

Corporate Plan 2022–23

Commissioner's Welcome

Welcome to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Corporate Plan 2022–23. This plan outlines the four key activities through which our performance in delivering high quality electoral services to Australian citizens is measured.



The plan details our operating environment; risk oversight and management; core capabilities; and our cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders – all of which help to distil our focus on delivering trusted elections to the highest standard for all Australians.

The events of the past can simply be an interesting story rather than an indicator to the future. However, those events can also act as a useful guide. In that vein, there are some key issues and trends identified from the 2022 federal election – such as electoral integrity and reputation management; security and disinformation; labour force pressures and service delivery expectations – that will likely be issues facing electoral administrators into the future. Therefore, this corporate plan will focus on how the AEC seeks to address many of these issues and trends.

The AEC faced an unprecedented number of challenges in the lead up to and during the 2022 federal election. It was, without a doubt, the largest and most complex in the history of our agency. In overcoming those challenges, we were reminded that our values of electoral integrity through agility, professionalism and quality remain highly relevant today, and they continue to underpin everything we do.

Maintaining a positive reputation for the Australian electoral system among citizens is critical in ensuring trust in election results, and electoral integrity is central to this. Additionally, proactive strategies to build understanding about electoral processes, including addressing mis and disinformation, will remain a critical focus for our agency well into the future.

The AEC is also continuing to think well beyond the next electoral cycle. The Voter 2030 initiative to consider what electors will expect from the voting experience in the longer-term future will continue to be at the forefront of our transformation journey. The intention is to enable us to continue to respond to our changing environment, identify appropriate risks, mitigations and controls. Our key aim remains to facilitate, not complicate, the electoral process.

The AEC has completed the first stage of our program of work to modernise our ageing IT systems architecture. We are undergoing a major information technology and communication transformation. This long-term program will enable us to simplify, secure and strengthen election delivery by improving our core election capabilities and our capacity to cope with the expected and unexpected challenges of the future, including detecting, preventing and responding to electoral interference.

The AEC Command Centre was an invaluable deliverable in the first stage of our transformation and a critical part of the 2022 federal election.

The command centre provided a central view of all aspects of our operations and greatly enhanced our situational awareness of key operations, and drove nationally consistent, centrally led service delivery and will continue to service us well into the future.

The AEC is now in the 'lessons learned' stage of our electoral readiness framework. This means we are reviewing the conduct of the 2022 federal election to gather observations on performance, identify lessons to be learned, and define how these learnings can best be implemented for future electoral events.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

Compliance statement

I, as the accountable authority of the Australian Electoral Commission, present the Corporate Plan 2022–23, which covers the period 2022–26, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

Introduction

This is the AEC's corporate plan for 2022–23 which sets the AEC's strategic direction for the next four years. Here is an outline of the elements in our plan, which work together to deliver our purpose.

Purpose

The AEC is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and an independent statutory authority established under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act).

Our purpose is to maintain an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters through active electoral roll management, efficient delivery of polling services, and targeted education and public awareness programs.

In line with the Electoral Act, we do this by:

- conducting successful electoral events, including federal elections, by-elections and referendums, and industrial elections and ballots
- ensuring confidence in the Commonwealth Electoral Roll
- regulating political party registrations and financial disclosure
- supporting electoral redistributions
- undertaking public awareness activities.

We also provide a range of electoral information and education programs, both in Australia and in support of Australia's national interests. We measure performance against our key activities, which outline the distinct or significant work that contributes to achieving our purpose.

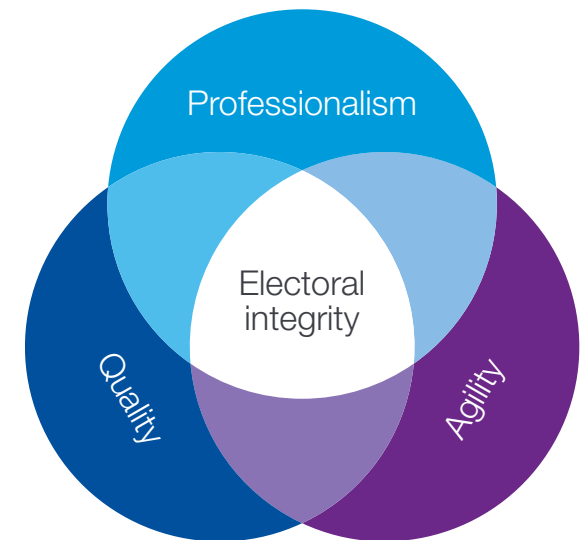
Commission

Section 6 of the Electoral Act establishes a three-person Commission which has exclusive powers, particularly in relation to electoral redistributions, political party registration, and funding and disclosure. The current Commission members are:

- Hon. Justice Susan Kenny AM, Chairperson
- Mr Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner
- Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician and non-judicial member.

Vision

We are a leader in refining and delivering best practice in election management.



AEC Values

Key activities

Our performance is measured against our **key activities**:

- 1 maintain the integrity of electoral and regulatory processes
- 2 prepare for and deliver electoral events
- 3 engage with our stakeholders through education and public awareness activities
- 4 maintain a capable and agile organisation and continue to professionalise our workforce.

Operating context

Our operating context discusses the environment we expect to operate in over the next four years. It outlines how we build our capability, manage our risks, and how we cooperate with others to deliver our purpose.

Performance

Our corporate plan fits within the broader Australian Public Service Performance Management Framework required under the PGPA Act. Our performance aligns with the performance criteria in the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS)*. **In the PBS, the AEC has one outcome: Program 1.1 – To deliver electoral events.**

We report on our performance through our key activities. The table below maps the performance measures in the PBS against the AEC's key measures. Our performance against each measure is detailed in pages 13 to 20.

