

Corporate Plan 2025–26

Commissioner's welcome

Welcome to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) corporate plan for 2025–26. This plan sets our direction for the next four years. It outlines the key activities we undertake to achieve our purpose, and how we measure our performance in delivering high integrity electoral services to Australian citizens.



After the successful delivery of the 2025 federal election, the AEC is now transitioning into the next phase of the electoral cycle, with a focus on embedding the lessons from election delivery into our forward practices. Each election brings new insights into our work. We are

continually engaging with a variety of stakeholders and will work closely with the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to continue to evolve our approach to delivering elections.

In addition to our normal regulatory activities, this year is the first full year of implementing our expanded regulatory functions. The implementation of the Funding and Disclosure Scheme, as part of the *Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Reform) Act 2025*, is the largest and most complex change to our role as a regulator in our 40-year history. We will engage extensively with stakeholders affected by the change to enable an effective and efficient user experience across the new systems and business processes we develop. Over the next four years this change will transform how we operate as a regulator.

We will also continue with our once-in-a-generation digital transformation, the Election Systems Modernisation (Indigo) Program. Already in the 2025 federal election, we benefitted from new capabilities including replacing our temporary election workforce management systems. The replacement of our legacy election management systems under Tranche 2 will greatly improve our capacity to adapt in a dynamic security risk environment and to continue to meet community expectations in election planning and delivery.

The AEC remit on electoral matters provides other areas of focus in the coming years. Operating as the Redistribution Committee and as the augmented Electoral Commission, the AEC will administer several redistribution processes to draw and adjust electoral boundaries based on population data. We will conduct elections for officeholders within organisations registered with the Fair Work Commission as required, as well as protected action ballots. Internationally, we will continue to provide electoral assistance to regional electoral management bodies in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

As we navigate through a changing operating environment, the *AEC Corporate Plan 2025–26* is our roadmap to deliver on our key activities and to maintain our commitment to Australia's democratic system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP', written over a white background.

Jeff Pope APM
Acting Electoral Commissioner

Statement of preparation

I, as the accountable authority of the Australian Electoral Commission, present the 2025–26 Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2025–29, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Jeff Pope APM
Acting Electoral Commissioner

Introduction

About us

AEC

The AEC is an independent statutory authority established under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act), and a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). We operate nationally to deliver free, fair and impartial federal elections, referendums and by-elections.

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:

- The Hon Susan Kenny AM KC, Chairperson
- Mr Jeff Pope APM, Acting 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.

Values

The AEC is a values-driven agency. The AEC values of electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism inform everything we do. These values guide the AEC to operate in line with legislation and policy requirements for public resource management. We deliver high quality services, maintaining stakeholder trust and confidence while continuing to strengthen the capabilities of our high performing workforce.



Purpose and role

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 relevant legislation, we do this by:

- conducting successful electoral events, including federal elections, by-elections and referendums
- upholding electoral integrity and public confidence in a neutral and independent electoral system
- maintaining and ensuring confidence in the Commonwealth Electoral Roll, including roll accuracy and security
- regulating political party registrations and maintaining the Register of Political Parties
- ensuring participants in elections and referendums comply with legislation regarding financial disclosure and authorisation of electoral communications
- supporting electoral redistributions to ensure equal representation across the country
- helping Australians understand the democratic process and their right and responsibility to enrol and vote.

We also assist other countries with their elections, including through electoral information and education programs. These activities support both Australia's national interests and emerging democracies in the region.

Finally, we manage industrial elections for organisations registered with the Fair Work Commission, and protected action ballots related to enterprise agreement negotiations.



KEY ACTIVITY ONE

Maintain the integrity of electoral and regulatory processes

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

1.1 We deliver the franchise – an Australian citizen's right to vote.

- Percentage of eligible voters enrolled (enrolment rate).
- Percentage of 18- to 24-year-old Australians enrolled (youth enrolment rate).
- Percentage of voters enrolled who turn out to vote at all federal electoral events (turnout rate).
- Percentage of votes cast formally for the House of Representatives and Senate at federal elections or at referendums, and by-elections (if any held).
- Percentage accuracy of the Commonwealth Electoral Roll at the electoral division-level and individual address-level.
- Redistributions are determined in accordance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

1.2 We exercise our regulatory functions.

- Information from disclosure returns is published and regulated in accordance with the timeframes in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* and the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984*.
- The AEC conducts compliance reviews in line with the approved program.

KEY ACTIVITY TWO

Prepare for and deliver electoral events

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2.1 We maintain an appropriate level of electoral event readiness.

