

3

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**BEHAN, Tim**

Tim moved to Orbst five years ago and currently operates the Orbst Club Hotel. Originally from far northern NSW, he sees a lot of similarities in the two areas and believes we have a huge untapped tourism potential. Prior to moving to Orbst, Tim worked in broadcast commercial television and previously in Information Technology, as a result he has worked on five Olympic Games. He also spent 13 years in the Australian Army Reserve. Tim understands the importance of a sustainable future and believes a well regulated Timber Industry is absolutely necessary for the continued survival of our regional economies. Between drought, fires and now Covid-19 we need unconventional thinking to stimulate our economy. Tim would encourage Council to take advantage of cheap money to borrow and invest in significant infrastructure projects including Bioenergy and micro grid technology this will reduce landfill waste, carbon emissions and the risk of blackouts. The regional centres need investment, not just Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance. We need to use everything our region has to offer to our maximum advantage, the completion of the Omeo Mountain Bike park will be a great opportunity as will the restoration of the Snowy River Rail Bridge. Together, these two projects could really make this region a must do for the cycling community. Lobbying of Parks Victoria to increase the facilities in our pristine natural environment will also help the tourism drawcard. Somethings just shouldn't be as difficult as they are, where possible, Tim will work to simplify those annoying little things. It's what you might call an outbreak of commonsense. It'll pass the pub test. Thanks for your time, I'd really appreciate your vote.

4

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**NEAL, Peter**

As a 5th Generation East Gippslander. I come with a strong business background of owning and running successful Civil Construction and Retail Businesses. I have previously served as an East Gippsland Shire Councillor for 6 years 2008/2016 one of those years as Mayor representing the People of East Gippsland 2014/2015. I was also Chair of the Gippsland Local Government Network. Council representative on the Municipal Association of Victoria. I also have a history in volunteering from Sporting Clubs as Player, Coach and as President. 40+ years in CFA holding several senior positions the majority in leadership. 2 years as Chair of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I am Executive Board Member of the \$7.6 mil Hope Restart Centre. I am also Secretary of the Ambulance Auxiliary in Bairnsdale. I am a keen boating person and love fishing and a desire to promote and share East Gippsland with others. I believe we in East Gippsland are on the threshold of better times there is a huge potential for development being situated centrally between Melbourne to the west and Eden to the east we have some 240+ square km of the best protected inland lake system in the Southern Hemisphere we are surrounded by National and State Parks, not taking advantage of the Natural features to their fullest. We need to get East Gippsland back on its feet and thriving. With the assistance of the State & Federal Government we will succeed. More importantly we need to be prepared to help ourselves. I try not to rely just on my own knowledge but wherever possible involve community to hear from them prior to decisions being made. I know with a group of councillors all working together we can do it.

5

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**STOW, Trevor**

I purchased a newsagency in Bairnsdale in 1978 and have lived here ever since. I am recently retired. Our Shire has seen drought, bush fires and Coronavirus. We need strong local government. Ratepayers are doing it tough and council needs to show leadership. Councillors need to work together for the common goal and not push their own political barrow. Our citizens, farmers and small businessmen are being forced to tighten their belts. Council needs to spend wisely and keep rate increases low. As a small businessman, I believe in promoting and supporting this sector. Car parking has been a problem for many years. We need to improve car parking. There have been too many instances of car parking being reduced in the shopping centres for no practical reason. We have some of the highest unemployment in Victoria. We need to look for and take opportunities to enhance employment. Job initiatives need to be identified to assist keep our young people stay in the area and for our valued mature aged residents. Planning has been an ongoing problem in our Shire. Issues need to be addressed and solutions found to improve delivery. I am a regular visitor to many of our outlying towns and communities. We need to be inclusive of towns like Omeo, Orbst, Mallacoota etc. and listen to and act on their concerns. I am a member of the Bairnsdale Golf Club, Fly Fishers Club and Gippsland Lakes Fishing Club. I am a past President of the Bairnsdale Chamber of Commerce and past Vice Chairman of Bairnsdale Adult Community Education. I have worked many years in the region listening to the general public every day in my business. I believe that I have a good feel for the citizen's views and concerns.

