

# Reputation Management System (RMS)



Electoral service delivery is more complex and unpredictable than ever and the AEC must go above and beyond to actively and transparently promote a positive, trusted reputation for the Australian electoral system.

## OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE BUILDS TRUST IN THE AEC



## RMS activities

All AEC staff, including the temporary election workforce, have a vital role to play in upholding and strengthening the AEC's trusted reputation.

Public trust in the AEC and, by extension, trust in Australia's electoral processes and results, is dependent on every task being undertaken with integrity.

**Operational excellence** is the foundation of the AEC's approach to reputation management. Robust, impartial electoral service delivery is the most important and effective way for the AEC to maintain its reputation and protect the perceived and actual integrity of electoral processes.

## THE SIX RMS PRINCIPLES

The Reputation Management System (RMS) guides, sustains and enhances internal awareness and capabilities relating to the key AEC **activities** and **priorities** which contribute to maintaining a positive and trusted view of the AEC and the Australian electoral process.



### Operational Excellence

Exemplify operational excellence by consistently delivering professional, impartial, high integrity federal electoral services that Australians can trust.



### Electoral Integrity

Maintain the perceived and actual integrity of Australian electoral processes and results.



### Meeting Expectations

Strive to meet stakeholder expectations by adapting to changing information and electoral integrity environments.



### Subject Matter Expert

Position the AEC as the foremost subject matter expert and authoritative source of information on federal electoral processes in Australia.



### Communication

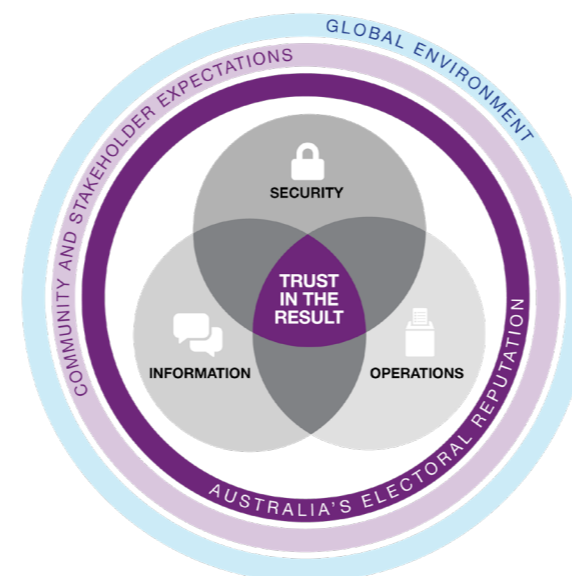
Communicate clear, targeted and transparent messaging to increase Australians' understanding of, and maintain their trust in, electoral processes, results and the AEC.



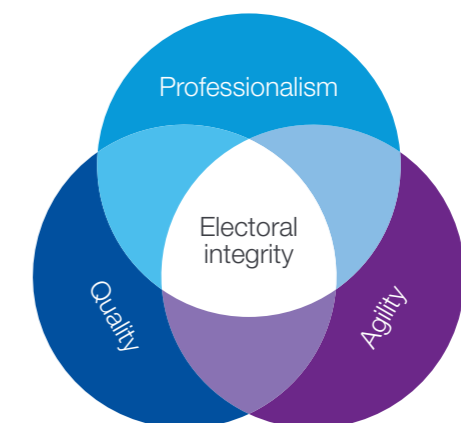
### Monitor and Respond

Actively monitor and respond to potential threats to electoral integrity, manage reputational risks and plan for crisis situations.

## ELECTORAL INTEGRITY RELIES ON TRUST



## AND IT ALSO RELIES ON US



The AEC values are explicitly designed to support electoral integrity in every task staff undertake.

The interconnected **activities, principles** and **focus areas** of this **RMS** will equip the AEC to **maintain public trust** in Australia's electoral processes and results.

## What is the problem?

**Electoral service delivery is more complex and unpredictable than ever.**

The circulation of mis and disinformation, conspiracy theories and blatantly false narratives about electoral processes and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has compounded the already significant complexity of electoral service delivery.

With access to thousands of sources of news and information, as well as online platforms where content can be publicly and instantaneously shared to a very large audience, Australians are being bombarded with information. While this open information ecosystem has many benefits, it has also led to an increase in mis and disinformation about the electoral process. This has the potential to impact election and referendum delivery, as well as voters' trust in the legitimacy of results.

The Australian public rightly expects the AEC to consistently administer professional, impartial and statistically accurate electoral services. However, expectations of the AEC are increasing, and even the highest standard of electoral service delivery is no longer sufficient to maintain public trust in democratic processes. In addition to this, the AEC must go above and beyond to actively and transparently promote a positive, trusted reputation for the Australian electoral system.