- AEC-wide readiness achieved by the directed level of electoral event readiness date.
- Deliver public awareness and education products that target all Australian citizens aged 18 years and over.
- Percentage of temporary election workforce employees completing election training relevant to their role.
- Voting locations (including early voting centres and polling places) published on the AEC website before polling commences.
- Undertake a lessons management approach to delivering electoral events.

2.2 The public and stakeholders have confidence the electoral process is well managed in accordance with legislation or rules.

- The result – for each event – is delivered in accordance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* or the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984*.
- Industrial election and ballot results are delivered with integrity and withstand scrutiny.

REPORTING ON PERFORMANCE

Performance reporting is included in AEC annual reports.

Operating context

Our environment

The AEC delivers high-quality and trusted electoral services to the Australian public. After every event we deliver, we learn and implement lessons to help us continue to improve. We strive to increase voter participation, make access to participate more equitable, and educate voters to drive up the number of formal votes.

From a core staff of around 1,000, we grow to a workforce of more than 100,000 to deliver full federal events, allowing us to manage logistics, polling services, and increasingly complex counts. The AEC works hard to meet public, candidate and media expectations for timely, accurate results while ensuring adherence to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918)*.

Public expectations are growing, and false and misleading information is spreading more quickly, especially through social media. We maintain an active social media presence as well as the more formal AEC Disinformation Register to protect the integrity of our elections, and to ensure we remain the authoritative source of information about electoral processes. We also conduct electoral education and engagement sessions and manage the National Electoral Education Centre to ensure Australians understand our voting system and how to vote formally.

The AEC helps stakeholders meet their legislative obligations. We provide information to support political party registrations and guidance on the authorisation of electoral materials. We facilitate transparency

surrounding political parties and candidates through the funding and disclosure scheme. We also enforce Australia's compulsory voting requirement.

In 2025–26, the AEC's event delivery functions will reduce as we move out of a busy period delivering three full federal events in four years. We will use this period to further strengthen internal expertise, prioritise employing staff directly rather than relying on contractors, and investigate opportunities to carefully leverage artificial intelligence to support long-term resilience in our service delivery. At the same time, we are charged with delivering two Tier One transformation programs: the Indigo Program (Election Systems Modernisation) and the Funding and Disclosure Reform Program. The enabling and regulatory areas of the AEC will continue to expand accordingly.

As part of the Australian Government's APS Net Zero 2030 policy initiative and requirements, the AEC continues to work towards zero emissions by 2030.

Our risk oversight and management

The AEC's Quality Management System defines a set of steps to ensure we deliver quality outcomes, functional products and professional services. Through strict internal safeguards and clearly articulated processes and compliance measures, we ensure our electoral system remains accessible, secure and resilient.

Risk management framework

Our organisational structure provides clear systems of delegated responsibility, oversight, escalation and reporting. Our risk management framework addresses strategic, enterprise, project and operational risks.

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

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

To continue to mature our risk management framework and strengthen organisational capability, we are 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 AEC and with our external partners
- embedding enterprise risk management with a greater focus on key controls.

Core risks

Our core risks comprise strategic and enterprise risks. Our two strategic risks relate to our ability to deliver our key activities, specifically:

- failing to deliver a contemporary service offering and not meeting the expectations of stakeholders
- being unable to uphold electoral integrity.

In addition, we have identified 13 enterprise risks, which range from managing change, finances, fraud, corruption, privacy, information management, labour hire and workforce capability, to complying with legislation and providing effective security and service delivery.


All core risks have targeted mitigation strategies in place that are managed at senior executive level. Governance committees provide oversight of enterprise risks.

We use lessons management to inform and refine behavioural and business process improvements for future electoral events.

Strategic risks

| Strategic risk | Mitigating strategies |
|---|--|
| <p>1. The AEC is unable to meet its service delivery and regulatory obligations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We regularly scan the environment to assess the risk context and to detect, prevent and respond to risk. This is supported by a robust governance framework overseeing a range of organisational health factors. • We undertake a continual cycle of improvement and continue to invest in developing our people. Our people and learning and development strategies are designed to ensure the AEC can attract, develop and retain a talented, agile and professional 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. • Our Election Systems Modernisation (Indigo) Program governs the replacement and modernisation of core election information technology (IT) systems. A modernised electoral management system will ensure ongoing integrity of the electoral system. • Our Funding and Disclosure Reform Program will enhance the AEC's work as a large-scale regulator. This includes establishing robust policy frameworks, communication and education activities to support AEC staff and affected disclosure entities; and modern enabling technology that is secure, integrated and responsive. • We continuously improve our operations and invest in staff development. Our people and learning strategies ensure the AEC attracts, develops and retains a talented, agile workforce. • We are implementing the AEC Workforce Strategy 2024–30 with five strategic goals to guide the leadership and management of our people and ensure we successfully meet our organisational outcomes. • We conduct targeted education and public awareness activities to help Australians understand the democratic process and their responsibility to enrol and vote. • We have adopted a command-and-control model to provide a centrally led, nationally consistent approach to crisis and incident management. • The AEC Disinformation Register is used to publicly highlight the inaccuracy of prominent or potentially harmful pieces of false or misleading information on the electoral process. • We engage with a range of stakeholders on the services we offer. User-centred design is key in our external-facing systems and processes. |
| <p>2. The AEC does not have sufficient agility, strategic foresight or planning to meet future challenges.</p> | |

