



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission



Rockingham by-election

REPORT

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Western Australian Electoral Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A by-election for the State electoral District of Rockingham was triggered by the resignation of the sitting member Hon Mark McGowan MLA. Following the issue of the Writ for the Rockingham district by the Speaker on Thursday 8 June 2023 and in accordance with the *Electoral Act 1907*, polling day was set for Saturday 29 July 2023. The Rockingham by-election was the second by-election conducted by the Western Australian Electoral Commission (the Commission) since the State General election in March 2021, with the North West Central by-election held on 17 September 2022.

The Commission had to pivot from Local Government Elections 2023 activities, act quickly and work within a short timeframe to deliver the by-election to the electors of Rockingham, located in the Perth South Metropolitan region.

The Commission remained committed to delivering accessible and high-quality electoral services during the election. The Commission developed a communications strategy encouraging electors to check and update their electoral roll details, generating awareness of various voting options and informing eligible electors of the compulsory nature of the by-election. This was communicated across a range of channels including targeted texts and emails to electors, digital advertising, social media advertising on Facebook and Instagram, outdoor posters in train stations and roadside street furniture, press advertisements in the state-wide papers and the local Sound Telegraph and reaching out to local community groups. The media were kept informed across the election cycle with media releases and notifications issued.

An addressed postcard was developed and mailed to every eligible elector enrolled in the Rockingham district, who had not already applied for a postal vote. This postcard included information about voting options, including a list of polling locations and contact points for further information.

A total of 22,504 votes were received at the Rockingham by-election. Early voting, including in person, postal voting and mobile polling continues to be a popular option for electors with 14,186 early votes cast at the Rockingham by-election. 3,350 were early votes by post and 122 votes by mobile polling. The Commission issued 10,714 in-person early votes at Early Voting Centres in Rockingham and the Commission's Perth city head office. This trend towards early voting has increased in recent elections and the Commission is factoring this into planning for the State General election due in March 2025.



Ten polling places were open on polling day between 8am–6pm. Counting of ordinary votes at the polling places concluded just after 8pm. At the end of the final count and the distribution of preferences, the Returning Officer Mr Gregg Boalch declared the WA Labor candidate Magenta Marshall elected as the new member for the Rockingham district with a majority of 61.37% of the total valid vote preference count.

Voter turnout for the Rockingham by-election was 74.48% of eligible electors which was lower than the equivalent rate in the Rockingham electorate of 83.94% at the 2021 State General election. The Commission will continue to work hard in fine tuning its planning, engagement and communications strategies to encourage eligible electors to vote at upcoming elections.

A post-election survey has been sent to over 13,000 Rockingham electors asking for their feedback on the election experience and the Commission's performance. Findings are being finalised. Further analysis will assist the Commission in future election preparations.

The Commission has a reputation for delivering secure, independent and accurate elections. This is achieved through collaboration between the Commission's permanent staff, temporary election workforce and other stakeholders in the election. I extend my thanks to them for their professionalism, efficiency and dedication to delivering a successful election in the Rockingham district.

Robert Kennedy
Electoral Commissioner

2023 Rockingham by-election at a glance

The region



The District of Rockingham covers the suburbs: Rockingham, East Rockingham, Safety Bay, Shoalwater, Garden Island, Hillman, Peron, parts of Cooloongup and parts of Waikiki.

Enrolment

30,213
electors



Candidates

9
Candidates
nominated

The people

72
Polling staff
2
Mobile polling staff



20
Early voting centre staff
3
Processing centre staff

Locations

10
Polling places

9
Early voting centres

4
Special institutions

Voting

Total votes	22,504
Early in person votes	10,714
Postal votes	3,350
Mobile Polling votes	122
Polling Day votes	8,258
Provisional votes	60



Voter turnout

Voter turnout rate	74.48%
Voted early	62.49%

Formality

Formal votes	21,874
Informal votes	630



INTRODUCTION

On Thursday 8 June 2023, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly issued a writ for a by-election in the Rockingham electoral district, following the resignation of its member, Hon Mark McGowan MLA. The date set for the by-election was Saturday, 29 July 2023 and voting in the by-election was compulsory.

