AEC Workforce Strategy
2024–30

Delivering our future through our people

AEC
Australian Electoral Commission

Contents

Foreword

Jeff Pope

**DEPUTY ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER AND
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

It is truly exciting to be launching the AEC's inaugural Workforce Strategy. The Workforce Strategy will guide us as we continue to build and maintain a capable and agile workforce critical to our success.

Collectively, our workforce maintains an impartial and independent electoral system for all Australians. The AEC's workforce is complex, comprising Australian Public Service (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 1918*.

This strategy recognises that the AEC must be ready and able to deliver quality electoral events in an increasingly complex environment, and is designed to position the AEC to attract, retain, develop and enable a modern APS workforce to achieve this.

This work will initially focus on our APS workforce, in acknowledgement that the APS workforce must be well positioned to support our temporary election workforce to deliver. As we mature, the strategy will expand its focus across the entirety of our workforce.

I extend my thanks to all those who contributed to this important piece of work foundational to the AEC.

Our business

The Australian community expects and demands that electoral events are conducted professionally and with high integrity processes and services.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner
APS Graduate Event Series, May 2023

Our role

Deliver the franchise: that is, an Australian citizen's right to vote, as established by the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Our purpose

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.

Our vision

A leader in refining and delivering best practice in election management.

Our values

Electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism.

Professionalism

Electoral integrity

Quality

Agility

AEC values
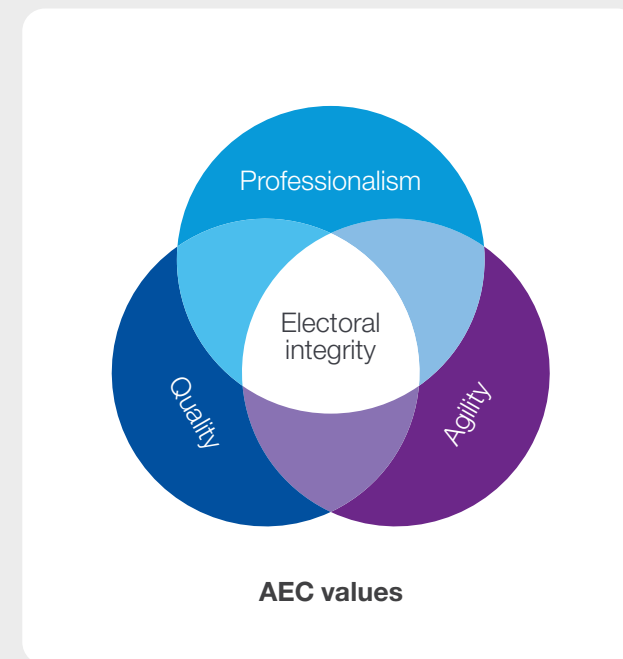
Our workforce strategy

Our *AEC Workforce Strategy 2024–30* helps to shape our workforce and create an authorising environment that enables a modern APS workforce.

As recognised in **Delivering for Tomorrow: the APS Workforce Strategy 2025**, the AEC needs to build a diverse and flexible workforce that can be mobilised where and when they are needed. The AEC Workforce Strategy will align to the broader *APS Workforce Strategy 2025* and future iterations in the AEC context.

The *AEC Workforce Strategy 2024–30* identifies five strategic goals which will guide the leadership and management of our people and ensure our success in meeting our organisational outcomes.

The Workforce Strategy will initially focus on our APS staff, and as we mature encompass our temporary election workforce. A key outcome from the **AEC Corporate Plan 2023–24** is to maintain a capable and agile organisation and continue to professionalise our workforce. This Strategy supports that aim.

Our workforce demographics

The AEC's workforce is unique and multi-tiered with; APS employees engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*, Statutory Appointments, contractors, surge workforce and temporary election workforce (TEW).

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

Building and maintaining a capable and agile organisation and professional workforce is critical to ensure we can respond to the changing legislation, policy, community expectations and our environment. Our workforce and their skill sets are critical to deliver our purpose and vision.