Enterprise risks

| Enterprise risk | Mitigating strategies |
|--|---|
|  <p>Change management: the AEC is unable to effectively recognise, respond to, apply or embed change.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We maintain an AEC Transformation and Investment Portfolio, supporting a future-thinking and change-ready culture. • Our annual Change Maturity Assessments improve understanding of overall agency change maturity. |
|  <p>Corruption: the AEC fails to prevent widespread or systemic corrupt conduct by staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have tools in place to monitor and detect potential instances of corruption, along with robust internal policies, procedures and frameworks. |
|  <p>Financial management: the AEC fails to use and manage resources in line with agency priorities, consistent with the Commonwealth Resource Management Framework.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of effective financial management is built into all agency projects and programs. • We regularly review financial management and report on governance activities to our Organisational Health, Performance and Risk Committee. |
|  <p>Fraud: the AEC fails to prevent fraudulent behaviour by staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud and corruption awareness training forms part of annual mandatory training for all staff. • All agency branches undertake fraud and corruption risk assessments. |
|  <p>Information management: AEC governance and management of agency information fails to provide protection or ongoing availability of data, information assets and IT infrastructure.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally consistent information governance guides data management, including for internal policies, plans, internal guidance and education programs. • We have strong relationships with our partners to effectively manage risks that could compromise the security of classified and sensitive data and information. |
|  <p>Labour hire: the AEC fails to effectively manage labour hire engagements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AEC's operational workforce planning tools enable managers to make standardised, well-informed hiring decisions. |
|  <p>Legislative compliance: the AEC fails to comply with or enforce legislative requirements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AEC legislative compliance is overseen by our Organisational Health, Performance and Risk Committee and Executive Leadership Team. Where appropriate, we initiate internal audits of our processes to detect instances of non-compliance. |
|  <p>People: the AEC has insufficient people capability and capacity to deliver quality agency outcomes in an agile manner to meet stakeholder expectations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed proactive measures to attract and retain employees with the necessary capabilities. |



Enterprise risks CONTINUED

| Enterprise risk | Mitigating strategies |
|--|--|
|  <p>Privacy: the AEC fails to collect, use, disclose or store personal information in compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior executive staff meet quarterly to monitor progress against the AEC's Privacy Management Plan. • Specialist roll management staff receive tailored training to manage the privacy of silent electors. |
|  <p>Portfolio management: AEC investments fail to deliver expected benefits within allocated time and budget.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive doctrine and governance arrangements support the delivery and implementation of programs, projects and services. |
|  <p>Security: the AEC fails to detect and prevent cyber and protective security threats.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We undertake assessments of the effectiveness of the AEC's cyber security, and take advice from the Australian Cyber Security Centre and the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce. • We have cyber security monitoring in place to detect, and enable us to respond to, cyber security events and potential incidents. |
|  <p>Service delivery: the AEC fails to deliver electoral events and services effectively and efficiently.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an Election Readiness Framework to underpin planning. It includes a series of assurance activities to manage risk, including monthly reporting of readiness activities. • Our assurance and national consistency ecosystems include compliance monitoring, and command and operation centres. |
|  <p>Workplace health and safety: a notifiable incident occurs in an AEC workplace or site that threatens the health, safety or wellbeing of our employees.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer proactive support for workplace wellbeing initiatives, with a focus on psychosocial hazards. |



Our capability

In an increasingly complex and dynamic operating environment, we continue to build our business processes and election and service delivery model through our Lessons Management Framework, contributing to APS Reform efforts to strengthen the public service and respond to changing public needs.

Our people capability

Our workforce

The AEC's workforce comprises APS employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*, statutory appointments, and external engagements. We also employ our large temporary election workforce and staff for specific electoral events. We support inclusivity in our workforce through specific strategies, diversity sponsorship, workplace adjustments, policy reviews, recognition programs and our Reconciliation Action Plan. We will continue to build on this work.

As part of our broader plan to increase diversity of our temporary election workforce, we will continue to recruit multilingual staff by expanding outreach and engagement with diverse communities. We are improving our systems to better manage temporary election workers, so we can quickly send staff who speak different languages to polling places where they are needed.

