

Corporate Plan 2024–25

Commissioner's welcome

Welcome to the 2024–25 Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Corporate Plan. 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.



The planning process allows us to explore and expand on our ongoing commitment to conducting elections at the highest standard, ensuring a safe and trustworthy outcome for all Australians.

At all levels of our organisation we are driven

by the AEC values of electoral integrity through agility, professionalism and quality. Our values are the foundation for us to deliver federal elections that are: accessible to all eligible voters; professionally run; impartial; and transparent. We also rely on innovation to meet the demands of a changing external environment.

Over our agency's 40-year history, the AEC has had a unique role in engaging communities and delivering education services on electoral matters. As the subject matter experts on federal electoral events, Australians look to us for help in understanding the process and how to fulfil their legal right and obligation to vote.

Recent national and international events have demonstrated the range of emerging challenges in delivering impartial and independent elections. The environment remains complex and is becoming even more so as all stakeholders grapple with more recent developments such as Artificial Intelligence. We must continue to evolve our approach.

The next federal election will be the largest in Australia's history. With record-high enrolment levels, the magnitude of the event requires expanded services, increased recruitment efforts, and enhanced staff training to ensure success. Elections are also deeply scrutinised, and we are seeing increased citizen engagement via social media, both domestically and internationally. As such, we must remain focussed on our extensive communication and education efforts.

The AEC maintains robust security measures to counter both cyber and physical threats. This focus helps us safeguard operations, ensuring citizens can have confidence in election results. We are unwavering in our impartial application of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

With an eye firmly on the future, we are rolling out the next phase of the AEC Transformation Strategy. This includes modernising information technology and communication systems to reduce risks to electoral integrity and strengthen our ability to respond to challenges ahead. Cyber security and safety for AEC staff and voters also remain high priorities.

Our transformation means continuing to work towards our desired state as an organisation with a workforce that is ever more diverse, flexible, professional and agile. Further, we must manage a range of policy and legislative changes as well as being ready to deliver an election at any time.

The modernisation process will strengthen the capabilities underpinning election delivery, enabling us to counter both the expected and unforeseen challenges ahead.

This is an exciting period for the AEC. We continue to evolve to meet the needs of voters and maintain trust in electoral outcomes today and into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Rogers'. The signature is stylized and fluid, written over a white background.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

Statement of preparation

I, as the accountable authority of the Australian Electoral Commission, present the 2024–25 Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2024–28, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

Introduction

About us

AEC

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).

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 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.



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 the Electoral Act, we do this by:

- conducting successful electoral events, including federal elections, by-elections and referendums
- maintaining and ensuring confidence in the Commonwealth Electoral Roll
- regulating political party registrations
- ensuring participants in elections and referendums comply with rules on financial disclosure and authorisation of electoral communications
- supporting electoral redistributions

- managing industrial elections for offices in organisations registered with the Fair Work Commission and protected action ballots related to enterprise agreement negotiations
- 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. This includes targeted education programs to help people understand democratic processes.

Key activities

Our key activities that we undertake in order to achieve our purpose are:

- 1** Maintain the integrity of electoral and regulatory processes.
- 2** Prepare for and deliver electoral events.



Operating context

Our environment

Australians benefit from an independent and trustworthy electoral system, serving the best interests of the community and elected representatives. When entering a polling booth, citizens can be confident their vote will be counted accurately and according to the rules of the Electoral Act or the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984* (Referendum Act).

Complexities and change

To maintain an impartial and independent electoral system, we must balance a range of challenges in a complex and dynamic operating environment. These include:

- threats to electoral integrity, for example through misinformation, disinformation and artificial intelligence
- local implications of the global decline in satisfaction with democracy and trust in public institutions
- the changing security environment in Australia
- labour force pressures
- growing service delivery pressures and challenges.

Delivering federal elections and referendums to all Australian voters, including those overseas, is one of the more complex and substantial peacetime logistic events in Australia. In preparing for the next federal election, we continue to prioritise equity of access for voters as our population grows, diversifies

and becomes more mobile. We remain committed to public engagement activities targeting all eligible voters to cast a formal vote. As part of a broad outreach program, we focus on assistance to remote voters and polling place accessibility, as well as providing mobile voting options for those without ready access to polling places.

We are aware of global trends towards dissatisfaction with democracy and mistrust in public institutions and processes. Despite this, Australians' trust in electoral integrity and in the AEC remains high.