Performance measures (Portfolio Budget Statements)	Key activities			
	1	2	3	4
Electoral roll management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of eligible voters enrolled (enrolment rate) Redistributions determined in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	
Elections, by-elections and referendums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The election result – for each event – is delivered in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> Industrial election and ballot results are delivered with integrity and withstand scrutiny 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓
Public awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver public awareness and education products that target all Australian citizens aged 18 years and over 		✓	✓	
Party registration and financial disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AEC maintains an up-to-date public register of political parties Disclosure returns are published and regulated in accordance with timeframes in the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> 	✓ ✓	✓	✓	

*See 2022–23 PBS published in March 2022



Operating context

Free, fair and impartial elections are the cornerstone of Australia's democracy. In support of our democratic process, the AEC maintains a neutral and independent electoral system, most publicly through the conduct of successful federal elections.

Our environment

The Australian electoral system presents unique challenges. With a wide range of voting methods, compulsory voting and no fixed date for elections, the AEC must be ready to deliver an electoral event at any point.

In addition to election preparation, the AEC is responsible for voter enrolment, electoral boundary redistributions and industrial elections and ballots. We also manage political party registration, disclosure and compliance.

The 2022 federal election was successfully delivered within the context of an increasingly unpredictable operational environment. The AEC responded to the broad challenges of conducting the largest and most complex election in Australia's history with unprecedented planning and rigour.

With a wide range of voting methods, compulsory voting and no fixed date for elections, the AEC must be ready to deliver an electoral event at any point.

Australia now has the highest level of enrolment since Federation – more than 17 million voters. The sheer size and scale of our federal electoral event requires us to further refine our processes, train greater numbers of staff, deploy more equipment, and deliver services in line with voters' expectations. Public scrutiny of elections is also growing, in light of citizen engagement through social media and increased mainstream media attention.

External factors have significantly affected the way we plan for delivering services to the Australian community. We respond to a constantly evolving landscape with the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. There is potential for malign actors to interfere in our electoral processes through cyber-attacks, foreign interference and the spread of disinformation. Legislative changes can also add layers of complexity to our preparations for electoral events.

The AEC must remain focused and ready to ensure we continue to address this broad range of emerging concerns. We have identified five key challenges that underpin all election preparations: electoral integrity and reputation management; security and disinformation; COVID-19; labour pressures, and service delivery expectations. Through the prism of these five areas, and in consultation with a range of internal and external stakeholders, we develop holistic responses to these challenges.

Election delivery globally is increasingly complex, due, in part, to an aggressive media cycle and growing citizen commentary through social media. Today, and into the future, the risks associated with conspiracy and disinformation will continue to escalate and mark our electoral landscape.

Maintaining the public's confidence and positive perception of the Australian electoral system is critical and the AEC is proactive in building this reputation. Our measures manage cyber and physical security, provide accurate information and ensure sound operations so citizens can have faith in the election result.

The Australian Government and community also expect a safe environment for people to enrol and vote. COVID-19 will continue to impact all aspects of our operations for the foreseeable future. We adapt to changes in the external environment and respond to manage risks effectively. Working with health authorities across multiple jurisdictions, we will continue to consider COVID-19 in all our planning and forecasting.

Low unemployment rates create significant labour force pressures, with demand greater than supply in an already competitive labour market. During an election period, our staff expands from around 800 to over 100,000 and we develop specific strategies to identify, attract, onboard and train the right people for our vast range of roles.

Today, and into the future, the risks associated with conspiracy and disinformation will continue to escalate and mark our electoral landscape.

We are aware of greater demands for more accessible and convenient voting options, particularly within the current pandemic context. A range of enhancements to our service delivery processes aims to meet the public's need for flexibility within the framework of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. Among these changes is the emergency measure for secure telephone voting implemented in the 2022 federal election. This ensured citizens with COVID-19 could still vote.

The road out of the recent federal election helps us pinpoint and continue to modernise, innovate and change. We are reinvigorating our Election Readiness framework and addressing opportunities to replace legacy systems. Among other efforts, we focus on further automating enrolments and increasing the user-centric nature of key processes. We expand education and awareness activities and use technology to manage challenges affecting voters in remote areas. We also work to overcome language and accessibility barriers.

The AEC assesses changes to our operating environment to ensure we remain agile and responsive to emerging risks, and continue serving the Australian public and its democratic values.



Our risk oversight and management

The AEC delivers one of the largest and most complex logistical peacetime events undertaken in Australia. Our ability to manage known risks and effectively respond to emerging risks in the evolving global environment is vitally important.

It is crucial that we meet Australian Government and community expectations to provide a safe environment for the public to enrol and vote, uphold the integrity of our electoral system and remain agile in our approach.

Our risk management framework

We take a whole-of-agency approach to managing risks and, in particular, encourage shared management of risks, both across the AEC and with our many external partners. Our structure provides clear systems of delegated ownership, oversight, escalation and reporting. The AEC's approach addresses strategic, enterprise, project and operational risks.

An important component of the AEC's framework is our risk management policy, which applies to all aspects of our operations. This policy defines:

- the AEC's approach to managing risk, and articulates how this approach supports the agency's objectives and activities
- the principles of the agency's risk appetite and risk tolerance
- key accountabilities and responsibilities for managing and implementing the risk framework.

Our ongoing maturity

The AEC's commitment to maturing our risk management framework and strengthening organisational capability continues. During the 2021–22 reporting period, we reviewed our long-standing strategic risks, and reframed our previous five risks to two. This revision reflects our risk maturity and understanding of key risks, their sources and consequences.

Our two core strategic risks are:

- the AEC fails to deliver a contemporary service offering and does not meet the expectations of stakeholders
- the AEC is unable to uphold electoral integrity.