6

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**BARLING, Ray**

I, Ray Barling, will represent all residents, ratepayers, businesses, the tourist industry, and work for jobs for the young people of East Gippsland. As well as help to bring in new industries. The Gippsland Lakes are the biggest Lakes system in the Southern Hemisphere, more must be done with this icon.

7

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**DUTTON, Kim**

Hi everyone. I was born and raised in regional NSW in the 60s. I worked as a horticulturist before a career change to wife and mother of three children kept me busy with committee positions on playgroups, school parent associations, coaching two soccer teams and visiting nursing homes with the family dog before the implementation of therapy dogs. In 2012 after a significant change in family dynamics I packed the campervan and set off to discover the world. I was fortunate to discover little Paynesville. I immediately found home in a community both diverse and inclusive. I have involved myself in community activities including swan watching, dragon boat racing, Alleycats choir, Gippsland Lakes Yacht Club and Coastguard. This has given me a chance to meet a good cross section of the local community. Residents have told me they want footpaths for the elderly and parents with prams for safety, more sports and activities for young adults, exercise stations along walking tracks and climate action. I will advocate for these plus caring and planning for all particularly under represented children, women, Gunaikurnai, LGBTIQ and the homeless. I will also advocate for regular community information sessions about the benefits of peaceful coexistence with wildlife in our backyards, paddocks and forests, what to do when finding an injured animal, subsidised desexing of companion animals and protection of wildlife corridors and habitats. I am eager to see streetscaping with endemic and exotic food plants using permaculture principles which the community maintains furthering our connection to nature and each other. As a future based leader I would like to see investment into environmentally friendly and animal friendly businesses and initiatives that ensure Gippsland Lakes, rivers and lands remain pristine. Proudly endorsed by the Animal Justice Party whose values are kindness, equality, rationality and non violence.

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**SCHRODER, Jeremy**

I grew up in the country and have spent my time employed in many various and diverse occupations. After High School, I worked picking potatoes in the frost and mud, I've done my time in the shearing sheds for several years as a roustabout primarily in the NSW Southern Tablelands, Wagga Wagga districts and a few sheds out West. Other employment since then includes general farm work, fencing, cutting broccoli in the veggie paddocks out at Lindenow, packing pies at Patties for 6 years and now after returning to study a 12-year career in community services as a youth worker and Family Violence and Child FIRST outreach worker. I learnt the value of hard work and reputation early in life, there is no standing around with hands in pockets when there is a job to be done. My work in social services has given a unique insight into the challenges within our community. We need to do more to support vulnerable members of our community with a focus on the homeless, disengaged young people, education, health and well-being with a greater focus and understanding around the development of Mens health in the region. Every day I turn up, every day I work hard, advocate, assess, empower and support decision making of others. I will put my community first while working closely with them to grow our region on the back of the natural assets that exist across East Gippsland. Im standing to provide a positive, environmentally sustainable and inclusive voice. I believe we can do more to engage with the community to deliver for the people of East Gippsland. I want the opportunity to be a part of a progressive council making real and positive change, showing responsibility towards our environment, local communities and future generations in East Gippsland.

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**McNEILL, Jeff**

My experience as a Councillor, farmer and small business owner gives me an awareness of the challenges ahead as we recover from the rolling disasters of drought, fires and pandemic. Strong communities come from decisions that reflect the true diversity of our people. By creating an open decision making process that engages across all our diversity sectors we can achieve that strength. People are our greatest asset; we need to lobby for health and welfare supports to ensure care is taken to minimize the human impact of our recent disasters. Our businesses will need support through economic drivers such as targeted regional development and federal infrastructure funding. I will support opportunities in tourism, sport and agricultural activities to assist in our recovery economically, socially and personally. Connectiveness between our communities is important but is particularly critical during emergencies. Roads and communications are a lifeline for our towns and economy. I will work to make sure there is solid investment in this infrastructure. Our environment is an integral part of East Gippsland. I will balance guardianship of our natural assets with economic considerations. Councils management of green waste is reckless and costly, missing opportunities for local firewood recycling. Having grown up in Bairnsdale, my wife and I chose to raise our two children here, one of whom is now a teacher at Lucknow Primary School. I am a 5 times Paralympian marathon athlete and now manage my wife's physiotherapy clinic in Bairnsdale. I have been a member of the Victorian Disability Advisory Board and am currently on the Public Transport Access Board. Council is about listening to the community needs, especially now as our health, wellbeing and economy are vulnerable. I stand with energy and a willingness to listen and lead our community through the times ahead.

