

## AEC communications campaign mandatory checklist

Compliance with the principles outlined in the *Short-term Interim Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies*.

### Campaign: 2014 WA Senate election public information campaign

**Duration: 28 February 2014 to 5 April 2014**

#### Key components

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is responsible for conducting federal elections and referendums and maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll. One of the AEC's key objectives is to have *informed Australians through the provision of information services on electoral matters*.

The AEC is required to inform and educate Australian voters about electoral events including federal elections and referendums. In addition to the AEC's business requirement to conduct education and communication campaigns, there is a demonstrated need to communicate with Australian voters in the lead up to and at election time to ensure that they:

- understand and know how to enrol to vote or change their details on the electoral roll
- know how they can vote if they are unable to get to a polling place on election day, and
- understand how to cast a formal vote.

Following a decision by the Court of Disputed Returns to void the results of the WA Senate election held in September 2013, the AEC is conducting an election for six senators for Western Australia. The 2014 WA Senate election public information campaign is being implemented by the AEC in the lead up to and during the 2014 WA Senate election. The campaign will run in three phases:

- 'close of rolls' which commences from the announcement of the dates for the WA Senate election and continues until the close of rolls deadline
- 'voter services' which commences with the start of early voting and continues until the day before election day, and
- 'formality' which commences one week prior to election day and continues through the electronic media blackout up to and including on election day.

The overall objective of the campaign is to help the AEC to maximise enrolment and participation in the 2014 WA Senate election.

The key objectives of each of the phases of the campaign are to:

### Close of Rolls

- raise awareness among eligible WA electors that there will be a fresh WA Senate election
- increase understanding that it is compulsory for Australians aged 18 and over living in WA to enrol and vote in this election
- raise awareness of the deadline for enrolling or updating their enrolment details so they can vote in the WA Senate election (8pm seven days after the issue of writ)
- increase understanding of how to enrol or update details online

### Voter Services

- increase understanding of the range of voting options for those unable to vote on election day
- increase understanding of how to obtain information about voting prior to election day
- promote the availability of remote mobile polling for WA residents living in regional and remote areas

### Formality

- inform eligible electors about the correct way to complete a Senate ballot paper
- increase understanding of how to obtain information on the correct way to complete a Senate ballot paper

**Principle 1: Campaigns should be relevant to government responsibilities**

Check box as appropriate	Principle sub-point	AEC specific information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The subject matter of campaigns should be directly related to the Government’s responsibilities. As such, only policies and programs underpinned by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ legislative authority</li> <li>▪ appropriation of the Parliament; or</li> <li>▪ a Cabinet Decision which is intended to be implemented during the current Parliament should be the subject of a campaign.</li> </ul>	<p>The campaign relates directly to the AEC’s responsibility to inform electors as set out in Section 7 of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>, and the <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Examples of suitable uses for government campaigns include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ inform the public of new, existing or proposed government policies, or policy revisions;</li> <li>▪ provide information on government programs or services or revisions to programs or services to which the public are entitled;</li> <li>▪ inform consideration of issues;</li> <li>▪ disseminate scientific, medical or health and safety information; or</li> <li>▪ provide information on the performance of government to facilitate accountability to the public.</li> </ul>	<p>Eligible Australian citizens living in WA, aged 18 years and older are required to enrol and vote in the WA Senate election.</p> <p>The campaign informs eligible West Australians of the requirement to enrol and vote in the WA Senate election.</p>

**Principle 2: Campaign materials should be presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner and be designed to meet the objectives of the campaign**

Check box as appropriate	Principle sub-point	AEC specific information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign materials should enable the recipients of the information to distinguish between facts, comment, opinion and analysis.	The information provided in the campaign is factual and informative. There is no opinion or analysis provided.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Where information is presented as a fact, it should be accurate and verifiable. When making a factual comparison, the material should not attempt to mislead the recipient about the situation with which the comparison is made and it should state explicitly the basis for the comparison.	The information provided in the campaign is factual, accurate and verifiable.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-existing policies, products, services and activities should not be presented as new.	No policies, products and services are discussed as part of the campaign.  The campaign informs Australians of their obligation to enrol and vote in the WA Senate election.  The activity of voting is not presented as a new activity.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Special attention should be paid to communicating with any disadvantaged individuals or groups identified as being within the target audience. Particular attention should be paid to the communication needs of young people, the rural community and those for whom English is not a convenient language in which to receive information.	The campaign includes information that is developed for special audience groups including Australians with a disability, rural and remote communities, young Australians, Indigenous Australians and Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Imagery used in campaign materials should reflect the diverse range of Australians. There should be recognition of the full participation of women, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities by realistically portraying their interests, lifestyles and contributions to Australian society.	The campaign includes an appropriate mix of the diverse range of Australians.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign materials should be tested with target audiences to indicate they are engaging and perform well against the objectives of the campaign.	The campaign materials were developed in 2006-07 and were extensively market tested during their development.  The campaign materials were used for the 2007, 2010 and 2013 federal elections and were subject to benchmarking and tracking research as part of evaluating the effectiveness of creative against the objectives of this campaign.  The content in the campaign materials

has been reviewed and updated to reflect the AEC’s current key messages for enrolment and voting for the WA Senate election with the main difference being the removal of references to voting for the House of Representatives.