## Why does it matter?

Public trust in the AEC is intrinsically linked to trust in the integrity of Australian electoral processes and results. Overall, Australians trust their elections – research over multiple electoral cycles consistently shows that approximately **nine out of ten Australians trust the AEC** to conduct fair and impartial federal elections.

However, amidst the increasing circulation of mis and disinformation about electoral processes, maintaining this trust and confidence is more challenging than ever.

Promoting authoritative sources of information about electoral processes and maintaining the AEC's positive reputation and credibility is crucial to maintain public trust in, and acceptance of, election results.

A population's acceptance of election results is the foundation for democratic legitimacy, and key to maintaining Australia's high quality, world-renowned democracy.

While meeting legislative obligations, the AEC must be continuously adapting to evolving environmental threats and stakeholder expectations, to consistently deliver transparent, robust and trusted federal electoral events for Australians.

## Benefits of the RMS

This Reputation Management System:

- Promotes an ongoing, increased focus on electoral integrity across all facets of AEC business, guiding the day-to-day activities of all staff.
- Ensures transparency and accountability to the Australian public about the AEC's electoral integrity activities.
- Demonstrates and reinforces the AEC's commitment to upholding electoral integrity.

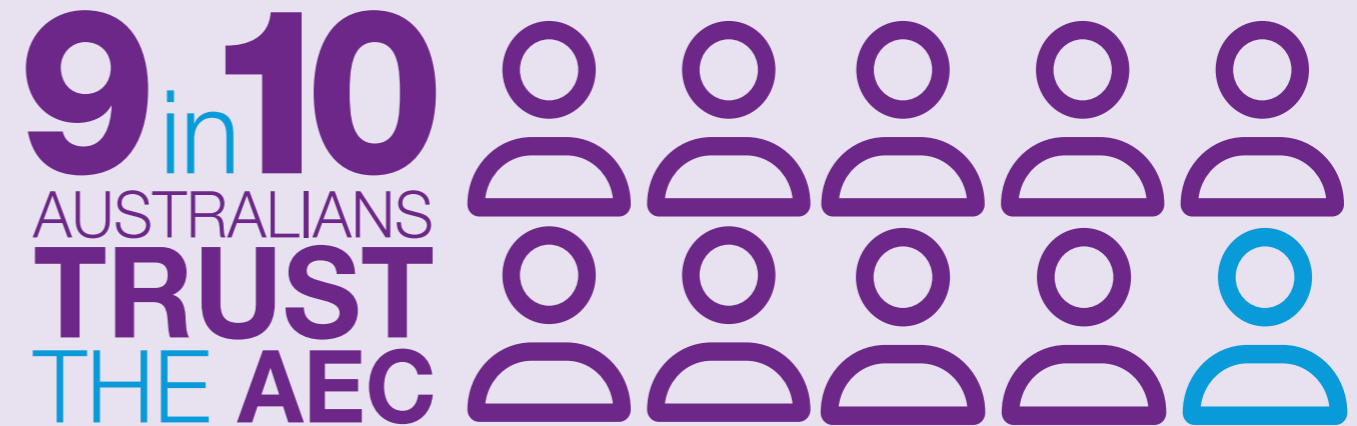
## Going forward

The AEC consistently scans the electoral integrity environment and engages with relevant government, community and industry stakeholders and experts to establish innovative ways to combat current and emerging threats to electoral integrity.

There is no one solution to achieve this, and the AEC's approach to maintaining electoral integrity and the confidence of the Australian public must continue to evolve, adapting to the challenges of the future. This will ensure the AEC can continue to be a world leader in executing measures to uphold electoral integrity, providing credible and trusted electoral service delivery, and combatting mis and disinformation about electoral processes.

As Australia moves forward into an increasingly complex information and security environment, the interconnected activities, principles and focus areas of this RMS will equip the AEC to maintain public trust in Australia's electoral processes and results.

THE RMS WILL HELP MAINTAIN PUBLIC TRUST



## CASE STUDY

### Disinformation register

In response to the changing information environment, the AEC established a Disinformation Register to help defend the Australian electoral process from disinformation. Each federal electoral event, the Register lists prominent pieces of disinformation the AEC has discovered regarding the electoral process, alongside the correct, fact-based information.

The AEC is not the arbiter of truth regarding issue or political communication and does not seek to censor debate in any way. However, when it comes to the electoral process, the AEC has a responsibility to ensure voters have access to factual information, so they can fully participate in the Australian democratic process.

By listing and correcting electoral disinformation, the AEC is assisting to both debunk and prebunk false narratives about the electoral process, encouraging voters to stop, consider and assess the reliability of the information they are consuming.

It is one of many RMS initiatives contributing to upholding public confidence in the AEC and the Australian electoral system.

The Register is available at [aec.gov.au/media/disinformation-register.htm](https://aec.gov.au/media/disinformation-register.htm)

CHECK THE SOURCE