Core workforce
APS employees engaged under the terms and conditions of our Enterprise Agreement or Statutory Appointments or labour hire contracts to undertake the duties relating to core work of the agency
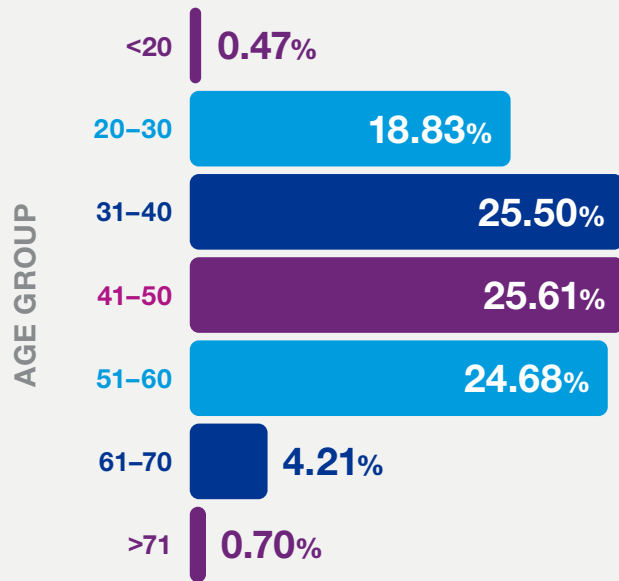
Surge workforce
APS employees engaged under the terms and the conditions of the AEC Enterprise Agreement or other such agreements such as labour hire contracts to undertake specific duties required to support the successful delivery of a federal election event
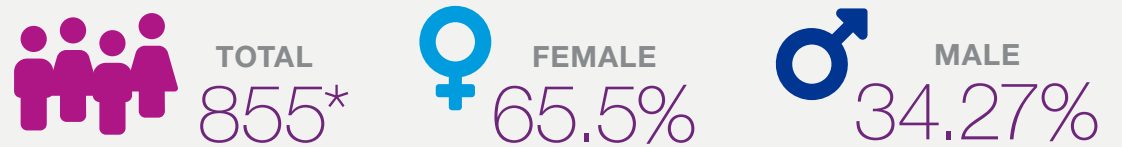
Temporary election workforce
Employed under the terms and conditions of the Commonwealth Electoral Act for specific roles directly relating to the delivery of a federal election event

Age of workforce

AGE GROUP

- <20 — **0.47%**
- 20–30 — **18.83%**
- 31–40 — **25.50%**
- 41–50 — **25.61%**
- 51–60 — **24.68%**
- 61–70 — **4.21%**
- >71 — **0.70%**

Ongoing APS headcount

TOTAL 855*

FEMALE 65.5%

MALE 34.27%

Other staff headcount

CASUAL 2,011

LABOUR HIRE 456

TEW >100,000

National workforce locations

The AEC has one of the most nationally dispersed footprints in the Commonwealth.

Workforce diversity

2.34% **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER**

7.25% **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE**
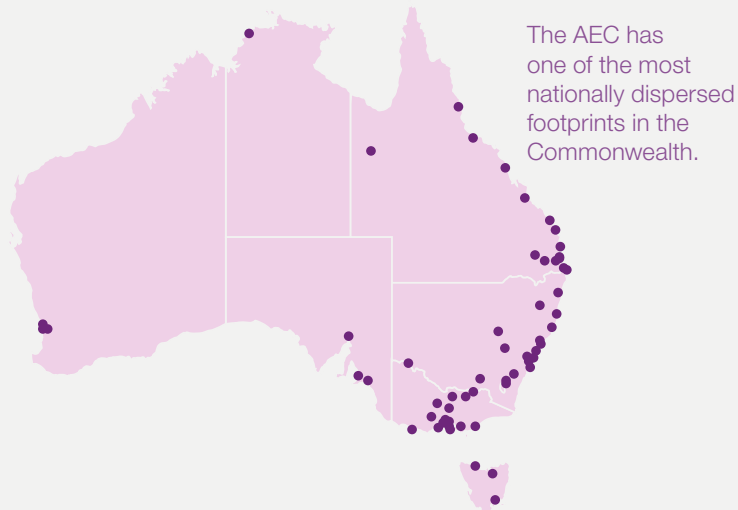
3.27% **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

*All workforce statistics are correct as of 29 January 2024.