By refining how we present these risks, we can focus on their sources and the effectiveness of controls to mitigate their impact or likelihood.

► We continue to mature our risk management framework and strengthen organisational capability.

In addition to these, the AEC has identified 11 core enterprise risks.

To ensure our ongoing maturity in this space, the AEC is committed to:

- supporting risk-taking within our appetite
- strengthening strategic alignment and risk communication
- promoting learning opportunities to reinforce positive risk behaviour
- sharing good practice and better integrating risks with identified lessons
- bolstering collaboration in managing shared risks, both across the agency and with our external partners
- embedding enterprise risk management with a greater focus on key controls.

Strategic risks

The following table outlines our two strategic risks, their sources and mitigating strategies.

Strategic risk	Impact of risk eventuating	Mitigating strategies
1. The AEC fails to deliver a contemporary service offering and does not meet the expectations of stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AEC's aging systems constrain the organisation's ability to implement a more effective and agile operating model • Outdated enabling legislation and regulations • A breakdown in trust of the AEC's impartiality, transparency and management of sensitive information • Shortened or unpredictable electoral cycles that impact on election readiness • Not maintaining a highly capable, agile and trusted Australian Public Service (APS) and temporary workforce • Rapid changes in the delivery environment such as a pandemic or natural disaster • A failure of third-party or government providers supplying products or services • A failure of shared risks being managed effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We regularly scan the environment to assess the risk context and respond collaboratively to changes. This is supported by a robust governance framework overseeing a range of organisational health factors. • The Election Systems Modernisation program (Indigo) will govern the replacement and modernisation of core election IT systems. An agile technology platform, Indigo will transform the AEC's delivery of electoral services and ensure ongoing integrity of the electoral system. • We are a learning organisation and are continuing to invest in developing people. We develop strategies to build the critical operational and professional capabilities of APS staff and the temporary election workforce. • We use lessons management to inform and refine behavioural and business process improvements for future electoral events. • We are agile and flexible, building temporary work units when required to respond to unprecedented events. • We have adopted a command-and-control model to provide a centrally led, nationally consistent approach to crisis and incident management.
2. The AEC is unable to uphold electoral integrity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evolving domestic and global threat environment • The AEC's aging systems constrain the organisation's ability to implement a more effective and agile operating model • A breakdown in trust of the AEC's impartiality, transparency and management of sensitive information 	

Enterprise risks

The AEC has 11 enterprise risks, outlined below. All AEC enterprise risks have targeted mitigation strategies in place, managed at senior executive level. Governance committees provide oversight of enterprise risks.

Privacy

Mismanagement of personal information.

Change management

AEC unable to effectively apply and embed change.

Resource management

Failure to use and manage resources in line with AEC priorities, consistent with the Commonwealth Resource Management Framework.

Fraud

Misuse or theft of Commonwealth resources; release of sensitive information or tampering with records for a benefit.

Regulation/legal compliance

Failure to comply with or enforce legislative and regulatory requirements.

Security

Failure to detect and prevent cyber and physical security threats.

People

Insufficient people capability and capacity to deliver quality agency outcomes in an agile manner to meet stakeholder expectations.

Information management

Governance and management of agency information fails to protect data and assets.

Workplace health and safety

An avoidable/notifiable incident occurs in an AEC workplace or site that threatens the health, safety or wellbeing of our employees, our visitors and others who work for us.

Service delivery

Failure to deliver electoral events and services effectively and efficiently.

Project management

AEC investments and projects fail to deliver expected benefits within allocated time and budget.



Our capability

In an increasingly complex operating environment, we continue to build our business processes and election delivery model through our lessons management framework.

Our people capability

The AEC's workforce is unique and multi-tiered. Our people include APS employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*, statutory appointments, contractors, our election surge workforce, and our very large temporary election workforce engaged under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act).

Collectively, our workforce maintains an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters and delivers various other electoral, education, regulatory and enabling services. Our workforce – with its unique skills – is critical to the delivery of quality services.

Achievement of AEC key activity 4 is supported through a range of initiatives. Among these is the development and implementation of a strategic workforce plan, building organisational capability and ensuring uptake of early intervention for optimum wellbeing. We will continue attracting and nurturing high-performing people and encourage workforce diversity.

Our workforce – with its unique skills – is critical to the delivery of quality services.

Learning and development is an integral part of professionalising our workforce. The AEC is focusing on five key areas:

- organisational capability
- learning culture
- accountabilities and responsibilities
- temporary election workforce
- learning infrastructure.

The AEC's investment in this domain helps build the capability of our people to achieve excellence. As a result, our staff are equipped to adapt to the changing nature of the AEC's work and evolving community expectations. A highly skilled workforce reinforces our reputation as a professional and responsive electoral management body.

Our ICT capability

IT systems

The AEC is undergoing a major information technology and communications transformation, following an initial multi-year funding investment by the Australian Government.

It is vitally important that the AEC operate robust and fit-for-purpose IT platforms. A modernised electoral management system will greatly improve our capacity to deal with security risks. Among these challenges, we must enhance our ability to detect, prevent and respond to external interference in Australia's elections.

The Election Systems Modernisation (Indigo) program represents a shift in our approach to this aspect of the AEC's work, as we develop a citizen-centric, agile technology platform. The transformation journey repositions how we provide electoral services and ensures the ongoing integrity of the electoral system.

We are using this opportunity to think well beyond the next election, and to expand our IT horizon to concentrate our efforts directly on the needs of citizens.

We are currently implementing one of three proposed tranches. The establishment phase for tranche 1 of the program fixed guidelines for governance and planning frameworks, and building capacity and capability. It also involved setting procurement procedures and engaging with experts to encourage business process optimisation throughout the organisation.

