

AEC SRC000655 Senate Ballot Paper Digitisation Solution

Public Interest Certificate

This *public interest certificate* is issued under section 22(1) of the *Government Procurement (Judicial Review) Act 2018 (Act)*.

I hereby state that it is not in the public interest for the following procurement(s) by the Australian Electoral Commission to be suspended while complaints under section 18 of the Act are being investigated or while applications for injunctions under Part 2 of the Act are being considered.

AusTender ID(s)	AEC- SRC000655
Tender(s) Close Date and Time	2.00pm (AEST) Monday 14 August 2023
Procuring Entity	Australian Electoral Commission
Contact Officer	Senate.tender@aec.gov.au
Category (UNSPSC)	81112002 - Data processing or preparation services
Description	<p>The AEC must accurately digitise every preference from all Senate ballot papers that have been returned in a federal election (estimated to be approximately 17.2 million ballot papers with approximately 119 million preferences for the 2027/2028 federal election). This must be completed within the timeframes specified in the writ by the Governor-General. This is generally completed within 27 calendar days after polling day to allow time for the AEC to finalise the Senate count, declare the result and return the writ to the respective State Governors and the Governor-General.</p> <p>The AEC and the supplier must meet immutable deadlines to ensure the trust and confidence by the Australian people in the Senate election and to avoid a potential petition to the Court of Disputed Returns. If an election is held in late May or June, under the Constitution, the Senate results must be declared prior to 30 June so the elected senators can form part of the new Senate on 1 July of that year.</p> <p>Federal elections do not have a fixed date. The AEC has no influence in determining the dates and timings of elections. Moreover, the AEC must always be ready for an early election, including one triggered by a double dissolution.</p> <p>Consequently, the AEC must have a fully implemented and functional ballot paper digitisation solution before an election may be called. The solution must meet the AEC's readiness timeframes which ensures the AEC is ready and prepared to deliver a federal election. Therefore, there cannot be any delay to the procurement and full implementation of the final procured solution as this will pose a significant and unacceptable risk to election delivery. Accordingly, the solution must be designed, built, tested and implemented as soon as practicable but no later than 1 August 2027, to ensure it is ready for the 2027/28 federal election.</p>

Signature of *accountable authority*/delegate:



Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

15 June 2023