Our changing environment

The AEC needs to adapt to the changes in our increasingly unpredictable operating environment if we are to:

- conduct successful electoral events, including federal elections, by-elections and referendums, and industrial elections and ballots
- ensure confidence in the Commonwealth Electoral Roll
- regulate political party registrations and financial disclosure
- support electoral redistributions
- undertake public awareness activities.

As an organisation the AEC has opportunities and challenges, both internal and external, which will shape the AEC workforce towards 2030. Internal factors include our changing workforce capability requirements, alignment to the Australian Public Service and the need for a strong and supportive culture for our workforce. External factors include: a decline in the trust in democracy requiring the AEC to maintain high levels of confidence in our impartiality, neutrality, transparency and management of sensitive information; the high demand for skills critical to the organisation; and the fast pace of the digital landscape in which we operate. Our workforce must be able to adapt to the changing nature of the AEC's work and evolving community expectations.

As outlined in the *AEC Transformation Strategy: Towards 2030 and beyond*, the AEC is facing unprecedented global challenges. These include electoral integrity and reputation management; security and disinformation; labour force pressures; constrained fiscal environment; economic and cost pressures; global decline in satisfaction with democracy and trust in public institutions; combined with increasing service delivery expectations.

The AEC will be undergoing significant change and growth through major transformation projects and broader reform agendas, all of which influence our strategic workforce priorities. The transformation strategy articulates the agency's strategic vision, and highlights opportunities and priorities that will enable the vision to be realised through three important transformation outcomes:

1. Electoral processes, systems and results will be protected, secure and trusted.

2. The AEC's services will be user-centric, easy to use and timely.

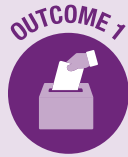3. The AEC and its workforce will be professional, and agile.
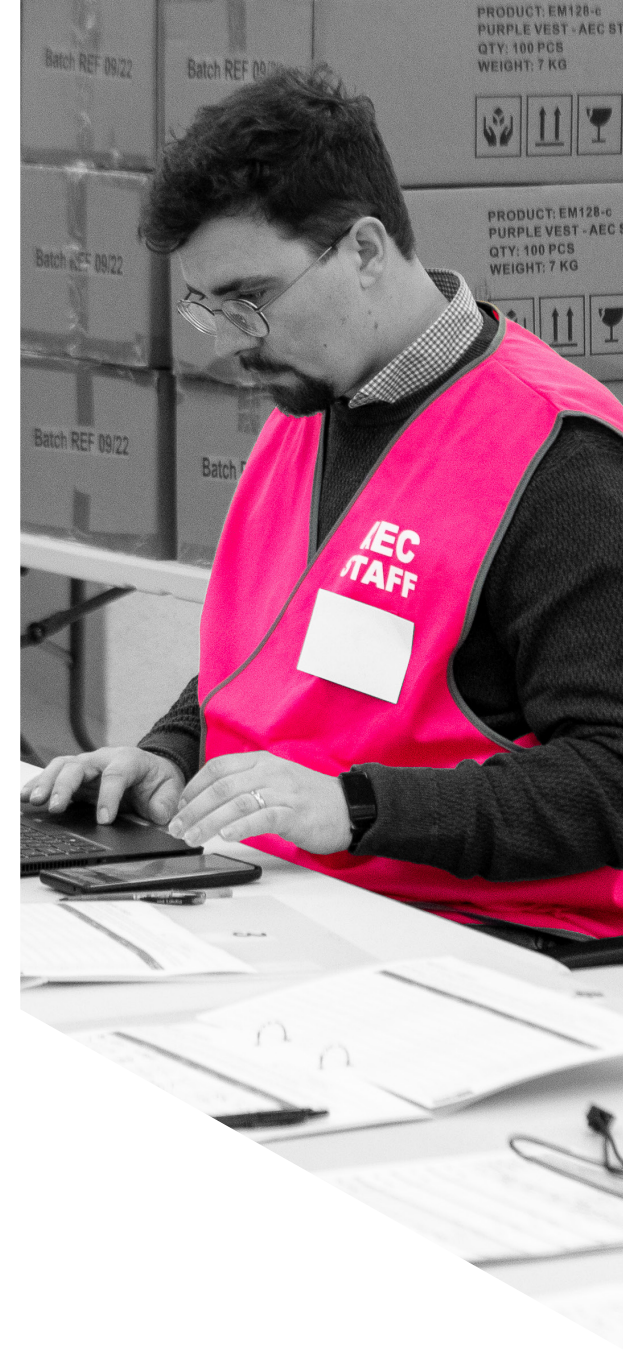
AEC Transformation Strategy on a page

