



# VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION AN AAPT WEB HOSTING SOLUTION

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Simon Hancock, IT MANAGER, VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION (VEC)

## 1 BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is an independent statutory authority that conducts elections across Victoria. These include local council, commercial and community polls and its largest event: the Victorian state elections. Its mission is to conduct fair and impartial ballots and deliver timely and accurate results.

On election night, the VEC must provide real-time results on its website for live television broadcasts, print media and the public.

During the 2002 election, the VEC hosted its own website, which suffered significant performance issues under peak demand. This website was expensive and placed an enormous burden on the VEC's IT team, which had to ensure tight security, disaster recovery and robust communications.

### FOR THE 2006 ELECTION, THE VEC DECIDED ON A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

"Election night happens for four hours once every four years and it doesn't make sense to spend so much money engineering a website infrastructure to cope with intense use for a short period," said Simon Hancock, IT Manager, VEC. "We wanted to move away from hosting our own website and outsource the infrastructure and expertise."

## 2 SOLUTION FEATURES

The VEC approached AAPT to provide a hosted website for the Victorian state election. The solution would be required for one month prior and one month after the election. AAPT built and managed the website in partnership with WebCentral, which provided the hosting environment.

AAPT used a variety of high-availability technologies, including a disaster recovery site, to guarantee the website would be working, secure and responsive during the crucial vote counting period.

This one-off website was called the Virtual Tally Room (VTR). During the election, the VTR displayed the number of votes and was updated every three minutes. The data was entered into the VEC's election management system from 43 remote regional offices and one central office in Melbourne and pooled in a central database. From there the results were extracted so they could be converted into web pages or downloaded in XML format for the media.

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## 3 THE RESULT

### **Stable and securely hosted infrastructure**

The VTR was available during the entire election period. It did not crash once, despite fielding up to 1 million hits per day.

With such a high-profile event the VEC could not afford the website to be compromised in any manner. "AAPT's secure solution meant that there wasn't a breach of security, poor performance or server faults," said Hancock.

### **Reduced operational costs**

The AAPT hosted solution cost significantly less than if the VEC had hosted its own website.

"If we didn't outsource we would have had to locate and purchase the individual components, networks and expertise," said Hancock. "And we would have ended up with an infrastructure we didn't need for the next three years and 364 days."

### **Highly reliable service**

AAPT proved to be a hands-on partner, working with the VEC to achieve seamless delivery of election results.

"AAPT was responsive, easy to deal with and delivered everything it promised," said Hancock. "Any issues were resolved quickly, the people we spoke to knew what they were talking about and quickly got things up and running."

## HOW CAN WE HELP YOUR BUSINESS SUCCEED?

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