



# Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer **Recruitment Information Pack**

## **Introduction**

The Electoral Commission SA (ECSA) is conducting an open recruitment process to appoint Returning Officers (ROs) and Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) for the upcoming 2026 State Election.

These positions are critical in the conduct and management of the election for a designated House of Assembly (HA) District and are based at a dedicated Returning Officer Office (RO Office). Multiple Districts are usually located in a Shared RO's Office in the metropolitan area.

Each HA RO is a Deputy RO for the Legislative Council election under the direction of the RO for the Legislative Council.

Prior to and post the election, RO's and ARO's are actively supported and guided by ECSA employees, and additional support staff are employed to assist with the processes that are undertaken at the RO Offices.

There are 47 HA Districts located across South Australia. There will be 47 positions available for RO's and 78 positions available for ARO's. Each District will have one ARO, and an additional ARO will be appointed in regional areas and where ECSA determines is appropriate within metropolitan areas. Provision will be made for additional reserve ARO's to cover unexpected vacancies that arise in the future.

This information pack provides an overview of what is required of a Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer for the 2026 State Election and details how to prepare and submit an application for one of these roles.

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## **About Electoral Commission SA**

ECSA is an independent administrative unit of the South Australian Government and is established to assist the Electoral Commissioner in conducting and administering elections, ensuring electors are enrolled to vote, registering political parties, and maintaining the electoral roll in conjunction with the Australian Electoral Commission.

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## **About State Elections**

South Australia has fixed term elections and these occur every four years.

The trigger for the State Election is the issue of the Writ which occurs 28 days before polling day. The Writ set out the timetable for the election.

For the next State Election, polling day will be Saturday 21 March 2026. The election will elect 47 members of South Australia's House of Assembly and 11 members to the Legislative Council.

## Training

All ROs and AROs will be provided comprehensive face-to-face and online training which will be delivered at key times following appointment and up until the completion of the election.

Face-to-face training will be held in the Adelaide metropolitan area and ECSA will cover costs for transport and accommodation for your attendance where you are travelling from regional areas. The online training components will require that you have access to a personal computer/mobile device with an internet connection.

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## Remuneration

A fixed fee remuneration applies to the roles of RO and ARO and this remuneration includes payment for all duties undertaken inclusive of casual loading, overtime, allowances and training payments.

The indicative fixed fee remuneration will be in the order of:

Returning Officer                      \$19,000

Assistant Returning Officer      \$14,000

The final fixed fee remuneration (including superannuation) will be paid in increments each month during the period of employment commencing with face-to-face training in December 2025 and concluding with a debrief in May 2026.

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## About the role – Returning Officer

Under the *Electoral Act 1985*, the Returning Officer is a statutory position responsible for the conduct of an election.

The Returning Officer is directly responsible to the Electoral Commissioner for the management of State parliamentary elections in a designated House of Assembly (HA) District and acting as a Deputy Returning Officer for the Legislative Council (LC). The Electoral Commissioner delegates operational management and oversight of Returning Officers to the Returning Officer Liaison Officers.

The RO is responsible for managing a range of election activities including:

- Arranging polling booths;
- Managing, rostering and training electoral officers;
- Processing candidate nominations;
- Managing assets and stock;
- Monitoring electoral processes, polling activities and polling staff and responding to issues;
- Conducting scrutiny and counts of ballot papers; and
- Reconciling and completing election and financial returns.

The following are considered as essential qualities, skills and experience required to perform the role:

- Capacity to quickly gain knowledge and understanding of new processes.
- Willingness to follow strict procedures and processes whilst operating within tight timeframes.
- Demonstrated experience using Microsoft suite at an intermediate level, with the ability to learn new systems quickly.
- Experience leading teams in a fast-paced delivery/operations or logistics environment.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills including proven ability to build rapport quickly and work with a broad range of people.
- Excellent organisational skills with demonstrated experience organising work priorities to immutable deadlines whilst maintaining accuracy and attention to detail.
- Proven ability to lead and manage a team and coordinating resources to produce work of the highest levels of accuracy within absolute time constraints.
- Strong analytical, problem solving and conflict resolution skills to guide and empower staff to create solutions and results.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills to work collaboratively with ECSA peers and other stakeholders to align team objectives with broader operational goals.

Special conditions of employment for this role:

- In order to not compromise the strict neutrality of the Commission, no person who is active in political affairs or intends to carry on this activity may be an employee.
- Significant out of normal hours work is required, especially during the weeks either side of polling day.
- Appointment is subject to a satisfactory Criminal History Check.
- A current driver's licence and access to a vehicle is required.

A Duty Statement, including a breakdown of the essential hours of duty is located on the ECSA website.

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### About the role – Assistant Returning Officer

The Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) is directly responsible to the Returning Officer (RO) for the management of a range of tasks critical for the conduct of State parliamentary elections and/or referendums in a designated House of Assembly (HA) district. ***The ARO is required to understudy the RO and support the RO with a range of duties.***

The ARO is responsible for a range of election activities including:

- Assisting with establishment and setup of the RO Office;
- Assisting with the management and training of electoral officers;
- Managing assets and stock, including equipment, ballot papers, polling booth kits;
- Assisting with the management of electoral processes at polling places; and
- Conducting scrutiny and counts of ballot papers.

Given that the ARO is required to understudy and support the RO, the essential qualities, skills and experience required to perform the role and the special conditions of employment are the same as the Returning Officer (see page 3).

A Duty Statement, including a breakdown of the essential hours of duty is located on the ECSA website.

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### **How to Apply:**

If you would like to apply for an RO or ARO position, please:

- Complete the attached RO/ARO Application Coversheet:
  - Indicate the position(s) you wish to apply for (RO or ARO or both);
  - Confirm you meet the 'Special Conditions'.
- Submit a current resume which includes two referees who can attest to your skills, qualities and experience.
- Submit a cover letter and report of no more than 2 pages which provides examples of how you have demonstrated the skills, qualities and experience in the essential requirements of the role as outlined on page 4 of this document.

Forward your application (coversheet, resume and report) to: [ecsa.jobs@sa.gov.au](mailto:ecsa.jobs@sa.gov.au)

If you have any questions regarding the roles or the application process, contact [ecsa.jobs@sa.gov.au](mailto:ecsa.jobs@sa.gov.au) or 7424 7400.

**Applications close at 5pm on Monday 22 September 2025.**

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### **Assessment and Interview Process:**

Following the closing date, the selection panel will assess applications and invite suitably skilled, shortlisted applicants to a 2-3 hour assessment and interview session.

This session will involve the following elements:

- Interpretation of legislation;
- Delivery of a training session;
- Computer literacy assessment;
- Written response to a scenario to assess problem solving skills and written communication; and
- A panel interview.

The assessment centres will be held between late September and mid-October 2025.

Please note the following:

- The interview and assessment process is the same for both roles as the ARO is an understudy for the RO.
  - Preparation for some activities during the interview and assessment process will be required to be undertaken at home and will then be facilitated by the selection panel on the day.
  - Applicants who are further shortlisted following the assessment and interview session will undergo reference checking and additional pre-employment screenings for Code of Conduct, and criminal history.
  - Participation in the assessment and interview session may not be required for applicants found to be suitable at an earlier stage.
  - Applicants who are not successful in being appointed as an RO or ARO are encouraged to apply for other roles required for the State Election.
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