In response to the changing landscape in traditional and social media, we work proactively to 'pre-bunk' (debunking in advance) and build voter resilience against the harms of misinformation. The AEC has a responsibility to ensure voters have access to correct information regarding electoral processes, so they can fully participate in Australian democracy. We must ensure a system where stakeholders who have never engaged with us before can do so in a straightforward manner, without confusion or administrative burden.

Maintaining citizen faith in the electoral process, and trust in electoral outcomes, is the overarching aim of all election management bodies. Failure to achieve this can lead to disputed elections, mistrust and democratic instability. The AEC must continuously adapt to an increasingly unpredictable environment to deliver successful electoral events into the future.

Integrity and security

Ensuring the integrity of the electoral roll and the safety of the personal details of millions of Australians are critical AEC priorities. We aim to be meticulous in meeting our legislative obligations to protect the data of all voters. Information technology (IT) systems, collaboration and vigilance are key to protecting the electoral roll and maintaining the integrity of the democratic process.

Both physical and cyber security incidents can present significant operational and integrity risks to electoral events. Even the perception that election systems, polling places or the electoral roll are not secure could damage the integrity of an event, causing public doubt and calling into question the validity of election results. We also prioritise AEC staff and voter safety around electoral events. We ask everyone to be respectful and courteous in the polling place.

External factors, such as natural disasters and supply chain disruptions, can significantly affect our ability to deliver electoral events and affect voter turnout. For example, we navigated complex service delivery in areas which were impacted by flooding at the 2022 federal election and bushfires at the 2023 referendum. The AEC Command Centre plays a vital role in monitoring the potential impacts in real-time.

Regional assistance

Beyond Australia, the stability of democracy in our region rests on strengthening the region's electoral management bodies, and their delivery of free and fair elections. We work closely with international partners to support democracy within our region. We help build technical capacity of electoral management bodies in the Indo-Pacific through our collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,

underpinned by our strong relationships. With endorsement from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, our electoral assistance programs are built on requests from partner electoral management bodies.

Planning for the future

Over time, we have seen an increase in complexity and emerging risks to democracy. At the same time, technologies, workforce capabilities and different modes of working offer exciting new possibilities. In this dynamic context, we prepare our organisation well beyond the next electoral cycle.

We recognise and plan for the opportunities and challenges that will shape our workforce towards 2030. We have implemented strategies to help us manage labour force pressures during electoral events. We continue to build a diverse and flexible workforce that can be mobilised where and when it is needed, a complicated task when election dates are unknown. In addition, with trust in democracy in danger of further decline, we must maintain high levels of confidence in our workforce's ability to be impartial. We adapt, invest in leadership, technical and cultural awareness and other training, and we leverage technology to respond to workforce challenges. Further, we are implementing initiatives from the Australian Public Service (APS) Reform agenda, contributing to a public service that is trusted, future-fit, responsive and agile.

We are also modernising our information technology and communication systems. Our Election Systems Modernisation Program is designed to mitigate risks to electoral integrity and strengthen Australia's democratic resilience. Bolstering our capabilities means we will be better equipped to meet voter expectations and adapt to unforeseen challenges. Modernising electoral systems will also strengthen our ability to respond to future policy and legislation



changes and allow us to adapt to an increasingly intricate environment. The program is a key initiative within the AEC Transformation Strategy, which guides our agency to become even more voter-centric, with enhanced security and stronger election processes.

Our agency values of electoral integrity through agility, professionalism and quality are enduring and support our transformation journey.

We are committed to embracing and driving change within our organisation to ensure we continue meeting the needs of our stakeholders into the future.

Our risk oversight and management

The AEC's ability to manage known risks and effectively respond to emerging risks in the evolving global environment is vitally important. This is crucial to meeting 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.

Quality management is a critical part of our work and is central to maintaining the AEC's reputation as a world leader in election management. Our Quality Management System provides a defined set of steps to use across our agency, bringing together different parts of our business to ensure we achieve quality outcomes and professional products and services. Through strict internal safeguards, clearly articulated processes, and compliance measures, we improve our capability to maintain a positive and trusted view of the AEC. Quality management is the main element in achieving several principles of our Reputation Management System, not least the principle of operational excellence.

