

Australian Electoral Commission

CORPORATE PLAN

2017–21



COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

I, as the accountable authority of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), present the 2017–21 AEC Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2017–21, as required under paragraph 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

MESSAGE FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER



Welcome to the Australian Electoral Commission Corporate Plan for 2017–21. It is a dynamic time for the AEC as our ‘change journey’ evolves into continuous improvement ahead of the next federal election, and we explore opportunities to innovate and modernise to better meet the needs and expectations of our community.

While the AEC’s commitment to delivering successful federal elections remains paramount, our operating environment is more complex and unpredictable than ever before and we must be able to adapt and respond to new challenges.

Whether it be to improve the voter experience, advance our online capabilities, or encourage greater electoral participation, the AEC is working hard to enhance its agency-wide operations and keep Australia’s election system strong and secure for the future. In this regard, the AEC’s values of professionalism, agility, quality and electoral integrity continue to guide us.

To enhance and protect the integrity of an electoral system soon to turn 100 years old, the AEC’s values are increasingly relevant. This 2017–21 AEC Corporate Plan provides the high-level framework that positions our agency to deliver that.

It comprises six agency directions that define how this will be achieved.

These have recently been expanded and updated to better reflect our contemporary operating environment. An important new principle to ‘Deliver high quality electoral services’ has been included, setting the highest possible benchmarks for service and delivery to the Australian public.

I am pleased to report that much progress is already occurring in this sphere. A comprehensive evaluation of the 2016 federal election recommended improvements to the electoral system in areas such as election planning and delivery, staff capability, compliance and quality assurance.

These improvements are now being implemented across the AEC in conjunction with the election readiness framework, so Australians can be confident of an effective and secure electoral system every time they vote.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner

AEC AT A GLANCE

OUR PURPOSE

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.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Electoral events including federal elections, by elections and referendums
.....
A secure and up-to-date electoral roll



Support services for electoral redistributions
.....
Administering political party registrations and financial disclosure
.....
Public awareness

VALUES

QUALITY
Best practice drives every aspect of our business

AGILITY
Adapt quickly to change and uncertainty, and look for innovative solutions

PROFESSIONALISM
We are competent, knowledgeable and highly skilled

AGENCY DIRECTIONS

Improve and modernise delivery model for electoral events
.....
Govern the organisation for quality and assurance
.....
Professionalise the workforce



Uphold the reputation of the AEC
.....
Build an agile and responsive organisation
.....
Deliver high quality electoral services

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Dynamic and complex
.....
High election participation
.....
Changing community expectations



Ongoing technological advancement
.....
Large temporary workforce
.....
Security, integrity and efficiency

PERFORMANCE

Events successfully delivered
.....
Maintain readiness to conduct an electoral event
.....
High level of confidence in the electoral roll



Timely conduct of activities
.....
High quality services delivered
.....
Support electoral participation

AGENCY PURPOSE

The Australian Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority established by the Australian Government 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.

We do this by:



Supported by six agency directions:

- 1.0 Continue to improve and modernise the delivery model for electoral events
- 2.0 Govern the organisation for quality and assurance
- 3.0 Professionalise the workforce
- 4.0 Uphold the reputation of the AEC
- 5.0 Build an agile and responsive organisation
- 6.0 Deliver high quality electoral services

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The Australian Electoral Commission operates in a complex and dynamic environment at all stages of the electoral cycle.

When not mobilising for a federal election, we undertake detailed analysis and planning for electoral events, and administer a broad range of associated electoral functions – from maintaining the electoral roll, to party registrations, electoral redistributions, by-elections, ballots for industrial and commercial organisations, electoral funding, and assisting overseas electoral management bodies.

As a Commonwealth agency with a relatively small permanent workforce, the strategic and operational challenges associated with delivering modern-day electoral services are vast.

Our operating environment is becoming increasingly dynamic, amid record enrolment rates, more mobile participants, and the strict requirements of a century-old Electoral Act under constant challenge in a technological age.

We are facing unprecedented demand in the community for improved automation and accessibility, for more convenient services, as well as rapid processing to deliver fast and accurate results.

Australians are also demanding higher standards of quality, efficiency and transparency from the agencies that serve them.

With this, comes heightened levels of scrutiny and increased expectations about electoral integrity and security.

Recent experiences overseas, in countries just like our own, show that electoral management bodies like ours must prepare for emerging challenges in physical and online operating environments that would have been inconceivable just a few years ago.