Reducing reliance on contractors

The Employment Principles and APS Strategic Commissioning Framework sets the expectation that APS employees are prioritised to fulfil most roles and functions, with limited use of external workforces. This approach aims to deepen and strengthen the APS, and reduce risks associated with outsourcing. An additional focus on less outsourcing in program delivery and administrative support areas is expected

to reduce outsourcing expenditure by \$0.2 million in 2025–26.

Our technical capability

The AEC's information and communications technology (ICT) systems are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet business needs. We are currently undertaking a large-scale digital transformation (the Indigo Program) to move from the use of legacy systems to systems built using modern and secure technologies. This will allow us to provide electoral services more efficiently and in a more user-friendly way, while ensuring extra protection from external inference. The second tranche of the Indigo Program is on track for completion in 2027.

Polling place technology

The Polling Place Technology (PPT) project will be completed in 2025 and improves polling place management and voter compliance. Electronic Certified Lists (ECLs) are portable devices, currently laptops, used to search the list of eligible voters and record electronically when a person is issued a ballot paper. Since the first ECLs were used in 2013, the AEC has expanded their use by over 2,000 per cent, deploying 12,300 ECLs at the 2025 federal election.

The PPT project has also developed and trialed a digital Officer in Charge return, aiming to improve polling place management and communication. It also allows for greater, more reliable and more timely visibility of voting services in the field.

These investments have played a large part in increasing voter enfranchisement, preventing multiple voting, and enhancing voters' experience. The AEC will continue to monitor the effect of this technology to determine the future footprint and further development of polling place technology.

Cyber security

In recent years, the AEC has increased our focus on internal cyber security to protect our agency against the heightened threat environment. Over the next year, we will increase investment in our internal cyber security capability to further mitigate these increasing threats.

Through our Cyber Security Governance Program, we continue to strengthen system security through a variety of measures, including heightened monitoring during electoral events. We engage with key cyber security partners, including the Australian Cyber Security Centre, to make sure we have all available information and resources to support risk-based decision-making.

Our regulatory capability

The AEC is responsible for the administration and regulation of Australia's electoral system. We help stakeholders meet their obligations and responsibilities under the Electoral Act and *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984* (Referendum Act). This includes providing information and services to support political party registrations and maintaining an up-to-date Register of Political Parties, published in our Transparency Register.

In addition, we regulate the authorisation of electoral materials, enforce compulsory voting and investigate cases of multiple voting.

Financial disclosure reforms

The AEC has established the Funding and Disclosure (FAD) Reform Program to implement the new FAD scheme, arising from the *Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Reform) Act 2025*.

New requirements come into effect next financial year, reshaping and expanding the current FAD scheme. The measures will enhance transparency and integrity of Australia's electoral processes. They implement Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recommendations to change the scheme to better meet community expectations and support public confidence in Australian elections.

Changes include:

- a reduction to the donation disclosure threshold from \$16,900 to \$5,000
- gift caps to limit the amount a donor can donate within a calendar year
- caps on electoral expenditure
- new accounting and reporting requirements for electoral expenditure and those who make political donations
- administrative assistance funding to assist parliamentary parties and independent parliamentarians meet the new obligations.

Further, donations meeting the relevant threshold will be subject to shorter timeframes for disclosure – within seven days during an election period and 24 hours in the week before and after polling day. Outside of elections, monthly disclosures will be required.

The FAD Reform Program will deliver comprehensive and enduring communication and education programs to increase scheme participants' accountability and understanding of the new legislation and existing AEC regulatory functions.

Our cooperation

External cooperation is critical to ensure the AEC continues to succeed in our evolving environment, delivering a safe and trusted electoral system into the future.

