

Australian Electoral Commission

ANNUAL REPORT

2015–16

Letter of transmittal

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ISSN: 0814-4508

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The term 'Indigenous' in this report refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people unless otherwise stated.

This report may contain the names and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased.

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Acknowledgements: This report reflects the work of many contributors. Special thanks to:

- Annual Report Coordinator: Nigel Harding
- Printer: Canprint Communications Pty Ltd
- Editor/Indexer: Wordwallah

This publication is printed on an uncoated Australian made, 100 per cent recycled, FSC® certified and carbon neutral paper.



Electoral Commissioner

Senator the Hon. Scott Ryan
Special Minister of State
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for the year ending 30 June 2016.

The report has been prepared for the purposes of:

- section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*; and
- section 17 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

As required by section 10 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, I also certify that I am satisfied that the AEC:

- has prepared fraud risk assessments and a fraud control plan
- has in place appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation, reporting and data collection procedures and processes that meet the specific needs of the AEC
- has taken all reasonable measures to deal with fraud relating to the AEC.

Yours sincerely

SIGNED

Tom Rogers
4 October 2016

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About this report

This report outlines the performance of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for the financial year ending 30 June 2016. It informs all Australians – including Members of Parliament, political parties, interest groups, candidates, electoral authorities, government departments and agencies, students, teachers and the media – about AEC activities and services. It also describes the AEC's performance against its agency directions as set out in the AEC Corporate Plan for 2015–19, with reference to updated 2015–16 deliverables specified in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2016–17.

The report accords with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2016* for annual reports.

There are five chapters:

- 1. Year in review** – Summary of key developments and trends by the Electoral Commissioner.
- 2. About the AEC** – Role, values and principles, outcome and programs structure, organisational structure and leadership, guiding legislation.
- 3. Performance reporting** – Reports against the five agency directions specified in the 2015–19 AEC Corporate Plan with reference to the Portfolio Budget Statements, plus additional information on achievements to complete the AEC performance story.
- 4. Managing the AEC** – Governance arrangements, strategic and business planning, risk management, managing resources and assets, compliance, and external scrutiny.
- 5. Financial reporting** – Financial performance for 2015–16, including audited financial statements.

These chapters are supported by:

- appendixes and reader guides at the end of the report
- 'spotlight' sections throughout the report highlighting particular developments, activities and outcomes.

Tools to assist readers

This publication has a table of contents, lists of figures and tables, an alphabetical index, a list of requirements, cross references, an abbreviations and acronyms section, and a glossary.

Visit annualreport.aec.gov.au/2016 to view this report online. A PDF version is also available.



1

YEAR IN REVIEW

70 000+

POLLING OFFICIALS AND
OTHER STAFF 2016 election

95% *NEW RECORD*

ELIGIBLE AUSTRALIANS
ENROLLED ↑ 2.7% since 2013

1 700

INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL
AND PROTECTED BALLOTS

In this section: Commissioner's review **2**

Throughout 2015–16 the AEC continued its commitment to electoral integrity through upholding the values of quality, professionalism and agility in its preparation for the conduct of the 2016 federal election.

Commissioner's review



Throughout 2015–16 the AEC continued its commitment to electoral integrity through upholding the values of quality, professionalism and agility in its preparation for the conduct of

the 2016 federal election. The 2016 federal election, conducted on 2 July, was the AEC's first opportunity to demonstrate on a national scale its progress in improving its policies and procedures to ensure it can deliver trusted, consistently reliable, high quality and high integrity electoral events and services.

The AEC demonstrated it is committed to transparency, continuous evaluation and improvement with the publication of the 2016 Federal Election Service Plan. This plan outlines the key election services and standards underpinning the AEC's delivery of the 2016 federal election. The AEC will measure and report against the standards in the Plan.

Changes to electoral delivery

The AEC continues to make steady progress towards the closure of recommendations from Mr Mick Keelty in his *Inquiry into the 2013 WA Senate election* (the Keelty Report) and from the Australian National Audit Office. In 2015, the AEC delivered two by-elections (the Divisions of Canning and North Sydney in September and December, respectively), which provided opportunities to implement and refine changes to the AEC's policies, procedures and processes ahead of the 2016 federal election.

While large parts of the AEC were engaged in the extensive work involved in preparing, delivering and evaluating these electoral events, the agency also progressed longer term reform

and process improvements. This included a fundamental revamp of election planning and preparation processes to improve long term planning and preparation for the conduct of electoral events.

Ahead of the 2016 federal election, the AEC continued its steady introduction of technology into electoral processes, using scanning and data capture services to count Senate ballot papers and process paper Postal Vote Application (PVA) forms and expanding the deployment of electronic certified lists (ECLs).

One of the 'Spotlight' reviews in this chapter summarises many of the changes implemented for the 2016 federal election.

The AEC also continued the agency's cultural journey, developing the skills and capacity of the leadership cohort, working with them to instil our values of electoral integrity, professionalism, quality and agility throughout the agency.

A limited number of recommendations have not been progressed due to legislative restrictions, or only partly implemented due to our capacity to absorb change in a truncated electoral cycle. The AEC is committed to continued implementation of outstanding recommendations during the forthcoming financial year and the years beyond.

Legislative change

The latter part of the 2015–16 financial year saw further significant change, with the passage of legislative amendments in March 2016. Those changes modified the Senate voting system, introduced party logos and unique registered officers for registered political parties, and changed how the AEC was required to handle declaration votes.

The significant workload to implement legislative change in this very tight timeframe was managed alongside the delivery of a double dissolution election. The AEC

demonstrated its agility and professionalism in designing and implementing a semi-automated process to conduct the Senate count. This involved scanning Senate ballot papers using optical character recognition technology to capture preferences, with verification by a human operator.

Financial and resource management

In 2015–16 the AEC recorded an operating deficit of \$25.0 million including depreciation. This was higher than our estimated actual result in the 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements and was attributable to the timing of costs associated with the 2016 federal election.

During 2015–16 our internal budgeting model and methodology continued to be improved to ensure that the AEC Corporate Plan drives resourcing decisions. Efficient and effective resource allocation, along with financial management reporting, are key contributors to the success of the agency's change journey.

2017 and beyond

A new electoral cycle will begin during the 2016–17 financial year, which may also include further electoral events such as a plebiscite and/or a referendum. During this cycle, the AEC will continue work to move to a more sustainable, cost-effective and efficient temporary election staffing model. It is at best optimistic to believe that every individual in a workforce of 70 000 people, many of whom work for only one day, will be able to fully and completely adhere to highly complex legislative requirements. This is further compounded by the limited time and resources available for training.

The AEC will also implement an improved evaluation process to review both reform and business-as-usual aspects of election delivery. Along with implementation of external review outcomes, it will continue driving internal

process improvements, with a focus on logistics and materials management, learning and development, and data use and analysis.

SPOTLIGHT

Governor-General visits AEC

The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), and Her Excellency Lady Cosgrove, visited the AEC's National Office on Thursday 14 April 2016.

It is the first time a Governor-General has visited an AEC office and came about after Sir Peter expressed an interest in how the AEC provides services to blind voters, low vision voters, and other people with disability.

The Electoral Commissioner, Tom Rogers, and the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Kath Toohey, provided a briefing to His Excellency and Lady Cosgrove before attending an afternoon tea with National Office staff.

Sir Peter expressed his gratitude for the work of the AEC and the fundamental role the agency plays in ensuring Australia maintains its strong international reputation in delivering electoral services to the community – including for people with disability. He also praised the work of the AEC's staff in ensuring this solid reputation is upheld.

After his address, His Excellency and Lady Cosgrove gave generously of their time to meet AEC staff and wish everyone well in delivering the 2016 federal election.

SPOTLIGHT

Changes implemented for the 2016 election

Election-specific changes implemented since the conduct of the 2013 federal election can be categorised into one or more of the following five themes:

- enhanced electoral integrity and ballot paper security
- communication with stakeholders
- enhancing national consistency through new and revised processes, procedures and policies
- people and culture
- logistics, materials and contract management.

A small selection of major or notable achievements against these themes is set out below.

Enhanced electoral integrity and ballot paper security

- Ballot paper principles that refocused the agency on the sanctity of ballot papers, and which can be applied where a policy or procedure does not exist.
- Implementation and communication of ballot paper principles and ballot paper handling policy.
- Requirement for all staff to complete online training on the ballot paper handling policy.
- Ahead of 2016 federal election, all ongoing and temporary staff required to sign undertakings on ballot papers, political neutrality and related matters.

- Key temporary election staff subject to a character check process.
- Greater professional focus on appropriate security, including after hours at selected premises.
- More robust integrity checks on enrolment transactions during close of rolls period.

Communication with stakeholders

- Increased commitment to transparency, continuous evaluation and improvement through publication of service plans for the 2015 Canning and North Sydney by-elections, and the 2016 federal election.
- Commitment to measuring and reporting on standards achieved against service plans for electoral events.
- Communication with a wide range of stakeholders, including government departments, candidates for election, political parties, and electors affected by redistributions.
- National communication campaign for electors on Senate voting changes and other information relevant to 2016 federal election – involving mass media advertising, public relations, media liaison and a national mailout to all Australian households. Information was available in 27 languages and in Braille, large print and audio versions.
- Redesigned election-time website provided clearer and more detailed information for the public on polling place locations, accessibility of polling places, and progress of the count.

- Engagement with international and state/territory electoral management bodies yielded improvements in materials management, and in overcoming risks and issues with employing a large temporary workforce to deliver high-quality results in a time-compressed, highly decentralised electoral process.

Enhancing national consistency through new and revised processes, procedures and policies

- Suite of new policies and supporting documentation for national consistency in election delivery. New policies covered (for example) ballot paper handling and security, election waste and election personnel identification.
- New standard operating procedures for key election activities, with supporting guides.
- Secure packaging and transport of ballot papers, new vests for easy identification of AEC officials during election activities.

People and culture

- New workforce plans covering election-critical ongoing and non-ongoing job roles at divisional and state levels.
- New and revised job roles that focus on quality and compliance and ensure safe custody of ballot papers.
- Increased allocation of staff in 2015–16 to assist with operation of polling places on election day, and to assist electors in casting a formal vote (with particular emphasis on Senate voting changes).
- Reciprocal arrangement with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to support the sourcing of temporary election staff.

- Polling Official page on AEC website outlining duties and training for each critical election role.
- Registrations of interest for temporary election employment systematically assessed for suitability prior to allocation of role.
- Temporary election staff required to undertake mandatory training, with completion actively monitored and logged.
- Training supplemented by more comprehensive briefing process at start of duties, including ballot paper security, and workplace health and safety.
- Employment of 'reserve' temporary election staff to cover unforeseen requirements.

Logistics, materials and contract management

- Improved contracting framework and panel arrangements for services, including ballot material printing and logistics.
- Procedures for contractors and suppliers to ensure compliance with minimum standards (for example political neutrality).
- New and improved Procurement and Contract Management Register and associated processes.



2

ABOUT THE AEC

150

**ELECTORAL DIVISIONS
ADMINISTERED**

1 020

**REGULAR
STAFF**

1902

YEAR ESTABLISHED

as part of Department of Home Affairs

1984

YEAR ESTABLISHED

as a statutory authority

In this section: What is the AEC? **8** Values and principles **8**
Outcome and programs **8** Organisational structure and leadership **9**
Guiding legislation **13**

We continue to strengthen our focus on electoral integrity, and on understanding and responding to the expectations of the public and the Parliament.

What is the AEC?

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) 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:

1. conducting successful electoral events, including federal elections, by-elections and referendums
2. ensuring confidence in the electoral roll
3. administering political party registrations and financial disclosure
4. undertaking public awareness activities.

Associated activities include:

- conducting ballots for industrial and commercial organisations
- undertaking electoral analysis
- supporting electoral redistributions
- administering election funding to eligible political parties
- assisting overseas electoral management bodies.

Values and principles

The AEC's values of electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism inform the agency's strategic planning and day-to-day operations.

The AEC is also guided by the Australian Public Service ICARE values of **impartiality**, **committed to service**, **accountable**, **respectful** and **ethical**.

We continue to strengthen our focus on electoral integrity, and on understanding and responding to the expectations of the public and the Parliament.

Outcome and programs

The AEC has one outcome: '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'.

SPOTLIGHT

Our history

- We were originally established as a branch of the Department of Home Affairs in 1902.
- Between 1973 and 1984 we were known as the Australian Electoral Office.
- On 21 February 1984, following major amendments to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, the Australian Electoral Commission was established as an independent statutory authority.

This outcome is delivered via one program – Deliver Electoral Events. This program has six areas of performance for 2015–16, reported separately in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2016–17 for the AEC (Budget-Related Paper No. 1.8, available at www.finance.gov.au/publications/portfolio-budget-statements/16-17):

- Federal elections, by-elections and referendums
- Electoral roll management
- Support services for electoral redistributions
- Party registrations and financial disclosure
- Industrial and commercial elections
- Public awareness.

Organisational structure and leadership

Structure

National office

At 30 June 2016, the National Office, in Canberra, consisted of 12 key functional areas:

- Legal and Procurement Branch
- Education and Communications Branch
- Information Technology Branch
- Finance and Business Services Branch
- Disclosure, Assurance and Engagement Branch
- Senate Reform Program
- Election Reform Program Branch
- Election Planning, Systems and Services Branch
- People Services Branch
- Industrial and Commercial Elections Program
- Roll Management Branch
- ETP (Employ, Train, Pay) Preparation Project.

State/territory offices

The AEC's state offices are located in each state capital city of Australia. The Northern Territory office is in Darwin. Divisional offices in the Australian Capital Territory office are managed by the New South Wales State Manager except during election periods, when an Australian Electoral Officer for the Australian Capital Territory is appointed.

Divisional offices and electoral divisions

Divisional offices of the AEC are responsible for electoral administration within each of the 150 electoral divisions. Each division is represented by a member of the House of Representatives. Divisional offices administer the conduct of electoral events, manage the electoral roll and carry out public awareness activities. Some divisional offices stand alone, while others are co-located in the same site. Australia's electoral divisions as at 30 June 2016 are shown in Figure 1.

Leadership

Electoral Commissioner

The Electoral Commissioner, Mr Tom Rogers, as the chief executive officer of the AEC, both leads and is responsible for day-to-day management of the organisation. He is also the accountable authority for the three-person Australian Electoral Commission under finance law.

The Commission

The Australian Electoral Commission (the Commission) is appointed by the Governor-General and comprises the Chairperson, who must be an active or retired judge of the Federal Court of Australia, the Electoral Commissioner and a non-judicial member.



Senior Executive Group 2015–16. Back row left to right: Ian Gordon, Anna Robinson, Jeff Pope, Paul Hawes, Thomas Ryan, Doug Orr, David Lang, Paul Pirani, Gabrielle Paten, Mick Sherry, David Molnar, Stephen Blackburn, Andrew Gately. Front row left to right: Marie Nelson, Lynn White, Gina Dario, Pablo Carpay, Kath Toohey, Tom Rogers, Kevin Kitson, Tim Courtney, Bernadette O’Meara, Emma Mason.

The functions of the Commission are set out in sections 7 and 7A of the Electoral Act. The Commission has various powers under the Act that can only be exercised by the Commission, particularly in relation to electoral redistributions, and political party funding and disclosure. Otherwise the Commission acts through the Electoral Commissioner, who is the CEO of the Commission (section 18).

As at 30 June 2016, the members of the Commission were:

- **Chairperson:** Hon. Dennis Cowdroy, OAM QC
- **Electoral Commissioner:** Tom Rogers
- **Non-judicial member:** David Kalisch.

Executive management

The AEC’s organisational structure and leadership are shown in Figure 2. Assisting the Electoral Commissioner are the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, three First Assistant Commissioners, seven Assistant Commissioners, the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Legal Officer.

They are supported by the State Managers, who also hold statutory appointments as Australian Electoral Officer for their respective state or territory (with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory, see ‘State/territory offices’ section above).

The First Assistant Commissioners are each responsible for a Division. These are:

- **Network Operations Division**, consisting of the Australian Electoral Officer/ State Manager network, Education and Communications Branch, and the Industrial and Commercial Elections Program
- **Capability Division**, consisting of four key functional branches
- **Election Operations and Reform Division**, consisting of four key functional areas (in addition, the First Assistant Commissioner, Election Operations and Reform Division, performs the role of National Election Manager [NEM]).

Figure 1: Australia’s 150 electoral divisions

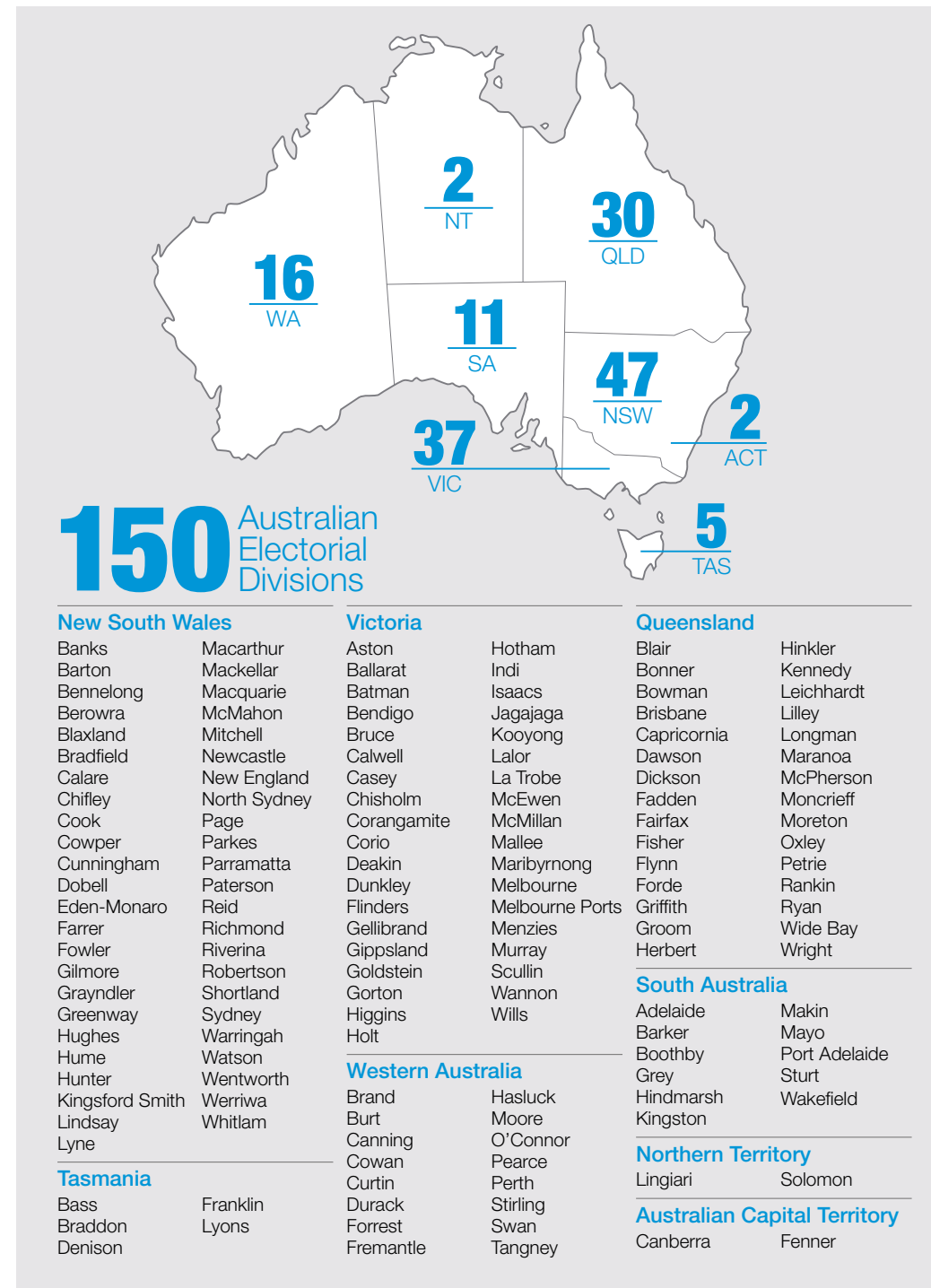
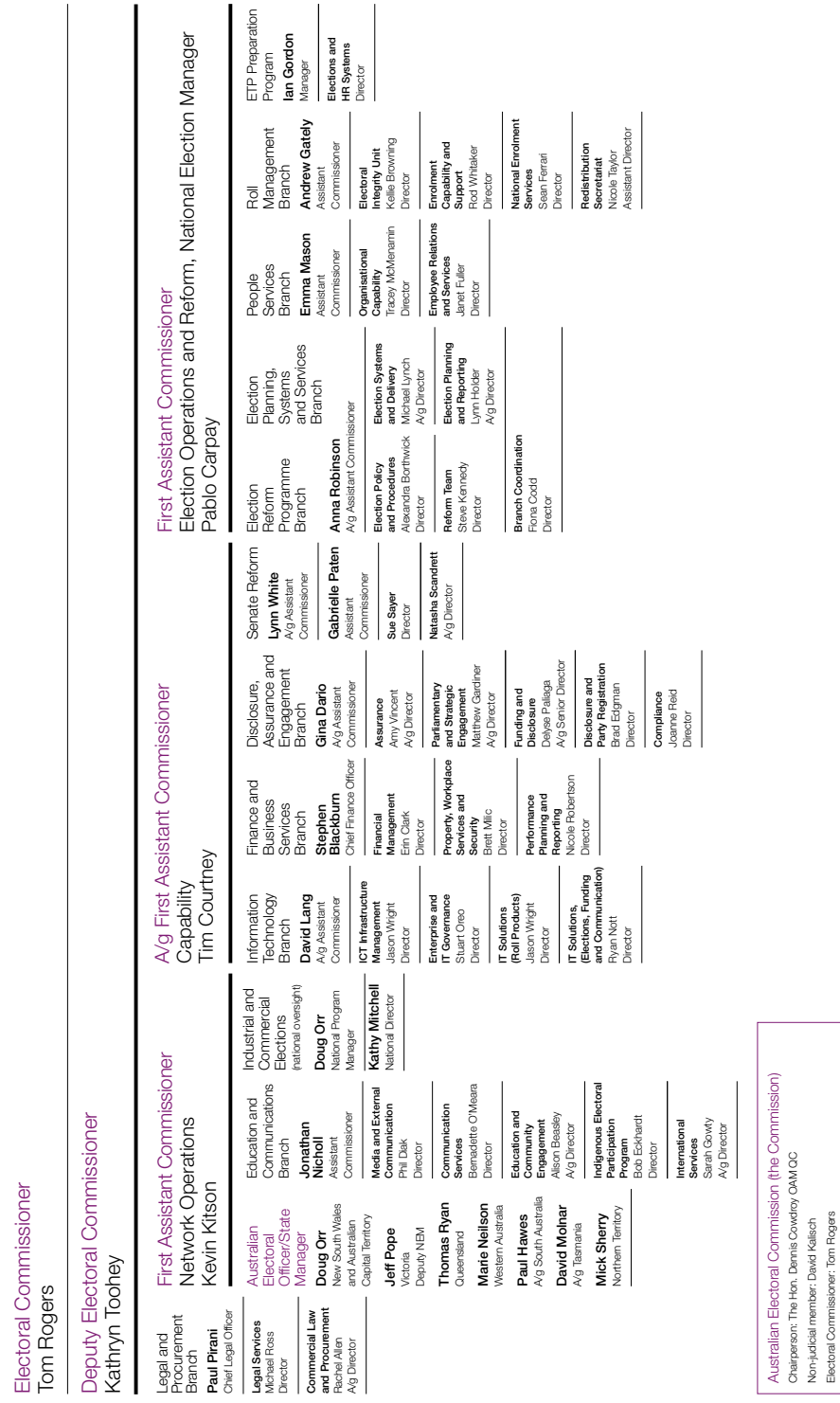


Figure 2: Organisation chart and leadership structure as at 30 June 2016



Australian Electoral Commission (the Commission)
Chairperson: The Hon. Dennis Cowdroy OAMQC
Non-judicial member: David Kalisch
Electoral Commissioner: Tom Rogers

Guiding legislation

The Electoral Act establishes the roles and responsibilities of the AEC as an independent statutory authority. Table 1 sets out the legislative instruments that guide our functions.