Managing all of these complex factors, while maintaining the integrity of the election system requires the AEC to be more efficient, agile and responsive than ever before.

It requires us to be focused on continuous improvement across our agency-wide operations to keep pace with evolving needs and expectations.

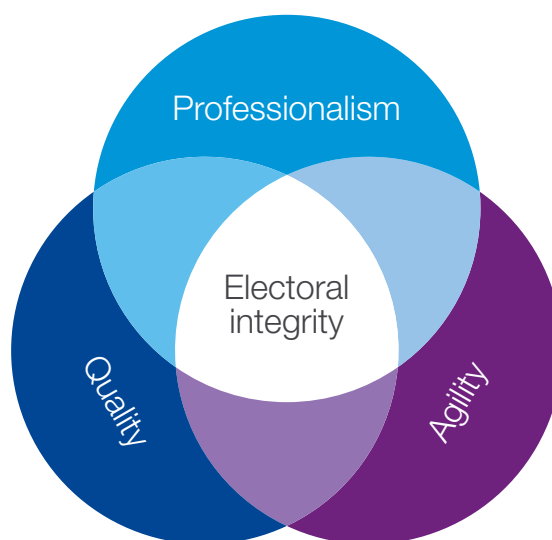
As we turn our sights to the next federal election, targeted enhancements are being made to improve the voter experience, better plan and coordinate elections, boost the temporary workforce, and improve training and service delivery.



OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The AEC's values and commitments – essential in our operating environment

The AEC values and commitments are an essential component of our operating environment and frame how AEC staff work. The AEC's focus is on electoral integrity through the values of **quality**, **agility** and **professionalism**.



QUALITY

Quality must be evident in every task across the AEC, with best practice driving every aspect of our business.

AGILITY

Agility is critical. We must readily and swiftly adapt to change, operate effectively despite uncertainty, and look for innovative solutions – not obstacles.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is our hallmark. A professional AEC comprises competent, knowledgeable and highly skilled electoral practitioners producing work of the highest standard.

BALLOT PAPER PRINCIPLES

The AEC values are supported by the organisational commitment to the ballot paper principles and that **'every task matters'**.

The ballot paper principles underpin all AEC planning, training, systems, handling and practices associated with ballot papers. They show how important ballot paper security is, and provide a basis for the treatment of every ballot paper from printing to destruction, by anyone who handles ballot papers, including but not limited to staff, polling officials and contractors.

A commitment to **every task matters** provides assurance that we comply with, and adhere to, all applicable legislation necessary to deliver electoral integrity.

PERFORMANCE AT THE AEC

The AEC's performance reporting framework is versatile, reflecting the agency's unique operating environment in which it must deliver a federal election every three years and adhere to Commonwealth reporting requirements over a four-year time horizon.

To help manage this, the AEC has developed a comprehensive reporting framework that integrates requirements under the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013*'s enhanced Commonwealth performance framework, with its own election readiness reporting framework.

This integrated approach combines strategic objectives, or agency directions, with a range of internal business activities that support the AEC to deliver on its purpose whilst monitoring its performance at specific points in time.

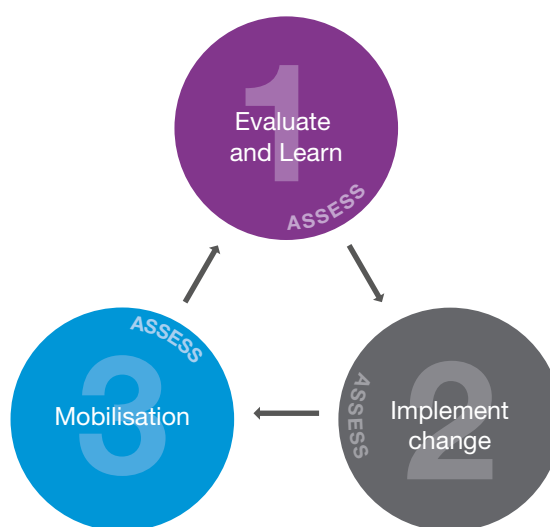
Under this framework, the agency directions are long-term objectives across the life of the AEC's Corporate Plan and are designed to promote agency-wide continuous improvement.

They are supported by internal activities and corporate performance indicators, which are reviewed annually to ensure the AEC is on track to meet its directions and purpose.

Many of the corporate strategies and performance indicators are ongoing but the strategies and indicators that relate to election delivery change and evolve according to the phases of the AEC's election readiness framework.

The election readiness framework and associated operational planning through the Election Ready Road Map (ERRM), are central to election planning and delivery within the AEC.