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**NEOPHYTOU, George**

Do you want a better council? This can be done by bringing about:

1. Better consultation a council that listens, considers and respects your point of view.
2. Accountability by being an open, transparent and non-secretive council.
3. Reduce or contain council rates and charges.
4. Protect and enhance our amenity and environment starting with a coordinated and effective approach to investigate and act on the health of the Gippsland lakes.
5. Ensure contracts are delivered by local business.
6. Proper budgetary and financial management allocation of funding in areas of greatest need, not to those that shout the loudest.
7. Improve safety: maintenance of roads, footpaths and better street lighting.
8. Address the increasing needs of our ageing community.
9. Support additional programmes and initiatives for our youth.

I am committed to be your voice and advocate on council. I will fight for you. I am already doing this in my profession as a barrister and solicitor. I understand the issues faced by business with my broad experience as a current law practice owner, a previous business and marketing practice owner, executive in the corporate sector and lecturer in economics at Deakin University. How to vote for me: Place a number 1 in the box next to my name, then fill all remaining boxes on your ballot paper so your vote is valid and will be counted. Or if you have another candidate you want to choose, place a number 1 in the box next to their name and give George Neophytou your second preference by giving me number 2, then fill all remaining boxes on your ballot paper so your vote is valid and will be counted. Any questions? Call (03) 5156 6888, Email vote1@GeorgeNeophytou.com, Website www.GeorgeNeophytou.com

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**ROWE, Jane**

As an experienced Councillor and Mayor, I understand the role is about representing you, listening to your needs and delivering practical solutions. The challenges we face are unprecedented; providing responsive leadership, good financial management and targeted business support will lead us through recovery and bring us back stronger. Like many in our community, I lived and responded personally to the impacts of the extended fire season, working on the ground to provide practical supports. We have now experienced a very different personal and economic challenge with covid and with the backdrop of an ongoing drought. How we respond to these challenges, how we plan to respond to future disasters and how we support our people, businesses and communities, will determine how well we recover. Our tourism, farming and forestry sectors have been heavily hit and need support to make sure they survive and grow. Where do we go from here? We can not only get back to business as usual, we can come back stronger if we have a strategy focused on delivering practical actions. Listening to individuals, creating community and industry specific plans and delivering practical solutions is our way forward. This requires responsible financial management to provide targeted asset renewal programs, better roads and affordable rates. I bring solid experience in responsive leadership, financial management, strategic planning, emergency management and government operations. I am also a small business owner and employer and although I now call Swifts Creek home, I lived worked and raised a family in Bairnsdale for 25 years. I have been an active community member and volunteer and held various leadership roles with State and Federal bodies. Join me in facing the challenges ahead by supporting me to represent you in Council and together we can come back stronger. Listen. Plan. Deliver.

12

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**ELLIS, Dick**

This election needs both experienced Councillors and new blood! 2020 has affected and challenged us all. How do we as a community overcome the negative impacts of drought, bushfire, loss of industry and Covid - 19? One practical way is through its Council. As a spokesman for our community, as a member of Council will advocate to other levels of government and industry to regrow our economy and social well being as part of a representative body based on integrity and collaborative behaviours. An experienced Councillor and 3 term former Mayor I am able to confidently able to offer positive leadership and input to support to such a concept. As such I seek your support in the forthcoming Council election. How we achieve that aim is through fiscally responsible management of Council income and assets, care of our environment to ensure a sustainable future and considered and active planning and engagement to ensure we meet the social and ethical challenges of a modern community. To provide a diverse and inclusive future for East Gippsland steady and experienced hands are needed amongst the need for new. Local government is entering into a new era of challenge as has become recently clear. It not only is at the coal face of the confronting problems such climate change, natural disaster and social dislocation it is a major player in the need to improve its challenged local economy. To work through such a challenge, experienced minds as well as new thinking is critically required. So in conclusion I again urge you to support my candidature based on experience and a desire to gain the very best for all East Gippslanders, its community, economy and environment. I am readily accessible and approachable as is widely known. Please Vote 1. Dick Ellis .