The AEC will continue to meet changing community expectations into the future as we progress towards 2030 and beyond.
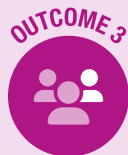
TRANSFORMATION OUTCOMES
Where we will be

TRANSFORMATION PRIORITIES
How we will get there

OUTCOME 1

Electoral processes, systems, data and results will be **protected, secure and trusted (Integrity)**

1. Improve **electoral processes** design, national coordination, consistency, agility and sustainability while reducing execution risk.

2. Modernise **election systems** with secure, citizen-centric, and agile technology platforms.

3. Improve **information and data** capability, security, control, privacy, value and delivery.

OUTCOME 2

The AEC's services will be **user-centric, easy to access and timely**

4. Provide a national **AEC service** across our channels that is **coordinated**, **consistent**, and committed to **greater equity of access**.

5. Embed a **service design**, **business-led** and **evidence-based** approach to services to improve stakeholder experience.

6. Make AEC's **digital services** more streamlined, responsive, accessible, and secure.

OUTCOME 3

The AEC and its workforce will be **professional and agile**

7. Improve **operating model's** agility, capacity, and sustainability across workforce, property, suppliers, and technology.*

8. Further improve **organisational capability** to innovate and adapt to manage change in our operating environment and stakeholder expectations.

9. Further position the AEC as the foremost **authority on federal electoral processes**.

10. Further improve **workforce** capabilities and professionalism in consistent service delivery, leadership, management and data.

11. Further strengthen **culture** of safety, values, privacy, behaviours, inclusion and innovation.

*The scope of improvements to the AEC's operating model can be broadened through legislative reform.

The AEC's values of electoral integrity through agility, professionalism, and quality are enduring and support our transformation journey

Our workforce strategic goals

The *AEC Workforce Strategy 2024–30* identifies five strategic goals which will guide the leadership and management of our people and ensure our success in meeting our organisational outcomes. Our Workforce Strategy Implementation Plan will outline the specific actions that we need to undertake to achieve the strategic goals.

Attract and keep the right workforce

Support the ongoing growth of our people to lead and manage

Flexibility in our workforce and ways for working

The workforce is responsive and agile to changing expectations through an alignment of individual performance to AEC's purpose and vision.

People feel empowered and engaged with their leaders.

Transform, engage, grow and develop

A culture that values, includes and supports

STRATEGIC GOAL	DESCRIPTION	SUCCESS MEASURES
Attract and keep the right workforce	Movement throughout the AEC is guided by the goal of having the right people with the right skills in the right role. This priority area recognises that having the right people in the right role is the foundation for ensuring success in the transformation of the AEC and in delivering quality services to the Australian community and our other stakeholders. Implementing effective attraction and retention processes is crucial to ensuring we have the right workforce. This strategy allows for the AEC's technical capability requirement (a shift to digital service delivery and event management), skills in high demand across the public and private sector.	**If this workforce strategy priority area is implemented successfully, we will:** • understand what roles are critical to the AEC and how to attract and retain people to these roles • maintain the currency our Position Descriptions to give our staff greater role clarity and alignment to their performance review cycle • promote the AEC's reputation and brand in the community • understand the AEC's Employee Value Proposition and implement a strong recruitment campaign to attract and retain talent • create career pathways that further grow internal capabilities.
Support the ongoing growth of our people to lead and manage	We will build an effective leadership capability, that drives collaborative and agile ways of working. This priority area reflects the important role of leadership and management, at all levels, in building and maintaining a supportive organisational culture and creating an authorising environment. It recognises the need for managers to focus on the people component of their role, and the key role they can and should play in promoting the AEC's strategic vision and modelling the values and behaviours. This increases accountability and supports efficient work practices through consistent and decisive leadership.	**If this workforce strategy priority area is implemented successfully, we will:** • have an agile workforce with the capability and capacity to move across the AEC work program as required • have managers who meet their legislative requirements including those related to safety, financial management, information management and people management • have managers who set performance and behavioural expectations, recognise good performance and appropriately address behaviour and performance issues • receive positive and constructive feedback from staff on the AEC's leadership at all levels • make evidence-based resourcing and workload management decisions using consistent tools • have leaders that are relationship orientated and foster a culture of collaboration at all levels • have a structure and culture that further supports innovation and co-design through agile and cross functional ways of working.