The readiness framework moves through three phases over a three-year election cycle – **Evaluate and Learn, Implement Change** and **Mobilisation**.



While the three phases of electoral readiness are loosely aligned to financial years, these phases are sequential and often overlap with financial years. Ultimately, the AEC must be ready to respond when an electoral event is called.

A final important aspect of the performance framework is a strong linkage between external performance reporting and the AEC's internal business planning.

Annual business planning activities and performance indicators are defined, measured and reported on and then incorporated into the AEC's corporate performance indicators. This supports a framework where performance is measured and reported on both internally and externally to support and drive continuous improvement.

Planned directions, strategies, activities and performance measures for 2017-18 are set out in the table on page 9.

PERFORMANCE 2017–18

2017–18 Agency directions, strategies and corporate performance indicators

AGENCY DIRECTIONS 2017–18	Strategies to achieve agency directions (2017–18)	Internal supporting activities (2017–18)	How our performance will be measured
Continue to improve and modernise the delivery model for electoral events	1.1 Consistent operational planning for electoral events.	Optimise key electoral processes and documents to improve election delivery and the timeliness of election results.	Maintain the ability to conduct a federal electoral event within required timeframes.
	1.2 Coordinate and consolidate electoral business processes.	Improve our supply chain management capability to support electoral events.	Operational planning is integrated through the national Election Ready Road Map.
	1.3 Effective internal communication and information management.	<p>Establish an ongoing delivery and management model for the counting of Senate ballot papers.</p> <p>Streamline processes for the recruitment and training of the election workforce.</p> <p>Targeted improvements to the Industrial and Commercial Elections Program.</p> <p>Leverage relationships with national and international electoral management bodies.</p>	<p>Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of election delivery through enhanced coordination and consolidation of electoral business processes.</p> <p>Clear two-way internal communication channels enable timely exchange of information at all levels.</p> <p>Industrial elections, Protected Action Ballots and Torres Strait Regional Authority elections are delivered in accordance with legislation and rules.</p>

PERFORMANCE 2017–18

AGENCY DIRECTIONS 2017–18	Strategies to achieve agency directions (2017–18)	Internal supporting activities (2017–18)	How our performance will be measured
Govern the organisation for quality and assurance	2.1 AEC governance framework supports achievement of the agency directions.	AEC governance committees have access to timely, high quality information and advice that supports effective decision making.	The governance framework is effective in supporting business outcomes.
	2.2 Foster and promote a culture of continuous improvement.	Reviews of select agency functions to identify drivers for continuous improvement.	High level of confidence in the electoral roll.
	2.3 Maintain the integrity of the electoral process.	Continue to improve our online enrolment services to the public. AEC delivery of electoral events ensures voter franchise, quality and integrity.	Timely conduct of redistributions.
Professionalise the workforce	3.1 Ensure staff understand their role and AEC principles.	Improvements to the AEC’s staff performance management framework.	Staff are role capable and have a clear understanding of expectations and accountabilities.
	3.2 Build the leadership and managerial capability of AEC supervisors.	Enhance human resource analysis and reporting to support effective management of staffing obligations and well-being.	Regular use of human resource analytics supports current and future workforce planning.
	3.3 Develop current and future workforce capability.	Establish a Learning Governance Committee.	
Uphold the reputation of the AEC	4.1 Engage decision makers and stakeholders in constructive conversations to shape expectations.	The AEC contributes timely and appropriate information and advice on electoral matters to parliamentary committees, decision-makers and stakeholders.	Productive relationships with the Minister, Parliament, key agencies and other stakeholders are maintained
	4.2 Entrench a culture of quality, professionalism and agility to support electoral integrity.	Deliver services to stakeholders with professionalism and integrity.	High quality reporting and advice supports the future direction of the AEC.