The electorate of Rockingham is located within the South Metropolitan Region. It encompasses an area of 49 km² and includes the suburbs of East Rockingham, Garden Island, Hillman, Peron, Rockingham, Safety Bay and Shoalwater within its boundaries. It includes part of the suburbs of Cooloongup and Waikiki.

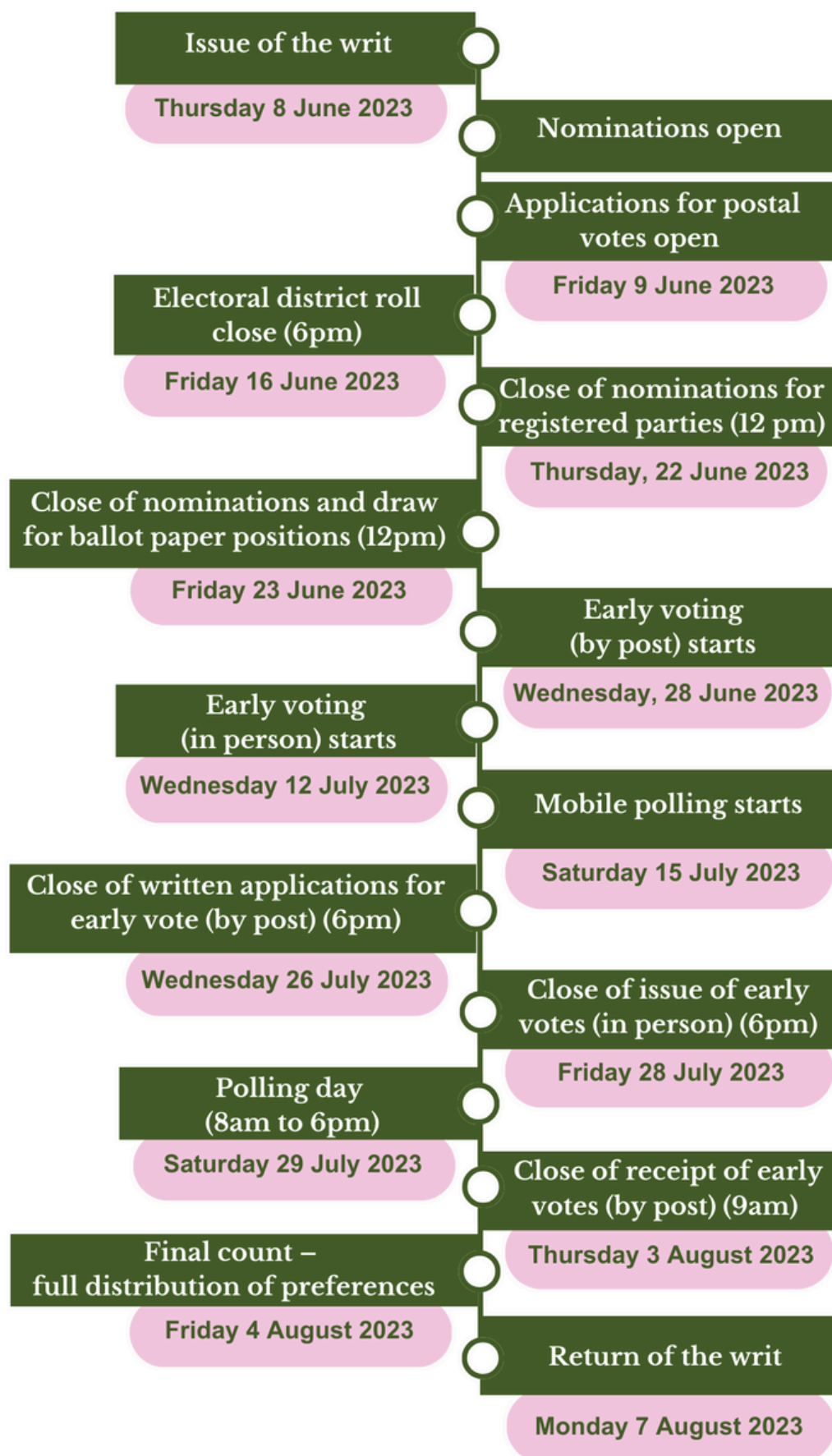
At the time of the by-election 30,213 people were eligible to vote in the district.