Table 1: Legislative framework

Legislative instrument	AEC function
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005</i>	Conduct Torres Strait Regional Authority elections.
<i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>	Conduct federal elections. Maintain and update the Commonwealth electoral roll. Promote public awareness of electoral and parliamentary matters through information and education programs. Provide international electoral assistance in cases approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Conduct and promote research into electoral matters and other matters that relate to AEC functions. Register political parties. Pay public funding to election candidates and parties and publish financial disclosure returns of political parties and others. Provide support to the independent redistribution process that determines representation entitlements.
<i>Electoral and Referendum Regulations 1940</i>	Conduct federal elections and referendums and provide voter information.
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	Manage activities in accord with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
<i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>	Conduct protected action ballots.
<i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i>	Conduct industrial elections.
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	Hold and release documents.
<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	Manage public money and property.
<i>Public Service Act 1999</i>	Ensure the effective and fair employment, management and leadership of AEC employees.
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i>	Store, use and disclose personal information.
<i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i>	Conduct federal referendums.
<i>Representation Act 1983</i>	Set numbers for Senate elections.
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>	Implement and report on matters concerning the health, safety and welfare of AEC workers.



3

PERFORMANCE REPORTING

2 517 National Electoral
Education Centre
**EDUCATION SESSIONS
THIS FINANCIAL YEAR**

2 19 September 2015 Canning
5 December 2015 North Sydney
**BY-ELECTIONS HELD
THIS FINANCIAL YEAR**

1
**FEDERAL ELECTION HELD
SHORTLY AFTER 2015–16**

In this section: Performance against agency directions **16**
Performance against Regulator Performance Framework **23**
Additional performance information **23**

We report on our performance against the five agency directions specified in the 2015–19 AEC Corporate Plan. We also report against the Regulator Performance Framework, and provide additional information to complete the AEC’s performance story for 2015–16.

Performance against agency directions

This section provides performance reporting on the AEC's activities against the five agency directions specified in the 2015–19 AEC Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Plan agency directions both draw from and contribute to the AEC performance criteria set out for 2015–16 under 'AEC Program 1.1 – Deliver electoral events', available in *Budget 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS)*, *Budget Related Paper No. 1.8 (Finance Portfolio)*, page 83 (available at www.finance.gov.au/publications/portfolio-budget-statements/16-17).

A matrix chart mapping the PBS performance criteria to the Corporate Plan agency directions is shown [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Mapping of PBS Performance Criteria for 2015–16 to Corporate Plan Agency Directions (Purposes) 2015–19

PBS PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	AEC CORPORATE PLAN AGENCY DIRECTIONS (PURPOSES)				
	Deliver a changed model for electoral events	Govern the organisation for quality and assurance	Professionalise the workforce	Re-establish the reputation of the AEC	Build an agile and responsive organisation
Federal Elections, By-elections and Referendums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal electoral events are successfully delivered. Maintain ability to conduct a federal electoral event within the timeframe determined by the Electoral Commissioner. 	✓	✓	✓		✓
Electoral Roll Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of confidence in the Electoral Roll. 		✓		✓	✓
Support Services for Electoral Redistributions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and timely conduct of redistribution activities. 		✓	✓		
Party Registrations and Financial Disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Party registration processed in accordance with the Electoral Act. Financial disclosures obtained and placed on the public record in accordance with the Electoral Act. 		✓	✓		
Industrial and Commercial Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial elections are delivered in accordance with the <i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i> and each organisation's rules. Protected Action Ballots are delivered in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> and the orders issued by the Fair Work Commission. Torres Strait Regional Authority elections are delivered in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005</i>. 	✓				
Public Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral education is provided to Australian schools through the operation of the National Electoral Education Centre, conduct of teacher professional development workshops and provision of education resources. Information is timely and accurate, uses appropriate technology and channels, and meets accessibility standards. Provide targeted and culturally appropriate electoral services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the delivery of the Indigenous Electoral Participation Program. 			✓	✓	✓

Statement by the Electoral Commissioner

I, as the accountable authority of the Australian Electoral Commission, present the 2015–16 annual performance statements of the Australian Electoral Commission, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). In my opinion these annual performance statements are based on properly maintained records, accurately reflect the performance of the entity, and comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

Tom Rogers
Electoral Commissioner
4 October 2016

Our performance against the agency directions is as follows.

AGENCY DIRECTION 1

Deliver a changed model for electoral events

Performance criteria	Source	Result
1.1 Federal electoral events are successfully delivered	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Partly met
1.2 Maintain ability to conduct a federal electoral event within the timeframe determined by the Electoral Commissioner	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met

Explanation

Criterion 1.1 was partly met. Assessment of the service plans of the two federal by-elections, Canning, WA (September 2015) and North Sydney, New South Wales (December 2015) identified minor aspects that were not achieved according to the plans.

Criterion 1.2 was met with the development and refinement of an election readiness framework – specifically the introduction of the 2016 Election Ready Road Map. At the issue of writs, inputs were ready to conduct both the Canning and North Sydney by-elections, and the 2016 federal election.

What we did

In April 2015, the AEC introduced the Election Ready Road Map (ERRM), a key component of the election readiness framework.

The ERRM sets out the sequence of actions over three phases that need to be completed between the return of writs from the previous election and the issue of the writs for the next election. It also connects the lessons learned from the last electoral event with the actions the AEC needs to take in preparing for, and delivering, the next electoral event. The ERRM influences all layers of the AEC.

The elements (or ‘inputs’) that must be ready before the AEC as a whole can be ‘election ready’ have been categorised on the ERRM under the following headings (summarised by the AEC as ‘POLITE’):

Personnel, **O**rganisation, **L**egislation, **I**nformation, **T**raining, **E**quipment, support and facilities.

The POLITE inputs: provide a foundation for adapting to changing circumstances; guide the conduct of the right tasks at the right time; and coordinate work across different (but interconnected) areas of the AEC. This framework was applied in the delivery of the two by-elections.

Recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, the Keelty Report and the Australian National Audit Office were considered in planning the delivery of the 2016 federal election.

Areas for further improvement

A revised framework was introduced to assess lessons learned from conducting the Canning and North Sydney by-elections. This framework is a more efficient and effective way of evaluating federal elections, and will be used to assess the 2016 federal election.

AGENCY DIRECTION 2

Govern the organisation for quality and assurance

Performance criteria	Source	Result
2.1 Assurance framework is implemented	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met
2.2 An enterprise performance and reporting framework is implemented	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met
2.3 High level of confidence in the accuracy of the electoral roll	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met

Explanation

Criterion 2.1 was met with implementation of a documented assurance framework, together with a complementary operational compliance plan, that were endorsed by the Business Assurance Committee at its June 2016 meeting.

Criterion 2.2 was met with the introduction of a performance and reporting framework underpinned by the Accountable Authority Instructions and regular reporting to the AEC Executive.

Criterion 2.3 was met with an increase in roll completeness, with almost one million people added to the roll since the 2013 federal election. There has also been an improvement in the core component of roll integrity through more sophisticated quality controls that give greater confidence in the accuracy of the roll.

What we did

Throughout the year the AEC’s focus has been on electoral integrity through the AEC values of quality, agility and professionalism. The AEC upholds the sanctity of the ballot paper in all its forms and at all times, supported by the ballot paper handling principles and the concept of ‘every task matters’.

A new planning, performance and reporting framework was implemented throughout 2015–16. It supports staff involved in planning, delivering outcomes, and managing resources and finances. This was integral to the structures, processes, controls and behaviours that support sections of the PGPA Act. In addition, an assurance framework was implemented that outlines how the Executive Leadership Team will gain assurance that the agency is operating efficiently and effectively, and meeting agency objectives.

The AEC has also focused on improving the foundations that support the organisation with not only the introduction of the performance and reporting framework, but also enhancements to the project management and risk management frameworks to ensure more accountability, and

alignment of the AEC’s Internal Audit Plan with the risk profile.



A range of measures were implemented via the Roll Program, based on the Electoral Integrity Framework, to improve roll completeness and accuracy, and reduce state and federal electoral roll divergence. The measures included streamlining workflows and workloads nationally to assist in updating the roll within required timeframes.

Areas for further improvement

The implementation of the performance, planning and reporting framework, together with the assurance framework, has led to improved Executive decision-making throughout the agency and supports the established continual improvement platform. The implementation of an electronic document and records management system will further enhance availability of the right information to support risk-based decision-making.

AGENCY DIRECTION 3

Professionalise the workforce

Performance criteria	Source	Result
3.1 An election workforce planning strategy is implemented	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met 
3.2 The election workforce is 'match fit' before the anticipated 2016 election	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Not met
3.3 Management capability of key cohorts addressed in development plans and delivered with 90 per cent participating in courses where appropriate	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Partly met 

Explanation

Criterion 3.1 was met with the finalisation of the AEC Workforce Plan, in line with the AEC's Directed Level of Election Readiness. The Workforce Plan informed the staffing model and training requirements for the 2016 federal election.

Criterion 3.2 was not met as the strategy was not operationalised and therefore could not be measured.

Criterion 3.3 was partly met. Due to the election preparations this program was put on hold.

What we did

The AEC developed and began to implement a core skills and capability training program designed to ensure that AEC staff at all levels could do their jobs competently. Further to this, a Coaching Program was piloted with selected staff, and project management and performance management courses were delivered throughout the States and Territories. This was part of a broader program aimed at becoming a learning organisation to support cultural change, and attract, retain and develop a more professional and agile workforce.

New workforce plans covering election-critical ongoing and non-ongoing job roles at divisional and state levels were implemented; these plans were aimed at delivering a 'match fit' workforce in accordance with the election readiness framework.




Areas for further improvement

With preparations for the 2016 federal election, the highest importance was placed on ensuring the temporary election workforce were trained and capable of undertaking their electoral roles. Consequently, implementation of the newly developed AEC staff core skills and capability training program was only partly achieved. Implementation will continue after the 2016 federal election.

Further work will continue on an appropriate model to manage staff 'match fitness' contingencies and redundancy gaps ahead of future electoral events.

AGENCY DIRECTION 4

Re-establish the reputation of the AEC

Performance criteria	Source	Result
4.1 Productive relationship is maintained with the Minister, Parliament, key agencies and other stakeholders	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met 
4.2 High quality services delivered with effective management of issues in line with relevant legislation and agreements	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Partly met 
4.3 Information is timely and accurate, uses appropriate technology and channels, and meets accessibility standards	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met 

Explanation

Criterion 4.1 was met with the AEC continuing to meet the commitments made to key stakeholders, including the Minister and the Parliament. The Commissioner met regularly with key external stakeholders throughout the year.

Criterion 4.2 was partly met. While the AEC continues to provide high quality services in line with our values of quality, agility and professionalism, there were instances where the conduct of other electoral services, particularly industrial and commercial elections, were not completed in line with complex legislation.

Criterion 4.3 was met with the delivery of engaging and informative education and communication products to the Australian public.

What we did

Throughout 2015–16 the AEC continued to maintain a productive working relationship with the Minister and the Minister's Office through timely and informative responses to questions, as well as by keeping the Minister appropriately informed.

The AEC contributed to seven Parliamentary inquiries related to electoral matters, through submissions and letters, and appearances. Other high quality services were provided to state Electoral Commissions, political parties and the public through the supply of electoral roll products, party registration and financial disclosure support.

In 2015–16, outside of the federal election period, the AEC received and responded to over 43 000 phone calls, 30 000 emails and 10 000 in-person contacts from the public. In the period 2 May to 30 June 2016, the election contact service centre (in partnership with the Department of Human Services) responded to over 560 000 telephone enquiries, 56 000 email enquiries and 35 000 requests for products. The



AEC's *Your official guide to the 2016 federal election* was delivered to over 10 million households. A new publication, *Voting in Australia*, was distributed to over 90 000 students in over 9 500 schools, as well as being made available to schools and the public on the AEC's website.

Areas for further improvement

In accord with our values of professionalism, quality and agility, the AEC will continue to build on and further improve external-facing services, as well as our international services, funding and disclosure services, and the provision of roll products.

AGENCY DIRECTION 5

Build an agile and responsive organisation

Performance criteria	Source	Result
5.1 Develop an established and efficient election evaluation model	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Met 
5.2 Create an environment to encourage innovative practices to support the AEC and the conduct of electoral events	AEC 2015–19 Corporate Plan, p. 9	Partly met 

Explanation

Criterion 5.1 was met with the implementation of the AEC's lessons-learned framework approved by the Electoral Commissioner.

Criterion 5.2 was partly met with the AEC developing innovative solutions to enhance the electoral process, which was supported by implementation of a new IT Strategic Plan.

What we did

In the lead-up to the 2016 federal election, programs and systems were either developed or enhanced to support the electoral reform program, as well as election readiness and delivery. These were underpinned by the IT Strategic Plan, which was developed to support key business initiatives and program development. The new or enhanced systems delivered more efficient administration of the AEC that better met the expectations of internal stakeholders.

The introduction of the lessons-learned framework was to ensure that observations made at elections are sufficiently captured and reviewed in order to learn from actions that were implemented. 'Lessons learned' is designed to foster innovation within the agency, and enhance the way we operate. This process will be conducted internally by an independent area within the AEC. This will provide sufficient information for timely decision-making and responsiveness in the lead-up to the next electoral event.

The AEC is on a journey to create a new environment that supports innovation and agility. The Senate Reform Program is an example of how the AEC, in a short time frame of 12 weeks, reprioritised and reallocated resources to produce a new system of counting Senate ballot papers using scanning technology.

Areas for further improvement

The AEC, in line with the three phases of the electoral cycle, will continue taking a more strategic approach to developing and delivering better services both externally and internally. A scoping exercise will be undertaken in the coming year to identify appropriate opportunities for this.

Performance against 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, and is committed to reporting annually against the Framework's six mandatory key performance indicators. Our performance for 2015–16 is shown in Table 3, cross-referenced to our performance under the AEC's five agency directions (see previous section).

Additional performance information

This section presents additional information on achievements for the year to give a more complete performance story for the AEC for 2015–16.

Brief descriptions are organised according to the six AEC performance areas for 2015–16 listed in the 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, namely:

- Federal elections, by-elections and referendums
- Electoral roll management
- Support services for electoral redistributions
- Party registrations and financial disclosure
- Industrial and commercial elections
- Public awareness.

Table 3: AEC Performance against Regulator Performance Framework, 2015–16

Mandatory key performance indicators	Performance criteria	Result
Regulators do not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of regulated entities	High quality services delivered to clients with effective management of issues in line with the legislation and agreements	Partly met. See performance under Agency Direction 4.2.
Communication with regulated entities is clear, targeted and effective	Information is timely and accurate, uses appropriate technology and channels, and meets accessibility standards	Met. See performance under Agency Direction 4.3.
Actions undertaken by regulators are proportionate to the regulatory risk being managed	Maintain ability to conduct a federal electoral event within the timeframe determined by the Electoral Commissioner	Met. See performance under Agency Direction 1.2.
Compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated	An enterprise performance and reporting framework is implemented	Met. See performance under Agency Direction 2.2.
Regulators are open and transparent in their dealings with regulated entities	Productive relationship is maintained with the Minister, Parliament, key agencies and other stakeholders	Met. See performance under Agency Direction 4.1.
Regulators actively contribute to the continuous improvement of regulatory frameworks	An efficient election evaluation model is implemented Create an environment to encourage innovative practices to support the AEC and the conduct of electoral events	Met. See performance under Agency Direction 5.1. Partly met. See performance under Agency Direction 5.2.

Federal elections, by-elections and referendums

In 2015–16, the AEC prepared for and delivered two federal by-elections, and prepared for the 2016 federal election, including delivery of early voting services before the 2 July 2016 election day.

2015 Canning by-election (WA)

This by-election was triggered by the death of the former Member for Canning, Mr Don Randall MP, on 21 July 2015. The writ for a by-election was issued on Monday 17 August 2015, and the by-election was held on Saturday 19 September 2015. [Table 4](#) shows the key dates for this by-election.

Nominations

The AEC received nominations from 12 candidates. Nominations were formally declared and the draw for positions on the ballot paper was conducted in accordance with the Electoral Act at noon on Friday 28 August 2015.

Provision of voting services

The facilities for voting included:

- 45 ordinary polling places on election day
- early voting facilities operating at eight pre-poll voting centres and AEC divisional offices (including one for blind and low vision voting, and four airport centres for fly-in fly-out workers) for up to three weeks before by-election day
- three mobile polling teams.

Types of votes cast

The AEC provided voting services to 89 717 people in the by-election. [Table 5](#) shows the number and percentage of each type of vote counted.

As is usual with AEC electoral events, the Virtual Tally Room and media feed were used to communicate the results on election night and in the post-election night period.

Full details of the official House of Representatives by-election results for the Division of Canning are available in the AEC Tally Room at results.aec.gov.au.

2015 North Sydney by-election (NSW)

This by-election was triggered by the resignation of the former Member for North Sydney, the Hon. Joe Hockey MP on 23 October 2015. The writ for a by-election was issued on Monday 26 October 2015, and the by-election was held on Saturday 5 December 2015. [Table 6](#) shows the key dates for this by-election.

Nominations

The AEC received nominations from 13 candidates. Nominations were formally declared and the draw for positions on the ballot paper was conducted in accordance with the Electoral Act at noon on Friday 13 November 2015.

Provision of voting services

The facilities for voting included:

- 36 ordinary polling places on election day
- early voting facilities operating at four pre-poll voting centres and AEC divisional offices (including one for blind and low vision voting) for up to three weeks before election day
- three mobile polling teams.

Types of votes cast

The AEC provided voting services to 81 779 people in the by-election. [Table 7](#) shows the number and percentage of each type of vote counted.

As is usual with AEC electoral events, the Virtual Tally Room and media feed were used to communicate the results on election night and in the post-election night period.

Full details of the official House of Representatives by-election results for the Division of North Sydney are available in the AEC Tally Room at results.aec.gov.au.

Table 4: Canning by-election timeline

Event	Day	Date (2015)	Time
Issue of writ	Monday	17 August	6 pm
Close of rolls	Monday	24 August	8 pm
Close of nominations	Thursday	27 August	12 pm
Declaration of nominations	Friday	28 August	12 pm
Election day	Saturday	19 September	8 am – 6 pm
Writ returned	Wednesday	30 September	

Table 5: Canning by-election – first preferences by vote type

Vote type	Number of votes	Votes (%)
Ordinary	78 881	87.92
Provisional	444	0.49
Early Vote (pre-poll declaration)	801	0.89
Postal	9 591	10.69
Total	89 717	79.52^a

a. This represents the turnout, i.e. the proportion of voters on the electoral roll at the time who voted. Other percentages are proportions of total votes by type (whether formal or informal).

Table 6: North Sydney by-election timeline

Event	Day	Date (2015)	Time
Issue of writ	Monday	26 October	6 pm
Close of rolls	Monday	2 November	8 pm
Close of nominations	Thursday	12 November	12 pm
Declaration of nominations	Friday	13 November	12 pm
Election day	Saturday	5 December	8 am – 6 pm
Writ returned	Wednesday	23 December	

Table 7: North Sydney by-election – first preferences by vote type

Vote type	Number of votes	Votes (%)
Ordinary	72 427	88.56
Provisional	367	0.45
Early Vote (pre-poll declaration)	211	0.26
Postal	8 774	10.73
Total	81 779	78.41^a

a. This represents the turnout, i.e. the proportion of voters on the electoral roll at the time who voted. Other percentages are proportions of total votes by type (whether formal or informal).

Apparent non-voting and multiple voting at the by-elections

The Electoral Act provides that it is an offence to fail to vote without a valid and sufficient reason, and to vote more than once in an election.

Non-voting

The AEC is proceeding with prosecuting non-voters in the Canning by-election whose excuse was found to be not valid and sufficient, and who have not paid the \$20 penalty.

The AEC is proceeding with the process of identifying and investigating apparent non-voters at the North Sydney by-election. Initial letters to electors who appeared to have failed to vote were sent in the week commencing 15 February 2016 (inside the three-month timeframe specified in the Electoral Act). Prosecutions are planned for late 2016, following the 2016 federal election.

Voting more than once

The follow-up of apparent multiple voting is an important electoral integrity measure.

Following the conduct of the 2015 Canning by-election, the AEC investigated 39 cases of multiple marks (all dual marks) occurring. Twenty-three cases were subsequently referred to the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

The AEC reviewed and investigated 39 cases of multiple marks (all dual marks) occurring at the North Sydney by-election. Further investigations involving the AFP are planned to occur in late 2016.