PERFORMANCE 2017–18

AGENCY DIRECTIONS 2017–18	Strategies to achieve agency directions (2017–18)	Internal supporting activities (2017–18)	How our performance will be measured
Build an agile and responsive organisation	5.1 Better leverage technology to enhance agency processes and services.	Develop a model for effective management of AEC activities/programs and facilitate information exchange.	Create an environment to encourage innovative practices to support the AEC and the conduct of electoral events.
	5.2 Assess organisational capabilities for a future AEC.	Develop an organisational capability strategy across future electoral events.	Define a vision of future organisational capability. Ability to identify and respond to emerging opportunities and risks.
Deliver high quality electoral services	6.1 Delivery of electoral services to the public is consistent with AEC standards and legislation.	Internal communication strategies are developed to ensure staff understand the expectations outlined in the AEC Service Charter.	Staff apply the AEC Service Charter and its principles, and legislative requirements are embedded in the design and delivery of services.
	6.2 The public is aware of how to meet their enrolment and voting obligations.	Maintain service standards for the delivery of electoral events.	Information provided to the public is timely and accurate, uses appropriate technology and channels, and meets accessibility standards.
	6.3 Provide a better experience for the voter.	Deliver communication, education and public awareness activities to inform all Australians of electoral matters. Increased use of data informs choices about the design and operation of polling places.	Support electoral participation through communication, education and public awareness activities that inform all Australians of electoral matters.

PERFORMANCE 2017–18

Relationship to Portfolio Budget Statements performance criteria

The AEC’s agency directions draw from and contribute to the four AEC performance criteria set out for 2017-18 in the 2017-18 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS).¹

A chart mapping the PBS performance criteria to the agency directions is below.

Map of 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) performance criteria to AEC agency directions

PBS PERFORMANCE CRITERIA 2017–18	AEC agency directions					
	Continue to improve and modernise the delivery model for electoral events	Govern the organisation for quality and assurance	Professionalise the workforce	Uphold the reputation of the AEC	Build an agile and responsive organisation	Deliver high quality electoral services
<p>Federal elections, by-elections and referendums</p> <p>Federal electoral events are successfully delivered.</p> <p>Maintain ability to conduct a federal electoral event within the timeframe.</p> <p>Timely conduct of redistribution activities.</p> <p>Industrial elections, Protected Action Ballots and Torres Strait Regional Authority elections are delivered in accordance with the relevant legislation and rules.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹ The criteria are outlined under ‘AEC Program 1.1 – Deliver Electoral Events’, available in *Budget 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements* (PBS), Budget Related Paper No. 1.8 (Finance Portfolio), page 79, available at www.finance.gov.au/publications/portfolio-budget-statements/17-18/.

PERFORMANCE 2017–18

PBS PERFORMANCE CRITERIA 2017–18	AEC agency directions					
	Continue to improve and modernise the delivery model for electoral events	Govern the organisation for quality and assurance	Professionalise the workforce	Uphold the reputation of the AEC	Build an agile and responsive organisation	Deliver high quality electoral services
<p>Electoral roll management</p> <p>High level of confidence in the electoral roll.</p>						
<p>Party registrations and financial disclosure</p> <p>Party registration processed in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> (Electoral Act).</p> <p>Financial disclosures obtained and placed on the public record in accordance with the Electoral Act.</p>						
<p>Public awareness</p> <p>Deliver communication, education and public awareness activities to inform all Australians of electoral matters.</p>						

PLANNED PERFORMANCE BEYOND 2017–18

Strategies to achieve agency directions

AGENCY DIRECTIONS 2017–18	Implement Change → Mobilise → Evaluate and Learn			
	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	
Continue to improve and modernise the delivery model for electoral events	1.1	Consistent operational planning for electoral events.	Level of election readiness is consistent with operational planning timeframes.	Implement lessons learned from the evaluation of election planning and delivery.
	1.2	Coordinate and consolidate electoral business processes.	Mobilise and use improved electoral business processes.	Implement agreed improvements or reforms to electoral business processes and practices.
	1.3	Effective internal communication and information management.	Establish, rehearse and implement improved internal communication and information management.	
	1.4		Undertake a post-election evaluation of election planning and delivery.	
Govern the organisation for quality and assurance	2.1	AEC governance framework supports achievement of the agency directions.	AEC governance framework supports achievement of the agency directions.	AEC governance framework supports achievement of the agency directions.
	2.2	Foster and promote a culture of continuous improvement.	Foster and promote a culture of continuous improvement.	Foster and promote a culture of continuous improvement.
	2.3	Maintain the integrity of the electoral process.	Maintain the integrity of the electoral process.	Maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