RETURNING OFFICER

Gregg Boalch was appointed as Returning Officer for the 2023 Rockingham by-election.

Mr Boalch was supported by Commission staff and particularly Mr David Payne.

TIMELINE



VOTING

Any eligible elector at a State General election or by-election may apply for an early vote.

A total of 14,186 early votes were taken at the Rockingham by-election comprising

- Early votes by post – 3,350
- Early votes in person – 10,714
- Mobile Polling - 122

This was more than half of the votes cast at the Rockingham by-election, with 22,504 votes cast in total, the early voting proportion equating to 62.5% of total votes cast.

This confirms that many electors are choosing to cast their vote at their convenience, rather than in-person on polling day. The Commission continues to provide this service particularly as demand for these additional methods of voting is likely to remain.

EARLY VOTING IN PERSON

Early voting in person was available from Wednesday 12 July to 6pm Friday 28 July 2023.

Early voting was available at the Rockingham Early Voting Centre (Commodore Drive) and in Perth CBD at the Western Australian Electoral Commission head office.

Electors who were interstate were able to vote early at Electoral Commission's offices in the other Australian States and Territories. These were in each of the capital cities and in the ACT.



POSTAL VOTING

Postal vote application forms were available on the Commission's website and upon request from Commission staff.

Applications for postal votes opened on Friday 9 June. Postal votes received by the Commission prior to 9 am on Thursday, 3 August 2023 were accepted into the count, in accordance with the provisions of the *Electoral Act 1907 (WA)*.

Electors were also able to physically lodge their postal voting packages with a Polling Place Manager into a ballot box at any polling place on polling day.

Of the 4,797 postal voting packages issued to electors, 3,907 voting packages were returned and following processing, 3,350 ballot papers were admitted to the count. After validating, 44 ballot papers were deemed informal, resulting in 3,306 valid postal votes.

A further 27 voting packages were received after the cutoff date and under legislative rules were not permitted to be included in the count.



MOBILE POLLING

A mobile team visited four special institutions taking 122 votes from electors who could not visit a polling place on polling day.

Location	Dates
Springfields Retirement Village	17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July
Baptistcare Gracehaven	19 July
Rockingham Aged Care	21 July
MercyCare Rockingham	21 and 28 July

ELECTION DAY VOTING

Ten ordinary polling places were open on polling day 8am-6pm.

Polling place	Venue information	Total votes
Bungaree Primary School	9 Centaurus Street, Rockingham	551
Charthouse Primary School	43 Rand Avenue, Waikiki	1278
Cooloongup Primary School	21 Westerly Way, Cooloongup	700
East Waikiki Primary School	21 Gibb Road, Cooloongup	388
Hillman Primary School	25 Unnaro Street, Hillman	583
Rockingham Beach Primary School	30 Bay View Street, Rockingham	737
Rockingham Polling Centre	Unit 5/8-10 Commodore Drive, Rockingham	712
Rockingham Senior High School	15 Read Street, Rockingham	780
Safety Bay Primary School	2 Waimea Road, Safety Bay	1578
Safety Bay Senior High School	80 Malibu Road, Safety Bay	951
Total		8258

ACCESSIBILITY

A multilingual guide to assist non-English speaking electors with completing a ballot paper was available at all locations.

All voting locations were accessible to people with disabilities.

Other assistance at polling places included

- Magnifying sheets
- Audio loop at selected locations
- Triangular grips for pencils
- In-car voting where electors could not leave their car.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission developed a communications plan that included paid and unpaid advertising via a mix of digital and print media, direct messaging via email and text to electors, plus proactive stakeholder and media releases to communicate key messages about the by-election.