Service plans for the Canning and North Sydney by-elections

The introduction of service plans for the two by-elections was a new AEC initiative in 2015–16. The plans outlined the key election services and standards underpinning delivery of the by-elections. This commitment to services embodied the AEC values of upholding electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism. In line with our commitment

to continuous evaluation and improvement, we measured and reported on our performance based on the standards in each plan.

Electoral Reform Program

Implementation of the Electoral Reform Program continued throughout 2015–16 in preparation for the 2016 federal election, including the implementation of a significant range of recommended reforms arising from the *Inquiry into the 2013 WA Senate Election* (the Keelty Report) and reports of the Australian National Audit Office.

The Program focused on:

- enhancing ballot paper handling practices
- ensuring greater electoral integrity
- achieving national consistency in AEC policies and procedures
- developing new materials and forms
- implementing more robust compliance and assurance mechanisms
- introducing greater rigour in transport and logistics contracts.

The Canning and North Sydney by-elections provided two opportunities to test these measures, particularly in the areas of ballot paper handling and security, visual identification of AEC staff, visitors and scrutineers in polling places, use of out-posted centres (for election activities), and the management of election waste.

The changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* passed by the Parliament on Friday 18 March 2016 were another significant milestone in terms of the AEC's Electoral Reform Program. As outlined elsewhere in this report, these changes principally related to voting in the Senate, counting of Senate ballot papers, and handling of declaration votes. This resulted in a number of significant organisational and operational changes, and changes in the management of, preparations for, and delivery of, the 2016 federal election.

Election planning and mobilisation for the 2016 federal election included the implementation and operationalisation of a range of new and updated policies, standard operating procedures, and supporting guidance, including (but not limited to):

- ballot paper handling (to address security, storage, packaging, labelling, transport and tracking)
- election waste
- out-posted centres
- Divisional Returning Officer Senate count
- Central Senate Scrutiny.

After the 2016 federal election all policies and procedures will be reviewed for efficacy, with implementation of reforms continuing through to the next federal election, anticipated for 2019.

Election readiness

Election Readiness Framework

Following the introduction of the Election Readiness Framework in 2015, throughout 2015–16 the AEC adopted and implemented the various initiatives developed under this framework to better synchronise planning efforts across all levels of the agency.

Innovations included:

- creating an Election Ready Road Map (ERRM) for the organisation to set a clear path to being ready for the 2016 federal election
- the federal election event picture, which provided a vision of the key policies, practices, training and systems to be in place for the 2016 federal election
- adopting an Election Readiness Assessment Framework (ERAF) and the concept of condition statements
- conducting a series of readiness assessments to measure the agency's actual state of election readiness along the way

- an ERRM readiness check involving Election Planning, Systems and Services (EPSS) Branch staff, in collaboration with staff from other business areas, and coinciding with the first Directed Level of Election Readiness (DLER) set by the Electoral Commissioner for the AEC to be 'writ ready minus 100 days' on 31 March 2016.

The AEC also developed a set of election delivery principles to create common understanding across the organisation and standardise the way polling staff approach their work, including a consistent approach to the agency's risk management framework.

The principles are numbered to reflect priority, and are underpinned by the core AEC values of electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism. In addition, they are supported by our organisational commitment to the ballot paper principles and the 'every task matters' principle.

The election delivery principles are:

1. Integrity of the result
 - a. safety, custody and handling of ballot papers
 - b. maintaining the integrity of a person's right to vote (prevention of voter disenfranchisement)
 - c. ballot paper formality.
2. Efficient processes and procedures.
3. Good customer service and positive customer experience.

Governance arrangements

To support election readiness, a National Election Manager (NEM) was appointed. This role is performed by the First Assistant Commissioner, Election Operations and Reform. The NEM is responsible for managing electoral events on behalf of the Electoral Commissioner. This role includes responsibility for both election preparation and election delivery.

The National Election Delivery Committee (NEDC), comprising the NEM, state and territory managers, and key Assistant Commissioners, operated throughout 2015–16 to provide national oversight of the AEC's election planning, preparation, and coordination of activities in line with the ERRM. During the election delivery phase the committee membership was augmented to include all First Assistant Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners. From the Issue of Writ for the

2016 federal election the NEDC met daily to monitor and manage election delivery.

Senate Reform Program

On 18 March 2016, the biggest electoral reform in 30 years was passed by the Parliament following a marathon 40-hour debate – the longest continuous Senate consideration of a single bill in 26 years.

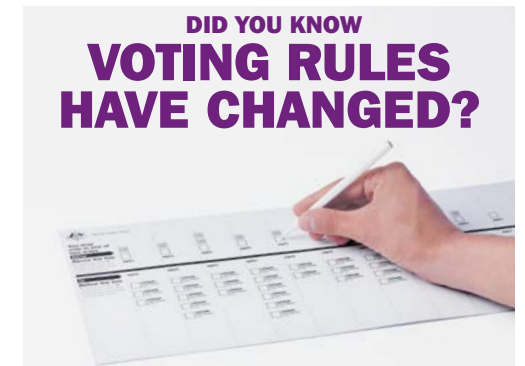
The changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* were:

- abolishing group voting tickets
- requiring voters to nominate a minimum of six preferences above or 12 preferences below the line on the Senate ballot paper
- allowing registered party logos to appear on ballot papers
- amending provisions to save informal votes

- precluding a person from being a registered officer for more than one political party at a time
- requiring declaration-vote ballot boxes to remain sealed at the polling place for transport to the divisional out-posted centre.

To implement the changes for the 2016 double dissolution federal election, the AEC developed:

- a national, integrated, multi-media public education campaign for voters on how to mark their Senate ballot papers
- a solution for counting Senate votes
- a register for authorised party logos
- new procedures for handling declaration votes
- revised election policies, procedures, training modules, publications, forms and materials.



Counting Senate votes

The changes to Senate voting substantially increased the complexity of the Senate count. At the 2013 federal election, most people voted by marking a '1' above the line, next to the group of their choice. The group voting ticket determined the flow of preferences.

Previously, only preferences expressed below the line, about 4 per cent of votes, needed to be recorded and entered individually into the count system.

The changes to Senate voting required voters to express group preferences (at least 1 to 6) above the line, or individual preferences (at least 1 to 12) below the line. Consequently, preferences had to be entered into the count system for 100 per cent of Senate ballot papers – whether the ballot paper was marked above or below the line.

New semi-automated solution

To ensure a workable count solution for a 2 July election, the AEC developed two potential solutions in parallel: (1) a semi-automated vote scanning and new counting system; and (2) an enhanced EasyCount solution, using the AEC's existing count application.

Developed in partnership with Fuji Xerox Document Management Solutions, the semi-automated process was considered more robust, efficient and technically superior, and was adopted for the 2016 federal election.

SPOTLIGHT

Implementing election reforms in the North Sydney by-election

With Lisa Warwar, Operations Manager, AEC, New South Wales.

A by-election for the federal House of Representatives seat of North Sydney (NSW) was held on 5 December 2015. The trigger for the by-election was the resignation of the sitting member, the Hon. Joe Hockey MP.

The North Sydney by-election was the first opportunity for staff in New South Wales to implement new policies and trial new Standard Operating Procedures developed to support the conduct of elections.

Operations Manager Lisa Warwar said, 'The first tangible sign that things would be different this time was when the ballot papers arrived in new security packaging and labelling.'

'Then came new bollards and tape for delineating secure zones at polling places, followed by new coloured vests and badges for identifying AEC staff and their various roles. In addition there was an increased security presence, and Early Voting Polling Place Liaison Officers at the pre-poll voting centres. Then having to guard the ballot papers at all times, including overnight, and having a documented chain of custody for all ballot papers, including the need for two people to move ballot papers, and so on.'

'I really think the vests had a unifying effect on all of our staff at polling places', Lisa said. 'I know it seems a very simple innovation, but with upwards of 80 people present at some polling places at times, the vests were a nice

way to unify the AEC staff – it gave us a real sense of "team".'

'Trialling the Standard Operating Procedures gave the Election Reform Program Branch the chance to see all their planning work in action, at the coalface. The importance of every single physical and administrative process was top of mind for all of us. It was a true "every task matters" principle in action. We were so aware of where all the things we did fitted in.'

'In the end it was very rewarding educating and passing on knowledge to our team members, and what was a lot to cope with became a big success – and hopefully a sign of good things to come with the 2016 election.'

Central Senate Scrutiny

Each state and territory established a dedicated Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS) site in their capital city. At the CSS, batches of Senate ballot papers were scanned using Kodak i5650 scanning hardware and entered into imaging software.

Optical character recognition technology captured voter preferences, with manual verification by a human operator. Candidate scrutineers were free to observe the verification process and raise challenges for adjudication by the Australian Electoral Officer. Images of potentially informal ballot papers, and those with unusual markings, were visually checked by a human operator and assessed as formal or informal by AEC staff.

Once verified, a record, representing the preferences on the ballot paper, was generated and a cryptographic digital signature applied to protect each preference record from modification. The AEC then imported the preference record into the AEC EasyCount system for the distribution of preferences.

System integrity

To ensure the integrity of the count, the CSS process was reviewed by IBM, and the Senate count system was certified by the National Association of Testing Authorities. It was independently reviewed for security vulnerabilities by a specialist agency and accredited under the Australian Information Security Registered Assessors Program.

2016 federal election

On Sunday 8 May 2016, the Prime Minister announced a double dissolution federal election for Saturday 2 July 2016. The writs for this election were issued on Monday 16 May 2016. Table 8 shows the key dates for this election.

Nominations

Nominations were received from 994 House of Representatives candidates and 631 Senate candidates. All nominations were officially declared, and draws for positions on the ballot papers were conducted at noon on Friday 10 June 2016, in line with legislative requirements. Table 9 and Table 10 show the breakdown of nominations by state and territory.

Distribution of ballot papers

Changes to the Electoral Act allowed – for the first time in the history of federal elections – the inclusion of logos approved by the AEC on ballot papers. Political parties were able to have their party logo appear adjacent to their candidate's names on the House of Representatives ballot paper, and have no more than two logos appear adjacent to their party or group name above the line on the Senate ballot paper.

For the 2016 election, 33 parties registered a logo, 941 different variations of ballot papers were designed and typeset, and over 45 million ballot papers were printed and distributed securely for use across Australia and the world.

Immediately after the declaration of nominations, the AEC began to print and distribute ballot papers in time for early voting to commence on Tuesday 14 June 2016.

Provision of early voting services

There was significant uptake of early voting services for the 2016 federal election.

Postal voting

Following the announcement of the election on Sunday 8 May 2016, postal vote applications opened (for eligible voters unable to vote on election day). As required under the Electoral Act, the deadline for receipt by the AEC of postal vote applications was three days before polling day – by 6 pm on Wednesday 29 June. More than 1.5 million postal vote applications were processed.

Early voting

Early voting services became available for eligible voters (to vote in person) from Tuesday 14 June 2016. There were 649 early voting centres operating across Australia in the weeks leading up to election day.

More than three million pre-poll votes were cast at early voting centres and AEC divisional

offices during the early voting period (which ended at 6 pm Friday 1 July).

Mobile polling

Mobile polling commenced from Monday 20 June 2016, with 557 mobile polling teams established for the election (including special hospital, remote and other mobile teams).

Table 8: 2016 federal election timeline

Event	Day	Date (2016)	Time
Announcement of the election	Sunday	8 May	–
Postal vote applications opened	Sunday	8 May	–
Issue of writs	Monday	16 May	–
Close of rolls	Monday	23 May	8.00 pm
Close of candidate nominations	Tuesday	7 June	12.00 pm
Declaration of nominations	Friday	8 June	12.00 pm
Early voting commenced	Tuesday	14 June	–
Mobile polling commenced	Monday	20 June	–
Close of postal vote applications	Wednesday	29 June	6.00 pm
Election day	Saturday	2 July	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
Writs returned	Wednesday	By 8 August	–

Table 9: House of Representatives nominations by state and territory

State/territory	Seats	2016 nominations
New South Wales ^a	47	314
Victoria	37	259
Queensland	30	204
Western Australia ^b	16	86
South Australia	11	72
Tasmania	5	30
Australian Capital Territory	2	9
Northern Territory	2	20
Australia	150	994

a. New South Wales was entitled to 48 seats at the 2013 federal election. This was reduced to 47 seats for the 2016 election.

b. Western Australia was entitled to 15 seats at the 2013 federal election. This was increased to 16 seats for the 2016 election.

Table 10: Senate nominations by state and territory

State/territory	No. of vacancies ^a	2016 nominations
New South Wales	12	151
Victoria	12	116
Queensland	12	122
Western Australia	12	79
South Australia	12	64
Tasmania	12	58
Australian Capital Territory	2	22
Northern Territory	2	19
Australia	76	631

a. The 2016 federal election was a double dissolution election, so all 76 Senate seats were vacant. For the 2013 federal election there were 40 Senate vacancies (half Senate for the six states, elected for six-year terms, plus two ACT Senators and two NT Senators, the Territory Senators always being elected for terms that coincide with House of Representatives terms).

Of these teams, 41 remote mobile voting teams visited more than 400 remote locations across Australia by land, air and sea.

Blind and low vision voting

A telephone voting service was provided for voters who are blind or experience low vision, via a two-step process of registration and voting. This service allows eligible voters to

cast their vote in secret and with a degree of independence.

Registrations opened on Monday 13 June 2016 and closed at 12 pm on 2 July 2016. During this period 2 175 people registered.

Voting via this service commenced on Tuesday 14 June 2016, and was available until 6 pm on election day. During this period 1 998 people used the service to cast their vote.

SPOTLIGHT

New Senate count solution in 12 weeks

In February 2016, the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016* was introduced into Parliament. It proposed changes to the Senate voting system, removing group voting tickets, and introducing optional preferential voting and party logos on ballot papers.

The AEC established the Senate Reform Program to scope potential requirements, with the possibility of an early election in mind. If passed, the AEC would likely need to operationalise these changes into new policies, procedures and systems extremely quickly.

On 18 March 2016 the legislation was passed, and the Senate Reform Program set to prepare and implement a solution to assist in the count of Senate ballot papers and registration of party logos which would appear on ballot papers. On 9 May 2016, the Parliament was dissolved and a double dissolution election announced for 2 July 2016.

In 12 weeks a new end-to-end solution was developed, tested and made operational. Integrity, accuracy and timeliness guided the work of the Senate Reform Program.

The solution involved scanning and image recognition technology to capture preferences which were then visually validated by a human operator before being imported to the AEC EasyCount system for the distribution of preferences and declaration of results.

Notable features of the solution included:

- a continual, trackable chain of custody for ballot papers
- human verification of every ballot paper
- full access for candidate scrutineers
- IT architecture and security standards to industry best practice.

The counting solution required the movement of approximately 14 million ballot papers from over 7 000 polling places to a Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS) site in each state or territory. At these sites, over 800 staff scanned and verified preferences for 631 candidates.

From Tuesday 5 July, eight CSS sites operated five days a week, over two shifts. The AEC, with the assistance of the counting solution, successfully declared the eight state and territory senate results and returned the writs by 8 August 2016.

This was an incredible achievement given the short time provided in which to implement the changes.

Polling places on election day

In addition to the early voting services described above, the AEC provided services at over 7 000 static polling places across Australia on election day. Overseas voting was available to eligible voters at over 95 locations outside Australia.

Electoral roll management

The state of the electoral roll

The Commonwealth electoral roll is the list of voters eligible to vote at federal elections. The completeness of the electoral roll is measured by the enrolment rate, which is the percentage of eligible Australian electors who are enrolled.

The AEC maintains multiple streams of contact with eligible electors to encourage them to enrol and keep their enrolment up to date, including the Online Enrolment Service (OES), the Federal Direct Enrolment and Update (FDEU) process, and the New Citizens Enrolment Program.

In 2015–16, the enrolment rate increased by 1.9 percentage points – from 93.2 per cent at 30 June 2015 to 95.1 per cent at 30 June 2016. This represented an increase of 501 857 Australians to 15 696 874 enrolled out of an estimated eligible population of 16 504 325. Over the same period there was a corresponding decline in the number of eligible Australians who were not enrolled – from 1.1 million to 807 000.

These positive outcomes have been driven by increasing take-up of the OES and the FDEU process. Combined, online and direct enrolment now represent almost 80 per cent of all enrolment activity, with only 20 per cent of electors submitting a claim for enrolment using a paper form.

The enrolment rate and growth of the electoral roll since 2007 are shown in Figure 3. The target is enrolment of 95 per cent of eligible

Australians. More detailed data on enrolment, including monthly and quarterly enrolment statistics, are available from the AEC website at www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Enrolment_stats/index.htm.

Targeted enrolment programs

Youth enrolment

Youth enrolment remains a challenge for the AEC as Australians aged 18 to 24 years have lower levels of enrolment than that of the general population. Despite this trend the AEC has achieved increased enrolment rates for this demographic, year on year, since 2012.

In 2015–16 the youth enrolment rate increased from 79.3 per cent of eligible electors aged 18 to 24 at 30 June 2015 to 87.4 per cent at 30 June 2016, above the target rate of 80 per cent.

New citizen enrolment

Another important target group for AEC enrolment activity is new Australian citizens. In 2015–16, AEC officers attended 1 128 citizenship ceremonies and collected 100 978 enrolment applications from new citizens enrolling for the first time.

Around 92.5 per cent of new citizens enrolled within three months of attendance at a citizenship ceremony, compared with just under 94 per cent the previous year.

Electoral roll integrity

Enrolment quality assurance

The Enrolment Quality Assurance Program (EQAP) is designed to improve the accuracy of the electoral roll by measuring the ongoing integrity of the AEC's enrolment transactions.

EQAP involves scrutinising a sample of enrolment transactions from every electoral division on a monthly basis to measure their accuracy, completeness and timeliness.

EQAP results up to December 2015 indicate that 97.8 per cent of essential data fields

(relating directly to voter entitlements) were processed without error, and 96.9 per cent of non-essential fields were processed without error. In 2015–16, 92.7 per cent of claims for enrolment were processed within five business days and 97.0 per cent of claims were processed within 30 days.

Sample Audit Fieldwork

Sample Audit Fieldwork (SAF) is a component of the AEC's roll integrity program that audits the enrolments of eligible electors at a random sample of addresses. SAF 2015 included performance targets of 95 per cent for the enrolment rate (proportion of electors enrolled), 95 per cent for enrolment completeness (proportion of electors enrolled for the correct division) and 90 per cent for enrolment accuracy (proportion of electors enrolled for the correct address).

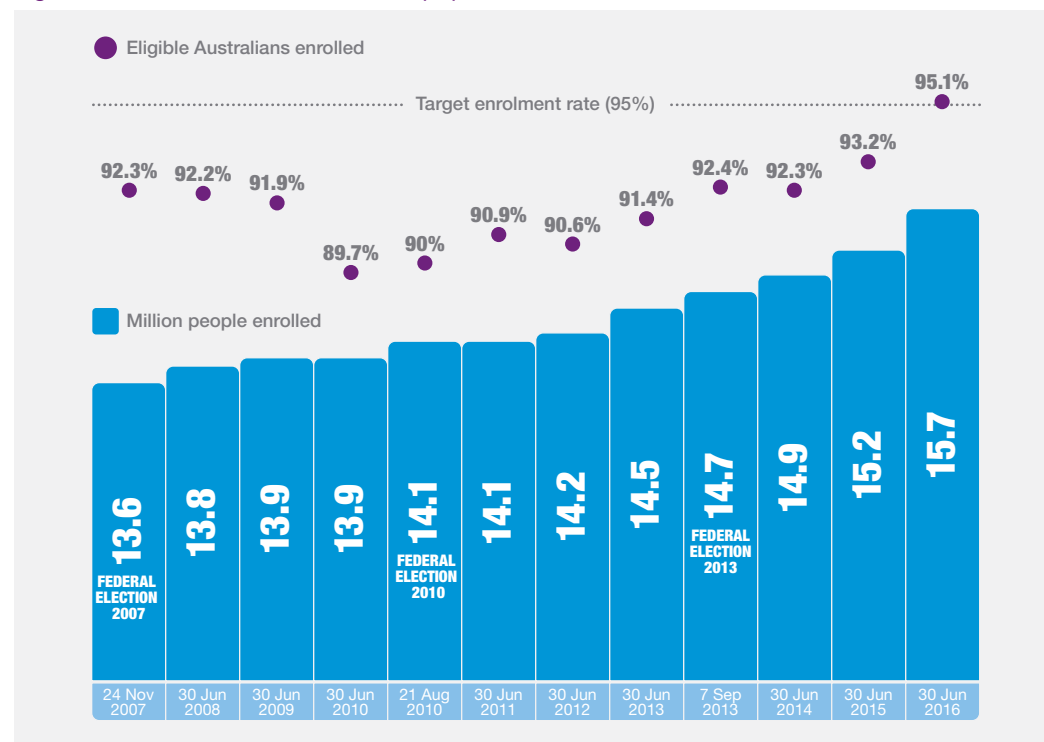
A random sample of approximately 30 000 addresses across Australia were selected for doorknocking in May 2015. This sample spanned 74 electoral divisions and included approximately 48 000 voters.

Results for the 2015 SAF are presented in Table 11, and are consistent with results from previous SAF activities.

Table 11: 2015 SAF average national results against performance measures

Indicator	Target	2015 SAF result
Enrolment rate	95%	98.7%
Enrolment completeness	95%	93.8%
Enrolment accuracy	90%	89.2%

Figure 3: Enrolment rate and enrolled population 24 November 2007 to 30 June 2016



SPOTLIGHT

Electronic premises inspection tool boosts polling place accessibility information for voters with disability

Prior to a federal election the AEC inspects thousands of premises across Australia, with around 7 000 subsequently being used as polling places.

For people with disability, information on the accessibility of various polling places – for example wheelchair accessible, or wheelchair accessible with assistance – can be crucial.

Ahead of the 2016 federal election we introduced 'EPIT' – the electronic premises inspection tool – to improve the collection, storage and publication of information on premises used as polling places, and, for the first time, provided detailed accessibility information for voters.

EPIT captures data from up to 150 accessibility questions aligned with Australian accessibility standards. The data are then assessed to determine the accessible and non-accessible features of the premises, and to assign an accessibility rating. This then flows through to the AEC website, where voters can find accessibility information for polling places across Australia.



The enhanced information became available on the AEC website from Sunday 12 June 2016, to coincide with the opening of early voting services for the 2 July 2016 federal election.