**Principle 3: Campaign materials should be objective and not directed at promoting party political interests**

Check box as appropriate	Principle sub-point	AEC specific information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign materials must be presented in objective language and be free of political argument.	The campaign materials are objective and informative with no political argument.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign materials must not try to foster a positive impression of a particular political party or promote party political interests.	The campaign materials are apolitical and do not promote party political interests.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campaign materials must not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. mention the party in Government by name;</li> <li>b. directly attack or scorn the views, policies or actions of others such as the policies and opinions of opposition parties or groups;</li> <li>c. include party political slogans or images;</li> <li>d. be designed to influence public support for a political party, a candidate for election, a Minister or a Member of Parliament; or</li> <li>e. refer or link to the web sites of politicians or political parties.</li> </ul>	<p>The campaign materials do not mention or promote political parties, views or slogans.</p> <p>Website links referred to in campaign materials direct viewers to the AEC website.</p>

**Principle 4: Campaigns should be justified and undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner**

Check box as appropriate	Principle sub-point	AEC specific information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Campaigns should only be instigated where a need is demonstrated, target recipients are clearly identified and the campaign is informed by appropriate research or evidence.</p>	<p>Australian citizens living in Western Australia and aged 18 years or older are required by law to enrol and vote in the WA Senate election.</p> <p>The campaign informs West Australians of their obligation, when they are required to enrol/update their enrolment details, and also how to vote in the WA Senate election.</p> <p>Research conducted prior to and at the 2007 and 2010 federal elections indicated ongoing evidence of the need to inform Australians about their rights and obligations in relation to enrolling and voting in elections.</p> <p>The 2010 federal election illustrated that effective electoral participation is being challenged in all three key measurements of enrolment, turnout and formality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 1.5million out of a possible 15.5million eligible citizens were not enrolled – up from 1.2million at the beginning of 2009</li> <li>• Nearly 900,000 of the 14 million enrolled voters did not vote</li> <li>• 730,000 House of Representatives ballot papers were informal.</li> </ul> <p>Further, the unusual circumstances of a repeat of the WA Senate component of the federal election requires clear communication to electors of the requirement to enrol and vote.</p> <p>Current enrolment figures show there are almost 174,000 West Australians not enrolled.</p> <p>Analysis of voter turn-out at by-elections indicates lower enrolment and turnout when the electoral event is not a federal election.</p>

☒	<p>Campaign information should clearly and directly affect the interests of recipients.</p>	<p>Enrolling and voting in the WA Senate election is compulsory.</p>
☒	<p>The medium and volume of the advertising activities should be cost effective and justifiable within the budget allocated to the campaign.</p>	<p>The campaign provides information to eligible Australians on how to enrol, how to vote on or before election day, and how to vote correctly.</p>
☒	<p>Distribution of unsolicited material should be carefully controlled.</p>	<p>The AEC sought advice from the Australian government’s master media buying agency, Universal McCann, on the most cost effective mix of channels to reach the campaign’s target audiences .</p>
☒	<p>Campaigns should be evaluated to determine effectiveness.</p>	<p>The AEC also reviewed market research from the 2013 election campaign and the evaluation of media placement strategies for this campaign.</p>
		<p>Advice was sought from special audience consultants on how to engage with specific target audience groups and the appropriate channels and level of investment in each channel, to target eligible electors in WA.</p>
		<p>The AEC has a responsibility to inform eligible Australians of their obligation to enrol and vote in the WA Senate election. Enrolment and voting for eligible Australians is compulsory.</p>
		<p>The AEC will distribute the Official Guide to the WA Senate election to all households in WA as part of the campaign. This carefully crafted publication informs eligible Western Australians of their legal obligation to vote in the election and provides information on where and how to vote.</p>
		<p>The campaign will be the subject of comprehensive quantitative research which will measure the effectiveness of the campaign against its stated objectives.</p>

**Principle 5: Campaigns must comply with legal requirements and procurement policies and procedures**

Check box as appropriate	Principle sub-point	AEC specific information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The manner of presentation and the delivery of campaigns must comply with all relevant laws including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. laws with respect to broadcasting and media;</li> <li>b. privacy laws;</li> <li>c. intellectual property laws;</li> <li>d. electoral laws;</li> <li>e. trade practices and consumer protection laws; and</li> <li>f. workplace relations laws.</li> </ul>	<p>No non-compliance has been identified following a range of checks made.</p> <p>The AEC’s Legal Services Section has reviewed campaign material for close of rolls and voter services phase. Formality phase will be reviewed before production.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Procurement policies and procedures for the tendering and commissioning of services and the employment of consultants should be followed and there should be a clear audit trail regarding decision making.</p>	<p>AEC procurement policies and procedures have been adhered to and there is a clear audit trail regarding decisions on the campaign.</p>