In 2022, the program will embark on a delivery phase, which includes working with vendors to deliver new ICT infrastructure and capabilities, to position the AEC for the future. These capabilities include business integration activities, overseeing supply chain and temporary election workforce, as well as enterprise service management.

All Australians should benefit from greater automation, less manual handling, and swifter election results.



Polling place technology

The Australian Government allocated \$24.4 million to the AEC over four years from 2020–21 to expand technology in polling places and to improve services to Australian voters during federal election events.

Electronic Certified Lists (ECL) are portable devices – currently laptops – and are used at all mobile and pre-poll voting centres, as well as selected high-volume polling locations on election day.

Polling officials use the ECL to search the list of eligible voters and record electronically when a person is handed a ballot paper. They are also used to print correct ballot papers on-demand.

This investment will enfranchise voters, help prevent multiple voting and enhance election coordination. In addition, the funding supports the development and delivery of a digital Officer-in-Charge Return, improving polling place management and communications.

Our work in this area involves redesigning processes, technology updates and workforce training to support changes to polling place technologies.

AEC Command Centre

Part of the government funding received in 2019–20 was used to develop a new AEC Command Centre to provide a secure, leading-edge, central point of command. This allowed the AEC to better monitor the 2022 federal election and provide the overarching visibility required during electoral events.

Our broader strategic direction is to modernise and use available tools, data and skills to better manage emerging risks and the changing operating environment. Establishing the command centre aligns with this goal and will help deliver safe and secure elections.

To ensure a nationally consistent approach, we plan to further expand the command centre's capabilities to provide better connectivity with regional Australia and our remote area mobile polling teams.

Disinformation and cyber security

A breakdown in public trust endangers electoral integrity. Everyone involved in the safe delivery of elections must be committed to reducing the footprint of disinformation.

The risks of inaction are serious. Consequences could be an erosion of public confidence in our governing institutions, and the potential to disenfranchise electors.

In an evolving electoral context, threats range from influencing voters before casting their vote, to interfering with the mechanics of the voting process and the systems that support election delivery. The possible outcome could be a compromise in our ability to effectively conduct an election with a trusted result.

We are a highly credible source for election information and we educate stakeholders. In particular, we are proactive in countering disinformation across media platforms and other channels.

The AEC operates a cyber security governance program to ensure risks associated with our systems and applications are known and remediated. We continue to strengthen the security of election systems through a variety of measures, including heightened monitoring during electoral events.

▶ The new AEC Command Centre provides a secure, leading-edge, central point of command.

Our cooperation

External cooperation is critical to ensure the AEC continues to succeed in an evolving environment, delivering safe and effective elections into the future.

Election events in Australia

We partner with a range of public and private entities to deliver Australian electoral events. We also foster collaborations and help others.

To meet the enormous task of conducting a federal election, in all its scale and complexity, the AEC works with many Australian Government agencies, state, territory, local government jurisdictions and external suppliers. Partners helping us deliver increasingly intricate voting options include:

- Commonwealth, state and territory agencies, sharing data and improving the quality of the electoral roll
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, providing population information used to calculate redistributions
- Services Australia, helping with remote mobile polling and call centre assistance
- Australian Federal Police, assessing suspected breaches of criminal offences of the Electoral Act
- Australia Post, ensuring we can provide a choice of postal and enrolment services
- Department of Health and Aged Care, and health departments in different jurisdictions, providing support and advice regarding the AEC's COVID-safe measures ahead of electoral events.

The Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce helps safeguard against interference that may impact on the safe delivery of electoral events. Potential threats include malicious cyber activity, physical attacks,

foreign interference or disinformation. Security and integrity of the electoral system are the AEC's top priorities. We co-lead this taskforce, guided by other key agencies across government, including:

- Department of Finance
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
- Attorney-General's Department
- Department of Home Affairs
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Signals Directorate
- Office of National Intelligence.

When required, the taskforce is also supported by the intelligence community.

The future of the electoral operating environment will be shaped, in part, by the AEC's close relationship with the Department of Finance. This partnership helps us contribute, when appropriate, to inform electoral policy and legislative reform.

Electoral participation and outreach

The AEC's priorities include supporting electoral participation for all Australians. We seek to engage citizens from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, people with disability, young people and those experiencing homelessness.



On 28 October 2021 the government announced additional funding of \$9.4 million to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australian elections. The additional funding will deliver an expanded Indigenous engagement program, designed and delivered in partnership with local Indigenous organisations and Indigenous communities.

Working with state and territory electoral commissions, the AEC collaborates with community organisations and other service providers to share electoral information, educate about election processes, and to promote recruitment opportunities. The AEC chairs the Disability Advisory Committee, which fosters accessibility, inclusion and participation in the electoral process by people with disability.

The AEC delivers a range of electoral information and education programs, including our National Electoral Education Centre in Canberra. To complement our education program, we are working with the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House to also establish a dedicated public exhibition. This important interactive display will explain Australia's federal electoral system and the role of the AEC.

We work with the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand to manage electoral rolls for Commonwealth, state, territory and local government elections. In the spirit of mutual cooperation, the council considers contemporary electoral challenges with a view to improving equality for all eligible voters.

The AEC also conducts industrial elections and ballots under the provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*.

International engagement

The AEC is internationally recognised for its support of emerging democracies and for building the technical capacity of partner electoral agencies. This reputation enables the government to include electoral support as a key element of development assistance.

We work closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to build international capacity and capability. The AEC delivers projects virtually and sends subject matter experts overseas to advise and help develop quality electoral services.

By building trust, mutual respect and shared vision, the AEC promotes peaceful and inclusive societies through sustainable development. Our partners in these bilateral endeavours include electoral management bodies, academic institutions and international development agencies.