PLANNED PERFORMANCE BEYOND 2017–18

AGENCY DIRECTIONS 2017–18	Implement Change → Mobilise → Evaluate and Learn			
	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	
Professionalise the workforce	3.1	Ensure staff understand their role and AEC principles.	Ensure staff understand their role and AEC principles.	Ensure staff understand their role and AEC principles.
	3.2	Build the leadership and managerial capability of AEC supervisors.	Leaders and managers are supported to develop and build team and individual capabilities.	Leaders and managers are supported to develop and build team and individual capabilities.
	3.3	Develop current and future workforce capability.	Develop current and future workforce capability.	Develop current and future workforce capability.
Uphold the reputation of the AEC	4.1	Engage decision makers and stakeholders in constructive conversations to shape expectations.	Engage decision makers and stakeholders in constructive conversations to shape expectations.	Engage decision makers and stakeholders in constructive conversations to shape expectations.
	4.2	Entrench a culture of quality, professionalism and agility to support electoral integrity.	Demonstrate a culture of quality, professionalism and agility to support electoral integrity.	Demonstrate a culture of quality, professionalism and agility to support electoral integrity.
Build an agile and responsive organisation	5.1	Better leverage technology to enhance agency processes and services.	Deploy effective technological solutions that enhance AEC electoral services.	Deploy effective technological solutions that enhance AEC electoral services.
	5.2	Assess organisational capabilities for a future AEC.	Undertake future-focused planning beyond the current electoral cycle.	Undertake future-focused planning beyond the current electoral cycle.

PLANNED PERFORMANCE BEYOND 2017–18

AGENCY DIRECTIONS 2017–18	Implement Change → Mobilise → Evaluate and Learn			
	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	
Deliver high quality electoral services	6.1	Delivery of electoral services to the public is consistent with the AEC Service Charter, performance standards and legislative requirements.	Delivery of electoral services to the public is consistent with the AEC Service Charter, performance standards and legislative requirements.	Delivery of electoral services to the public is consistent with the AEC Service Charter, performance standards and legislative requirements.
	6.2	The public is aware of how to meet their enrolment and voting obligations.	The public is aware of how to meet their enrolment and voting obligations.	The public is aware of how to meet their enrolment and voting obligations.
	6.3	Provide a better experience for the voter.	Evaluate and learn from the voter experience.	Implement lessons learned to improve the voter experience.

Strategies for 2020–21 will broadly reflect those for 2017–18 in line with the AEC’s election readiness framework and the Election Ready Road Map.

REGULATOR PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Australian Government has committed to reducing the cost of unnecessary or inefficient regulation imposed on individuals, business and community organisations, and has developed a framework to measure the performance of regulators. As a regulatory body, the AEC aims to reduce the regulatory burden imposed on electors through enrolment and voting activities.

The AEC will measure itself against the six mandatory key performance indicators, consistent with the AEC's obligations under the Regulator Performance Framework.

AEC performance against the Regulator Performance Framework

Mandatory key performance indicators	Measures of success
Regulators do not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of regulated entities.	Support electoral participation through communication, education and public awareness activities that inform all Australians of electoral matters.
Communication with regulated entities is clear, targeted and effective.	Information provided to the public is timely and accurate, uses appropriate technology and channels, and meets accessibility standards.
Actions undertaken by regulators are proportionate to the regulatory risk being managed.	Maintain the ability to conduct a federal electoral event within required timeframes.
Compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated.	The governance framework is effective in supporting business outcomes.
Regulators are open and transparent in their dealings with regulated entities.	Productive relationships with the Minister, Parliament, key agencies and other stakeholders are maintained.
Regulators actively contribute to the continuous improvement of regulatory frameworks.	Create an environment to encourage innovative practices to support the AEC and the conduct of electoral events.

CAPABILITY

Resource allocation

Resources, particularly financial resources, are allocated according to agency directions and strategies, risk to the agency and organisational priorities.

Information to support allocation decisions is collected through the business planning cycle and project management initiation processes, along with regular organisational performance reporting.

Regular reporting includes progress against key performance indicators to ensure priorities are met on time and within budget and that resources can be reallocated where necessary.

Resources available, including budget expenses and the average staffing level, are detailed in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Information technology

The AEC's information technology system is critical to the agency's capability for delivering successful federal elections.

IT supports the delivery of safe, transparent and efficient modern electoral activities and makes it easier and more convenient for voters to engage with the AEC.

The current election and enrolment IT management systems were first introduced in the early 1990s and require significant investment to keep pace with the contemporary operating environment. They are reviewed, along with all information technology management systems, as part of the business planning cycles.

CAPABILITY

Our systems are supported by a detailed Information Technology Strategic Plan and an Information Technology Architecture Plan. These work to support the agency directions by delivering IT services that meet industry standards, improve election logistics and the voter experience, and ensure the agency is election ready when required.

With the growing importance of IT in delivering successful electoral events, the AEC is committed to investing in more modern and integrated technological solutions that will enable us to further improve the voter experience and protect the integrity of the electoral process into the future.