It is a complex task to achieve operational excellence and deliver quality service at the polling place. Most Australians interact with our organisation on just one day every three years, engaging with some of the 100,000 staff who are employed for a federal election. This requires our sound processes, strong risk identification and mitigation strategies, and the provision of easy-to-understand instructions. We develop high-quality training and we source, onboard and provide the largest workforce of any Australian government agency.

Our risk management framework

We take a whole-of-agency approach to managing risks and encourage shared management of risks, both across the AEC and with our many external partners. Our organisation structure provides clear systems of delegated ownership, 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 our agency's objectives and activities
- the principles of our agency's 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 agency and with our external partners
- embedding enterprise risk management with a greater focus on key controls.

Core risks

Our two core 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 core 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.

Strategic risks

Strategic risk	Mitigating strategies
<p>1. The AEC fails to deliver a contemporary service offering and does not meet the expectations of stakeholders.</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 IT systems. A modernised electoral management system will ensure ongoing integrity of the electoral system. • 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 disinformation relating to the conduct of electoral processes. • We engage with a range of stakeholders on the services we offer, with user-centred design being key in our external-facing systems and processes.
<p>2. The AEC is unable to uphold electoral integrity.</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, including an integrated portfolio of change initiatives over the next four years, that will deliver the maximum contribution to reaching the AEC's strategic objectives. • Our Annual Change Maturity Assessments measure progress of change for significant projects and programs and 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 in place tools to monitor and detect potential instances of corruption related to procurement, and robust internal policies, procedures and frameworks for other corruption matters.
 <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"> • The AEC doctrine supports appropriate compliance and oversight of financial management. A culture of effective financial management is built into all agency projects and programs. • The Electoral Commissioner's Instructions assist us to meet our duties under the PGPA Act and to establish appropriate internal controls for the use of public resources in the delivery of policies, programs and services. • 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 is available for all staff and labour hire as part of annual mandatory training to improve agency culture toward fraud detection and prevention. • Fraud and corruption risk assessments are undertaken by all agency branches to ensure oversight and compliance.
 <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"> • The AEC doctrine supports information governance, including internal policies, plans, internal guidance, and education programs on the management of data. • 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: failure to effectively manage labour hire engagements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AEC is implementing operational workforce planning tools that will 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. Additionally, we initiate internal audits of our processes, where appropriate, to detect instances of non-compliance.

Enterprise risk	Mitigating strategies
 <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. • We have also created doctrine setting out our agency's commitment to maintain a capable and agile organisation, and to professionalise our workforce.
 <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"> • We are implementing a Privacy Management Plan targeted to each of the Australian Privacy Principles. Senior executive staff meet quarterly to monitor progress against the plan. • We have created a Silent Elector Processing Cell to train specialist staff how to manage the privacy of silent electors when they are undertaking roll management.
 <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 in line with the proper use of public resources.
 <p>Security: the AEC fails to detect and prevent cyber and protective security threats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We undertake assessment and assurance of the effectiveness of our agency cyber security, including Essential Eight assessment, and advice from the Australian Cyber Security Centre and the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce.
 <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 of electoral events. This framework includes a series of assurance activities to manage risk, including monthly reporting of readiness activities and an embedded lessons learned process.
 <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, including the Workplace Contact Officer Program.



Our capability

In an increasingly complex operating environment, we continue to build our business processes and election and service delivery model through our Lessons Management Framework.

Our people capability

Our workforce

The AEC's workforce comprises APS employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*, our event surge workforce, statutory appointments, external engagements (labour hire, contractors or consultants), and our large temporary election workforce engaged under the Electoral Act.

Collectively, our workforce maintains an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters, and also delivers other electoral, education, regulatory and enabling services.

The AEC Workforce Strategy 2024–30 identifies five strategic goals that will guide the leadership and management of our people and ensure we successfully meet our organisational outcomes. These goals are to:

- 1 attract and keep the right workforce
- 2 support the ongoing growth of our people to lead and manage
- 3 transform, engage and develop
- 4 provide a culture that values, includes and supports
- 5 offer flexibility in our workforce and ways of working.

The AEC is dedicated to increasing the diversity of our temporary election workforce to reflect

the community we serve. As part of our broader strategy, we will continue to target the recruitment of multilingual staff by expanding outreach and engagement with diverse communities. We are transforming our systems to better manage the temporary election workforce, enabling us to quickly allocate staff with language skills to selected polling places to enhance our ability to serve all members of the community. Inclusion of people from all backgrounds and experiences in the election workforce contributes to our mission of promoting full electoral participation for all.