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**BUCKLEY, Sonia**

Being from Benambra, I understand that we need stronger support for remote communities. We face a tough economic future, so it is essential that we support our region which is why I stand for lower rates, keeping our debt low and well structured spending. Rural land use strategies must be revised to enhance our unique lifestyle. The current policies put economic handbrakes on our region, and therefore we must reform them and cut the red tape to fast track our land use and permit system. My experience in political campaigning for community and country issues has been developed over many years. It would be an honour to represent the community of East Gippsland as we work towards the economic, social, environmental and cultural redevelopment of our region. Empowering the decision-making process for our local councillors must be a priority. Greater delegated authority for elected councillors, with increased public scrutiny, ensures accountability. I believe that transparency is an imperative for good governance. I support many local initiatives such as the Motorplex Showground Park and the Omeo Mountain bike track, and I put my full support behind upgrading the Bainsdale Growth Strategy Plan - as well as fighting for fair representation for all regional and outlying areas. The importance of home-grown representation is needed now more than ever, and I hope that you would find that your vote would be well invested in me. I am running as an independent, not affiliated with any political party, and I believe that my decisions are based on representing my constituents, not a political party. I believe in a smaller, yet more effective government, and I look forward to being your voice in Local Government.

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**ROBERTS, Luke**

East Gippslanders we all need to support one another - from community, sporting, social groups, small to large businesses, sheep, beef and vegetable farmers. This period in our lives is horrible socially, economically and emotionally, from hospitality to teaching, tourism, nursing, police and all essential service workers. Having worked in small businesses, the fishing and timber industries I know how tough life is at the moment. As a way to help one another I encourage all of us to holiday and spend our free time in our great East Gippsland. There is no single quick fix solution. Collectively all ideas, big and small, will help. If elected to Council I commit myself to listen to all our problems and help as much as possible. My greatest assets is the ability to communicate to people from all ages, backgrounds and genres. With your support, given a chance I can help us. "I love East Gippsland."

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**ALLEN, Arthur**

What does East Gippsland need? A change of council attitude, that's what. Focusing on 'can do', not 'cannot do.' On backing our judgement and skills as the area's governing body and paving the way for our people to be creative and productive, helping this great part of the world achieve its extraordinary potential. Wherever I go, I am confronted with the same question: 'Why is the council so negative?' I appreciate that in our rapidly changing world, councils have to deal with increasingly complex legislation and intense media scrutiny. It is not an easy role. But as a fifth-generation East Gippslander, family man, service club leader, small business operator and primary industry spokesman, I have helped create ideas and solve problems at community, Local Government and State level for forty-plus years, while developing a vital network of staff, management and Members of Parliament. I believe I can make a significant contribution to advancing our shire. It's frustrating when innovative proposals are lost in red tape, and when long-running programs such as the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO), which particularly affects Metung, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance, stall. A much-vaunted pilot program to map a future strategy has, excuse the pun, sunk without trace! Meanwhile, the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO), important as it is, adds another administrative layer to our already complex world. We live in a wonderful part of Australia with many good people yearning to do great things, but who are tired of being stymied by obsessive bureaucracy, negative attitudes and glacial-speed administration. Simultaneously, we must focus on keeping our up-and-coming talent here in East Gippsland, via apprenticeship and job opportunities, so they can join us on the exciting journey and become tomorrow's leaders. It's time for a change. Time to get things done. Time to say, 'Yes!'