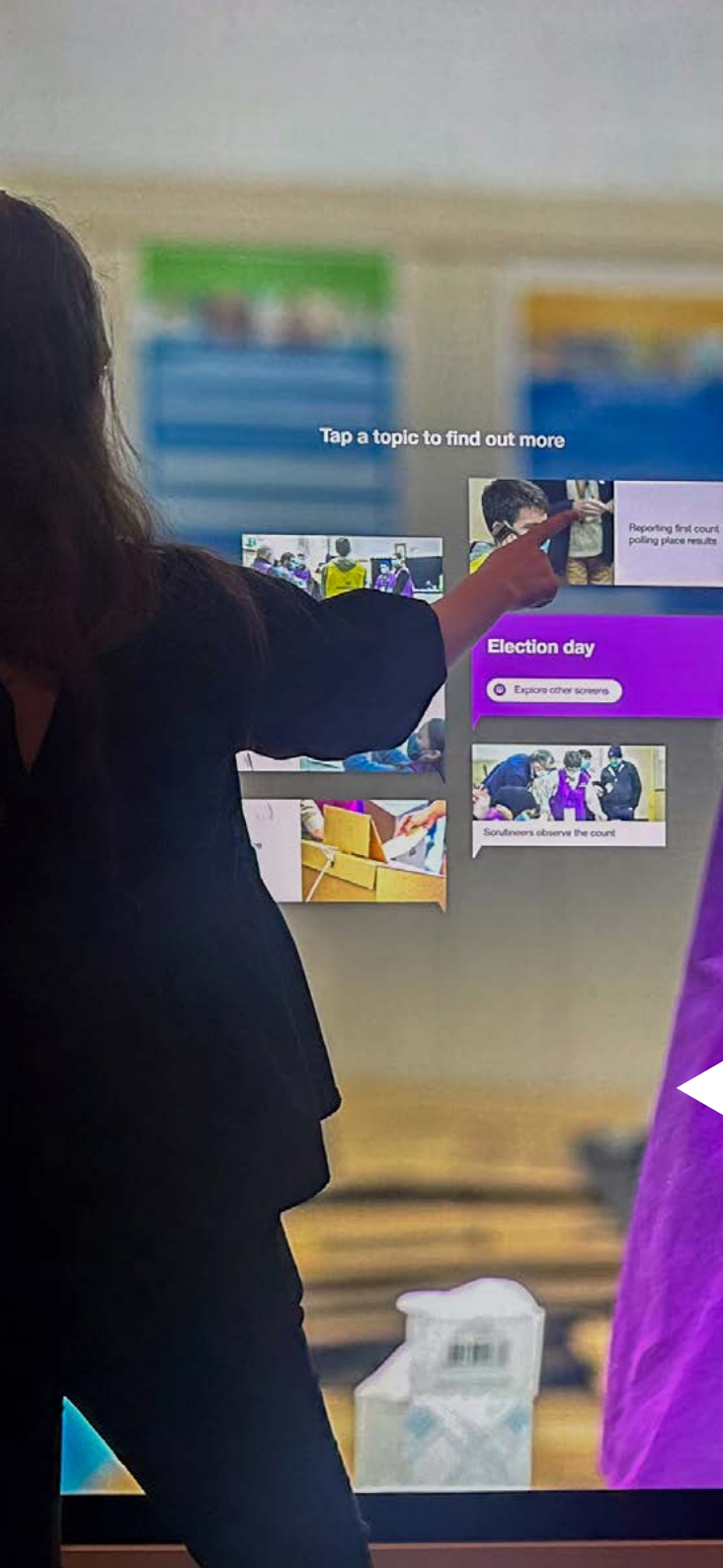
Electoral events in Australia

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

We work with many Australian Government agencies, as well as state, territory and local government jurisdictions and external suppliers. Government partners help us deliver crucial voting options safely and securely.

Specifically, we partner with:

- the Australian Bureau of Statistics – providing population information used to calculate redistributions and enrolment rates
- Services Australia – helping with voter services, expanding enrolment services, and providing call centre assistance
- the Australian Federal Police and state and territory police – assessing suspected criminal offences and breaches of the Electoral Act, and working proactively to ensure a safe voting experience for all
- Australia Post – ensuring voters who need to can access postal services for enrolment and voting
- the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and state and territory health departments – providing support and advice to enable the delivery of voter services to voters in thousands of health and care facilities



- the Department of Corrections in each jurisdiction – ensuring people in prison can vote via a mobile polling team or postal vote
- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Austrade – supporting the delivery of voting in many overseas posts.

We lead the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce, which provides coordinated information and advice to the Australian Electoral Commissioner on matters that may compromise the real or perceived integrity of an electoral event. The taskforce brings together capabilities and expertise across government to assess and address these threats. It ensures information is efficiently referred to relevant agencies, facilitating cooperation and coordination, and enabling agencies to work together to take any appropriate action.

Electoral participation and outreach

The AEC supports electoral participation for all Australians. We research how best to communicate and engage with all voters across a range of demographics, and throughout Australia. It is important we explain why and how to enrol and vote in a culturally appropriate, engaging way that helps people to participate.

We collaborate with stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, aged care providers and prisons to co-design information and resources. Information is available in accessible formats and in up to 59 First Nations and international languages. We are committed to continuing our community education, and delivering face-to-face and online education throughout Australia, including in-language.

We champion inclusivity and deliver accessible services, programs and reforms. The AEC Disability Advisory Committee includes representation from Australian peak body organisations and members of the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand. We also chair an Aged Care Advisory Working Group, which comprises representatives from across the sector including members from consumer peak bodies and profit and not-for-profit service providers and advocates. A Mental Health Advisory Working Group helps us ensure services are provided in an appropriate way for some of the most vulnerable voters.