Reducing reliance on contractors

The APS Strategic Commissioning Framework sets the expectation that APS employees should be prioritised to fulfil most roles and functions, with limited use of external workforces. This approach aims to deepen and strengthen service-wide capability and reduce risks associated with outsourcing.

The AEC has focused on a reduction of outsourcing in program delivery and administrative support areas, with an expected reduction of \$0.2 million in outsourcing expenditure, which forms part of the savings of the 2024–25 Budget measures '*savings from external labour – extension*'.

Our election capability

Election readiness

Our readiness for electoral events is central to maintaining the integrity and successful delivery of electoral events. Being event ready means that we can deliver high-quality and high-integrity electoral events that withstand public scrutiny. Our Election Readiness Framework (in use since 2014 and further matured each electoral cycle), plays a crucial role in

our success. The framework supports the AEC to prepare and deliver operational excellence through:

- refining our processes
- open collaboration with stakeholders
- integrated planning
- sound financial management and resource forecasting
- quality assurance
- active risk management.

This work is underpinned by a focus on learning lessons, identifying those elements we should sustain and how to improve, from every event we conduct.

User-centric service design

User-centred service design is key to enhancing electoral delivery experience for electoral staff, candidates, suppliers and importantly, voters. By focusing on the needs and preferences of voters, election officials can ensure user experience is at the forefront of service delivery, creating a high-integrity experience that delivers results in a timely and accurate manner. We use service design to consider all parts of the end-to-end process – from enrolment to voting options, and from candidate nominations and early voting to the return of the writ. When voters feel valued and supported throughout the electoral process (particularly in the design of future solutions), it enhances their overall experience and contributes to a more positive and engaging democracy.

As part of our user-centric focus, we work hard to support greater equity of access to our services, such as making it easier to enrol to vote, improving the usability of our services, increasing the accessibility and reach of our polling services.

Our ICT capability

AEC ICT systems are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet business needs. It is essential that we operate robust and fit-for-purpose IT platforms. A modernised electoral management system will greatly improve our capacity to deal with the dynamic security risk environment, including our ability to detect, prevent and respond to external interference in Australia's elections.

The AEC is undergoing a once-in-a-generation digital transformation. The Election Systems Modernisation (Indigo) Program represents a major shift in our approach as we develop a citizen-centric, secure technology platform. This transformation will recalibrate how we provide electoral services and ensure the ongoing integrity and democratic resilience of Australia's electoral system. We are using this opportunity to look well beyond the next election, and ensure our services continue to meet community needs and expectations.

Several capabilities have now been delivered in Tranche 1 of our modernisation program, with foundational ICT systems and the improved AEC Service Centre delivered in 2023. These capabilities provide secure, agile platforms paving the way for us to build modern election, candidate and electorate management solutions as part of Tranche 2.

Tranche 2 began in July 2023 and focuses on mitigating enduring and significant risks to electoral integrity and Australia's democratic resilience. In addition, it will enhance voter and stakeholder experiences by replacing legacy election management systems with modern and secure technologies.

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 improve services to Australian voters during federal election events. This includes funding to expand the use of Electronic Certified Lists and develop a digital Officer-In-Charge Return, due for pilot implementation at the 2024/2025 federal election.

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

Polling officials use Electronic Certified Lists to search the list of eligible voters and record electronically when a person is issued a ballot paper. They are also used, when required, to print the correct House of Representatives ballot paper during vote issuing.

This investment will enfranchise voters, help prevent multiple voting and enhance the voter's experience. In addition, the new digital Officer-In-Charge Return pilot will improve polling place management and communications, allowing for centralised visibility and back-end efficiencies.

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

AEC Command Centre

Formally established in time for the 2022 federal election, the AEC Command Centre provides a secure, leading-edge, central point of command during core business and federal electoral events. This is achieved by providing overarching visibility through available tools, data and Australian Government and private sector relationships, to help identify and subsequently manage operational and reputational risk.

The ongoing evolution of the AEC Command Centre, as further refined for the 2023 referendum and multiple by-elections, actively contributes to staff and voter safety while playing a centralised role in successful federal event delivery.