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**WHITE, John**

My wife Leanne and I have lived on and worked our mixed farming enterprise at Lindenow Sth for 43 years and I have served as CFA volunteer for 47. During this time we raised three children, Justin Cindy and Tamara. This past year has seen such horror, tragedy and stress, which has had to be absorbed by so many. My role in this was, first and foremost to get help to all as quickly as possible and in the right places. I was ably assisted by so many great people just wanting to help. I have always made myself available 24 seven with no request considered irrelevant. "Some have said why bother, we have more important issues to deal with" My answer is and always will be it is important to them and they deserve assistance. My service over the past 4 years has been for everyone across the length and breadth of our magnificent shire. This has brought about change in many areas and will serve us well into the future. So this is where we look forward, as we can't go back. Keep assisting all those impacted by drought and bushfires. Reverse the perception that our small regional towns are shrinking, encourage investment in them. Help our tourist towns and business's overcome the indirect financial stress they are enduring from the fires and Covid. I feel strongly that the trust you put in me four years ago has seen the good outcomes expected, being delivered. Ask the community what they want, don't tell them what they are getting. I will continue to be the person who listens to those not being heard, and those who are heard but not listened to. We need strength of character and strength of commitment and I will continue to be that person.

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**REEVES, Mark**

Mark Reeves has the knowledge, skills and experience as a two term councillor, mayor and deputy mayor. He has been an educator for 35 years and is the founding principal of The Alpine School. His vision is for East Gippsland is a thriving, safe and secure place to live, invest, raise a family, access education, retire and recreate. It will be a region that is economically strong, socially connected, environmentally sustainable and celebrates our indigenous culture. Mark, will ensure council is inclusive, responsive and financially responsible. He will provide stability and continuity to council to enable it to build on the successes of the past four years and grow the shire into the future. Mark believes that government should be almost invisible, that its working at its best when you hardly know its there. Services and facilities should function, be renewed, be reliable and be accessible. When we get it wrong, council will respond quickly and fix the mistake. Mark has a strong sense of social justice, the need to look after the most vulnerable people, kids, aged, disabled, and disadvantaged. Drought, fires and covid have pushed us to our limits. The shire will continue to offer relief and support. Mark will ensure rates are kept at or below CPI in the current rate-capped model. Green waste will remain free, and a kitchen-compost program will be introduced. Mark has proven ability to work with state and federal governments to secure grant funding for disaster recovery, roads and bridge construction and to ensure our essential assets are maintained. This includes sea walls, airports, boat ramps, libraries, roads and bridges and more. He will advocate to continue bushfire recovery hubs as emergency and disaster recovery centres for the future. Mark will ensure our shire thrives.

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**KENDALL, Sally**

We all dream of an East Gippsland with a thriving local economy, truly connected communities and better health, education and job opportunities for our young people. I was born and raised on a farm in the Tambo Valley, and I brought up my own four children in Bairnsdale. I believe our generous, hard-working people have the power to create a bright future for ourselves. If elected to Council this year, I commit to working with you to create: a thriving regional community with improved transport, more trains and better facilities and services that can be accessed by everybody; a brighter economic future for East Gippsland, with a particular focus on small business; a stable and meaningful future for our young people, with better services to address mental and physical health and improved education and employment opportunities. East Gippsland is the most wonderful place in Australia. I'm standing for election now because I believe in a vibrant and committed Council that acts in all our best interests. I have a lifetime of experience in serving our community. I was a primary school teacher and social worker for decades. I was the Chair of the Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network and have volunteered my skills to local service clubs and school councils. I am currently the President of the Bairnsdale 'Tip Shop'. I understand the critical issues that face us. The drought and the terrible bushfires, the limited opportunities for our young people, the lack of local employment and services, and now this pandemic. I believe that together, we have the strength and creativity to come up with smart, practical solutions to help us recover from these challenges, and most importantly, will open the space for us to thrive.