The target audience was all eligible electors within the district of Rockingham with the key objectives -

- To increase community awareness that a by-election was scheduled for 29 July 2023 and voting was compulsory
- Increase enrolment by promoting and encouraging people to check and update their enrolment
- To increase voter participation in the by-election.

MEDIA – DIGITAL AND PRINT

The Commission ran a communications campaign from Wednesday 14 June until Saturday 29 July 2023. The campaign targeted Western Australian electors enrolled in the Rockingham electorate, aged over 18 and eligible to vote.

The main objectives were to:

- Encourage electors to update or check their electoral roll details before the electoral roll closed on Friday 16 June.
- Generate awareness of polling day, postal voting and early voting options including key dates.

Press

Seven newspaper advertisements were placed in the West Australian, the Sunday Times and the Sound Telegraph over the course of the campaign.

Sound Telegraph

College fire 'suspicious', say police
Youth called to make a difference

Rockingham by-election 29 July

To vote in the Rockingham by-election, make sure you're enrolled by 6pm Friday 16 June.
elections.wa.gov.au

Strong field in race to take

Rockingham by-election

Vote on polling day Sat 29 July
Vote early from 12 July
Vote by post until 26 July

Voting is compulsory

elections.wa.gov.au

Drunk was 'shadow boxing'
Man denies break-in and rape of 60yo

Rockingham by-election 12-28 July

Vote early in the Rockingham by-election 12-28 July

Rockingham Polling Centre
1st & 2nd Commercial Drive, Rockingham
8 am - 4 pm weekdays
Sat 12 noon - 4 pm
Thurs 12 noon - 4 pm, Fri 9 am - 12 pm

Rock City
100 Commercial Drive, Rockingham
Weekdays 8:30 am - 1:30 pm
Fri 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, Sat 9 am - 12 pm

Other events vote at a public place on Sat 29 July
Make sure you're enrolled by 6pm Friday 16 June
elections.wa.gov.au

Voting is compulsory

Alleged kidnapper in court

Vote this Saturday in the Rockingham by-election

Voting is compulsory

elections.wa.gov.au

June 14

July 5

July 12

July 26

West Australian

Wolf is at the door
Cops cull bike gang howling out for members

Rockingham by-election 29 July

To vote in the Rockingham by-election, make sure you're enrolled by 6pm Friday 16 June.
elections.wa.gov.au

Helmets go with the flow
his jail sentence for torture was cut from seven years to five

Vote today in the Rockingham by-election

Voting is compulsory

elections.wa.gov.au

June 10

July 29

Sunday Times

WA'S KEY ROLE IN VOICE VOTE
Minister's pitch to West Aussies

Rockingham by-election 29 July

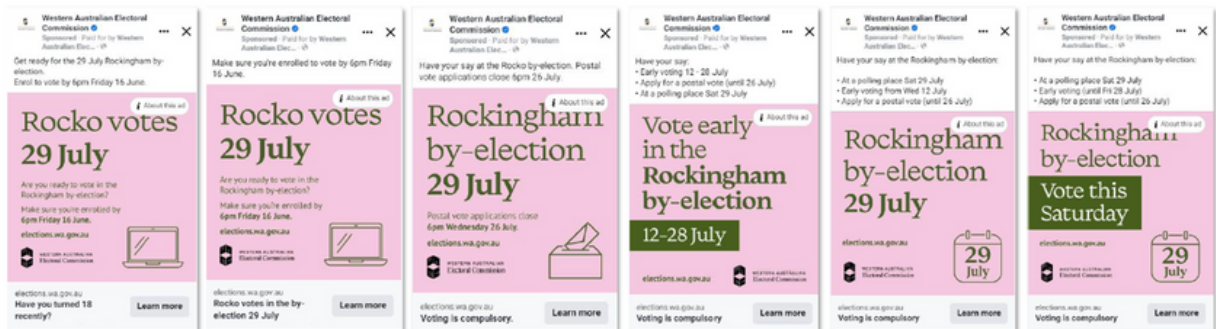
To vote in the Rockingham by-election, make sure you're enrolled by 6pm Friday 16 June.
elections.wa.gov.au

June 11

Digital Media

Digital media activity included Social Media ads (via Meta, the company that runs Facebook and Instagram) and Web banners (ads that appear when visiting websites - via Yahoo DSP) with different messages over the course of the campaign. The ads were geotargeted in Rockingham, reaching people who were only in this area.