Mis and disinformation

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

The possible consequences of inaction are serious, including an erosion of public confidence in our governing institutions, and the potential to disenfranchise electors.

In an evolving electoral context (including referendums), threats range from potentially influencing voters before they cast their vote to interfering with the mechanics of the voting process. The possible outcome could be a compromise in our ability to effectively conduct an election with a trusted result.

The AEC is the subject matter expert and the authoritative source of electoral information, and part of our role is to educate stakeholders. In particular, we are proactive in countering misinformation and disinformation across media platforms and other channels. We invest in developing and maintaining productive relationships with online media platforms, working collaboratively to counter false narratives online about the election process.

Our Reputation Management System is an ongoing endeavour. It informs our position as the subject matter expert in federal electoral processes to maintain trust in Australia's electoral system.

Cyber security

The AEC operates within a heightened global cyber security threat environment. This combines with an evolving electoral landscape where an increasing number of individuals and entities seek to interfere with and disingenuously challenge democratic processes. In such an environment, threat actors may be motivated to attempt to adversely affect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of AEC systems and data. This could include tools and information used in election delivery by the AEC and our suppliers.

The AEC's Cyber Security Governance Program has an emphasis on assurance in addition to ensuring we identify and mitigate risks associated with our systems and applications. 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 ensure we have all available information and resources to support risk-based decision-making.





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.

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.

To deliver a federal election, in all its scale and complexity, we work with many Australian Government agencies, as well as state, territory and local government jurisdictions and external suppliers. Partners who help us deliver increasingly intricate voting options in a safe and secure environment include:

- Commonwealth, state and territory agencies – sharing data, improving the quality of the electoral roll and utilising staffing resources in line with the APS Workforce Strategy 2025
- 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 call centre assistance
- the Australian Federal Police, assessing suspected breaches of criminal offences of the Electoral Act and state and territory police forces
- Australia Post – ensuring voters who need it can access postal services for enrolment and voting
- the Department of Health and Aged Care and health departments in different jurisdictions – providing support and advice to enable the delivery of voter services to electors in thousands of health and care facilities

- the department of corrections in each jurisdiction to ensure 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.

The Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce provides coordinated information and advice to the Australian Electoral Commissioner on matters that may compromise the real or perceived integrity of an electoral event. This could include malicious cyber activity, physical attacks, foreign interference or the spread of misinformation and disinformation about the electoral process. To do this, the taskforce brings together capabilities and expertise across government to assess and address these threats. The taskforce ensures information is efficiently referred to relevant agencies, facilitating cooperation and coordination, and enabling agencies to work together to take any appropriate action. The security and integrity of the electoral system are our top priorities. We lead this taskforce and co-lead its Board, guided by other key agencies across government.

The security and integrity of the electoral system are our top priorities.

The future of the electoral operating environment will be shaped, in part, by our close relationship with the Department of Finance. The Department of Finance has policy responsibility for electoral policy and legislation; this partnership helps us contribute, when appropriate, to inform changes to these items.

Electoral participation and outreach

The AEC supports electoral participation for all Australians. We engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voters, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability, young people, people experiencing homelessness, and people in prison.

We undertake research to understand how to best communicate and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important we explain why and how to enrol and vote in a culturally appropriate, engaging way that helps people participate. Insights from this research will form the evidence base for a communication, education and engagement framework ahead of the next federal election and beyond.

Collaborating with First Nations, multicultural and disability organisations helps us share electoral information, provide education on electoral processes (including in-language and accessible formats), and promote opportunities to join our temporary workforce.

We are committed to continuing our community education, and delivering face-to-face and online education throughout Australia, including urban, regional and remote areas, in around 35 languages.

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. This committee fosters accessibility, inclusion and participation in the electoral process by people with disability. In 2024, three new disability advisory

working groups were established to focus on accessible polling places, Auslan education, and initiatives to improve understanding of electoral information.

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 services providers and advocates. This group discusses enrolment and voting services and opportunities for improvement across AEC services. A Mental Health Advisory Working Group helps us ensure services are provided in an appropriate way for these voters. We continue to engage with health stakeholders to help voters in these settings participate in electoral events.