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**ELLIS, Simon**

Hello I am Simon Ellis I have lived in Gippsland now for 10 years, have been in Australia for 16 years (I am nearly a local) and have watched and I understand how things work. I have my roots placed firmly in Bairnsdale with a number of small business ventures and also working to support my family. From local radio, to CFA firefighter, to business groups and community events is where I am from. I will work hard to keep rates low, I will work hard to give us the services we need in every town to provide more health and mental health services. I will work hard to Fast track our infrastructure to cope with the increased population in all parts of East Gippsland. Why should our community affected by bushfire still be waiting for permits? More emphasis on sport and rec for all areas. Like the Buchan pool and areas that need upgrading like the West Bairnsdale area. I will work to support and improve local businesses and the local economy. I am determined to ensure that all residents are always listened to. I do listen and I do act. I am asking for your vote to make a change and make a difference for you. It is not about one person, it's about many people from all backgrounds from a diverse culture that together, is East Gippsland. The small towns, small businesses the forgotten few need to be remembered and with me as your councillor everyone's voice will be heard. We need a council that listens to the needs of the community. We need councillors that will put your community first. So put a 1 next to my name and remember to fill out all the other boxes so your vote will count. Vote for Simon Ellis.

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**VAN DIGGELE, Kirsten**

I am a young and passionate resident who wants to see East Gippsland thrive. There is a quote 'nothing about us, without us' that describes the need for a diverse range of perspectives and voices when it comes to decision-making processes. Using my tertiary qualifications in Community Health and Development, I have been the driver behind many youth programs and initiatives in the East Gippsland region. Most notably, I established the Youth Ambassador Committee, co-wrote the Regional Youth Plan, and delivered numerous community events, programs and activities including forums and festivals. I want to hear the unique way residents believe we can navigate and reimagine the future of East Gippsland after the myriad of challenges we have recently faced. I will advocate to expand our essential services; create more local jobs by attracting businesses and supporting entrepreneurship into our community; promote our regions fresh produce and locally made products; promote our community and boost tourism; build a culture of diversity and inclusion; increase social connectedness through the development of programs and groups; advocate for better transport to interconnect our townships; increased community events and activities; advocate for education services and up-to-date recreational facilities; and expand our volunteer services to isolated people within the community to receive additional support. As an elected Councillor, I will champion for change and act as a conduit between the community and Council. I will actively listen and seek to amplify the voices of the whole community to ensure East Gippsland is the most liveable region in Australia. Vote [1] for VAN DIGGELE, Kirsten. Contact email: egkirstenvd@gmail.com; Mobile 0475 467 478; facebook.com/vote1kvd

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# Appendix 8: Daily breakdown of the general mail-out

| East Gippsland Shire Council election |                |                |        |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------|
| 6 October 2020                        | 7 October 2020 | 8 October 2020 | Total  |
| 14,054                                | 14,054         | 13,226         | 41,334 |

## Appendix 9: Result information

### East Gippsland Shire Council election

#### Count summary

**Enrolment:** 41,335

**Formal votes:** 30,782

**Informal votes:** 3,406 (9.96% of the total votes)

**Voter turnout:** 34,188 (82.71% of the total enrolment)

| Candidates (in ballot paper order) | First preference votes | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| URIE, Mendy                        | 3,041                  | 9.88%      |
| GREACEN, Jane                      | 1,579                  | 5.13%      |
| CROOK, Tom                         | 1,425                  | 4.63%      |
| BEHAN, Tim                         | 1,379                  | 4.48%      |
| NEAL, Peter                        | 1,047                  | 3.40%      |
| STOW, Trevor                       | 2,118                  | 6.88%      |
| BARLING, Ray                       | 431                    | 1.40%      |
| DUTTON, Kim                        | 563                    | 1.83%      |
| SCHRODER, Jeremy                   | 1,095                  | 3.56%      |
| McNEILL, Jeff                      | 390                    | 1.27%      |
| NEOPHYTOU, George                  | 1,186                  | 3.85%      |
| ROWE, Jane                         | 1,034                  | 3.36%      |
| ELLIS, Dick                        | 1,458                  | 4.74%      |
| BUCKLEY, Sonia                     | 2,598                  | 8.44%      |
| ROBERTS, Luke                      | 556                    | 1.81%      |
| ALLEN, Arthur                      | 2,555                  | 8.30%      |
| WHITE, John                        | 1,971                  | 6.40%      |
| REEVES, Mark                       | 1,535                  | 4.99%      |
| KENDALL, Sally                     | 886                    | 2.88%      |
| ELLIS, Simon                       | 598                    | 1.94%      |
| VAN DIGGELE, Kirsten               | 3,337                  | 10.84%     |