While premises are primarily inspected for wheelchair accessibility, the information can also be highly relevant to people with other forms of disability.

Compared to the previous entirely paper-based process, EPIT has resulted in benefits beyond enhanced premises information for voters. It also fulfils recommendations made by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) for centralised assessment and retention of data on polling premises which can then be used for future elections.

Enrolment processing integrity checks

During the close of rolls process for major electoral events, including the 2016 federal election, the AEC conducts a series of checks to ensure the integrity of claims for enrolment.

These integrity checks on claims for enrolment include:

- verifying ‘evidence of identity’ documents in instances where a document is used for more than one claim for enrolment
- confirming the number of voters enrolled at a residential address
- scrutinising unusual patterns of enrolment.

The AEC takes any allegation or suspicion of enrolment fraud very seriously (see ‘Federal elections, by-elections and referendums’ earlier in this chapter).

Electoral roll products and services

The AEC provides a wide range of roll products and services to state and territory electoral authorities, other government departments and agencies, federal parliamentarians, political parties and researchers. These services are provided in accordance with the Electoral Act, under agreement and for an authorised purpose.

In 2015–16, roll products provided by the AEC included support for the two federal by-elections and 1 782 extracts of roll information.

State and territory electoral roll products and services

The AEC manages and maintains the electoral roll on behalf of states and territories under agreements referred to as joint roll

arrangements. In 2015–16 the AEC provided states and territories with 909 roll information products, known as extracts, supporting 51 state, territory and local government elections.

Other electoral roll products and services

Under section 90B of the Electoral Act the AEC is permitted to provide certain roll information to various legislated recipients for authorised purposes.

Members and Senators

Subsection 90B(1) of the Electoral Act allows Members of Parliament, Senators and House of Representatives candidates to receive electoral roll information. The AEC provided 611 roll extracts in 2015–16. A full breakdown of roll information provided to Members and Senators is available in [Appendix B](#).

Political parties

Federally registered political parties are entitled to receive electoral roll information in accordance with subsection 90B(1) of the Electoral Act. In 2015–16, the AEC provided 204 roll extracts to registered political parties. A full breakdown of roll information provided to registered political parties is available in [Appendix C](#).

Government departments and agencies

Government departments and agencies are entitled to receive electoral roll information if they are a ‘prescribed authority’, under item 4 of subsection 90B(4) of the Electoral Act.

The AEC provided 39 roll extracts to 13 government departments and agencies in 2015–16. Each department and agency provided justification for access by reference to its statutory functions and the *Privacy Act 1988*. A full breakdown of roll information provided to government departments and agencies is available in [Table 36](#) in [Appendix D](#).

Researchers

Medical and electoral researchers are permitted access to electoral roll information under

item 2 of subsection 90B(4) of the Electoral Act. This information is commonly used to identify participants for research projects and mail surveys. Before they can access roll data, researchers must undergo an approval process. This includes scrutiny by a human research ethics committee and agreement on how the data will be used and protected.

In 2015–16 seven medical researchers and one electoral researcher received electoral roll information. A full breakdown of roll information provided to researchers is provided in [Table 37](#) in [Appendix D](#).

SPOTLIGHT

Scanning postal vote applications

For the 2016 federal election the AEC introduced scanning of paper postal vote applications (PVAs) to capture essential data to feed into the AEC’s Automated Postal Vote Issuing System (APVIS) for streamlined processing and despatching of relevant postal vote packs and ballot papers.

This represents a significant improvement to the way the AEC manages paper-based postal vote applications. Previously, manual processing of paper applications was required, which took up valuable time during a critical period in the lead-up to election day.

The new process builds on the introduction of online lodgement and processing of PVAs at the 2013 federal election. Despite the introduction of online postal vote

applications, the AEC still received around 715 000 paper postal vote applications – hence the introduction of scanning of PVAs.

For the 2016 federal election, eligible voters were able to apply for PVAs from the election announcement on Sunday 8 May until 6pm Wednesday 29 June 2016 (7.5 weeks).

During this period we received over 1.5 million PVAs via the following methods:

- around 530 000 lodged online
- over 700 000 submitted by paper form
- over 260 000 pre-approved postal voters not required to submit a PVA each election.

The AEC will review all processes associated with postal voting as part of our evaluation of the 2016 federal election. This will include PVA scanning, to find where further improvements and efficiencies can be made.

SPOTLIGHT

Partnership with DHS to deliver election services

As occurred for the 2013 federal election, the AEC again partnered with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to deliver election services at the 2016 federal election. Election services delivered included:

- contact centres
- election service centres
- blind and low vision registration and voting
- enrolment and polling services in remote areas.

The AEC strategic partnership with DHS exemplifies a whole-of-government approach to service delivery, delivering an efficient business solution for providing election services to the Australian public.

SPOTLIGHT

All Norfolk Islanders to vote in future federal elections

In March 2016, the Australian Government made changes to arrangements for enrolment and voting for Norfolk Islanders.

The effect of the changes was that from after the 2016 federal election, it will be compulsory for Norfolk Islanders to enrol to vote in federal elections, in the Division of Canberra.

Prior to the 2013 federal election, enrolment was optional for Norfolk Islanders, and they could be enrolled in almost any electorate in Australia, depending on their individual circumstances. If enrolled, voting was compulsory.

In brief:

- The legislative changes commenced on 1 July 2016.
- From 6 May 2016 (8 weeks before commencement of the changes), Norfolk

Island electors making a claim (e.g. for new enrolment, or change of address) were enrolled in or transferred to the Division of Canberra.

- From 1 July 2016, Norfolk Island electors enrolled in Divisions other than Canberra were to be transferred into Canberra – however the transfer could not occur between the close of rolls and close of poll for an election – so as the 2016 federal election was on 2 July, the transfer occurred after this time.
- In the months leading up to the changeover, the AEC worked with local authorities and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to overcome communication challenges to inform electors about the changes. The AEC also distributed flyers on the island outlining the changes and effects. Specific information was also available on the AEC's website.
- At the beginning of the changes, 231 Norfolk Islanders were enrolled. By 30 June 2016, 653 Norfolk Islanders were enrolled.

Private sector organisations

Under items 5, 6 and 7 of subsection 90B(4) of the Electoral Act, private sector organisations may receive roll information for identity verification processes related to the *Financial Transactions Reports Act 1988* and the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006*. The AEC provided 12 roll extracts to private sector organisations. A full breakdown of roll information provided to private sector organisations is available in [Table 38](#) in [Appendix D](#).

Support services for electoral redistributions

Electoral divisions are periodically 'redistributed' (that is, redrawn) in accordance with Part IV of the Electoral Act. The purpose of an electoral redistribution is to ensure that, as nearly as practicable, there are an equal number of voters in each electoral division for a given state or territory.

Redistributions concluded in 2015–16

As a result of three redistributions that concluded in 2015–16, changes were made to the names and boundaries of some electoral divisions in New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. [Table 12](#) sets out the milestones in each of these three redistribution processes.

More information on these redistributions and associated name changes is available in the 'Redistributions in 2015–16' Spotlight on [page 44](#).

Table 12: Summary of electoral redistributions concluded in 2015–16

	New South Wales	Western Australia	Australian Capital Territory
Basis for Electoral Commission's determination triggering a redistribution	Decreased entitlement to House of Representatives electoral divisions (from 48 to 47)	Increased entitlement to House of Representatives electoral divisions (from 15 to 16)	More than seven years had elapsed since the last redistribution was determined. The ACT retained its entitlement to two members of the House of Representatives
Direction to commence redistribution	1 December 2014	1 December 2014	1 December 2014
Release of Redistribution Committee's proposed redistribution	16 October 2015	21 August 2015	11 September 2015
Public input relating to the proposed redistribution	791 written objections were received between 16 October and 13 November 2015 26 written comments on objections were received between 16 November and 27 November 2015	28 written objections were received between 21 August and 18 September 2015 10 written comments on objections were received between 21 September and 2 October 2015	29 written objections were received between 11 September and 9 October 2015 Five written comments on objections were received between 12 October and 23 October 2015
Augmented Electoral Commission activities	Inquiries held: 30 submissions were made at the inquiry held in Sydney and 18 submissions were made at the inquiry held in Port Macquarie Decision: Adopt the proposed redistribution, with changes Announcement of decision: 14 January 2016	Inquiries held: Six submissions were made at the inquiry held in Perth Decision: Adopt the proposed redistribution, with changes Announcement of decision: 5 November 2015	Inquiries held: Seven submissions were made at the inquiry held in Canberra Decision: Adopt the proposed redistribution Announcement of decision: 24 November 2015
Gazettal of determination of names and boundaries of electoral divisions	25 February 2016	19 January 2016	28 January 2016

Redistributions begun in 2015–16

The redistribution of federal electoral divisions in the Northern Territory commenced on 15 October 2015 because seven years had elapsed since the previous redistribution was determined. The Northern Territory retained its entitlement to two members of the House of Representatives.

The Redistribution Committee for the Northern Territory received six suggestions to the redistribution and one comment on suggestions. It will release a report detailing its proposed redistribution of the Northern Territory in 2016–17.

Deferral of redistribution

A redistribution of Tasmania was due to start within 30 days of 16 February 2016, as seven years had elapsed since the last redistribution of Tasmania was determined. However, the Electoral Act prevents redistributions from commencing in the 12 months before the expiry of the House of Representatives. The redistribution of Tasmania will commence

within 30 days of the first sitting day of the new House of Representatives following the 2016 federal election.

Assistance provided by the AEC

The AEC provides administrative assistance to the two bodies established to conduct each redistribution:

- The **Redistribution Committee**, which is responsible for making a proposed redistribution, is comprised of the Electoral Commissioner, the relevant Australian Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor-General (or equivalent officer) and the Auditor-General of the relevant state or territory.
- The **augmented Electoral Commission**, which considers any objections to a proposed redistribution, and makes a final determination of the names and boundaries of the redistributed electoral divisions. It is comprised of the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, the non-judicial member of the Electoral Commission and the members of the Redistribution Committee.

The AEC assisted the Redistribution Committees for New South Wales, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, and the augmented Electoral Commissions for New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, by:

- analysing demographic and enrolment data
- facilitating the public consultation process
- providing support for committee meetings
- producing and publishing (including on the AEC website) information about the redistribution process
- preparing legal instruments, background research papers, analysis of public submissions and material for publication in the *Commonwealth Government Notices Gazette*.

SPOTLIGHT

Electronic Certified Lists

Electronic Certified Lists (ECLs) allow AEC staff and polling officials to, among other things, look up, in real-time, a person's electoral enrolment on an electronic database and electronically mark off their name.

Other benefits of ECLs include:

- looking up electors on a national roll to determine their correct division
- the ability to print House of Representatives ballot papers on demand rather than needing to have ballot papers for 150 divisions on hand

- providing daily statistics on ordinary voting at pre-poll centres and the issuing of declaration votes, facilitating electoral roll integrity and reducing errors
- reducing the risk of multiple voting.

At the 2013 federal election, the AEC piloted the use of ECLs in selected locations to introduce efficiencies into the process to find and mark voters off the electoral roll.

The Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) considered the use of ECLs in its inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 election (*Second interim report on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 federal election: An assessment of electronic voting options*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2014). The Committee recommended that the AEC deploy ECLs where possible to all pre-poll voting centres and all mobile voting teams at

the next federal election. The JSCEM also recommended that ECLs be progressively implemented with a view to eventual replacement of paper lists at all polling places.

An AEC evaluation of ECL usage at the 2013 federal election pilot (and in line with the 2014 JSCEM recommendations) found that allocating ECLs by polling type rather than specific areas or divisions offered the most benefit in particular, allocating ECLs to pre-poll voting centres and mobile teams.

At both the Canning by-election (September 2015) and North Sydney by-election (December 2015) all polling places, early voting centres, and mobile polling teams used ECLs to issue ordinary votes to electors. Training was provided to all polling officials using ECLs for the by-elections. Every polling place was also provided with a contingency supply of materials required to conduct polling in case of ECL failure.

Ahead of the 2016 federal election, 1 544 ECLs were deployed (around double the number used in the 2013 election) as shown in the table.

The AEC will review its use of ECLs in delivering streamlined processes and electoral integrity as part of its evaluation of the 2016 federal election.

Deployment of Electronic Certified Lists (ECLs) for the 2016 federal election

Quantity	Location
51	Static super-booths in Sydney and Brisbane to enable ballot paper print on demand to help streamline voting
1 031	Pre-Poll Voting Centres (PPVCs) with a high estimated number of ordinary votes expected (13 500+)
149	PPVCs with a high estimated volume of declaration votes expected
78	All remote mobile teams to provide the ability to search for electors by location/establishment and immediacy of access to marks
191	Rural mobile teams (e.g. for hospitals in rural areas)
44	Spare ECLs in case of technical issues (and to further support polling activity)

During April 2016, the AEC sent letters to more than 670 000 households in New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory advising that all enrolled residents at the address were now enrolled for a different electoral division as a result of the redistribution in their respective state or territory. Notices advising of changes to the names and boundaries of electoral divisions were also placed in newspapers circulating throughout New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Party registrations and financial disclosure

Register of Political Parties

The AEC maintains the Register of Political Parties as required under Part XI of the Electoral Act and provides political parties with advice on how to apply for and maintain registration.

It also receives and processes applications for party registration, reviews political parties' eligibility to remain on the Register, and updates contact details for party officials.

Political parties are not required to register with the AEC. However, those that register can be eligible for public election funding (provided a threshold proportion of first preference votes is received), and can have the party name and logo printed on ballot papers. Benefits and obligations of party registration are outlined in the Party Registration Guide available on the AEC website.

The AEC provides updated party registration information on its website including:

- the current Register of Political Parties (including registered party names, optional abbreviations, logos, registered officer details and whether the party wishes to receive election funding)
- notices regarding party registration required under the Electoral Act
- historical information
- the Party Registration Guide
- statements of reasons for decisions on particular applications
- forms and explanations to help parties making applications.

Party-registration-related applications and requests

The number of party-registration related applications or requests in 2015–16 (Table 13) was almost double that of 2014–15. This was principally due to the March 2016 amendments to the Electoral Act which, among other things, enabled registered political parties to apply to register a logo and have it appear adjacent to their candidates' names on the House of Representatives ballot paper and adjacent to their party or group name above the line on the Senate ballot paper. Other increases were within the normal pattern of fluctuations during the electoral cycle.

The (three-person) Electoral Commission reviewed three decisions to deregister a party. Of these applications, one party registration was reinstated and two reviews were still in progress at 30 June 2016. Further details are available on the [AEC website](#).

Table 13: Party-registration-related applications and requests, 2015–16

Application/request type	Received
Register a political party	20
Voluntarily deregister political party	0
Change party details (including name, abbreviation and logo)	78
Change party abbreviation	0
Update party office holder information – change registered officer	37
Update party office holder information – change other party officials	147
Change other party details	21
Review of decision of Commissioner's delegate – refusal to change registered officer	0
Review of decision of Commissioner's delegate – party deregistration	3

SPOTLIGHT

Electoral enrolment rate hits 95 per cent

During 2015–16 the AEC achieved an enrolment rate of 95 per cent – that is, 95 per cent of all eligible electors were enrolled to vote.

The number of missing electors (electors who should be enrolled but are not) has fallen from highs of more than 1.5 million in 2012 to 807 000 at 30 June 2016.

More than 15.6 million people are now on the roll.

Youth enrolment in particular has risen since the 2013 federal election. Young people, regardless of their generation, have traditionally had lower enrolment rates than older electors.

Direct enrolment is enrolment based on information obtained from other government agencies. This is provided for in law (the Electoral Act).

Enrolling to vote, and voting, are compulsory in Australia for Australian citizens aged 18 and over.

These improvements in elector participation have resulted in higher levels of roll integrity – in other words, roll completeness and accuracy.

These positive changes have been largely due to the AEC's digital transformation, directing electors towards the online enrolment service, and the direct update and enrolment process, rather than traditional paper forms.

Almost 80 per cent of enrolments now originate from online and direct enrolment.

The AEC writes to prospective electors to inform them that they intend to add their name to the roll or update their details, while also giving the elector an opportunity to change their details if necessary.

SPOTLIGHT

Redistributions in 2015–16

Redistributions of federal electoral divisions in New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory were completed in early 2016.

New South Wales

The New South Wales redistribution was required as the number of members of the House of Representatives to be chosen for New South Wales at the 2016 general election had decreased from 48 to 47. The Division of Hunter was abolished. However, as Hunter was first used as the name of a federal electoral division in 1901, the Division of Chariton was renamed as the Division of Hunter. In recognition of the former Prime Minister, the Hon. Edward Gough Whitlam AC, QC (1916–2014), the Division of Throsby was also renamed, becoming the Division of Whitlam.

Western Australia

The Western Australian redistribution was required as the number of members of the House of Representatives to be chosen for Western Australia at the 2016 general election had increased from 15 to 16. The new Division of Burt is located in the City of Armadale and the City of Gosnells area of the south-eastern Perth metropolitan region. The name honours succeeding generations of the Burt family for their significant contributions to the justice system and for their wider contributions to public service, specifically:

- Sir Archibald Burt (1810–1879), first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia

- Septimus Burt (1847–1919), whose public roles included that of Attorney-General of Western Australia at the time of colonial self-government
- Sir Francis Burt (1918–2004), who served as a judge of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, Chief Justice of Western Australia, and Governor of Western Australia from 1990 until 1993.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT redistribution was required as more than seven years had elapsed since the last redistribution was determined. The ACT remains entitled to two members of the House of Representatives. As well as the boundary between the two electoral divisions being altered, the Division of Fraser was renamed as 'Fenner' in recognition of Professor Frank Fenner, AC, CMG, MBE, FAA, FRS, FRACP, FRCP. Professor Fenner was an eminent scientist of national and international renown who made significant contributions to improving the wellbeing of humanity. The name 'Fraser' was retired in the ACT to provide the option in the future of naming an electoral division in Victoria after the former Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. John Malcolm Fraser, AC, CH.

Transparency of political funding

The Commonwealth funding and financial disclosure scheme, established under Part XX of the Electoral Act, outlines the requirements in relation to the disclosure of detailed financial information regarding donations to political parties and election campaigns.

The disclosure scheme requires that the following groups and individuals lodge annual or election period financial disclosure returns with the AEC:

- political candidates
- political parties and their associated entities
- donors
- other participants in the electoral process.

Financial disclosure returns

During 2015–16, the AEC received 627 annual financial disclosure returns and amendments. These included:

- 525 returns and 53 amendments for the 2014–15 financial year
- 16 returns and 24 amendments for the 2013–14 financial year
- 1 return and 8 amendments relating to returns received for years prior to 2013–14.

Political party and associated entity financial disclosure returns for 2015–16 are due on 20 October 2016. Donor and third party returns for 2015–16 are due on 17 November 2016. These returns will be published on the [AEC website](#) on the first working day in February 2017. [Table 14](#) shows the number of returns lodged for the three previous financial years.

Online lodgement of returns is available through the [AEC's eReturns system](#), which is a secure portal on the AEC website. The uptake of online lodgement has continued to increase. In 2015–16, 67 per cent of returns were completed online, compared with 64 per cent in 2014–15 and 62 per cent in 2013–14.

Compliance reviews of disclosure returns

The AEC undertakes annual compliance reviews of disclosure returns lodged by political parties and associated entities under section 316(2A) of the Electoral Act.

The AEC uses a risk-based matrix to determine which parties and entities will be selected for review. The AEC may also select parties or entities for review on the basis of professional judgment if it is in receipt of information that suggests a review is warranted.

In 2015–16, the AEC completed 28 such compliance reviews.

Table 14: Financial disclosure returns lodged and published in previous financial years

Return type	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Political party	73	92	85
Political party – amendment	29	35	41
Associated entity	185	189	186
Associated entity – amendment	16	8	18
Donor	295	360	239
Donor – amendment	35	34	26
Political expenditure	45	35	32
Political expenditure – amendment	3	3	0
Total financial disclosure returns lodged	681	756	627

Election funding

The AEC calculates the election funding rate for each vote received by candidates and Senate groups that reached a threshold of four per cent of the formal first preference vote. Every six months the election funding rate is adjusted in line with the consumer price index and published on the AEC website.

The election funding rates during 2015–16 were:

- 259.405 cents per first preference vote for 1 July to 31 December 2015
- 262.259 cents per first preference vote for 1 January to 30 June 2016.

Two federal by-elections were held during 2015–16: Canning (WA), held on 19 September 2015, and North Sydney (NSW), held on 5 December 2015. Details of election funding payments are provided in [Table 15](#) and [Table 16](#) below.

Table 15: 2015 Canning by-election payment to political parties and candidates^a

Political party	Amount
Liberal Party of Australia	\$103 014.91
Australian Labor Party	\$78 070.53
The Greens (WA) Inc.	\$12 884.65
Total	\$193 970.09

a. No independent candidate obtained the required four per cent of the formal first preference vote in order to be eligible for payment of election funding entitlements.

Table 16: 2015 North Sydney by-election payment to political parties and candidates

Political party/candidate	Amount
Liberal Party of Australia	\$95 175.69
The Greens NSW	\$31 022.24
Dr Stephen Ruff (Independent)	\$37 102.70
Total	\$163 300.63

Industrial and commercial elections

The AEC's Industrial and Commercial Elections (ICE) program comprises three types of electoral events that support Australian workplaces:

- industrial elections** in accordance with the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, the associated regulations and the relevant organisation's rules
- protected action ballots** in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009*, the associated regulations and Fair Work Commission orders
- fee-for-service** elections and ballots.

Industrial elections

Industrial elections are office bearer elections for organisations registered under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*. These organisations can be either trade unions or employer organisations.

Protected action ballots

Protected action ballots provide employees with an opportunity to formally vote on proposals for industrial action.

Fee-for-service elections and ballots

Fee-for-service elections and ballots are conducted at full cost recovery for clients who approach the AEC for such services. Authority for the AEC to perform this work is prescribed in section 7A of the Electoral Act. Authority to charge for this work is set out in section 7B.

The AEC has minimum standards that must be met before it will consider conducting fee-for-service elections or ballots. These standards are available on the AEC website. Most fee-for-service work is for the conduct of a ballot on a proposed enterprise agreement.