We deliver a range of electoral information and education programs, including our National Electoral Education Centre in Canberra and an innovative electoral exhibition at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. *Writs to Referendums: Celebrating Australia's unique electoral system* is an interactive public space showcasing Australia's democratic and electoral system and the role of the AEC. We also provide community education across Australia in the lead-up to an electoral event for people who need additional support to participate and we provide education resources on our website for community groups, stakeholders and others to access and use directly with their communities.

We work with the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand in our consideration of contemporary electoral challenges, and with our Joint Roll Partners to manage electoral rolls for Commonwealth, state, territory and local government elections.



As a development partner, the AEC is recognised globally for our knowledge and experience in election delivery.

Industrial elections and ballots

The AEC conducts hundreds of industrial elections for office holders of organisations registered with the Fair Work Commission, which include 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. If employees want to take protected industrial action, they must apply to the Fair Work Commission for approval to hold a protected action ballot and vote on whether to take the action. 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.

Planning for all elections and ballots begins once we receive an order or decision from the Fair Work Commission. We then work with employers, bargaining representatives and registered organisations to perform these functions.

International engagement

Working closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we partner with electoral management bodies primarily across the Pacific. We help them to deliver their elections while continuing to further build their technical capacity. As a development partner, the AEC is recognised globally for our knowledge and experience in election delivery.

We also deliver projects virtually and deploy subject matter experts overseas to advise and help provide quality electoral services.

By building trust, mutual respect and a 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.

Our international 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. Through PIANZEA, we support voter registration through the Generic Voter Registration System for several Pacific Island nations. Designed and hosted by the AEC, this software application provides users with a technologically appropriate system to manage their electoral rolls. With the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we are working on upgrading the Generic Voter Registration System to meet evolving requirements of electoral management bodies and users, and to make it more sustainable into the future.

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 stakeholders in the electoral process around the world. As well as the AEC, the BRIDGE Partners are:

- 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 performance

Planning and performance

Our corporate plan fits within the broader Australian Public Service Performance Management Framework required under the PGPA Act.

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

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

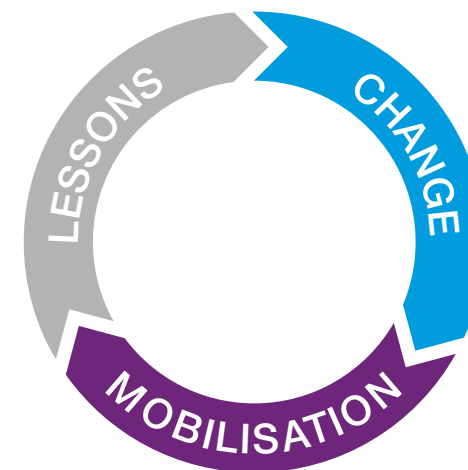
Reporting and election readiness cycles

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

We operate on two reporting cycles:

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

As we must always be ready to deliver an electoral event, the three phases of election readiness direct our workflow and are 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. In 2024–25, we will be in the 'mobilisation' phase.



Our 'lessons learned' approach directs a continual cycle of improvement and learning across all aspects of AEC operations.

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. The AEC maintains an impartial electoral system and processes for elections, referendums, plebiscites and by-elections in accordance with the Electoral Act and the Referendum Act.

As the Australian Government's independent electoral body, electoral integrity is central to our values of electoral integrity through agility, professionalism and quality. To maintain electoral integrity, we regulate important aspects of the electoral system.

This includes:

- maintaining a complete and accurate Commonwealth Electoral Roll
- promoting 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.

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
			2024–25 to 2027–28		
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 annually 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 annually 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.

Intended result	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets	Sources	Method and frequency
			2024–25 to 2027–28		
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 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.
	<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%	The Annual Roll Integrity Review, which measures the accuracy and integrity of electoral roll data	AEC roll data and other agency data, calculated, compared and published 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 are determined in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> .	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.
1.2 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>Disclosure returns are 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>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 and referendum returns published 24 weeks after polling day for each event.</p> <p>Compliance reviews are published on the AEC website.</p>	<p>Transparency Register (AEC website)</p> <p>Compliance reviews (AEC website)</p>	<p>Annual returns: measured annually</p> <p>Election returns: measured for each electoral event</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.

We provide the best possible electoral services and events to stakeholders and the public within a complex environment and in response to increasing community expectations. We must deliver these services and events with the highest degree of integrity and impartiality, and in accordance with legislation. We must meet stakeholder needs and diverse customer service expectations. Electoral services and events must be accessible to all eligible Australians.