AEC activities include:

- technical assistance
- strategic planning and advice
- training courses
- reviewing and updating policies and manuals
- knowledge exchange programs
- workshops
- designing, printing, and supplying electoral materials.

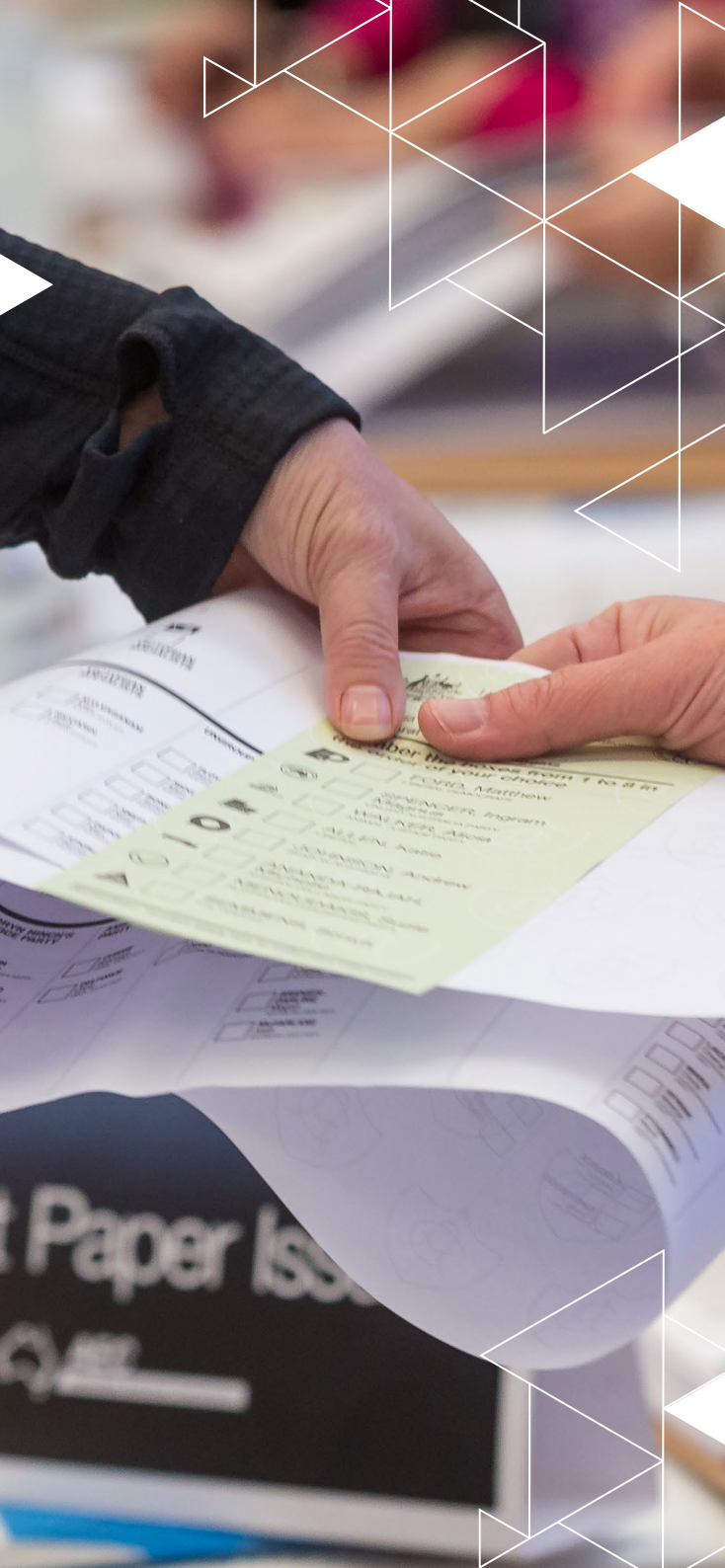
The Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) network is an Australian Government-funded electoral support program led by the AEC. The network has helped deliver programs and resources for more than 20 years to strengthen the capability of Pacific Island electoral management bodies.

The AEC also continues to play an integral role as a founding partner of the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) partnership.

This professional development program is focused on electoral processes and is the only initiative of its type delivered to electoral officials around the world. As well as the AEC, BRIDGE partners are the:

- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Electoral Assistance Division/ Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

▶ The AEC delivers projects virtually and sends subject matter experts overseas to advise and help develop quality electoral services.



Our performance

This year we continued to build our performance framework against our four agency activities, and to provide more detailed performance measures and targets.

The AEC's Performance Reporting Framework guides our approach to developing, managing and reporting performance information in line with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). We measure our performance against four key activities and the results we intend to achieve.

The following pages detail our key activities and targets measuring delivery of our success.

Reporting cycles

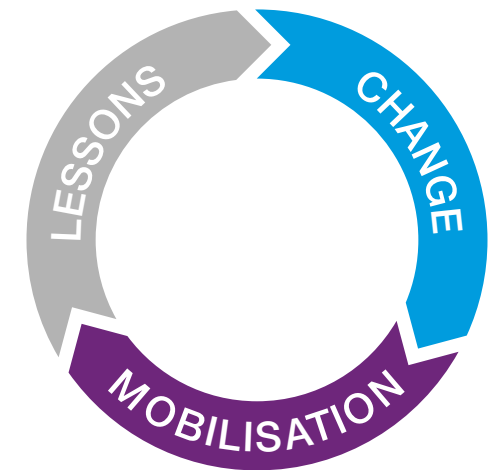
We report our performance through the annual performance statements in our annual reports.

We operate on two reporting cycles:

- externally on a four-year cycle through the PGPA Act
- internally as part of the electoral cycle focusing on the three phases of election readiness
 - lessons
 - implement change
 - mobilisation.