A total of 1 700 industrial and commercial elections (including protected action ballots) were conducted in 2015–16, compared with 1 533 the previous year. Of these elections, 273 were industrial elections, 1 303 were protected action ballots, and 124 were fee-for-service elections and ballots (including 81 certified agreement ballots) (see [Table 43](#) in [Appendix G](#) for more information).

The ICE program is guided by a specific strategic plan for 2015–2019. The key focus of this plan is to ensure that the AEC core values of electoral integrity through quality, professionalism and agility are embedded in the ICE Program.

Torres Strait Regional Authority elections

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) is an Australian Government authority. The TSRA Board consists of 20 elected members who are all Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal people living in the region. They are elected every four years by their individual communities.

The AEC delivers the TSRA Elections in accordance with the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* and *Torres Strait Regional Authority Rules 1996*. During the year preparations were undertaken for the next TSRA elections, gazetted to be held on 30 July 2016.

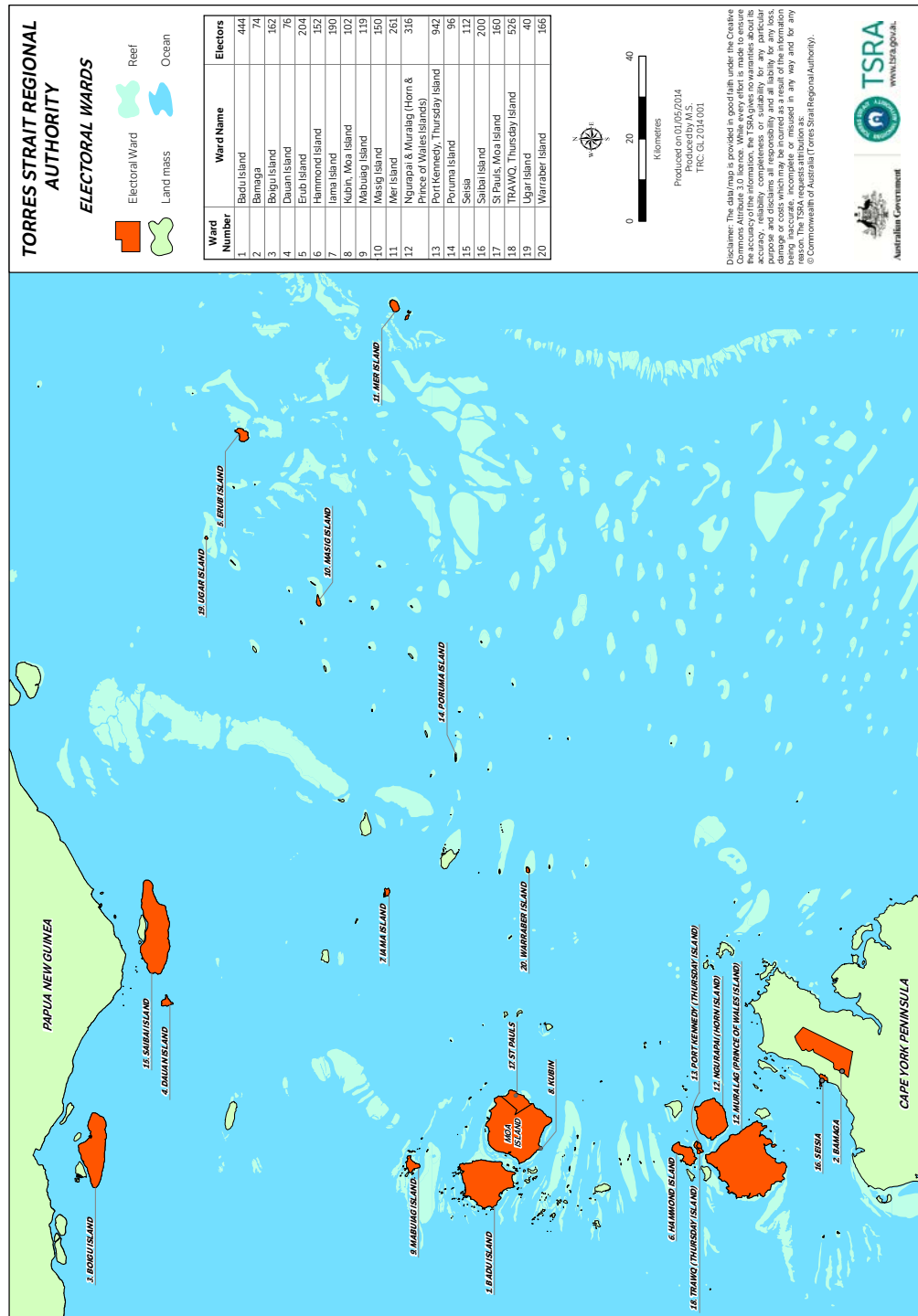
In preparing to deliver the 2016 TSRA elections the Queensland State Office project team incorporated principal elements of the AEC's reform program, and ratified delivery of the project through implementation of a memorandum of understanding with TSRA.

Key events specific to the delivery of the TSRA elections in July 2016 included:

- delivering candidate information sessions across all 20 wards
- delivering voter information sessions across all contested wards (wards are not contested if a candidate is nominated unopposed)
- producing a mobile polling schedule for visiting all contested wards
- providing three static polling places, to include sites on Thursday Island and Cape York
- post-election Board member election.

With 14 wards being contested in the 2016 elections, the AEC will be delivering mobile and static polling to the communities of Boigu, Mabuiag, Iama, Poruma, Erub, Badu, Warraber, Mer, St Pauls, Kubin, Hammond, Bamaga, Port Kennedy and TRAWQ (Communities of Tamwoy, Rosehill, Aplin, Waiben and Quarantine on Thursday Island). The following six wards will not be contested in 2016, as the nominated candidate is unopposed: Dauan Island, Masig Island, Ngurapai and Murlag, Saibai, Seisia and Ugar Island.

Figure 4: Torres Strait Regional Authority electoral wards 2016



Public awareness

The AEC conducts a range of public awareness activities to promote knowledge of, and participation in, the electoral process. These include:

- electoral education services to schools, students, teachers and the general public
- public awareness campaigns to help Australians understand and fulfil their electoral obligations
- targeted electoral services that meet the needs of people with disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- information and services that meet the needs of Indigenous Australians.
- assistance to electoral bodies overseas (with the approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs).

Education services

Outreach and online education

In July 2015 the AEC launched its new *AEC for schools* website, which provides a range of education materials for use in classrooms. The core education outreach program is 'Get Voting', which provides materials for schools to conduct their own election, teaching students about electoral processes through participation.

Key facts for 'Get Voting' for 2015–16 were:

- 18 620 online visitors
- 430 requests for election equipment packs
- school elections for 54 893 students.

We also produced a new print publication, *Voting in Australia*, a concise and simple overview of elections for students and the public. It explores the structure and workings of Australian democracy, particularly voting, in an easy and accessible way. The publication was distributed to primary and secondary schools throughout Australia.

Professional learning for teachers

The AEC delivers training to teachers to help them develop the knowledge and skills needed to teach electoral education in primary and secondary schools. For example, in 2015–16 we held:

- 10 'Voting in the classroom' workshops – 97 participants
- 3 civic education conferences – 80 participants.

In 2016 we also developed an online course for teachers. This module will be available in 2016–17.

National Electoral Education Centre

The National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC) at Old Parliament House in Canberra provides education programs for students visiting the national capital as part of their Civics and Citizenship studies.

During the year we:

- hosted visitors from 149 electoral divisions
- held 2 517 sessions
- had 87 723 participants, of which:
 - 73 505 were primary students
 - 6 451 were secondary students
 - 228 were from other groups
- collected 231 new enrolment forms.

In response to reviews conducted in 2015, parts of the NEEC were updated to modernise its presentation and educational practice. We also added new information to reflect the March 2016 changes to Senate voting.

Community engagement

Community Electoral Education Kit

A new Community Electoral Education Kit was published on the AEC website on 10 May 2016, and received over 2 500 page views in the ensuing two months.

Library voter information sessions

A new pilot voter information program was introduced during the year, in partnership with the Australian Libraries and Information Association, using the Community Electoral Education Kit. The program involved delivering voter information sessions in local libraries. In total 116 sessions were delivered in 64 libraries, in 18 languages.

Voter Information Officers

As part of the public awareness campaign surrounding the March 2016 changes to Senate voting, additional staff (Voting Information Officers) were allocated to each polling place for the 2 July 2016 federal election. Around 9 000 Voter Information Officer kits, including translated materials, were produced and despatched.

Public awareness of electoral obligations

In 2015–16 the AEC's advertising, communication and public relations strategies focused on the 2016 federal election and the 2015 by-elections in Canning and North Sydney.

Leading up to the federal election, AEC public awareness activities were concentrated on the need to inform electors about the significant changes to Senate voting that were passed by Parliament in March 2016.

In addition to the need to inform voters about the reforms to Senate voting, the AEC also delivered phased public awareness activities to ensure that eligible electors were correctly enrolled, understood their voting obligations and were able to cast a formal vote.

In addition a tailored *Our Vote Our Future* campaign was conducted to encourage Indigenous electoral participation (see 'Services for Indigenous Australians' section later in this chapter).

Senate reform and the 2016 federal election

In the months ahead of election day, the AEC conducted a national communication campaign to educate Australian electors on the changes to the Senate voting system.

The Senate campaign combined with the election time communication campaign to provide an integrated approach to all facets of communication with electors about the 2016 federal election.

The campaign was implemented in five phases, incorporating mass media advertising, public relations, media liaison and a national mail-out to all Australians in the weeks prior to election day.

Phase 1: Pre-election education on Senate reform (26 April – 10 May 2016)

The AEC commenced its new advertising campaign, *Your vote will help shape Australia*, on Tuesday 26 April with mass media advertising including television, radio, digital and press placements. The first phase focused on raising awareness of the reforms to Senate voting ahead of the formal election period.

Phases 2–5: Close of Rolls, education on Senate reform, Voter Services and Formality (May–July 2016)

With the announcement of the election on Sunday 8 May, the Close of Rolls phase began, reminding voters of the need to enrol or update their enrolment details by the 23 May deadline.

Following the conclusion of the formal Close of Rolls period, the AEC's campaign swung back to awareness of the Senate voting changes, providing an opportunity to reinforce the importance of this message within the formal electoral period. This phase ran from 29 May – 11 June 2016.

The Voter Services phase began on 15 June following the start of the early voting period, and concluded on 1 July 2016. This phase of the campaign provided information for voters who would be unable to attend a polling place on election day and needed to access alternative voting options.

The final phase of the campaign – Formality – ran in the two weeks prior to election day and focused on providing instructional information to voters on how to complete their House of Representatives and Senate ballot papers to ensure their vote would be counted. The phase also reinforced the importance of understanding the new changes to the Senate voting system.

All campaign phases used a mixture of communication channels and methods, ranging from television, radio, online and press advertising, to community based activities, social media messaging and a national mailout of election material. Advertising materials were also translated in up to 28 languages and 13 Indigenous languages.

Official guide to the 2016 federal election

Delivered to around 10 million households in the weeks prior to election day, the *Official guide to the 2016 federal election* was designed to provide specific information for voters on where, when and how they could vote. Expanded in 2016 to accommodate critical information on the Senate voting changes, the guide was also translated into 27 languages and available in braille, large print, audio and e-text versions.

Public relations and promotions

In 2015–16 the AEC implemented its national media and public relations plan for the 2016 federal election, with activities taking place in all states and territories. A highlight of the period was coverage of the remote mobile polling program. Several film crews and journalists attended a media opportunity organised by the AEC at the remote location of Bulman in the Northern Territory.

Public awareness campaign outcomes

The AEC commissioned market researcher the Wallis Consulting Group to conduct benchmarking and tracking research after each phase of campaign, to ensure the campaign was meeting its objectives.

The research recorded significant increases in understanding how to vote correctly above and below the line on the Senate ballot paper. Understanding for voting above the line increased from 45 per cent awareness before the campaign to 90 per cent after the campaign. The research also confirmed that people who recalled the AEC's communication campaign were more likely to recall the correct way to vote.

By-elections

The AEC implemented an integrated communication approach to the by-elections in Canning and North Sydney in 2015–16. At both events, the AEC provided communication products and services ranging from newspaper advertising to online search facilities, media releases and an official guide addressed and delivered to all voters in each division.

AEC website

The AEC website, www.aec.gov.au, continues to be the main external communication platform of the agency and employs a responsive design to ensure it is usable on a wide range of devices (e.g. desktop computer, tablet and mobile phone).

To support the election, the website's homepage was focused on helping users with enrolment, and in providing information about voting changes. The site complemented the new public awareness campaign (see previous section) and reflected and responded to trending issues from the election contact centre. Visitors could customise the homepage by entering a postcode. The website was also used to update the public on the progress of the count after polling day.

In 2015–16, the website had 9.5 million users, with 70 per cent of these users visiting after the election announcement.

Text-to-speech software was available on all AEC web pages via a 'Listen' button to create an audio version of the content. This new feature enhanced the experience of users with reading difficulties, English as a second language, or a disability.

AEC social media

Social media plays an integral role in the AEC's external communication activities, allowing the agency to quickly distribute messages to the public and respond to enquiries. In 2015–16 the AEC's social media presence included Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

At 30 June 2016 the AEC Facebook page had over 26 000 page likes, the Twitter account over 8 500 followers and the AEC YouTube account over 1 500 subscribers.

The AEC's Twitter account (@AusElectoralCom) was used throughout the 2015–16 financial year to communicate with what is primarily an engaged media audience. In total, we posted 163 tweets during the year. Prior to the start of the 2016 federal election, the account was used to provide information about particularly newsworthy federal electoral matters that included party registration, redistribution processes and financial disclosure. During the 2016 federal election the level of activity on the account increased significantly to proactively communicate key election information to the broader electorate and respond to the increased number of enquiries being received through the channel. Proactive communication via Twitter during the federal election period included contributing to the education campaign on the new Senate voting system.

National online and telephone enquiry services

The agency's online enquiry platform allows members of the public to directly contact the AEC via the [AEC website](#).

The AEC's national telephone service provides information and receives queries from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm on 13 23 26. The international call number is +61 2 6160 2600. People with hearing or speech impairment can contact the AEC via the National Relay Service, Text Telephone (TTY), Speak and Listen and Internet relay.

During the 2016 federal election the AEC established an election contact centre service which generally operated from 8 am to 8 pm local time seven days a week.

Publications and resources

A range of publications and resources are available at state, territory and local AEC offices. Those available online at the AEC website include corporate publications, handbooks, information reference publications, reports on federal electoral events, and public policy, research and evaluation reports.

A range of information materials were produced to support the changes to Senate voting, including a how-to-vote guide that was translated into 27 languages.

Media relations

Throughout the 2015–16 financial year the AEC interacted with the media both proactively and reactively regarding key electoral issues.

The AEC distributed 56 national media releases with the vast majority of proactive media messaging detailing key activities during by-elections in the divisions of Canning and North Sydney, as well as the 2016 federal election. The AEC also provided detailed information to the media on the redistribution processes underway in 2015 in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia, as well as the publication of political party financial disclosures in early 2016.

The level of regular media enquiries received by the AEC varies greatly depending on the electoral activity underway at the time. During the 2015–16 financial year, enquiries regarding financial disclosure requirements and redistribution processes were frequent. Throughout the 2016 federal election period the agency responded to an average of 120 enquiries per week on a range of election-related topics.

SPOTLIGHT

‘Your vote will help shape Australia’ (‘paper people’) campaign

The *Your vote will help shape Australia* campaign, run by the AEC in the lead-up to the 2016 federal election, showcased our ability to respond rapidly to a changing electoral landscape and to communicate with the Australian community in a timely, informative and effective way.

Before each federal election, the AEC conducts a national advertising campaign to inform voters of their obligations to enrol and vote. In 2016, the amendments to the Senate voting system made educating Australian voters even more critical.

The early election date after the passing of the Senate voting changes by the Parliament meant that the AEC had a limited time available to research and implement a new advertising campaign.

Research

We immediately commissioned formative research to determine voters’ understanding of the changes and participating in a federal election, their information needs and preferred communication channels. The research methodology included:

- a qualitative component via focus groups involving 354 people across seven states and territories in metropolitan, regional and remote locations
- a quantitative component with 1 600 people, including an online and telephone survey.

The research found:

- high awareness of the requirements to enrol to vote, but limited awareness of the deadline for enrolment and updating
- lower awareness of the range of voting options available
- limited understanding about how to vote correctly.

Only one-fifth of Australians were aware of the Senate voting changes.

A powerful piece of paper

Informed by this research, the AEC developed the *Your vote will help shape Australia* campaign, aiming to educate voters about the changes to Senate voting, and maximise enrolment and participation in the 2016 federal election.

The campaign creative theme showcased how powerful a piece of paper can be through the use of dynamic stop-motion animation techniques, and how ordinary Australians can have a voice in shaping Australia by participating in the federal election. Elaborately hand-crafted paper models were animated in-camera to bring to life the power of a humble piece of paper and the possibilities it represented on election day.

This creative approach gave the AEC an opportunity to provide integrated communication imagery and messaging on a national scale. Mass media advertising was combined with dedicated public relations and education activities, social media engagement, and direct communication with community groups. Indigenous Australians and Australians from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were targeted through translated advertising, public relations and direct communication.

Guide to the 2016 federal election

In the weeks prior to election day, every Australian household also received *Your official guide to the 2016 federal election* – a printed publication that included information on how to find your polling place, what to do if you could not make it on election day, and how to correctly complete both ballot papers.

Online presence

The AEC’s online presence was a critical element of the campaign, with all communication driving voters to seek more information on the AEC website. The website aligned with the campaign advertising and each phase of the election. Users could personalise the homepage to show information for their own electoral division.

Social media

The campaign was also implemented in social media, with information flowing through Facebook, Twitter and the AEC’s YouTube account. The campaign featured in Facebook Megaphone, which appeared in all Australian Facebook newsfeeds on election day so that people could share that they were voting and encourage their friends to do likewise.

Tracking the campaign

To track the success of the campaign, the AEC conducted benchmarking and tracking research after each advertising phase. Significant increases were recorded in community understanding of how to vote correctly in the Senate:

- correct responses for understanding of above-the-line rose from 45 per cent to 90 per cent
- correct responses for understanding of below-the-line rose from 40 per cent to 76 per cent.

People who recalled the AEC’s campaign and publicity were more likely to recall the correct way to vote.

By the end of the campaign, 93 per cent of people who had seen or heard the AEC’s campaign believed numbering at least six boxes above the line was valid, compared with 83 per cent for people who hadn’t seen or heard the AEC’s campaign.

In addition, 95 per cent of people were aware of the need to enrol.



Assisting Australians with diverse needs

As voting is compulsory in Australia, the AEC endeavours to meet the needs of a diverse range of people when managing electoral events and preparing information for the public. We use a range of education and communication initiatives for meeting the needs of Australians with disability (such as hearing, sight or communication impairments), people suffering disadvantage (such as homelessness), and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

People with disability

In addition to supporting the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, the agency uses a number of initiatives and outreach activities to improve awareness of, and access to, electoral services.

The AEC held a dedicated information briefing for representatives of peak disability organisations to provide details of the services available to support participation of Australians with disability in the election. The briefing also provided an opportunity for representatives to share and discuss other election-related matters of common interest.

Translation services

The AEC provides a translation service, which is outsourced to the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service (VITS). This service can also be accessed through the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's Translating and Interpreting Service.

VITS operated 16 dedicated language-specific telephone interpreter information lines and a multilanguage information line. It handled 9 016 calls in 2015–16. A total of 6 521 callers used the translator service to speak directly to AEC staff. The top three languages used were Mandarin (2 942 calls), Cantonese (1 329 calls) and Vietnamese (831 calls).

For new citizens who speak a language other than English, we also provide translated information on our website about enrolment and voting in 26 languages.

Service for voters who have a hearing or speech impairment

The AEC also provides a service for voters who have a hearing or speech impairment. The service is operated by the National Relay Service, which is managed through the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

Services for Indigenous Australians

Indigenous Electoral Participation Program

Indigenous Australians are less likely to enrol and vote than other Australians. The AEC's Indigenous Electoral Participation Program (IEPP) aims to close this gap by increasing electoral knowledge, enrolment, turnout and vote formality levels.

The IEPP is delivered in urban, regional and remote areas by 19 AEC Indigenous Community Engagement Officers, the majority of whom are Indigenous. Under the program, AEC staff work directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their local communities or in partnership with other organisations to deliver electoral services in ways that meet cultural and regional needs.

In 2015–16, IEPP activities included:

- promoting election-time jobs for Indigenous Australians through print, online and face-to-face at Indigenous employment events
- delivering face-to-face training for particular categories of election staff, such as Indigenous Voter Information Officers
- drawing on the rich community knowledge of IEPP staff to support the delivery of remote mobile polling services



Participants at Indigenous Electoral Participation Program staff conference 2016

- providing electoral information sessions at key community events, meetings, conferences and forums to raise awareness of enrolment, voting, vote formality and democratic processes
- raising public awareness for federal, state, and local elections
- contributing to the AEC's Reconciliation Action Plan and cultural awareness training and development of staff.
- 1 499 page likes on the AEC's Indigenous Facebook page. Posts reached 1 440 135 people, with 10 824 people directly engaging with the information.
- Over 50 media reports on Indigenous enrolment and voting services.

Measures of success

Measures of the AEC's successful communication with Indigenous Australians in 2015–16 included:

- Around 3 000 people enrolling online said they were prompted to enrol by the Indigenous 'Our Vote Our Future' campaign. This was an increase of over 200 per cent on those who enrolled in 2014–15 as a result of an AEC Indigenous electoral participation campaign.
- 98 168 views of the AEC's Indigenous website page at www.aec.gov.au/Indigenous, an increase of 40 per cent from 2014–15.

Using technology to support service delivery

The AEC has introduced a new Community and Stakeholder Engagement system (CaSE) which will be a 'one-stop shop' to help staff effectively plan, undertake, evaluate and report on Indigenous community and stakeholder engagement activities. CaSE was completed in June 2016 and is being implemented from 1 July 2016.

A customer relationship management component of the system enables staff to build community profiles – including details of local stakeholders and government and non-government service providers – as a basis for planning and managing community engagement visits.

The system can also be used to support targeted information dissemination and election-related activities at the local level, such as Indigenous election staff recruitment.

A data collection component provides the basis for nationally consistent program reporting, review and evaluation.