The agency remains ready to respond to shifting priorities and emerging challenges in the operating environment.

Security

Security is a business priority for the AEC that is managed through an integrated security program covering the agency's physical, information management and digital assets.

The program adheres to the requirements of the Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework, and mitigates risk through a series of policies specifically designed to safeguard the integrity of electoral operations.

As part of this program, the AEC liaises with a range of national law enforcement and intelligence agencies to identify and manage emerging risks in both its physical and online operating environments.

Our IT Security Team works closely with the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) to mitigate cyber security threats and to ensure the agency complies with international best practice online security measures.

In the physical environment, the AEC works to provide a safe voting experience for all in our community, by liaising with government, security and policing agencies on an ongoing basis, to better plan and prepare for safe polling events.

Workforce planning

The AEC's workforce is a key determinant for the successful delivery of electoral events. The agency is investing significantly in building its human resource capability, to better support the delivery of complex electoral operations and meet the business challenges of the future.

This includes the implementation of a new organisational design that reflects our core functions and agency directions, is sustainable over the medium term, and has sufficient agility to meet future demands.

This will support the development of an integrated workforce that is more proficient across operational and strategic activities, and caters for the needs of both permanent and temporary election employees. It will promote an agile and diverse workforce, which better reflects the contemporary demographic of the Australian community, and improves our capacity to respond quickly and effectively to change.

Recent improvements to the AEC's learning and development function are already delivering a more contemporary approach to staff development.

These include stronger governance arrangements, a new learning management system 'AEC learning', the rollout of a new training curriculum for our Australian Public Service and temporary election workforce, and the successful delivery of our election readiness program.

Further workforce planning improvements will be rolled out as the agency’s strategy for continuous improvement progresses ahead of the next federal election.

Risk management

Risk management allows improved decision-making, performance and accountability, and acts to minimise losses and maximise opportunities for the agency. Accordingly, risk assessments and the subsequent management of risk, are integrated into all agency activities.

The AEC Risk Management Framework and Strategic Risk Management Plan continue to set the risk environment in which the AEC operates to meet its purpose and agency directions. The strategic risks as identified in the Strategic Risk Management Plan, outline what may impact on the AEC achieving its objectives:

1. The AEC fails to effectively deliver federal electoral events.
2. The AEC does not maintain adherence to our values causing a lack of good governance and compliance practices and a failure to achieve agency objectives and priorities.
3. The AEC fails to effectively engage with and manage key stakeholders and maintain strategic partnerships, resulting in poor business outcomes and reputational damage.
4. The AEC lacks capability to identify changes in the external environment and their impact on the AEC, nor identify opportunities for innovation and technological advancement and therefore is unable to respond to government and stakeholder expectations.

The following table shows the link between the agency directions and the four strategic risks.

Agency directions	Risk
Continue to improve and modernise the delivery model for electoral events	1
Govern the organisation for quality and assurance	2
Professionalise the workforce	2
Uphold the reputation of the AEC	3
Build an agile and responsive organisation	4
Deliver high quality electoral services in line with relevant performance standards and legislative requirements	1

The Strategic Risk Management Plan is supported by operational and project risk assessments which are reported to the Executive on a monthly basis.

Further, the AEC contributes to the annual Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking Survey, with the 2017 results showing the AEC compares well with like organisations. In 2016–17, the AEC’s risk management maturity level was maintained at integrated.

The AEC will continue to work towards maturing its risk framework, in particular through:

- further promoting a positive risk culture
- finalising the implementation of dedicated risk management software, and
- focusing on the identification and management of shared risks with key contractors and other government agencies.



Assurance

The AEC has a comprehensive assurance framework to provide the Electoral Commissioner with confidence that the agency's purpose will be achieved within an acceptable level of risk.

It helps to identify and manage risk across the agency, and to ensure that agency directions are being delivered efficiently and economically.

The framework incorporates local assessments, national monitoring, independent auditing and regular reporting to various governance committees and the AEC Executive Leadership Team.

It is underpinned by a suite of additional assurance mechanisms that include internal audits, specialist reviews, health checks and monitoring services, and external reviews. In addition, the AEC routinely undertakes IT assurance activities as part of its election readiness framework. These activities regularly test protections for critical election systems and data holdings, and ensure systems can operate effectively under the demands of an election event.

This quality assurance framework is integral to all AEC activities to ensure the preparation, delivery and evaluation of electoral events meets the highest possible standards, and is in line with relevant legislation and organisational policies and procedures.