We must always be ready to deliver an electoral event.

Each phase of the election readiness framework directs our workflow and is reflected in the performance measures for the year. Our 'lessons learned' approach directs a continual cycle of improvement and learning across all aspects of AEC operations. Following the delivery of the 2022 election, we moved into the 'lessons' phase. In 2022–23, we will move through 'lessons' to 'implement change'.



Key activity 1

Maintain the integrity of the electoral and regulatory processes

An essential feature of Australian democracy is an electoral system that operates with a high level of integrity. The AEC maintains an impartial electoral system and processes for elections, referendums, plebiscites and by-elections in accordance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) and the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984*.

As the Australian Government's independent electoral body, electoral integrity is central to the AEC's values of quality, agility and professionalism. To maintain electoral integrity, the AEC regulates important aspects of the electoral system. This includes:

- maintaining a complete and accurate Commonwealth Electoral Roll
- driving voter turnout
- supporting electoral redistributions
- registering political parties
- regulating the funding and disclosure scheme for political entities and individuals
- regulating the authorisation of electoral communications.

This enables all eligible Australians to enrol, nominate as candidates, vote, and have their votes counted accurately and securely. Citizens participate in a free, fair and appropriately regulated electoral system.

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
1.1 Deliver the franchise – an Australian citizen's right to vote	Maintain impartial and independent enrolment, and electoral services and processes that enable voters to exercise their franchise.	Percentage of eligible voters enrolled (enrolment rate).	≥95%	≥95%	≥95%	≥95%	Electoral roll and Australian Bureau of Statistics population data.	Roll and population data calculated and reported annually at the end of each financial year and at close of rolls for a federal election or referendum.
		Percentage of voters enrolled who turn out to vote at all federal electoral events (turnout rate).	>90% voter turnout rate for elections for the Senate and House of Representatives at the 2024–25 federal election. Where applicable, turnout rate will be reported for by-elections.				AEC Tally Room.	Number of people enrolled to vote who cast a vote by any voting method at a federal electoral event.
		Percentage of votes cast formally for the House of Representatives and Senate at next federal election or at a referendum or for by-elections (if any held).	>90% formality rate for Senate and House of Representatives. Where applicable, formality rate will be reported for by-elections.				AEC Tally Room.	Percentage of formal votes cast when compared to all votes cast at a federal electoral event (including referendum).

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
1.2 Maintain a high level of confidence in the electoral roll	<p>Actively manage the electoral roll throughout the electoral cycle.</p> <p>Process enrolments to agreed timeliness and standards and quality assure a representative sample of enrolments for accuracy.</p> <p>Support the delivery of state, territory and local electoral events by delivering joint roll services to state and territory electoral commissions.</p>	Percentage accuracy of the Commonwealth Electoral Roll at the electoral division-level and individual address-level.	≥95% and ≥90%	≥95% and ≥90%	≥95% and ≥90%	≥95% and ≥90%	The Annual Roll Integrity Review (ARIR), which measures the accuracy and integrity of electoral roll data.	AEC roll data and other agency data, calculated and publicly published quarterly and annually at the end of each financial year.
	Support the timely conduct of electoral redistributions, ensuring, as near as practicable, that each state and territory gains representation in the House of Representatives in proportion to their population.	Redistributions determined in accordance with the Electoral Act.	All redistributions are determined in accordance with the planned determination date and impacted electors are notified prior to the relevant federal election.				Government Gazette and newspaper notices, and the date of letters to electors lodged with Australia Post.	For each redistribution, publication of notices and letters to electors comply with requirements in the Electoral Act.
1.3 Exercise our regulatory functions	<p>Process political party registrations in accordance with the Electoral Act.</p> <p>Regulate the funding and financial disclosure scheme for political parties, entities and individuals with disclosure obligations.</p> <p>Develop education and awareness resources and products to assist political entities in Part XX of the Electoral Act and those impacted by electoral authorisations to understand and comply with their regulatory responsibilities.</p>	The AEC maintains an up-to-date public register of political parties.	Compliance with s125(1) of Part XI of the Electoral Act.				Electoral Act (s125 (1) of Part XI), AEC funding and disclosure, Client and Return Management system and the AEC website.	No identified breaches of s125(1) of Part XI of the Electoral Act for the year, as at reporting date.
		<p>Disclosure returns are published and regulated in accordance with the timeframes in the Electoral Act.</p> <p>The AEC conducts compliance reviews in line with the approved program.</p>	<p>Annual returns published on the first working day in February.</p> <p>Election returns published 24 weeks after polling day for each electoral event.</p> <p>Compliance reviews completed annually compared to the approved program.</p>				<p>For annual returns and election returns, the source is the Transparency Register on the AEC website.</p> <p>For compliance reviews please refer to the AEC website.</p>	<p>Annual returns: measured annually.</p> <p>Election returns: measured for each electoral event.</p> <p>Compliance reviews: this is measured annually as at reporting date.</p>

Key activity 2

Prepare for and deliver electoral events

The AEC delivers federal electoral events, industrial elections, protected action ballots, and Torres Strait Regional Authority elections in accordance with the relevant legislation and rules.

The AEC provides the best possible electoral services and events to stakeholders and the public within a complex environment and in response to increasing community expectations. The AEC must deliver these services and events with the highest degree of integrity, impartiality, and in accordance with legislation. We deliver to all stakeholders and diverse

customer service expectations. Electoral services and events need to be accessible to all eligible Australians.

The AEC prepares for and delivers electoral events through the Election Readiness Framework. While the AEC works to a three-year electoral cycle, the timing of electoral events is unknown. The AEC must strike a careful balance between the likelihood of an event occurring with the cost and complexity associated with maintaining a readiness posture. Election readiness is also balanced against other agency priorities.