Digital media activity reached (number of people who saw the ad at least one time) a total of 195,281 Meta accounts (Facebook and Instagram) and 929,797 website users throughout the campaign.



Social Media ads



Web banners

Out-of-home Media

The Commission paid for electoral messaging in the Rockingham shopping centre, and on street furniture at the local Rockingham train station.



WEBSITE

The Commission website featured a Rockingham by-election specific link on the homepage, guiding users to information about the district, Returning Officer contact details, polling place and early voting locations, media information, the election timetable and results.



NOTIFICATIONS – EMAIL AND SMS

The Commission used email and SMS messaging to directly target electors in the by-election. The Commission had the electronic contact details for approximately half the electors. This approach was an effective and low-cost way to engage electors.

Email messages	Recipients	Opened	Clicked*	Sent
Electoral enrolment	11,960	61.4%	24%	Friday, 9 June 2023
Plan your vote	10,439	51.2%	15.7%	Wednesday, 12 July 2023
Final reminder - election is on Saturday	7,091	51.9%	11.9%	Thursday 27 July 2023

SMS message	Recipients	Delivered	Bounced	Sent
Electoral enrolment	8,639	7,123	1516	Saturday, 29 July 2023

The electors who had recorded as having already voted were removed from any subsequent messaging, including the SMS on the day.

*‘Clicked’ refers to any link clicked in the email and could have been to the Commission website, Facebook page, GoogleMaps or to view the email in a browser, for example.

ELECTOR POSTCARD

The Commission sent 28,351 addressed elector postcards to all enrolled Rockingham electors who had not already applied for a postal vote.

The postcard outlined Commission contact details and information about early voting and voting on polling day. It also highlighted the compulsory voting nature of the by-election.

Feedback to the Commission is that the elector postcard was useful in creating awareness of the election and the different voting options.



 Vote on election day Saturday 29 July: 8am - 6pm	
Bungaree Primary School - 9 Centaurus Street, ROCKINGHAM & Charthouse Primary School - 43 Rand Avenue, WAIKIKI & Cooloongup Primary School - 21 Westerly Way, COOLOONGUP & East Waikiki Primary School - 21 Gibb Road, COOLOONGUP & Hillman Primary School - 35 Unnaro Street, HILLMAN & Rockingham Beach Primary School - 30 Bay View Street, ROCKINGHAM & Rockingham Senior High School - 15 Read Street, ROCKINGHAM & Rockingham Polling Centre - 5/8-10 Commodore Drive, ROCKINGHAM & Safety Bay Primary School - 2 Waimea Road, SAFETY BAY & Safety Bay Senior High School - 80 Malibu Road, SAFETY BAY &	
 Vote early Wednesday 12 July to Friday 28 July	
Rockingham 5/8-10 Commodore Drive & 8am-6pm weekdays Sat 22 July: 8am-6pm Thurs 27 July: 8am-9pm	Perth WA Electoral Commission office Level 2, 111 St Georges Tce & 8:30am-4:30pm weekdays Fri 28 July: open until 6pm



MEDIA RELEASES

The Commission sent out a number of media releases across the Rockingham by-election campaign covering topics such as the issue of the Writ, elector enrolment, candidate information, early voting, voting statistics and the return of the Writ.

This facilitated positive interactions with the media and generated media interest in the election.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Commission sent direct emails and supporting communication resources, including social media tiles, to community stakeholders outlining the compulsory nature of the election and key milestones. The Commission attempted to actively engage with local community groups and the City of Rockingham promoting the Rockingham by-election. Submissions were made to relevant community newsletters such as those produced by the Office of Multicultural Interests and the Youth Advisory Council WA.