### Successful candidates

VAN DIGGELE, Kirsten (1st elected candidate)

URIE, Mendy (2nd elected candidate)

BUCKLEY, Sonia (3rd elected candidate)

ALLEN, Arthur (4th elected candidate)

STOW, Trevor (5th elected candidate)

GREACEN, Jane (6th elected candidate)

WHITE, John (7th elected candidate)

CROOK, Tom (8th elected candidate)

REEVES, Mark (9th elected candidate)

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## Appendix 10: Election participation statistics

Note: 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).

### East Gippsland Shire Council election

| Enrolment category                                       | Participation as a percentage of voters enrolled in each category for 2020 East Gippsland Shire Council general election | Comparator for 2016 East Gippsland Shire Council general election | Statewide postal election comparator for 2020 LG elections (excl. Melbourne City Council) |
|--|--|---|---|
| Voters enrolled through section 241 of the LG Act        | 87.02%   | 79.63%  | 86.27%  |
| aged 18 to 69 years old on election day                  | 85.29%   | 80.13%  | 85.48%  |
| aged 70 years and over on election day                   | 91.54%   | 78.08%  | 90.14%  |
| Voters enrolled through sections 243 - 245 of the LG Act | 69.24%   | 61.46%  | 60.96%  |
| <b>Council total</b>                                     | <b>84.97%</b>  | <b>76.32%</b>   | <b>84.12%</b>   |

## Appendix 11: Complaints

### Written complaints received by the VEC

| Date             | Nature of the complaint  | Action taken by the VEC    |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 2 September 2020 | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Candidates and Parties (Alleged<br>intimidation, harassment or assault)   | Referred to LGI            |
| 1 October 2020   | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Advertising or Election Material (Location<br>of Signs)                   | Referred to Council        |
| 6 October 2020   | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Advertising or Election Material<br>(Misleading or Deceptive Information) | Referred to LGI            |
| 9 October 2020   | Simple Complaint - VEC Administration<br>(Lack of information)   | Response provided          |
| 9 October 2020   | Complex Complaint - Voting (COVID-19)  | Action taken and responded |
| 11 October 2020  | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Advertising or Election Material<br>(Authorisation)                       | Referred to LGI            |
| 12 October 2020  | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Advertising or Election Material<br>(Authorisation)                       | Referred to LGI            |
| 13 October 2020  | Criticism - Voting (Ballot Papers)   | Action taken and responded |
| 14 October 2020  | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Candidates and Parties (Conduct of<br>Candidate or Party)                 | Referred to LGI            |
| 15 October 2020  | Allegation of potential breach of the law<br>- External Agency as Regulator -<br>Advertising or Election Material<br>(Misleading or Deceptive Information) | Referred to LGI            |
| 19 October 2020  | Complex Complaint - Advertising or<br>Election Material  | Response provided          |
| 20 October 2020  | Complex Complaint - Voting (Ballot<br>Papers)  | Action taken and responded |
| 20 October 2020  | General Question - Advertising or<br>Election Material (Candidate Statement<br>or Questionnaire)   | Response provided          |
| 27 October 2020  | Sensitive / Complex Complaint  | Response provided          |
| 2 November 2020  | Compliment - Other / Multiple (Other)  | Response provided          |
| 2 November 2020  | Complex Complaint - Voting (Postal<br>Vote Never Received)   | Response provided          |
| 4 November 2020  | Simple Complaint - Voting (Results)  | Action taken and responded |

|                  |   |                            |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 4 November 2020  | General Question - Voting (Results)                     | Action taken and responded |
| 5 November 2020  | Complex Complaint - Voting (Postal Vote Never Received) | Action taken and responded |
| 5 November 2020  | Complex Complaint - Voting (Postal Vote Never Received) | Response provided          |
| 19 November 2020 | Complex Complaint - Voting (Results)                    | Response provided          |

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