We prepare for and deliver electoral events through our Election Readiness Framework. While we work to a three-year electoral cycle, the timing of electoral events is unknown. This means we must strike a careful balance between the likelihood of an event occurring with the cost and complexity associated with maintaining a readiness posture. Event readiness is also balanced against other agency priorities.

To maintain awareness of electoral matters, we engage with the public and a range of different communities and stakeholders throughout the electoral cycle. At an electoral event, we conduct 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. We develop information, service tools and strategic partnerships, including for those who may experience some barriers to electoral participation.

We use a lessons management approach during and following electoral events to ensure successful events into the future. Within the bounds of the Electoral Act, we continue to enhance and modernise our model for delivering electoral events and services.

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 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 APS and temporary election workforce, which surges to more than 100,000 employees during a federal election.

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

Intended result	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets	Source	Method and frequency
			2024–25 to 2027–28		
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 TEW 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.

Intended result	AEC contributions	Performance measures	Targets	Source	Method and frequency
			2024–25 to 2027–28		
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>	Electoral Act <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i> Electoral Commissioner's advice published on AEC website Outcomes of the Court of Disputed Returns	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:

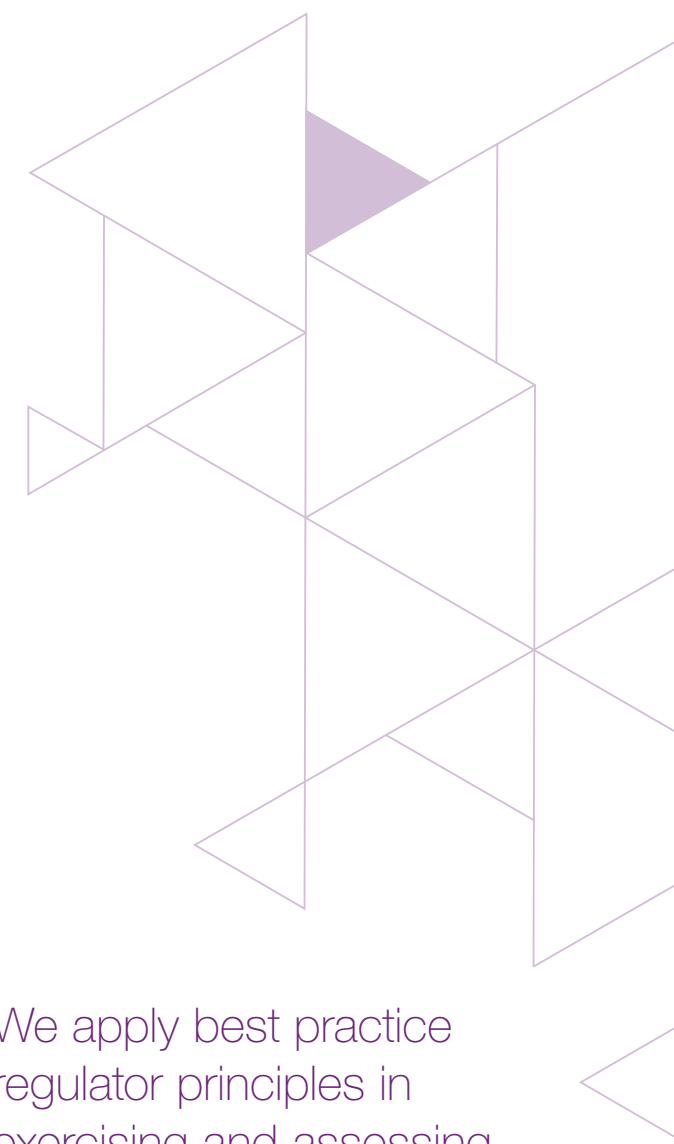
- the Commonwealth funding and disclosure scheme in Part XX of the Electoral Act – this requires candidates, senate groups, political parties, significant third parties, associated entities, third parties, donors, senators and members of the House of Representatives to lodge election or annual financial disclosure returns with the AEC
- the referendum disclosure scheme under Part VIIIA 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 that 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 and Part IX of the Referendum Act.

We apply best practice regulator principles 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.



We apply best practice regulator principles in exercising and assessing regulatory functions.

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>1 and 2</p>

List of requirements

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