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

As required under the *Electoral Act 1907*, the Commission gazetted the following election notices:

Gazette notice 1 – **Issue of the writ** – published in the general Gazette Tuesday 13 June 2023

Gazette notice 2 – **District of Rockingham** (Returning Officer, Place of Declaration of Nominations, Polling Places, District of Rockingham, Declaration of Boundaries of a Polling area, Registered Political Parties in WA.) – Published in the General Gazette Friday 23 June 2023

CALL CENTRE

An election information telephone call service was established from 8 June to 29 July and handled general public enquiries during business hours and on Polling Day from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm (hours of polling).

Approximately 774 calls were received. The nature of enquiries varied, most calls were from people outside the electorate who were unsure if they were required to vote and eligible electors unable to vote. Other calls related to enrolment, postal voting and polling location enquiries.

COMPLAINTS

The Commission received seven complaints and one feedback submission over the course of the by-election.

Complaints primarily related to; voters not receiving postal vote packages, misleading and deceptive electoral material and de-registered parties supporting candidates.

All submissions were resolved by email within two business days.

POST-ELECTION ELECTORS' SURVEY

The Commission developed a post-election survey to assess the experience of over 13,000 eligible electors within the Rockingham electorate. The Commission received 771 responses and will assess this feedback to assist with planning for future election events.

SERVICES TO CANDIDATES

PARTY AND CANDIDATE SUPPORT

An information email regarding the nomination process was sent to all political parties once the writ was issued for the by-election. The email contained links to the relevant nomination forms. All candidates and parties that nominated were provided with:

- Candidate's guide – Legislative Assembly
- Election timeline
- Political finance timeline
- Funding and Disclosure guidelines
- District map
- Formality of ballot papers information
- Form for the supply of rolls
- Appointment of an agent and scrutineer appointment form
- Scrutineer guide
- Election return forms

Commission electoral liaison staff were available throughout the by-election to offer support and guidance to parties and candidates, assisting with nomination procedures and to review any feedback following the by-election.

In addition, the Commission produced 12 by-election bulletins that were emailed to candidates and political party contacts. Topics covered in the by-election bulletins included:

- Ballot paper draw
- Candidates contesting the by-election
- Polling locations
- Conduct at the Rockingham Early Voting Centre
- Mobile polling schedule
- Scrutineer arrangements
- Processing postal votes received
- Processing early votes received
- Election day counts and result publication
- Declaration of the result

NOMINATIONS AND BALLOT PAPER DRAW

Nominations opened on Friday, 9 June and closed at 12pm on Friday, 23 June (party nominations closed at 12pm on Thursday, 22 June). Nine candidate nominations were received.

Five registered parties lodged the relevant nomination forms with the Commission and four independent candidates lodged their forms with the Returning Officer prior to the close of nominations.

The draw for ballot paper positions was conducted by the Returning Officer at the Gary Holland Community Centre at 19 Kent Street Rockingham, on Friday 23 June shortly after the nominations closed.

The candidates are listed below in ballot paper order:

Candidate	Party Name
MARSHALL, Magenta	WA Labor
COTTAM, Rae	Legalise Cannabis Western Australia Party
HUDSON, Peter	Liberal Party
KNAPP, Janetia	
DE JONG, Madeleine	The Greens (WA)
GALLETLY, Clive	Independent
EDWARDS, Hayley	Independent
CRICHTON, Mike	Australian Christians
DUNNE, Peter D	Independent

Rockingham by-election
ballot paper

Western Australia Ballot Paper
Election of one member of the Legislative Assembly

ROCKINGHAM
DISTRICT

Number the boxes from to
in the order of your choice.