Culturally suitable polling places

In 2016, the AEC introduced a new policy to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders the opportunity to give feedback about proposed polling place venues. The policy acknowledges that Indigenous Australians are more likely to attend a polling place and vote if the venue is culturally suitable.

Program staff consulted 181 Indigenous community representatives in areas with significant numbers of Indigenous voters (where 10 per cent or more of eligible electors identified as Indigenous Australians in the 2011 Census).

Feedback received from Indigenous communities was a key consideration during the polling place selection process, along with other factors such as location, size and amenities.

A total of 198 out of 201 polling places in targeted areas were confirmed as culturally suitable.

Strategic partnerships

An AEC priority is to build and foster partnerships with government and non-government agencies to extend the reach and impact of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voters. This is particularly important in remote locations.

In 2015–16, the AEC worked with 1 626 government and non-government stakeholders to improve audience coverage and increase the reach of the IEPP.

The AEC also worked closely with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's new Regional Network to draw on its community presence and resources to more effectively engage with remote communities.

Before the 2016 election the AEC contracted the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide electoral awareness information to DHS Indigenous customers in remote areas, and to help them enrol to vote or update their details in the electoral roll. These services were provided as part of the Department's regular service delivery in remote areas. DHS's capability includes interpreter services and information on client language preferences.

The initiative yielded 1 089 enrolment transactions (386 new enrolments and 703 enrolment updates) prior to the close of rolls on 23 May 2016.

Assistance to overseas electoral management bodies

The AEC undertakes international electoral work in accordance with section 7(1)(fa) of the Electoral Act, in close cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

While the majority of funding for the AEC's international work is provided by DFAT, the AEC also works closely with counterparts in the Asian, Pacific and Southern African regions, and with other providers of international electoral assistance, including the:

- International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
- United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
- Commonwealth Secretariat (an intergovernmental organisation of which Australia is a member).

As a member of these five organisations, Australia is also a partner in 'BRIDGE' – the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections modular professional development program. In 2015–16 the BRIDGE partnership commenced an update and consolidation of the BRIDGE modules, which will be launched throughout 2016–17. The program is available online at www.bridge-project.org/en/.

Asia-Pacific

The AEC engages with electoral management bodies in the Asia-Pacific region through the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators network (PIANZEA).

In 2015–16, the AEC provided secretariat services to PIANZEA and provided DFAT-funded electoral support programs in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Nepal, Myanmar and a number of Pacific Island countries.

Indonesia

In the first three months of 2015–16 the AEC continued to maintain its relationship with Indonesia's three electoral management bodies – the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Elections Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) and the Indonesian Elections Ethics Council (DKPP) – through participation in the Australia Indonesia Electoral Support Program. The Program ended in September 2015.

In December 2015, the AEC participated in the Indonesian Head of Regional Election Visit Program at the invitation of the KPU. In April 2016, the AEC supported the delivery of BRIDGE 'Inclusion in Electoral Processes' training to KPU staff under a DFAT-funded program managed by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

Timor-Leste

The AEC worked with the electoral management bodies in Timor-Leste – the Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral (STAE) and the Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) – to continue to strengthen electoral capacity.

Papua New Guinea

The AEC's work with the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission (PNGEC) through the AEC PNGEC Twinning Program is funded by DFAT until the end of 2016. Under the program, the AEC provides targeted, short-term technical expertise, extending the long-standing arrangement that has seen the AEC assist with Papua New Guinea's electoral system since 2002. We currently provide technical assistance for electoral training.

Autonomous Bougainville Government

In 2015–16, the AEC continued to provide technical assistance to the Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner (OBEC) to support local level elections.

The program was funded by DFAT as part of the broader Australian electoral assistance program in Papua New Guinea.

SPOTLIGHT

Indigenous *Our Vote Our Future* campaign

In 2015–16, the AEC's Indigenous Electoral Participation Program (IEPP) focused its advertising, communication and public relations activities on the 2016 federal election.

In particular, the AEC's Indigenous campaign sought to ensure that all eligible Indigenous voters were enrolled before the close-of-rolls deadline and understood the changes to the voting system.

A range of tailored Indigenous communications materials were developed around the tagline 'Our Vote Our Future' and through the use of culturally appropriate visual branding. Indigenous Community Engagement Officers distributed materials through the Indigenous press, online, through relevant stakeholder organisations, and in areas with high levels of Indigenous population.

Most notably, the campaign included a series of five video messages produced for Indigenous youth by Indigenous creative agency Carbon Media and disseminated mainly through Facebook and YouTube. The videos featured high profile Indigenous personalities, including Brisbane Broncos footballer Sam Thaiday, AFL star Lewis Jetta, international model Samantha Harris and Madelaine Madden, grand-daughter of Charlie Perkins.

In 2015–16, 3 000 Indigenous Australians enrolling online said they were prompted to enrol as a result of the 'Our Vote Our Future' campaign. This was a significant increase compared with 2014–15, when

around 1 000 said they enrolled as the result of AEC Indigenous electoral participation campaigns.

Indigenous Community Engagement Officer Murray Johnston, who works out of the AEC's Perth office, confirmed that the Indigenous population aged under 25 'is difficult to reach through conventional media'.

'Using positive role models through online communities is an effective way to get young people to pay attention. In my experience Indigenous youth are very enthusiastic about high-profile personalities, particularly when it involves AFL or NRL.'



Lewis Jetta with Murray Johnston, AEC Community Engagement Officer, Perth.

Pacific Island countries

In 2015–16, the AEC provided support to Pacific Island electoral management bodies both through bilateral assistance programs and through provision of support through the PIANZEA network. Activities included:

- providing operational support to the Tonga Electoral Commission in advance of Town and District Offices elections in 2016
- supporting DFAT's electoral observation mission for snap elections in Vanuatu in January 2016
- supporting the development of electoral trainers in the Pacific through a regional 'Train the facilitator' program in August 2015
- supporting a mentoring program for the Fijian Elections Office focused on the Queensland Local Government election in March 2016
- organising a regional conference and workshops on electoral systems and disability issues for members of the PIANZEA network.

Myanmar

The AEC supported delivery of a cascade training program for polling officials in partnership with the Union Election Commission in Myanmar, ahead of historic national elections in November 2015. Together with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), AEC provided training that ultimately reached 81 000 polling station officials running some 41 000 polling stations across the country. International observers commented positively on the quality of polling operations and performance of polling officials on election day.

AEC staff were included in official Australian Government election observation teams that observed the elections in Shan and Kayin State, as well as attending polling in a variety of locations, and observing vote receipt and counting in township offices. The teams contributed to broader international observer reports through the Australian Embassy.

Nepal

The AEC program assisting the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) and staff of the Nepalese Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) finished in December 2015. At this point, the EEIC had officially opened, and, with the support of AEC educators, was delivering successful education sessions to students and other visitors. Further, the accreditation of a BRIDGE Facilitator at Accrediting Level provided the ECN with internal capacity to deliver training using their own preferred training approach.

Meetings with international counterparts

In 2015–16, senior AEC staff met with a range of international counterpart organisations. These included the:

- Commonwealth Electoral Network Steering Committee
- Electoral Commission of India
- Elections Canada
- Four Countries Conference (United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia).

Hosting international visitors

In 2015–16 the AEC hosted international study programs, delegations and visitors from Bougainville, Fiji, Korea, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, the United States, Vanuatu and Vietnam.



4

MANAGING THE AEC

8.1 years
AVERAGE LENGTH OF
SERVICE ongoing staff

616 000+ 560K calls
56K emails
ELECTION CONTACT CENTRE
ENQUIRIES 8 May – 30 June 2016

47.8 years
AVERAGE AGE
regular workforce

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We seek to ensure that our organisation is managed to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and accountability.

In the same way that the AEC strives for electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism, we also seek to ensure that the organisation itself is managed to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and accountability.

We do this in the first instance through a combination of governance mechanisms combined with ethical standards and staff consultation, plus strategic and business planning and reporting, and comprehensive

risk management. These activities are the foundation of the way we manage our resources and assets.

Assurance is provided through compliance activities such as legal services, auditing and fraud control mechanisms. And ultimately what we do is subject to considerable external scrutiny – through our customers, the public, the judiciary, various audit and integrity bodies and, on occasion, parliamentary committees and inquiries.

Governance, ethics and staff consultation

The AEC’s corporate governance arrangements are the structures and processes the senior leadership uses to monitor performance, ensure accountability and steer the agency. These structures and processes predominantly consist of the executive management structure (see Chapter 2) and a range of decision-making management committees, supported by four influential discussion forums.

Corporate governance at the AEC is underpinned by strong ethical standards, and regular consultation with staff on decisions that affect them.

Assurance activities were a focus of several management committees during 2015–16 as the agency worked to re-establish its reputation – but particularly the Business Assurance Committee, Fraud Control Committee and the Operational Compliance Group.

Management committees

Committee name	Function	Members	Meeting frequency
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Senior management team assisting the Electoral Commissioner in day-to-day and long-term management of the AEC.	Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, three First Assistant Commissioners, State Manager Victoria	Weekly
Strategic Directions Group (SDG)	Provides advice to the Electoral Commissioner on strategic planning, long-term strategic direction and the DLER. Reviews and considers long-term environmental scanning. Considers reports from Operational Compliance Group on issues and risks with potential strategic impact on the agency.	Electoral Commissioner, First Assistant Commissioner (FAC) Network Operations, FAC Electoral Operations and Reform, FAC Capability, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Information Technology, State Manager Victoria.	Regularly – usually bi-monthly

Committee name	Function	Members	Meeting frequency
Operational Compliance Group (OCG)	Monitors and drives progress against key performance indicators, compliance benchmarks and assurance frameworks. Provides advice to SDG and ELT as necessary.	Deputy Electoral Commissioner, FAC Capability, AC Disclosure, Engagement and Assurance, AC Education and Communications, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Legal Officer, State Manager Western Australia, State Manager South Australia.	Monthly
Project Board	Assesses new project proposals and advises ELT on project progress. ELT endorses, suggests changes to, or rejects new project proposals, based on advice from the Project Board. Project Board also reports to SDG and OCG as appropriate.	FAC Network Operations, Chief Finance Officer, AC Roll Management, AC Election Reform/Election Planning, Systems and Services, AC Disclosure, Assurance and Engagement, State Manager Tasmania.	Monthly
Business Assurance Committee (BAC)	Provides independent advice on the AEC’s internal audit resourcing, and coverage in relation to key risks. Approves the internal audit program. Oversees operation of audit committees and fraud control under the PGPA Act.	At least three external independent members appointed by Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, State Manager Victoria, and three advisers in 2015–16.	Quarterly
Fraud Control Committee (FCC)	Sub-committee of the BAC. Advises BAC on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the AEC’s fraud control plans, policies and procedures.	State Manager Victoria, FAC Electoral Operations and Reform, State Manager Western Australia, Territory Manager Northern Territory, Chief Legal Officer (observer), Chief Finance Officer (observer).	Quarterly
National Election Delivery Committee (NEDC)	Supports the National Election Manager (NEM) in national oversight of the agency’s election planning, preparation, delivery and coordination of activities, as set out in the Election Ready Road Map (ERRM). The NEM reports regularly on behalf of NEDC to OCG and ELT.	NEM, state and territory managers, and other senior executive staff of AEC (membership expands as election approaches).	Regularly; varies from monthly and fortnightly to weekly or daily in run-up to an election
Work health and safety (WHS) committees	National and state and territory WHS committees represent workers in WHS matters as well as monitoring, inspecting and inquiring into all aspects of work health and safety.	Chair, management representatives, employee representatives and advisers from People Services Branch.	Quarterly, with out-of-session meetings as required.

Discussion forums

With management and employees distributed across all states and territories, it is important to maintain effective internal communication to ensure agency cohesion. This is achieved at three levels of agency management via four discussion forums that incorporate the participation and feedback of senior executives and managers. These forums have been designed to facilitate information-sharing and links across the AEC's national network.

Forum name	Function	Members	Meeting frequency
Senior Executive Forum	Achieving common understanding of key agency issues among all senior executives. Focus is on information sharing and clarification of the AEC's approach. Also provides links between priority-setting and decision-making at executive level, with implementation at branch and state level.	Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, all First Assistant Commissioners and branch heads, all state and territory managers.	Monthly via teleconference, with at least one face-to-face meeting each year.
Director Operations Network	Works closely with many National Office branches and program areas to promote national consistency in the implementation of AEC policies and procedures. Informs the NEDC of potential challenges to implementation, particularly operational and strategic issues.	All Directors of Operations.	Six times a year, mostly via teleconference or video conference, with at least one face-to-face meeting.
Operations Managers Network	Encourages participation of operations managers in cultural and operational transformation. Facilitates increased collaboration, consistency and compliance across state and territory operations and the broader agency.	FAC Election Operations and Reform, and operations managers from all states and territories.	Two to five times a year, as required.
National Office Directors Network	Enables Directors in National Office to collectively influence AEC strategy and operations, put forward new ideas and opportunities, and raise any unrecognised operational risks. Also promotes engagement with other governance entities and improves relationships across the AEC.	FAC Capability; all Directors (EL2 level officers) working in National Office, Canberra.	Quarterly.

Ethical standards

The AEC's ethical standards are implicit in:

- AEC values and commitments
- the AEC's strategic planning framework
- AEC staff conduct policies (e.g. political neutrality, attendance, dress code, conflict of interest)
- the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct (reinforced in the AEC Enterprise Agreement 2011–2014).

The AEC's core values and commitments of electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism inform both strategic planning and day-to-day operations.

More information on AEC values is provided in Chapter 2, 'About the AEC'.

Electoral integrity is a particularly important aspect of the AEC's ethical standards, in accord with our focus on understanding and responding to the expectations of the public and the Australian Parliament.

Staff consultation

The AEC considers effective communication with staff as crucial to the achievement of its objectives. As a result, it manages a number of initiatives to ensure that employees' views and opinions are heard on decisions that affect them.

Consultative forums

As established in the AEC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14, national and state consultative forums support open communication and consultation. Elections are held to select employee representatives, who may self-nominate to participate.

The AEC Consultative Forum (ACF) is the national consultative body. Membership includes:

- management representation
- employee representation
- Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) representation.

The responsibilities of the ACF include:

- improving communication between employees and AEC management
- providing an opportunity for open, honest and effective communication on matters concerning the AEC nationally
- reporting to the Executive Leadership Team as necessary.

Enterprise agreement negotiations

In 2015–16, significant consultation was undertaken with staff as part of the negotiation of a new enterprise agreement. Negotiations involved employer, employee and union representatives. All negotiations were conducted in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* and the Workplace Bargaining Policy 2015. On 9 May 2016 both Houses of Parliament were dissolved and the caretaker period began. The AEC deferred voting on the enterprise agreement following advice from the Australian Public Service Commission.

State of the Service survey

The AEC's Australian Public Service (APS) employees are invited to participate in the annual State of the Service survey conducted by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). In 2016 the survey was conducted over a one-month period during May and June 2016.

The AEC's response rate in 2016 was 49 per cent, which is below the APSC's organisational target response rate of 65 per cent, and a decline from last year's agency response rate of 76 per cent. This decline was possibly due to the survey occurring partly within the 2016 federal election period, a time when employees had a heightened workload.

Each year, senior management reviews the confidential results to find out what is working well across the agency and to take action in areas that require improvement.

Other internal consultation

Other initiatives used by the AEC for staff consultation include internal surveys, workshops, dedicated email addresses for specific queries, and online discussion forums. The intranet is the AEC's key internal communications tool and is continuously improved through analysis of usage patterns and user experiences.

Strategic and business planning

Strategic planning and reporting to government

As a publicly accountable agency, the AEC has a statutory duty to professionally plan and report on its achievements each year, primarily to the Australian Parliament.

Statutory reporting includes the AEC Corporate Plan, Portfolio Budget Statements and (when required) Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements, and the Annual Report.

Corporate Plan

Our inaugural Corporate Plan 2015–19, required by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), was published in August 2015. The Corporate Plan provided a focus for the agency's work from the start of the 2015–16 financial year. It is the foundation of the agency's planning and operating framework.

The plan outlines five agency directions:

- deliver a changed model for elections and referendums
- govern the organisation for quality and assurance
- professionalise the workforce
- re-establish the reputation of the AEC
- build an agile and responsive organisation.

Portfolio Budget Statements and Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements

The purpose of Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) is to inform Senators and Members of Parliament of the proposed allocation of resources within AEC to government outcomes.

As outlined earlier in this report, the AEC has one outcome: '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'.

This outcome is delivered via one program – *Deliver electoral events* – with six areas of performance for 2015–16:

- Federal elections, by-elections and referendums
- Electoral roll management
- Support services for electoral redistributions
- Party registrations and financial disclosure
- Industrial and commercial elections
- Public awareness.

SPOTLIGHT

AEC Digital Transformation Plan

During 2015–16 the AEC developed its Digital Transformation Plan as part of the broader whole-of-government Digital Transformation Agenda.

As a customer-focused organisation, the AEC seeks to provide electors with the services they want via the channels they prefer, subject to legislative requirements.

The AEC began its digital transformation journey some time ago. The digital services in place for electors to enrol, check and update their enrolment are now mature and well-used, with around 80 per cent of enrolment-related transactions being conducted online. Feedback from electors has been overwhelmingly positive.

The AEC's vision for digital transformation, as set out in the AEC Digital Transformation Plan, is for electors to choose the AEC's digital services because they are accessible, trusted and easy to use. We will achieve this by:

- designing digital services with a focus on elector experience
- offering electors digital services first in preference to other channels while continuing to offer alternative channels for as long as electors require them
- making our digital services meet the accessibility and diversity needs of electors both directly and through partner organisations
- building organisational capability through communicating this vision internally, and including digital transformation in the AEC's governance arrangements.

The Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) inform Senators, Members of Parliament and the public of changes since the Budget to the proposed allocation of AEC resources to government outcomes. PAESs are only issued if there are changes that the government has agreed to.

Annual Report

The primary purpose of the Annual Report is accountability, to the Parliament in particular. The Annual Report serves to inform Parliament, the public and all stakeholders about the performance of the AEC in relation to activities undertaken, and especially in relation to the activities and directions set out in our Portfolio Budget Statements and Corporate Plan. The Annual Report is also a key reference document and historical record.

Business planning

The work of the AEC is also set out in a comprehensive range of business planning documents, many of which have associated internal monitoring and reporting mechanisms. These documents are listed in [Table 17](#).

Table 17: Business planning documents

Document	Purpose	Reviewed
Planning, Performance and Reporting Framework	Supports staff in planning and delivering outcomes specified in the AEC Corporate Plan, as well as managing resources and finances. Supports numerous sections of the PGPA Act. Progress against key performance indicators is measured and monitored regularly to ensure priorities are met in the timeframes indicated, and within budget.	Annually
Branch, and state and territory business plans	These plans align branch, and state and territory activities with the Planning Performance and Reporting Framework.	Annually
Election Readiness Framework	Sets out and monitors the program of activity required to maintain election readiness.	Every election cycle
Information Technology Strategic Plan	Sets out the AEC's desired information technology vision to 2020. Supported by the IT Architecture Plan.	Annually
Digital Transformation Plan	Sets out the AEC's vision for digital transformation and providing electors with accessible, trusted and easy-to-use digital services.	Annually
Fraud Control Plan	Provides a tailored solution for preventing, detecting and responding to fraud in accordance with relevant Commonwealth law, fraud control policies and memorandums of understanding.	Every two years
Strategic Risk Management Plan	Details strategic risks that affect the AEC and specifies how these risks will be managed.	Annually
Assurance Plan	Outlines assurance activities that target the AEC's key/high risk business processes.	Annually
Internal Audit Plan	Sets out the AEC's internal audit program for the financial year (contained within the Assurance Plan).	Annually
Business continuity plans	Ensures continuation of identified critical business functions during and following a critical incident that causes disruption to normal operations.	Every three years (or sooner in the event of a major restructure)
Disability Inclusion Strategy	Identifies target outcomes from the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 relevant to the AEC.	2020
Diversity Strategy	Sets out activities to recognise and value diversity in the workplace.	Every four years
Reconciliation Action Plan	Sets out activities to recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in internal and external arrangements and activities.	Every three years
Property Plan	Provides direction for long-term management of leased property.	Annually
Security Plan	Sets out strategies to protect staff, visitors, information, equipment and premises against harm, loss, interference and compromise.	Bi-annually

SPOTLIGHT

IT Strategic Plan maps technology future for AEC

One of the AEC's key achievements during the year was the development and release of our IT Strategic Plan 2015–2020.

Information technology is a 'critical enabler' for the AEC – it underpins the delivery of safe, transparent and efficient modern elections. It can also make engaging with the AEC easier and more convenient for voters and prospective voters.

Some of the innovations in the IT Strategic Plan have already had these effects on our processes:

- **Faster** – changes to our major enrolment systems have improved performance. During the close-of-rolls period prior to the 2016 federal election, we at one point handled 33 912 online enrolment forms and 9 805 other enrolments in an hour, consistently averaging 2.5 seconds for an application verification.
- **Easier to use** – rationalised and simplified tally room functionality and implemented a new election dashboard providing better near-real-time stats. An essential tool during the close of rolls period.
- **Reliable** – we delivered a new component of our processing system for 'silent' voters (voters who cannot have their addresses openly available on the electoral roll for security and other reasons). It incorporated the scanning of silent documentation for secure online storage, as well as automated letter generation and processing.

- **Modernised** – as set out in the Plan, from mid-November 2015 to March 2016 we rolled out 1 000 new desktops, 500 laptops and associated hardware such as servers, switches, uninterruptible power supply units, and barcode scanners for AEC staff Australia-wide.

- **More efficient and transparent** – enabled the scanning of postal votes and Senate ballot papers, and extended the use of electronic certified lists.

- **Safer** – successfully implemented an agency-wide desktop infrastructure refresh that introduced a number of security enhancements to the AEC standard operating environment, designed to offer greater protection against cyber security threats.

The AEC IT Strategic Plan continues to 2020. In the immediate future we hope to see the following innovations:

- web hosting in the cloud
- better mobile election solutions
- more modern IT platforms
- less reliance on legacy systems
- innovative data solutions.

Risk management and business continuity

The AEC is committed to integrating risk management principles and practices into its business processes. A range of initiatives guide the work of the AEC in its commitment to minimising risk and ensuring business continuity.

Addressing risk

Risk management allows the AEC to better understand the choices faced in allocating resources in support of its corporate plan. It also improves decision-making, performance and accountability, and acts to minimise losses and maximise opportunities for the agency.