The AEC uses a lessons management approach during and following an electoral event to ensure Australians are provided with successful electoral events. Within the bounds of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act), we continue to enhance and modernise our model for delivering electoral events and services.

Under the Electoral Act, the AEC also supports international electoral management bodies, in close cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
2.1 The AEC maintains an appropriate level of election readiness	Using the Election Readiness Framework, the AEC comprehensively prepares for the federal election and other electoral events.	AEC-wide readiness achieved by the Directed Level of Electoral Readiness date (federal elections only).	Agency wide readiness meets the Directed Level of Electoral Readiness date (federal elections only).				AEC Election Readiness Framework.	Undertaken as required at key times prior to each electoral event.
2.2 The public and stakeholders have confidence the electoral process is well managed in accordance with legislation	Successfully deliver federal electoral events in accordance with legislation.	The election result – for each event – is delivered in accordance with the Electoral Act.	<p>The writs for a federal election event are issued and returned in accordance with legislative requirements and timeframes.</p> <p>The AEC will report on the number of Court of Disputed Returns matters which challenge AEC conduct, and whether these challenges are dismissed or upheld in favour of the AEC.</p>				<p>Electoral Act.</p> <p>Electoral Commissioner's advice published on AEC website.</p> <p>Outcomes of the Court of Disputed Returns.</p>	<p>For each electoral event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writs returned to the Governor-General or State Governors or the Speaker of the House of Representatives • Electoral Commissioner's advice published on the AEC website • Court of Disputed Returns advice.

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
2.3 Accessible and high-quality enrolment and polling services	Deliver enrolment services to electors in a timely and efficient manner. Identify opportunities to modernise delivery of enrolment services and increase digital offerings to our stakeholders.	Percentage of enrolment transactions lodged online, including through the Online Enrolment Service (OES).	≥80%	≥80%	≥80%	≥80%	Roll data from AEC enrolment systems and extracts.	Rates calculated monthly and reported annually at the end of each financial year. Also calculated at close of rolls for full federal elections.
	Deliver polling services to the public within the parameters and timeframes set in the Electoral Act and the AEC's Event Service Plan.	Voting locations (including early voting centres and polling places) published on the AEC website before polling commences.	100% of polling locations are published.				AEC Election Management System data. AEC website.	Publication on the AEC website for each electoral event.
	Mature and embed the AEC's lessons management approach and capability. Undertake an AEC voter survey following each federal election to inform future planning and delivery of electoral events.	After election night, count information is progressively updated on the AEC website.	Preliminary election results available on election night and progressive count information updated on the AEC website.				AEC Election Management System data.	Publication on the AEC website for each electoral event.
		Undertake a lessons management approach to delivering electoral events.	Agency lessons identified from the previous federal election are to be considered and implemented at the next electoral event.				AEC Lessons Management Framework. AEC Election Readiness Framework.	Agency-wide qualitative analysis undertaken for each federal election.
2.4 Industrial elections and ballots are designed for the future and delivered with integrity	The AEC meets legislative requirements to conduct electoral events for organisations registered with the Fair Work Commission; and protected action ballots when assigned as the Ballot Agency by the Fair Work Commission. Engage with stakeholders to modernise industrial election processes and systems, mature planning and assurance, and detail lessons learned.	Industrial election and ballot results are delivered with integrity and withstand scrutiny.	The AEC will report on the outcomes and number of events in which the AEC's conduct is challenged before a court.				Federal Court outcomes.	Federal Court outcomes for the year, as at reporting date.

Key activity 3

Engage with our stakeholders through education and public awareness activities

To maintain awareness of electoral matters, the AEC engages with the public and a range of different communities and stakeholders throughout the electoral cycle. At a federal election, the AEC conducts a national advertising campaign across a range of communication channels and in many Indigenous and

major community languages to maximise successful election participation.

Our education and public awareness activities target all eligible voters and consider Australia's diverse population. Targeted information, service tools and

strategic partnerships are developed for priority groups, including those who may experience some barriers to electoral participation.

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
3.1 Enable Australians to participate in electoral events and understand electoral matters	Provide timely and accurate electoral information and public awareness products and campaigns to a range of target audiences to support enrolment and participation in electoral events.	Deliver public awareness and education products that target all Australian citizens aged 18 years and over.	The AEC's public awareness campaign is delivered in accordance with key objectives outlined in the campaign strategy.				Campaign evaluation report.	Specific communication activities delivered for mainstream and identified special audience groups measured for each federal election.
	Work with key stakeholders such as state and territory electoral commissions, further enhance partnership arrangements and extend our digital reach to provide awareness and education products to the priority groups.	Percentage of 18 to 24-year-old Australians enrolled (youth enrolment rate).	≥87%	≥87%	≥87%	≥87%	Roll data from AEC enrolment systems. ABS population data.	Rates calculated monthly and published quarterly. Also measured and reported for each federal election.
	The priority groups include youth (18–24 years old); Indigenous Australians; people with disability; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people experiencing homelessness; and people who are incarcerated.	Deliver electoral participation activities to support AEC priority groups.	Assessment of activities delivered in accordance with the AEC Targeted Engagement Framework 2020–2023.				Assessment against Targeted Engagement Framework 2020–23.	Assessment of activities for the year as at each reporting date.