The AEC runs electoral information and education programs including a program for school children at the National Electoral Education Centre. We also have an innovative exhibition at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. We work with the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand to consider contemporary electoral challenges, and with our Joint Roll Partners to manage electoral rolls for Commonwealth, state, territory and local government elections.

Industrial elections and ballots

The AEC conducts hundreds of industrial elections for office holders of organisations registered with the Fair Work Commission, including unions, employer associations and enterprise associations. We also conduct protected action ballots, which are part of the process required for employees to take protected (legal) industrial action when bargaining for a new enterprise agreement. We conduct these ballots and elections under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, associated regulations and the rules of registered organisations.

International engagement

The AEC supports democratic institutions in the Indo-Pacific by building technical capacity through information sharing and on-the-ground assistance.

At the request of our international partners, and with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, our locally led engagement activities may 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 share programs and resources for more than 25 years to strengthen the capability of Pacific Island electoral management bodies.

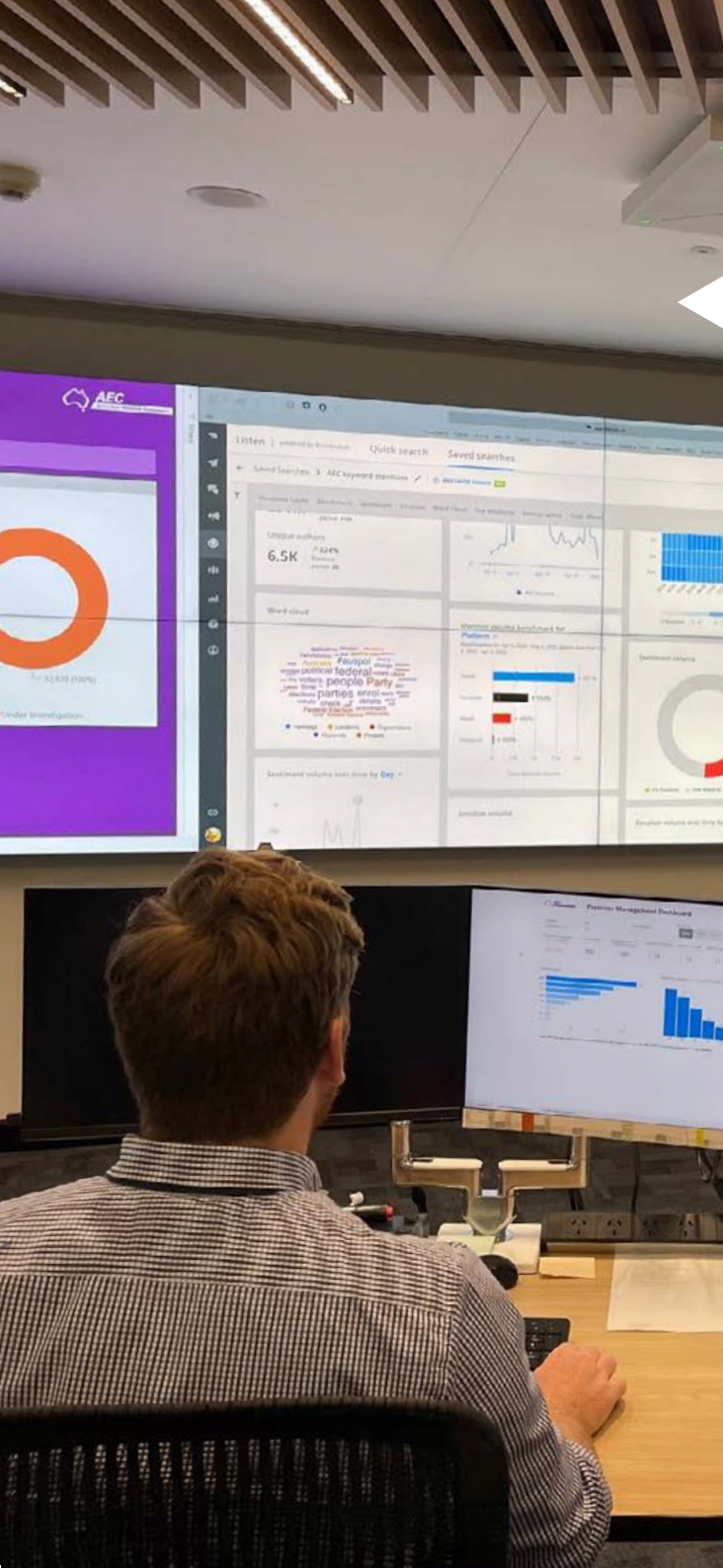
The AEC also continues to play an integral role as a founding partner of the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) partnership. This professional development program focuses on electoral processes and is the only initiative of its type delivered to electoral officials and other election stakeholders around the world. Our BRIDGE partners are the:

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

Our international program is a vital feature of our broader remit to defend democracy and enhance stability in the region and contribute to the national interest.