☐ **MARSHALL, Magenta**
WA Labor

☐ **COTTAM, Rae**
Legalise Cannabis Western Australia Party

☐ **HUDSON, Peter**
Liberal Party

☐ **KNAPP, Janetia**

☐ **DE JONG, Madeleine**
The Greens (WA)

☐ **GALLETLY, Clive**
Independent

☐ **EDWARDS, Hayley**
Independent

☐ **CRICHTON, Mike**
Australian Christians

☐ **DUNNE, Peter D**
Independent

REMEMBER... ROCKINGHAM
Number every box to make your vote count.



COUNTING

Counting of ordinary votes at all polling places concluded at 8:00 pm. Results were available progressively on the Commission website and all materials from polling places were returned to the Returning Officer by 10 pm.

The final count and the full distribution of preferences was conducted on Friday 4 August at the Commission's head office.

The two candidate preferred result, after the full distribution of preferences count, showed that Magenta Marshall won with 61.37% (13,412) of the votes compared to Hayley Edwards with 38.63% (8,443) of the votes.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

At 8pm on Friday 4 August, the Returning Officer declared the poll at the Commission's head office. Magenta Marshall from the WA Labor was declared elected the new member of the Rockingham Electoral District with a majority of 61.37% of the total valid vote preference count. Information relating to the by-election including results at polling place level was published on the Commission's website.

PUBLIC FUNDING

Four party-endorsed candidates and one Independent candidate were eligible to submit a claim to be reimbursed for electoral expenditure, as the candidate received more than 4% of first preference votes. Claims for public funding, or reimbursement of electoral expenditure, are required to be submitted by 18 December 2023. The maximum entitlement of all five electoral participants was \$46,813.41. The amount paid in public funding to date is \$41,010.05 (as of 9th November 2023). Information relating to the claims is published on the Commission's website.

RESULTS

Results by candidate			
Candidate	Party	Votes Counted	% valid votes
MARSHALL	ALP	10,791	49.33%
COTTAM	LCWA	1,487	6.80%
HUDSON	LIB	3,868	17.68%
KNAPP		262	1.20%
DE JONG	GRN	1,081	4.94%
GALLETLY	IND	193	0.88%
EDWARDS	IND	3,488	15.95%
CRICHTON	AC	534	2.44%
DUNNE	IND	170	0.78%
Total valid votes		21,874	
Informal		630	
Total		22,504	

Distribution level	Marshall ALP	Cottam LCWA	Hudson LIB	Knapp	De Jong GRN	Galletly IND	Edwards IND	Chrichton AC	DUNNE IND	Valid Votes	EXH	Total votes
First preference	10,791	1,487	3,868	262	1,081	193	3,488	534	170	21,874	0	21,874
Distribution 1	14	9	4	6	11	30	63	33	-170	0	0	0
Progressive Total 1	10,805	1,496	3,872	268	1,092	223	3,551	567	0	21,874	0	21,874
Distribution 2	24	30	19	15	24	-223	97	14	0	0	0	0
Progressive Total 2	10,829	1,562	3,891	283	1,116	0	3,648	581	0	21,874	0	21,874
Distribution 3	41	42	53	-283	23	0	85	39	0	0	0	0
Progressive Total 3	10,870	1,568	3,944	0	1,139	0	3,733	620	0	21,874	0	21,874
Distribution 4	50	50	325	0	29	0	166	-620	0	0	0	0
Progressive Total 4	10,920	1,618	4,269	0	1,168	0	3,899	0	0	21,874	0	21,874
Distribution 5	629	227	84	0	-1,168	0	227	0	0	-1	1	0
Progressive Total 5	11,549	1,845	4,353	0	0	0	4,126	0	0	21,873	1	21,874
Distribution 6	907	-1,845	237	0	0	0	697	0	0	-4	4	0
Progressive Total 6	12,456	0	4,590	0	0	0	4,823	0	0	21,869	5	21,874
Distribution 7	956	0	-4,590	0	0	0	3,620	0	0	-14	14	0
Total	13,412	0	0	0	0	0	8,443	0	0	21,855	19	21,874

Two candidates preferred (after full distribution of preferences)		
Candidate	Votes	% voters
MARSHALL – ALP	13,412	61.37%
EDWARDS IND	8,443	38.63%