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
3.2 Enhance understanding of Australia's electoral system	Deliver a high quality and accessible electoral education experience to school children through the National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC).	Annual visitors to the National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC).	No target. Report NEEC visitor numbers in 2022–23. New baseline to be determined for the Corporate Plan 2023–24*.				AEC visitor data captured via the NEEC online booking system.	Visitor attendance reported annually.
	Provide a program of targeted professional learning opportunities and resources to teachers that support their teaching of the Australian electoral system consistent with the Australian Curriculum.	Visitor satisfaction rates at the NEEC.	≥ 90%	≥ 90%	≥ 90%	≥ 90%	AEC NEEC visitor satisfaction survey.	Visitor satisfaction rates at the NEEC.
		Maintain the number of unique views of AEC for Schools website.	≥ 200,000	≥ 200,000	≥ 200,000	≥ 200,000	AEC for Schools website.	Maintain the number of unique views of AEC for Schools website.
		Teacher professional learning participant numbers.	No target. Report teacher professional learning participant numbers in 2022–23. New baseline to be determined for the Corporate Plan 2023–24*.				AEC Learning Management System data and attendance at in-person or online sessions.	Professional learning participation rates reported annually.

* COVID-19 lockdowns reduced the numbers of visitors and face-to-face education programs in 2021. The NEEC was refurbished in 2022, which also affected visit numbers.

Key activity 4

Maintain a capable and agile organisation and continue to professionalise our workforce

Building and maintaining a capable and agile organisation and professional workforce is critical to delivering electoral events. To ensure we can respond to changing legislation, policy, community expectations and our environment, we must continue to develop our agility and capability. We do this by refining our organisational structure and focusing on key aspects

of governance and assurance. We are also investing in and modernising our enrolment and election systems and processes.

Our people and learning and development strategies are designed to ensure the AEC can attract, develop and retain a talented, agile and professional workforce.

This includes both our regular Australian Public Service (APS) and temporary election workforce, which surges to more than 100,000 employees during a federal election.

Intended results	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets				Source	Method and frequency
			2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26		
4.1 Develop and maintain a professional, talented and agile workforce	Continue to develop our people by implementing the AEC workforce plan and Learning and Development Strategy.	Percentage of identified APS employees undertaking specific training relevant to their role.	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	AEC Learning Management System.	Training completion data measured annually.
	Further expand our capability to support and train the AEC's temporary election workforce.	Percentage of TEW employees completing election training relevant to their role.	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	AEC Learning Management System.	Training completion data measured for each federal electoral event.
4.2 Invest in organisational capability and governance	Continue to mature and streamline our agency's governance arrangements. Improve our maturity across risk management, protective security (under Protective Security Policy Framework), information management and privacy.	Increase agency-level governance maturity in the areas of risk management, protective security, privacy and information management.	Increase or maintain maturity against identified Commonwealth surveys or plans.				Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking Survey, National Archives of Australia's Check-up PLUS survey and reports, Protective Security Policy Framework, AEC Privacy Management Plan.	Survey benchmarking using Commonwealth frameworks and agency maturity assessments for protective security and information management measured annually. Comcover Risk Culture survey is measured biennially. Qualitative assessment on privacy management, performed annually as at reporting date.
4.3 Implement systems and processes that are sustainable, relevant and modern to support election planning and delivery	Continue investment in the AEC's modernisation agenda.	Progress the modernisation of the AEC's core election and roll management systems.	Meet the key program milestones associated with the procurement, delivery, execution and de-commissioning of these systems.				Program documentation and reporting.	Governance reporting mechanisms (including internal and external assurance) as guided by program structure and documentation.

Regulator performance

The AEC's regulatory responsibilities under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) involve administering:

- the Commonwealth funding and disclosure scheme in Part XX of the Electoral Act. This requires candidates, Senate groups, political parties, significant third parties, associated entities, third parties, donors, senators and members of the House of Representatives to lodge election or annual financial disclosure returns with the AEC
- registration of political parties under Part XI of the Electoral Act. The AEC maintains a Register of Political Parties which lists the parties eligible to have the party affiliation of their endorsed candidates printed on ballot papers at a federal election
- authorisation of electoral communications in Part XXA of the Electoral Act.

The AEC applies best practice regulator principles in exercising and assessing these regulatory functions. This is done in line with the Australian Government's commitment to reduce the cost of unnecessary and inefficient regulation imposed on individuals, business and community organisations.

The principles of regulator best practice are:

- continuous improvement and building trust – regulators adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving their performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings
- risk-based and data-driven – regulators manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden and leveraging data and digital technology to support those they regulate to comply and grow
- collaboration and engagement – regulators are transparent and responsive communicators, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way.



The following table outlines our performance against our measures of success.

What we do to meet the best practice principles	Measures	Key activity reference
<p>We understand the operating environment and circumstances of stakeholders and take actions to minimise the potential for unintended negative impacts on them.</p> <p>We provide up-to-date, clear, accessible and concise guidance information, delivered through appropriate channels to the target audience.</p> <p>We apply a risk-based, proportionate approach to compliance obligations, engagement and regulatory enforcement actions.</p> <p>We ensure information requests to the public and stakeholders are tailored and made only when necessary to secure regulatory objectives, and in a way that minimises impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AEC maintains an up-to-date public register of political parties. • We regulate the funding and disclosure scheme, ensuring disclosure returns are published and regulated in accordance with timeframes. • We undertake regular compliance reviews examining a sample of disclosure returns and use a risk-based approach to compliance activity and enforcement of disclosure obligations. The outcomes of compliance activity are published on the AEC's website. • We administer the funding and disclosure scheme, political party registrations and electoral authorisations. We provide guidance and information to ensure stakeholders are aware of the need to comply with electoral legislation as well as the 'how-to'. • We apply a risk-based proportionate response in addressing multiple voting and non-voter prosecutions, and in administering electoral communications requirements. • We continue to improve our risk management maturity to build organisational capability. We are also maturing and embedding our lessons management approach and capability. • We manage feedback and complaints in line with the AEC complaints management policy and seek improvements in administration when relevant. 	<p>1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>