The PIANZEA network has helped share programs and resources for more than 25 years to strengthen the capability of Pacific Island electoral management bodies.





Our performance

Planning and performance

Our corporate plan fits within the broader APS Performance Management Framework required under the PGPA Act.

There is a direct link between our corporate plan and Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS). In our corporate plan, our purpose mirrors our PBS outcome, our performance measures mirror our PBS performance measures, and our targets mirror our PBS expected performance results. (Note, as with our PBS, the terms voters and electors are used interchangeably.)

The AEC Performance Reporting Framework guides our approach to developing, managing and reporting performance information in line with the PGPA Act. We measure our performance against our two key activities and the results we intend to achieve.

Reporting and election readiness 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 corporate planning cycle, in line with the PGPA Act
- internally, as part of the electoral cycle focusing on the four phases of election readiness:
 - Plan
 - Mobilise
 - Deliver
 - Finalise.

As we must always be ready to deliver an electoral event, the phases of election readiness direct our work and are reflected in the performance measures for the year. In 2025–26, we will move from the 'Finalise' to 'Plan' phase.

Key activity **one**

Maintain the integrity of electoral and regulatory processes

An essential feature of Australian democracy is an electoral system that operates with a high level of integrity.

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

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

| Intended result | AEC contributions | Performance measures | Targets | Sources | Method and frequency |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | | 2025–26 to 2028–29 | | |
| 1.1 We deliver the franchise – an Australian citizen’s right to vote. | Maintain impartial and independent enrolment and electoral services and processes that enable voters to participate in electoral events. | Percentage of eligible voters enrolled (enrolment rate). | ≥ 95% | Electoral roll and Australian Bureau of Statistics population data | Calculated and reported internally monthly and published quarterly on the AEC website. Reported at the end of each financial year and at close of rolls for a federal electoral event. |
| | | Percentage of 18- to 24-year-old Australians enrolled (youth enrolment rate). | ≥ 87% | Electoral roll and Australian Bureau of Statistics population data | Calculated monthly and published quarterly on the AEC website. Reported at the end of each financial year and at close of rolls for a federal electoral event. |
| | | 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. Where applicable, turnout rate will be reported for by-elections. | AEC Tally Room | Number of ballot papers admitted into scrutiny as a proportion of enrolled population. |
| | | Percentage of votes cast formally for the House of Representatives and Senate at federal elections or at referendums, and by-elections (if any held). | > 90% formality rate | AEC Tally Room | Percentage of formal votes cast as a proportion of all votes cast. |



Key activity one CONTINUED

| Intended result | AEC contributions | Performance measures | Targets | Sources | Method and frequency |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | | 2025–26 to 2028–29 | | |
| 1.1 We deliver the franchise – an Australian citizen’s right to vote. | <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> | <p>Percentage accuracy of the Commonwealth Electoral Roll at the electoral division-level and individual address-level.</p> | <p>≥ 95% and ≥ 90%</p> | <p>The Annual Roll Integrity Review, which measures the accuracy and integrity of electoral roll data</p> | <p>AEC roll data and other agency data, calculated, compared and published at the end of each financial year.</p> |
| | <p>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.</p> | <p>Redistributions are determined in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>.</p> | <p>All redistributions are determined in accordance with the planned determination date and impacted electors are notified prior to the relevant federal election.</p> | <p>Government Gazette and newspaper notices, and the date of letters to electors lodged with Australia Post</p> | <p>For each redistribution, publication of notices and letters to electors comply with requirements in the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>.</p> |
| 1.2 We exercise our regulatory functions. | <p>Regulate the funding and financial disclosure scheme for political parties, entities and individuals with disclosure obligations.</p> <p>Develop education and awareness resources to assist political entities in Part XX of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> and Part VIIIA of the <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i>.</p> | <p>Information from disclosure returns is published and regulated in accordance with the timeframes in the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> and the <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i>.</p> | <p>2025–26</p> <p>Information from annual returns published on the first working day in February.</p> <p>Information from election and referendum returns published 24 weeks after polling day for each electoral event.</p> <p>2026–27 to 2028–29</p> <p>Targets are being reviewed following the passing of the <i>Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Reform) Act 2025</i>.</p> | <p>Transparency Register (AEC website)</p> | <p>Annual returns: measured annually</p> <p>Election returns: measured for each electoral event</p> |
| | | <p>The AEC conducts compliance reviews in line with the approved program.</p> | <p>Compliance reviews are published on the AEC website.</p> | <p>Compliance reviews (AEC website)</p> | <p>Annually</p> |