Accordingly, risk assessments and risk management processes are incorporated into all critical activities of the agency. A Strategic Risk Management Plan and the Risk Management Policy set the risk environment in which the AEC operates. The Strategic Risk Management Plan is supported by operational and project risk assessments. All risk assessments are recorded in an Enterprise Risk Register (see next section).

There is monthly risk management reporting to the Executive Leadership Team and other internal business and operational groups at the AEC.

Further, the AEC contributes to the annual Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking Survey, with the 2016 results showing the AEC comparing well with like organisations, and making significant improvements since the previous year. In 2015–16 the AEC's risk management maturity level improved from systematic to integrated.

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

- increased education and empowerment of staff

- use of key risk indicators and near-miss data
- investigating and implementing dedicated risk management software.

Risk register

In 2015–16, the enterprise risk register continued to provide a central platform for employees and management to record, assess and manage risks. By providing a snapshot of identified risks and management strategies, the register supported the agency in identifying, resolving and mitigating both operational and strategic risks.

Business assurance

The 2015–16 AEC Assurance Plan set out our proposed audit and assurance activity for the year. It was designed to provide assurance to the AEC Executive and the Business Assurance Committee that:

- appropriate controls were in place over key/high risk business processes
- the effectiveness of these controls is continuously monitored

The Assurance Plan was based on the AEC's risk exposure as identified in the 2014–15 Strategic Risk Management Plan and a range of environmental factors following the 2013 federal election, including:

- ANAO audits, AEC internal audits and the Keelty Report
- the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) reports into the 2013 federal election.

The Assurance Plan also continued assurance work delivered through the annual Internal Audit Plan completed in previous years.

As a federal election was expected during 2016, the Assurance Plan was particularly targeted toward key election and election planning activities.

Business continuity

The AEC's approach to business continuity management is based on maintaining the reliability of functions that are critical to our operations. A range of plans and initiatives, guided by the AEC Business Continuity Management Policy and Framework, address the agency's need to respond appropriately to disruptive events, maintain reporting lines and efficiently deliver critical services.

The AEC Business Continuity Management Policy was updated in February 2016 and a new Business Continuity Management Handbook was developed to assist staff to understand and apply business continuity management processes.

Managing resources, assets and procurement

The AEC manages a diverse portfolio of resources and assets throughout offices at the national, state/territory and divisional level. These include human resources, such as the agency's regular and casual workforce, as well as physical assets such as office equipment, and information assets such as technology services.

In managing its assets the AEC also manages a range of procurement activities, including tenders, consultancies and contracts. The AEC works to ensure that the value of procurement contracts held with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) exceeds the government target of 10 per cent.

The AEC also has an obligation to manage its environmental performance. We have to manage our resources and assets in a sustainable manner that adheres to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* by minimising impact to the environment, reducing waste and conserving energy use.

Human resources

AEC employees are located throughout Australia in a network of divisional, state and territory offices, including a national office in Canberra.

As at 30 June 2016, the AEC had a regular workforce of 1 020 staff, a casual workforce of 1 204 irregular or intermittent staff, plus a temporary election workforce of over 70 000 polling officials.

Recruiting, developing and retaining a professional and capable workforce is a key strategy for our agency. We aim to entrench a culture of quality, agility and professionalism to support electoral integrity. This is achieved through developing core skills, capability training and by providing the necessary tools for staff to become more adaptive to change by being flexible and innovative when facing an uncertain and demand-driven environment.

Working arrangements

Employment agreements

AEC Enterprise Agreement

The AEC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14 covers the majority of AEC staff. The AEC Enterprise Agreement nominally expired on 30 June 2014 and has not yet been replaced – see 'Governance, ethics and staff consultation' section earlier in this chapter for more information.

Section 24(1) determinations

In 2015–16, the terms and conditions of employment of nine employees, predominantly senior executive service (SES) officers, were set by individual determinations by the agency head (the Electoral Commissioner) under section 24(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. A revision of the determination template was made during the course of the year, in order to reflect better practice provision. All SES staff have entered into a new arrangement.

Collective Determination under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918

The AEC has a Collective Determination for staff engaged under the Electoral Act. The Collective Determination covers temporary staff such as polling officials for the election period only, and sets terms and conditions, hourly rates of pay and other entitlements.

These terms and conditions are set by the Electoral Commissioner under section 35 of the Electoral Act. The Collective Determination was updated for use during the 2016 federal election to reflect required legislative changes to salary and superannuation, and to accommodate revised allowances and training requirements.

Individual flexibility arrangements

To meet the needs of the AEC and individual employees, under the AEC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14 the Electoral Commissioner may agree to individual flexibility arrangements with employees, covering one or more of the following conditions:

- working hours
- overtime rates
- penalty rates
- allowances
- remuneration
- leave.

During 2015–16 the Electoral Commissioner agreed to 29 new individual flexibility arrangements, all of which were still active as at 30 June 2016. The majority of these reflected the ongoing need to recognise the particular needs of both the individuals and the AEC.

Employee non-salary benefits

AEC staff receive a range of non-salary benefits, consisting of leave arrangements, provision for separation and redundancy benefits, plus superannuation. This information is listed in the Notes to the Financial Statements section of this report.

Statutory appointees and executive remuneration

The Remuneration Tribunal determines the remuneration of the Electoral Commissioner under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973*.

Other statutory appointees are part of the principal executive officer structure under the Remuneration Tribunal Act. The Electoral Commissioner determines the remuneration and conditions afforded to these appointees, within parameters set by the Remuneration Tribunal. [Table 18](#) illustrates the salary ranges for each classification of statutory appointees and senior executive staff.

Table 18: Salary bands for statutory appointees and senior executive staff effective 30 June 2016

Number of staff ^a	Remuneration band ^b
1	\$300 000–350 000
6	\$180 000–299 999
5	\$150 000–179 999
8	\$0–149 999

- a. Includes staff acting in positions at 30 June 2016.
- b. Bands do not reflect total remuneration rates; they include salary for superannuation purposes but do not include other components of salary packaging.

Performance management

AEC performance management covers all ongoing and non-ongoing employees employed under the Public Service Act, and forms part of the AEC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14. Managers and employees work together to ensure that:

- the nature and standard of work requirements are clearly articulated
- performance is reviewed regularly, in line with expectations
- regular feedback is provided
- individual development needs are agreed upon and actioned.

Salary progression in the AEC within salary classification bands is subject to meeting standards set out in the performance management program.

Performance pay

In 2015–16, performance bonuses were not offered to any employees.

AEC workforce statistics

As at 30 June 2016, the AEC workforce consisted of:

- a regular workforce of 1 013 ongoing and non-ongoing APS employees and 7 employees engaged under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (statutory office holders)
- a casual workforce of 1 204 irregular or intermittent employees.

Tables provided at [Appendix F](#) provide a further breakdown of the AEC workforce.

Regular workforce

The AEC’s regular workforce is spread across the AEC network of national, state, territory and divisional offices.

A range of tables and figures provide specific workforce information within this section of the report. Percentages of male and female staff, from 2013–14 to 2015–16, are shown in [Figure 5](#). The age profile of AEC employees is shown in [Figure 6](#).

The majority of staff in the AEC are female, but for the first time in over a decade there has been a decrease in the proportion of females, from 68.2 per cent in 2014–15 to 64.6 per cent in 2015–16.

The largest segment of the AEC’s regular workforce is in the range of 50 to less than 55 years, and 62.2 per cent are aged 45 and over, as shown in [Table 19](#). The average age of the AEC’s regular workforce has increased, rising from 47.3 to 47.8 years in the last 12 months.

Figure 5: The regular workforce by gender 2013–14 to 2015–16

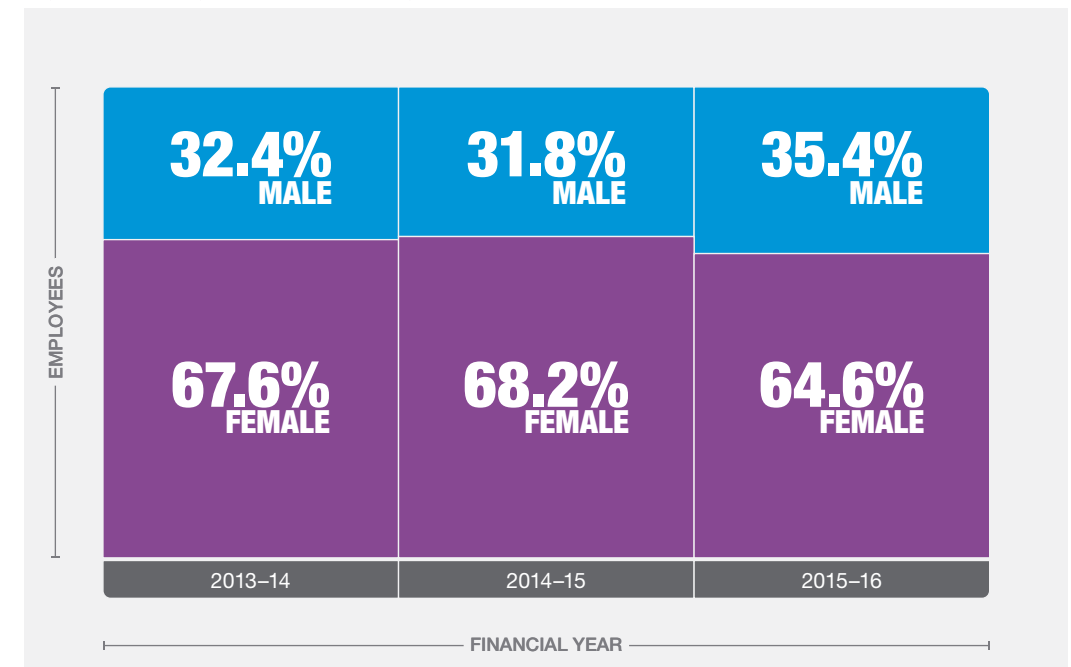


Figure 6: The regular workforce by age group as at 30 June 2016

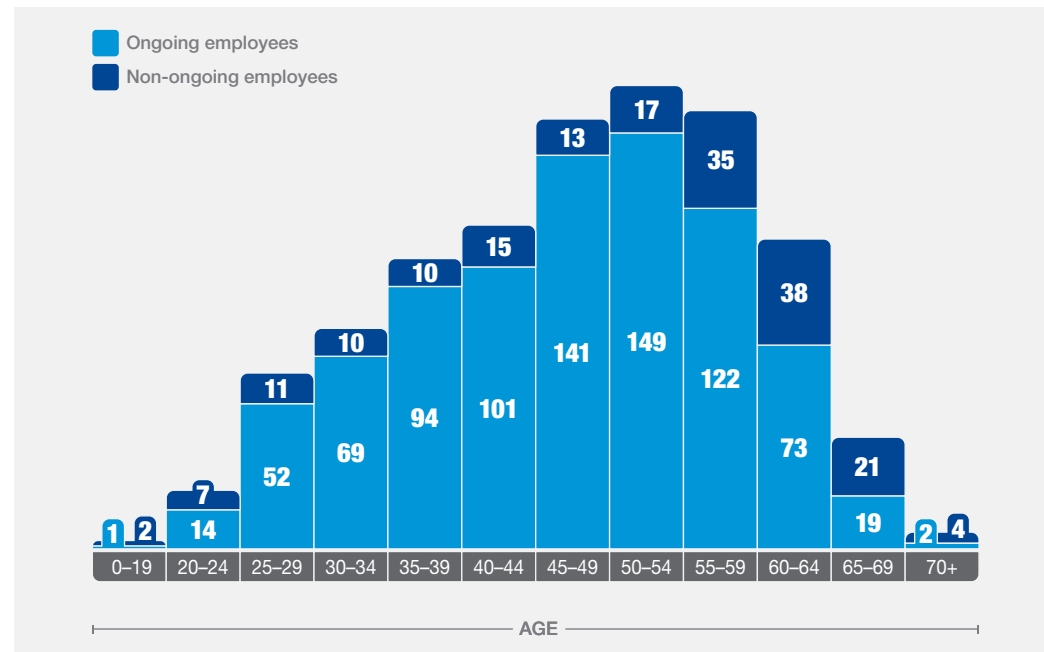
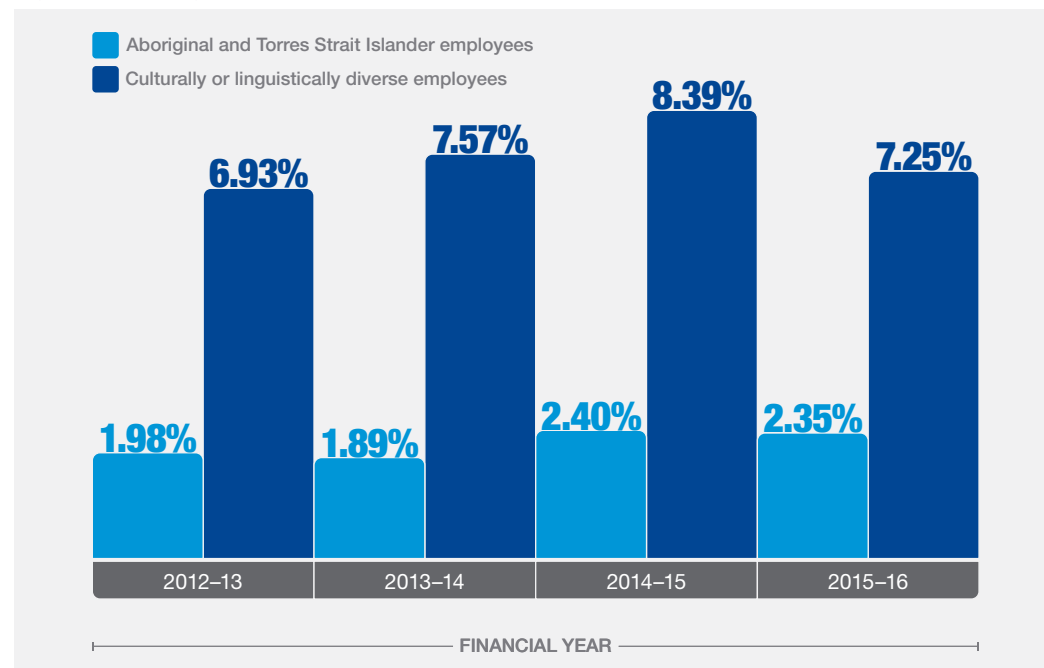


Figure 7: AEC regular workforce by diversity 2012–13 to 2015–16



The number of non-ongoing employees increased at 30 June 2016 compared to the same time last year. This was principally due to the engagement of additional non-ongoing staff to assist with the 2016 federal election.

Table 19 provides a snapshot of the AEC's regular workforce profile.

Irregular or intermittent employees

At 30 June 2016, the AEC had an available casual workforce of 1 204 irregular or intermittent staff. Employed mostly at the APS 1 level, the casual employees were largely working in divisional offices assisting with workloads arising from the 2016 federal election. A breakdown of this workforce is provided in Table 20.

Indigenous employees

In 2015–16, 2.4 per cent of the regular AEC workforce self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Figure 7 provides further information on AEC staff who self-identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Indigenous election workforce

The AEC is committed to creating a staffing profile at polling places that reflects the cultural diversity of the communities it serves throughout Australia.

Post-election evaluations show that the recruitment of Indigenous polling officials has a positive impact on increasing Indigenous voter turn-out and formality of votes, as well as creating employment opportunities and stimulating interest in the democratic process for those employed, and their families and friends.

Since 2010, AEC recruitment activities have resulted in an increasing number of Indigenous election staff. At the 2013 federal election the AEC almost doubled the number of Indigenous polling officials employed in the 2010 election. Over 70 more Indigenous election staff were expected to be employed at the 2016 federal election compared with 2013.

Table 19: AEC regular workforce profile as at 30 June 2016

AEC workforce segment	Workforce statistic
Full-time	94.2%
Linguistically diverse background	7.3%
Female	64.6%
Average age	47.8 years
45 years and over	62.2%
Staff turnover	19.9%
Average length of AEC service for ongoing staff	8.1 years

Table 20: Intermittent or irregular employees by classification

Classification	Number of employees
APS 1	1 118
APS 2	15
APS 3	46
APS 4	11
APS 5	2
APS 6	10
EL 1	2
Total	1 204

APS = Australian Public Service, EL = Executive Level

SPOTLIGHT

Reconciliation Action Plan

The AEC Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2016–2018 was launched during National Reconciliation Week in May 2016. The RAP advocates a united approach to reconciliation that every employee supports and actively contributes to.

Through the 2016–18 RAP, the AEC will:

- strengthen our reputation as an employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ensure our staff are culturally aware and equipped to communicate effectively and to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ensure our services are effective, culturally appropriate and accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- strengthen our relationships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within which we deliver services.



Keynote address by Brett Hill, Team Leader, Indigenous Electoral Participation Program, AEC

Disability reporting

As disability reporting to the Council of Australian Governments now occurs through the National Disability Strategy, within the *State of the Service* report, the specific requirement for disability reporting in individual Commonwealth agency annual reports has been discontinued. The *State of the Service* report is available at www.apsc.gov.au.

The National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 sets out a 10-year national policy framework to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. A high-level two-yearly report now tracks progress against each of the six outcome areas of the Strategy, and is available at www.dss.gov.au.

Recruitment and employee retention

Recruiting employees

We continue to review and optimise relevant recruitment guidelines, processes and procedures.

In early 2016, the AEC processed a high volume of requests for temporary or casual employment in readiness for the 2016 federal election.

Job advertising

The AEC's total advertised vacancies (ongoing and non-ongoing positions) grew from 135 in 2014–15, to 178 in 2015–16. This was due to the lifting of interim restrictions on recruitment in the APS, and to meet the requirement to have sufficient staff in readiness for the 2016 federal election.

Graduate program

The AEC welcomed five graduates into the agency as part of the 2016 graduate program. The group made it through a competitive recruitment process and joined us with high levels of education, skills and experiences in a wide variety of areas.

AEC graduate recruits rotate through three placements, predominantly in branches located in the national office in Canberra. The placements are designed to provide them with valuable skills and experience, and foster a well-rounded appreciation for the work done across the AEC.

This year, the placements included participation in the lead-up to and during the 2016 federal election. Positioned all over Australia, graduates contributed to many aspects of election preparation and delivery, including training our temporary workforce, candidate nominations, recruitment, polling, declaration exchange and return of materials.

AEC graduates also participate in the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Graduate Development Program, which includes working collaboratively on a major project. The 2016 AEC Graduates have been asked to explore options for the development of agency capability in the form of exercises and rehearsals in the lead-up to an electoral event.

Retaining employees

Retention rate

The AEC's retention rate for ongoing staff in 2015–16 was 85.6 per cent, a decrease from 95.5 per cent in 2014–15. The AEC's ongoing employee retention rate fluctuates year-on-year but on average is around 90 per cent.

State of the Service employee survey results

The AEC's 2015 State of the Service employee survey results showed improvements in employee engagement levels across all elements of engagement, and an increase in satisfaction with the agency's overall performance. In particular, survey respondents indicated they were more satisfied in 2015 than in 2014 with their immediate supervisor and senior leaders, and with their access to effective learning and development.

The survey results also highlighted areas for development such as:

- opportunities for career progression and talent development
- improving internal communication
- managing employee wellbeing.

Support of the Carer Recognition Act 2010

The AEC does not have any obligations with regard to the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*, as the agency is not defined in the *Public Service Act 1999* as being responsible for the development, implementation, provision or evaluation of policies, programs or services directed to carers or the persons for whom they care.

As a public service agency, however, the AEC does support employees with caring responsibilities as outlined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*. Employees are eligible for Paid Personal Leave (Carer's), under Clause 69.7 of the AEC Enterprise Agreement 2011–14, to provide care or support to those they are responsible for in the case of personal illness, injury or unexpected emergency.

Learning and development

The approach to learning by AEC employees has evolved significantly since the launch of our Learning and Development (L&D) Blueprint in July 2014, which guides staff learning and development at the AEC.



2016 Graduate Recruits Romeo Luka, Leigh Hill, Jarred Davis, Julie Igglesden and Rachel Dieckmann

AEC Learning

'AEC Learning', the AEC's new learning management system, was launched in early 2015. It represents a new online approach to the way APS employees engage in learning and development in the AEC, and was the first major learning and development initiative to emerge from the L&D Blueprint. AEC Learning offers a range of self-paced and instructor-led courses, available through the AEC intranet, designed to enhance overall workforce capability and professionalism.

Election training review development

In November 2014 the AEC undertook a full review of technical election training to better prepare both APS employees and polling officials for the operational demands of increasingly complex elections. A new Election Training Curriculum was subsequently developed. For the 2016 election, we developed and released 113 module components for APS employees, and 19 polling official modules (e-learning and face-to-face).

Certified Trainer Program

The delivery of consistent high-quality training is a vital part of the AEC's ability to deliver successful elections. The Certified Trainer Program was designed to create a pool of trainers from across the AEC with the skills and knowledge to provide effective and engaging

training. In preparation for the 2016 election, the program was delivered to 340 participants, and a further 28 AEC employees received recognition of prior learning. This equated to 310 trainers endorsed to deliver polling official programs and 45 trainers that were certified to deliver the Election Readiness Program as well as polling official programs.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning remains a crucial element in the successful delivery of electoral services in the AEC. Managing an ongoing workforce of over 1 000 employees, in addition to a temporary election workforce of over 70 000 employees, requires careful planning and consideration.

As with other areas of the AEC, much of the attention for the 2015–16 period was focused on the lead-up to the 2016 federal election. In the past year we have continued our substantial reform journey to build and embed consistent workforce planning methodology across all levels of the agency. The 2016 phase of the workforce planning project expanded on earlier work (committed to in 2014–15), and formalises the connection between divisional, state and national office workforce planning risks and strategies.

Key activities included:

- developing workforce planning resources such as templates, guidance material, and data sources
- delivering face-to-face and virtual workforce planning workshops
- developing a governance framework and planning infrastructure
- facilitating and supporting the completion of divisional and state and territory workforce plans
- supporting the implementation of divisional workforce plans through the Home Visit project
- developing a National Workforce Strategy, which supports workforce planning activities at division and state levels
- completing a suite of comprehensive role profiles for ongoing and non-ongoing APS and temporary (election critical) roles.