STRATEGIC GOAL	DESCRIPTION	SUCCESS MEASURES
Transform, engage, grow and develop	Build capability in the core and technical skill areas that will deliver our purpose and transformation outcomes. This priority area focuses on building technical capabilities to meet the current and future needs of the AEC and creating a positive culture of learning and collaboration where development opportunities and pathways enable our people and the AEC to succeed and thrive. This priority area is about creating a culture in which high performance is valued and recognised and where there is a strong sense of collaboration and connection within and across teams in the AEC and with our stakeholders.	**If this workforce strategy priority area is implemented successfully, we will:** • understand where we have capability, experience and capacity with transferable skills which are mapped and used optimally across the AEC • have people who have the core and technical skills sets required to perform their substantive/nominated role and at the appropriate APS level • achieve a learning culture at the organisational and individual level that recognises how we learn, consolidate our understanding and promote continuous improvement • have leaders who are actively driving change, performance and engagement with their teams • have people who are active stewards of their own career, who understand where development opportunities are available and take action to enhance their own skills • empower our people to collaborate and share information where appropriate across the agency.
A culture that values, includes and supports	Our staff will engage with the AEC and APS values and will embody the AEC's vision and purpose in all they do. This priority area recognises it is essential to care for and support our people if we want to achieve an engaged and high performing workforce. It promotes the health and wellbeing of all staff, including their physical, emotional and psychological health and wellbeing, emphasising the importance of providing a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace. There will be an increased focus on connection to support our staff to perform at their best.	**If this workforce strategy priority area is implemented successfully, we will:** • have a culture that helps people to thrive, feel included and supported • improve staff wellbeing and work-life balance • have engaged and motivated staff who have clarity of the AEC's purpose and transformational outcomes • reduce turnover and attract great people • live by our values of professionalism, agility and quality • be committed to serving the public and upholding Australian democratic values today and into the future.

STRATEGIC GOAL	DESCRIPTION	SUCCESS MEASURES

Flexibility in our workforce and ways for working

Scope and test flexible options to attract and retain the skills and capabilities we need to deliver our purpose and transformation outcomes.

This priority area recognises changing workforce expectations including more flexibility in the workplace and appropriate technology to support such working arrangements.
This requires a strong focus on information and records management, efficient process and procedures and digitisation capabilities. It will also impact our approach to property management, location and configuration.

If this workforce strategy priority area is implemented successfully, we will:

- be able to attract and retain the best talent
- utilise work practices and tools that improve collaboration and flexible ways of working
- have efficient workflows that support good decision making and build business intelligence through data
- understand and monitor the location of in demand and emerging skills and have ways to support remote working.

Our governance

The Workforce Strategy, sponsored by the Executive Leadership Team and monitored by the People Committee, is contingent on AEC's senior leaders and all managers owning and driving achievement through the strategy's priority areas.

The Workforce Strategy will be reviewed annually or in response to a significant environmental change, to ensure it remains relevant and aligned in our current operating context.

The Workforce Strategy Implementation Plan will be reviewed yearly and aligned to the business planning cycle.

AEC Corporate Plan

AEC Transformation Strategy

Our 3 transformation outcomes

OUTCOME 1 — Electoral processes, data and systems
- Electoral Integrity Framework
- Reputation Management System
- Election Readiness Framework

OUTCOME 2 — Our services
- Service Principles Framework

OUTCOME 3 — AEC and our workforce
- Workforce Strategy

AEC Digital Strategy

Information and Data Management Strategy

Privacy Management Plan

AEC Transformation and Investment Portfolio Framework and Delivery Plan

APS Workforce Strategy 2025

AEC Workforce Strategy
- AEC Workforce Strategy Implementation Plan
- AEC Recruitment Plan

Australian Electoral Commission **Workforce Strategy 2024–30** October 2024