Key activity two

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 following table outlines our performance against our measures of success.

| Intended result | AEC contributions | Performance measures | Targets | Sources | Method and frequency |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | 2025–26 to 2028–29 | | |
| 2.1 We maintain an appropriate level of electoral event readiness. | Using frameworks, comprehensively prepare for electoral events. | AEC-wide readiness achieved by the directed level of electoral event readiness date. | Agency-wide readiness meets the directed level of electoral event readiness date. | AEC electoral event frameworks | Undertaken as required at key times prior to each electoral event. |
| | 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 and education programs contribute to an enhanced understanding of Australia's electoral system, voter services and formality. | Communication and campaign strategy Independent market research and reports Survey responses | Specific communication activities delivered for mainstream and identified special audience groups measured for each federal electoral event. |
| | Further expand our capability to support and train the AEC's temporary election workforce. | Percentage of temporary election workforce employees completing election training relevant to their role. | ≥ 95% | AEC Learning Management System | Training completion data measured for each federal electoral event. |
| | Deliver polling services to the public within the parameters and timeframes set in the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> and the AEC's Event Service Plan. Deliver enrolment services to electors in a timely and efficient manner. | 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 | Published on the AEC website for each electoral event. |
| | Mature and embed our lessons management approach and capability. Undertake a voter survey following each federal election to inform future planning and delivery of electoral events. | Undertake a lessons management approach to delivering electoral events. | Agency lessons identified from previous electoral events are considered and implemented at the next electoral event. | AEC Lessons Management Framework AEC Election Readiness Framework | Agency-wide qualitative analysis undertaken for each election event. |



Key activity two CONTINUED

| Intended result | AEC contributions | Performance measures | Targets | Sources | Method and frequency |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| | | | 2025–26 to 2028–29 | | |
| 2.2 The public and stakeholders have confidence the electoral process is well managed in accordance with legislation or rules. | Successfully deliver federal electoral, referendum and by-election events in accordance with legislation. | The result – for each event – is delivered in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> or the <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i> . | <p>For each event, the writs 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><i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i></p> <p><i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i></p> <p>Electoral Commissioner's advice published on AEC website</p> <p>Outcomes of the Court of Disputed Returns</p> | For each electoral event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> writs issued by and 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. |
| | <p>Meet 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.</p> <p>Engage with stakeholders to modernise industrial election processes and systems, mature planning and assurance, and detail lessons learned.</p> | 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. |

Regulator performance

The AEC's regulatory responsibilities under the Electoral Act and the Referendum Act involve administering:

- compulsory voting requirements under section 245 and enforcing provisions against multiple voting under section 339 of the Electoral Act – this requires the AEC to pursue non-voters, issue penalty notices, process excuse applications, and investigate cases of multiple voting
- 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
- the referendum disclosure scheme under Part VIII A of the Referendum Act – this requires referendum entities to lodge returns that provide details of donations received and expenditure incurred during the referendum expenditure period
- registration of political parties under Part XI of the Electoral Act – we maintain a Register of Political Parties listing parties that are 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 and Part IX of the Referendum Act.

We apply best practice regulator principles in line with the whole of government Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework and per our regulatory approach, including:

- educating individuals and entities of their regulatory obligations and escalating progressively to more serious responses depending on the risk and seriousness of the non-compliance issue
- using a targeted approach based on the risk to Australia's democratic processes
- using deterrence strategies to ensure compliance is achieved. This can include court action to respond to and deter breaches. We seek penalties for more serious breaches of electoral legislation and refer criminal matters to the Australian Federal Police. Through deterrence activities, we ensure electoral participants are aware that non-compliance will be detected, and appropriate regulatory action will be taken
- applying an evidence-based and data-driven approach to assessing effectiveness and to inform quality improvement of our regulatory approach
- using a range of regulatory tools to ensure electoral participants are accountable and the integrity of Australia's electoral system is protected
- continuously improving and upholding our regulatory stewardship by being outcomes-focused, user-centred and reflective of the digital era.

The AEC ensures our regulatory system is continuously maintained through the regulatory life cycle of monitor, enforce, evaluate, and improve, to achieve cost-effective outcomes.

We apply best practice regulator principles in line with the whole of government Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework.

| How we meet the best practice principles | Measures of success | 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"> • We maintain 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. We publish the outcomes of compliance activity on our 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 how to comply. • 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 make improvements in administration when relevant. | <p>The measures apply to both our key activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the integrity of electoral and regulatory processes. 2. Prepare for and deliver electoral events. |

