



Australian Government

EIAT
Electoral Integrity
Assurance Taskforce

OFFICIAL

Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce

TERMS OF REFERENCE

27 October 2022

Overview

1. Public confidence in the integrity of an electoral event is essential to the legitimacy of election results.
2. Aspects of the electoral environment are considered in various ways by policy, operational, law enforcement and intelligence agencies from across government. These agencies undertake this work as part of their existing legislated remits.
3. The purpose of the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce (the Taskforce) is to provide consolidated and coordinated information and advice to the Australian Electoral Commissioner on matters that may compromise the real or perceived integrity of a federal election.
4. The Taskforce will comprise representatives from a number of agencies across government. Each represented agency has capabilities and expertise relevant to the assessment and remediation of threats to the integrity of Australia's electoral systems and processes. These threats may be realised through various vectors, including a cyber- or physical security incident, foreign interference and/or the spread of mis/disinformation.
5. For the purposes of the Taskforce, interference is characterised as an action intended to affect or disrupt electoral processes or outcomes which, in the case of foreign actors is deceptive, clandestine or coercive, or in the case of domestic actors, is illegal.
6. The Taskforce is responsible for assessing and understanding the vulnerability of Australia's federal electoral environment, and developing strategies and processes to ensure cohesive and effective management and response should any threats be realised.
7. The Taskforce provides a platform for information sharing and is a valuable resource for centralising and exchanging information in the lead up to, and during, an election period.

Roles and Responsibilities

8. The Taskforce will be governed by a Board (the Board). The Board will be responsive to the Australian Electoral Commissioner, who is responsible for delivering an election that has the confidence of the Australian people.
9. The primary responsibilities of Taskforce members are:
 - Under individual agency's authorities, and in a coordinated manner, to collect, evaluate and disseminate information, to other Taskforce members on matters which may impact electoral integrity.
 - Refer any relevant, emerging or current threats or activities identified through agency activities to Taskforce members to identify any levers for additional action.

- Brief other Taskforce members and the Board regarding any relevant current or emerging threats or activities relating to interference, which may impact electoral integrity.
 - Conduct activities to proactively strengthen the security and integrity of electoral events, including providing advice and support to state and territory electoral commissions upon request.
 - Develop and maintain an accessible and effective network of agency contacts that can be used in the lead up to and during federal electoral events, for the dissemination of relevant information.
 - The Board will assist the Australian Electoral Commissioner, as appropriate, in coordinating and providing advice to government, the public and/or other entities where cyber or physical threats, or acts of interference or disinformation are discovered during (and relating to) federal electoral events. This may include, but is not limited to briefing material, referrals and communication strategies.
10. The Electoral Integrity Intelligence Forum (EIIF) coordinates across the National Intelligence Community to provide intelligence support to electoral integrity efforts. The EIIF reports to the Board.

Members

11. The Taskforce will comprise working level subject matter experts from the following portfolios:
- Home Affairs
 - Finance
 - Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
 - Attorney-General's Department
 - Prime Minister and Cabinet
 - Defence
12. The Taskforce will be Chaired by a representative from the Australian Electoral Commission.
13. Each portfolio should nominate Board member-endorsed representative/s from relevant agencies. If that representative is unavailable to attend a Taskforce meeting, a proxy, also Board member-endorsed, should attend in their place. It is acknowledged that there may be different representatives required depending on the issues being considered.
14. To streamline and focus discussion, members of the Taskforce may refer issues to agencies that are not represented on the Taskforce for discussion and report back.

Governance

15. The Taskforce will be governed by a Board, co-chaired by:
 - the Australian Electoral Commission; and
 - the Department of Finance.

The flexibility of this chairing arrangement allows for appropriate leadership, dependent on the particular issue(s) that may arise.

16. Each portfolio should nominate Board member/s from relevant agencies with the appropriate knowledge and authority to contribute, acknowledging that there may be different representatives required depending on the issues being considered.
17. The Board may invite other agencies to join the Board and the Taskforce for particular matters or periods or if needed on a permanent basis.
18. Membership of the Board is listed at [Attachment A](#).

Reporting

19. The AEC will provide a conduit for information between the Board and the Taskforce, including formal reports on development of the Taskforce work program for information, feedback and endorsement.
20. The Taskforce will provide a classified lessons learned document to the Board post-event.

Attachment A

Membership of the board will comprise the:

- Deputy Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission (Co-Chair);
- Deputy Secretary, Governance and Resource Management, Department of Finance (Co-Chair);
- The National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator, Home Affairs;
- First Assistant Secretary, Online Safety, Media and Platforms, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts;
- Assistant-Director-General, Cyber Engagement and Access, Australian Cyber Security Centre;
- Deputy Commissioner, Investigations, Australian Federal Police;
- First Assistant Director-General, Analytical Capabilities, Office of National Intelligence;
- Deputy Director-General, Intelligence Service Delivery, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation;
- Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary and Government, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- Assistant Secretary, Domestic Security Branch, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; and
- Deputy Secretary, Integrity and International Group, Attorney-General's Department.