Work health and safety

The AEC recognises its responsibility to positively influence the work health and safety (WHS) of employees, and to provide a safe environment for members of the public who enter AEC premises, including leased premises used as polling places during an electoral event.

WHS outcomes

The AEC complies with its obligations under both the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* by ensuring there are appropriate systems that actively monitor, evaluate and maintain health, safety and welfare across all aspects of business. [Table 21](#) provides a summary of ongoing AEC workplace health and safety outcomes during the year.

Claims management

The AEC's management of work health and safety claims during the year consisted of:

- 14 new cases for compensation (of which 9 were accepted by Comcare)
- 27 continuing cases for compensation
- 41 new cases of non-compensable injuries
- 11 continuing cases of non-compensable injuries.

[Table 22](#) shows the number of new claims managed over the past three years, reported for the year in which management commenced.

Health and wellbeing programs

The AEC encourages its employees to pursue healthy lifestyles with the following range of elective health and wellbeing programs:

- the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- annual influenza vaccinations
- quit smoking programs
- workstation assessments and provision of recommended ergonomic equipment
- eyesight testing reimbursements
- financial support for early intervention on health matters.

The EAP provides free, confidential support services that address a range of health and wellbeing issues. In 2015–16 the EAP utilisation rate for new AEC referrals was 5.89 per cent.

Physical assets

The physical assets of the AEC include equipment located at offices throughout Australia. ICT infrastructure, machines, equipment and office fitouts are managed on an 'end of life' or 'end of lease' schedule. Comprehensive service and maintenance agreements are used where they represent value-for-money, to ensure all assets are fully functional and perform at optimal levels.

Office fit-outs

In 2015–16 four fit-outs were completed: an additional office in the Executive Suite in National Office; in the Division of Herbert (Townsville, Queensland); in the newly-established Division of Burt (Cockburn, Western Australia); and at the National Electoral Educational Centre (Canberra, ACT).

Table 21: Work health and safety summary, 2015–16

WHS information	AEC outcomes
Initiatives taken during the year to ensure the health, safety and welfare of workers	Continued enhancement of the AEC WHS management system. Workforce conditioning project. Election-related WHS strategies.
Health and safety outcomes achieved as a result of the initiatives	Continued development of the WHS management arrangement structure, providing a greater level of employee consultation and representation through an increased health and safety representative (HSR) network and revised work group structure.
Notifiable incidents	During 2015–16, eight incidents were reported to Comcare. Six incidents were notifiable for serious injury or illness, one incident notifiable for a dangerous occurrence and one incident was determined to not be notifiable.
Investigations conducted by the AEC	There were no investigations conducted during 2015–16.
Comcare investigations	There were no Comcare investigations undertaken, and no improvement notices issued to the AEC.
Health and safety events reported	160 health and safety incidents were reported, compared with 111 for the previous year. An increase in reporting of incidents occurred in the lead-up to the 2016 federal election.
Number of liaison inspections	Nil.
Formal notices issued by the Regulator	Nil.
Workers compensation premium under the Comcare scheme	Premium rate for 2015–16 was 1.45% of wages and salary, less than the 2014–15 figure of 1.84%. The overall Comcare scheme premium for the APS in 2015–16 was 1.85%.

Table 22: New claims for compensable and non-compensable injuries

Case management type	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Compensable	9	17	14	14
Non-compensable	17	32	19	41
Total	26	49	33	55

Information assets

ICT technical support services and infrastructure are integral to the AEC's activities, and are provided through a combination of in-house and external resources.

Security enhancements

During 2015–16 the AEC implemented an agency-wide desktop infrastructure refresh to the AEC standard operating environment to provide greater protection against cyber security threats.

ICT infrastructure

From mid-November 2015 to March 2016, the AEC rolled out 1 000 new desktops, 500 laptops and associated hardware such as servers, switches and uninterruptible power supply units, as well as barcode scanners for AEC staff Australia-wide.

Procurement

Purchasing

The AEC's approach to procuring goods and services is consistent with the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs). These rules are applied through the AEC's Accountable Authority Instructions (AAls) and supporting operational guidelines.

The AEC has a centralised area of expertise that provides procurement and contracting advice, and manages panel arrangements for key election-related services. Information on procurement policy and practices is available to staff through an internal procurement and contract management register.

The AEC continues to develop employees' procurement skills across the Agency and continues to review procurement processes to improve efficiency and value-for-money outcomes.

Information on procurements expected to be undertaken in 2016–17 is available in the agency's annual procurement plan published on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

Initiatives to support small business

The AEC supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Participation statistics for small and medium enterprises are available on the Department of Finance's website at www.finance.gov.au/procurement/statistics-on-commonwealth-purchasing-contracts.

The AEC recognises the importance of ensuring that small businesses are paid on time. The results of the survey of Australian Government payments to small business are available at www.treasury.gov.au.

Requests for Tender

There were nine open tender requests published electronically on AusTender in 2015–16.

Grants

The AEC did not administer any discretionary grant programs in 2015–16.

Consultancies

The AEC engages consultants when it requires specialist expertise or when independent research, review or assessment is required. Consultants are typically engaged to investigate or diagnose an identified issue or problem, carry out defined reviews or evaluations, or provide independent advice to assist in AEC decision-making.

Decisions to engage consultants during 2015–16 were made in accordance with

section 35(2) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, the PGPA Act, related regulations (including the CPRs), and relevant internal policies.

During 2015–16, the AEC entered into 24 new consultancy contracts involving total actual expenditure of \$1.87 million. In addition, 7 ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the period, involving total actual expenditure of \$992 000.

SPOTLIGHT

Election Readiness Program

In the first half of 2016, the AEC conducted six sessions of the Election Readiness Program. Around 180 staff participated in the two-week residential program.

The Program used scenario-based learning to take employees through the live aspects of conducting a federal election. Its aim was to equip divisional returning officers (DROs) and senior divisional office staff with the knowledge and skills to successfully deliver the federal election, including how to factor the AEC's Standard Operating Procedures into their election plans.

The program's learning outcomes included:

- gaining an in-depth understanding of election-related activities
- better ability to deal with unforeseen challenges
- greater self-awareness around time pressures and stress, and how to deal with these pressures

- an applied understanding of election databases, including the Election Management System (ELMS) and Roll Management System Election Processing (RMANS).

The value and impact of the program was reflected in feedback received from participants:

'I feel supercharged and energetic having now completed the program... the hands-on approach has helped me to retain a great deal of knowledge, especially around new standard operating procedures. I feel as though I can share this knowledge with my team members when I return to the office.'

'Over the past two weeks I have learned a lot from the others in the group and formed some valuable networks. I can't believe I am saying this – I am sad it's over!'

'It's been a whirlwind; however it's helped to clarify for me the leadership role of the DRO and blown away a lot of the fog surrounding new policies and procedures. I feel like I am ready to go.'

Following this success, we expect that the program, suitably updated, will be used in the lead-up to future elections.

Table 23: Expenditure on consultancy contracts, 2013–14 to 2015–16

	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Total actual consultancy expenditure	\$1.4 million	\$2.5 million	\$2.9 million

Information on the value of AEC contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website at www.tenders.gov.au.

ANAO Access Provisions

All AEC contract templates include a standard clause providing the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises. The AEC did not have any contracts that did not contain the ANAO access provisions.

Exempt Contracts

No contract or standing offer in excess of \$10 000 (GST inclusive) in 2015–16 were exempt from publication on AusTender on the basis that they would disclose exempt information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Sustainability principles

In accordance with the Commonwealth procurement framework, the AEC aims to fulfil its responsibility to be an efficient, effective, economical, ethical and sustainable procurer. The AEC's procurement policy seeks to achieve sustainability through reducing energy consumption and minimising waste.

Environmental performance

We manage our environmental performance by minimising the impact of our operations on the environment, encouraging sustainable business practices, managing waste, and monitoring energy and resource use. The AEC's Environment Management Commitment is available on our website.

An AEC Environmental and Sustainability Guide is available to all staff. It focuses on office-based operations and behaviours that align with legislative requirements, and encourages environment-friendly and sustainable practices in the areas nominated above.

For the AEC, environmental performance also encompasses nationwide sustainable procurement practices, building operations, and the management of national, state/territory and divisional offices. It also includes the impact of state and federal elections, and management of the waste reduction program for the National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC).

Sustainable development

Sustainable use of premises

In accordance with section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* the AEC reports on environmental performance and measures that minimise environmental impact, including:

- the recommendations of the Australian National Audit Office's Performance Audit Report No. 47 of 1998–99
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science Energy Efficiency in Government Operations Policy
- Fleet Monitoring Body guidelines for use of ethanol.

The AEC continues to take the following measures to minimise the effect of office operations on the environment:

- contracting service providers to collect and recycle paper, cardboard, plastics, aluminium and glass nation-wide

- contracting service providers to remove spent toner cartridges from all offices
- using partly or wholly recyclable products wherever possible
- applying double-sided default printer settings to reduce office paper consumption
- promoting use of E10 petrol in AEC vehicles
- considering environmental impacts in the design and layout of new and upgraded accommodation
- working with contracted property services providers to reduce energy consumption in state/territory and divisional offices.

The AEC also adheres to a range of environmental management requirements, listed in [Table 24](#).

Sustainable procurement practices

The AEC addresses sustainable procurement in accordance with: the Commonwealth Procurement Rules; the Department of the Environment and Energy's Sustainable Procurement Guide; and the AEC Procurement Policy.

Value-for-money is a core principle of the AEC's Procurement Policy. As a result, the agency values goods and service providers that reduce:

- energy and consumption demand
- unnecessary consumption
- end-of-life disposal.

Sustainable procurement requirements are outlined in [Table 25](#).

Minimising impact

Building design

The AEC's national office occupies two floors at 50 Marcus Clarke Street in central Canberra. The building has high environmental performance, particularly in the areas of building design, and water and energy use. [Table 26](#) outlines the national environmental ratings of the building.

A key aspect of these premises is the use of an integrated trigeneration system which simultaneously produces three forms of energy – electricity, heating and cooling. This single system produces power, hot water, space heating and air-conditioning for the entire building, which considerably reduces the greenhouse gases produced. In addition, during the year a 100 kW solar photovoltaic system was installed on the roof and is fully operational helping power base-building services. The building's overall lighting power density is kept to an average of 1.75 W/m²/100 lux.

Energy conservation

The AEC is committed to establishing standards, programs and innovative practices to improve energy efficiency across our property portfolio. Considerations and activities related to energy consumption are outlined in [Table 27](#).

Energy-efficient operations in the national office include the use of:

- energy-efficient dishwashers and refrigerators
- automatic energy-saving mode for multifunction devices and machines
- automatic energy-saving mode for desktop computers and monitors
- motion-sensitive, task-based lighting (Digital Addressable Lighting Interface).

Table 24: Legislative compliance and reporting for environmental management

Area	Requirements
Energy Efficiency in Government Operations (EEGO) Policy	Office tenant light and power to be 7 500 MJ per person per annum.
	Office central services (e.g. air-conditioning, elevators, base-building lighting and hot water) to be 400 MJ/m ² per annum.
	Office lighting to not exceed 10 W/m ² .
Commonwealth Procurement Rules	Refurbishments over 2 000 m ² to satisfy 4.5 NABERS ^a Energy Rating. New buildings over 2 000 m ² to satisfy 4.5 NABERS Energy Rating. Green Lease Schedules for new leases over 2 000 m ² and for two-year terms.
	Where financially viable, minimise environmental impact over the life of goods and services by choosing products or services that have lower adverse impacts associated with any stage in their production, use or disposal.
Commonwealth Property Management Framework and Guidelines	The Framework focuses on achieving efficient, effective and sustainable property outcomes and sets out arrangements under which the AEC is responsible for its performance. When determining the merits of a property the AEC will (on a case-by-case basis) take into consideration cost-benefit analyses (using whole-of-life costs), and environmental obligations and impact.
	The Property Guidelines seek to enhance good property management practice across agencies, providing increased efficiency and effectiveness of property use in the course of Government business.
Australian Packaging Covenant	Arrangements in place for efficient collection and recycling of packaging.
National Waste Policy	Avoid the generation of waste, reduce the amount of waste (including hazardous waste) for disposal.
	Manage waste as a resource.
	Ensure that waste treatment, disposal, recovery and re-use are undertaken in a safe, scientific and environmentally sound manner.
	Contribute to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation and production, water efficiency and the productivity of the land.

a. National Australian Built Environment Rating System.

For 2015–16, the use of light and power energy across all AEC premises was 9626.03 megajoules per person which represents a 14.97 per cent decrease on the previous year.

Water conservation

While opportunities to use water conservation strategies are sometimes limited across the entire AEC property portfolio, the AEC considers the capture and use of water wherever possible, as outlined in [Table 28](#).

Water conservation measures at the National Office include:

- low-flow sensor taps
- grey water recycling for flushing toilets
- dual-flush cisterns and waterless or low-flow urinals
- rainwater retention for use in cooling towers.

Table 25: AEC sustainable procurement requirements

Area	Requirements
Administration	<p>Ensure cleaning products have Safety Data Sheets (SDSs), which include the ecological impact for each product/chemical.</p> <p>Maintain accurate and complete records for reporting purposes on the consumption and supply of office equipment and related consumables.</p>
Fit-out and refurbishment	<p>Procure products that are recycled or have recycled content, and are recyclable at end-of-life (where practical), fit-for-purpose and cost-effective.</p> <p>Where possible, procure products with eco-labels that are compliant to ISO 14024 or ISO 14021 eco-labelling standards (life cycle impacts), such as timber and wood products meeting Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified sources/forests or Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).</p> <p>Procure products with energy conservation features in their design.</p> <p>Procure products designed for longevity that have design features minimising the environmental impact at end-of-life, or have options for manufacturer/supplier take-back.</p> <p>Procure products that are designed and supplied with low environmental load packaging, while maximising the purpose of preventing damage or breakage.</p> <p>Procure products with energy conservation features in their design (a minimum level of 5 Stars under the ENERGY STAR® program) where such equipment is available, fit-for-purpose and cost-effective.</p> <p>For appropriate contracts, apply an evaluation measure or weighting to environmental criteria in procurements.</p> <p>Procure products that have reduced or eliminated environmentally sensitive materials and substances such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in paints and solvents, mercury, lead, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, and short chain chlorinated paraffin (SCCP) flame retardants and plasticisers in certain applications.</p>

Table 26: National office environmental ratings

Rating system	Ratings
Green Star ratings are awarded by the Green Building Council of Australia as an internationally recognised sustainability rating system.	6 Star Green Star As Built (whole of building)
The Office Design v2 category evaluates the environmental potential and operational performance of commercial office design.	5 Star Green Star Office Interiors
NABERS ^a is a national rating system that measures the environmental performance of Australian buildings, measuring energy efficiency, water usage, waste management, indoor environment quality, and impact on the surrounding environment. Ratings range from one star (lowest) to six stars (highest).	5.5 Star NABERS Energy for both Base Building and Tenancy
	4.5 Star NABERS Water
	5 Star NABERS Indoor Environment

a. National Australian Built Environment Rating System

Table 27: Energy consumption considerations across the network

Area	Requirements
Administration	<p>Review provision for accredited renewable energy (e.g. Green power) take-up in electricity contracts.</p> <p>Maintain accurate and complete records for reporting purposes on electricity and gas use in buildings, refrigerant types used in air conditioning systems and fire retardants used in fire suppression systems.</p> <p>Ensure non-AEC energy-intensive power-consuming devices that are continuous in operation must not be connected to power points (e.g. fish tanks, digital photo frames, fans and heaters), unless approved by the AEC's National Property Team and respective State Manager and/or Branch Head.</p> <p>Provide for major property energy efficiency and greenhouse initiatives through the annual strategic property planning review.</p>
Education	<p>Ensure approved AEC energy-intensive devices must be switched off when not in use.</p> <p>Make effective use of curtains or blinds to optimise air conditioner and heating system efficiency.</p>
Fit-out and refurbishment	<p>Ensure newly constructed or major refurbishments of tenanted space meet the minimum energy performance standard set out in the Energy Efficiency in Government Operations (EEGO) Policy.</p> <p>Include the provision for renewable energy generation initiatives into new building designs and fit-outs.</p>
Leasing	<p>Ensure new office leases over 2 000 m² and two-year duration include the relevant version of the Green Lease Schedule (GLS) which contains ongoing minimum energy performance standards.</p> <p>Ensure the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) assessment and evidence of market testing occurs and is taken into account in overall cost considerations before exercising a lease option.</p> <p>Ensure separate digital metering is established to differentiate the supply between base building and tenancy energy use.</p> <p>Include the provision for renewable energy generation initiatives into new building designs and fit-outs.</p>

Table 28: Water consumption considerations across the network

Area	Requirements
Administration (Fit-Out, Refurbishment and Leasing)	<p>Introduce water conservation measures into building leases for existing and/or new tenancies, toilets and urinals with high Water Efficiency and Labelling Service (WELS) scheme star ratings, re-use systems, rainwater harvesting and the use of drought-tolerant native plant species local to the area.</p> <p>Maintain accurate and complete records for reporting purposes on the water infrastructure established during refurbishments.</p> <p>Apply strategies and procedures to effectively arrange potable water use.</p>
Education	Report tap water leakages in a timely manner to the relevant responsible areas.
Leasing	Ensure mains digital metering is established to differentiate the supply between base building and tenancy water use.

Responsible disposal of waste

The AEC's Environmental and Sustainability Guide provides staff with instructions on the responsible disposal of:

- cleaning chemicals
- volatile organic compounds in paints and solvents
- staff amenity paper products
- furniture
- kitchen supplies.

Vehicle use and travel reduction

AEC business vehicles are selected in accordance with the Department of Finance vehicle selection policy, with a focus on reduced CO₂ emissions when comparing suitable models.

National Electoral Education Centre waste reduction program

The ACTSmart Business Recycling Program assesses the waste reduction initiatives of businesses located in the Australian Capital Territory. In December 2015, the National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC) was awarded its sixth ACTSmart accreditation.

In 2015–16 the NEEC extended its paper recycling efforts to include other materials such as plastic bottles. In the six years that the NEEC has actively participated in the program it has reduced annual landfill waste to 2.9 cubic metres per annum, representing an overall waste reduction of 83 per cent. This achievement has been maintained despite the fact that the NEEC maintains annual visitor numbers of more than 87 000.

Compliance

Legal compliance

The AEC retains both in-house and external legal services. Activities encompass legal action, commercial law, responding to human rights matters, and overseeing internal and external compliance processes related to administrative, judicial and parliamentary scrutiny. We also seek and provide advice on the operation and effect of provisions in the Electoral Act and the Referendum Act.

Internal audit

Internal audit is a key accountability mechanism for effective governance and business improvement. The AEC's internal audit function provides independent and objective assurance and review of operations, functions, processes, and systems. It also provides the Electoral Commissioner, through the Business Assurance Committee, with professional advice on improving effectiveness of risk management, control and governance.

Internal Audit Plan

The 2015–16 Internal Audit Plan continued to focus on the emerging risks and priorities leading to an election year. The Business Assurance Committee adopted methodical processes to close audit recommendations, particularly in relation to the Keelty Report, and previous ANAO audits. Internal audit subjects for 2015–16 covered contract management, internal communications, election funding and party registration, work health safety, election recruitment and corporate performance reporting.

In addition, a review of the AEC compliance and assurance mechanisms was undertaken to identify priority gaps leading into the 2016 federal election.

Internal Auditors

In July 2013 the AEC appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers and McGrath Nicol to provide audit and assurance services for an initial three-year period. The 2015–16 AEC Audit Charter defines the scope, responsibilities and independence requirements for audit functions. The 2015–16 AEC Internal Audit Plan was endorsed by the Business Assurance Committee.

Fraud control

The AEC conducted a comprehensive review of its fraud control function early in the financial year. The review demonstrated the AEC's commitment to full compliance with fraud control requirements under the Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework, including section 10 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, the Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy and associated Fraud Guidance.

A new 2015–17 Fraud Control Plan highlights the AEC's zero tolerance approach to corporate and electoral fraud. Prevention strategies are the focus of the plan, which also outlines how to detect and respond to external and internal fraud.

A comprehensive fraud risk assessment was conducted during 2015–16. A fresh fraud risk assessment was subsequently conducted, after the passage of the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Act 2016* in March 2016.

Prior to the delivery of the 2016 federal election, all AEC staff, including contractors and the temporary election workforce, were required to participate in fraud awareness training as part of the fraud prevention program. In particular, the focus of the training was to raise awareness of key risk areas and individual employee responsibilities in preventing and detecting fraud.

AEC staff and members of the public can report allegations of suspected fraud to the AEC online, by telephone via a dedicated hotline, or by mail. The AEC's fraud webpage was updated in 2015–16 to clarify what is considered fraud, including electoral fraud. The update also provided further guidance on how to report suspected fraud.

In 2015–16 the AEC took all reasonable measures to deal with fraud allegations. The AEC fraud unit received and examined 95 allegations of suspected fraud. Of these, 91 matters came from external sources and 4 were received from internal sources. All allegations were related to electoral matters. There were no allegations of corporate fraud.

Fraud Control Committee

The Fraud Control Committee is a sub-committee of the Business Assurance Committee (see list of AEC management committees earlier in this chapter). It oversees the appropriateness and effectiveness of the AEC's fraud control plans, policies, procedures and systems to identify and investigate fraud-related matters.

The Fraud Control Committee held four meetings in 2015–16 and provided reports to the Business Assurance Committee after each meeting.

Freedom of Information

Agencies subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) are required to publish a broad range of information for the public on their websites as part of the Information Publication Scheme (IPS). This replaces a previous requirement to publish a statement in the agency's annual report.

In addition, agencies must publish information that has been released in response to each FOI access request, subject to certain exceptions. This publication is known as a 'disclosure log'.

Information Publication Scheme and FOI Disclosure Log

The AEC's IPS entry and FOI Disclosure Log are published on our website, highlighted with icons developed by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

In accordance with FOI Act requirements, the IPS page on the AEC website displays the following:

- an outline of the IPS and its requirements
- the AEC Agency Plan (which includes invitations for the public to comment on the AEC Agency Plan)
- details of the AEC's structure and functions (including a link to the AEC's organisation chart and a list of statutory appointments under the Electoral Act)
- the AEC's reports and responses to the Australian Parliament
- annual reports dating back to 1998
- routinely requested information
- contact details for further queries.

The AEC website also features operational information that assists us in making decisions or recommendations that affect members of the public, such as the AEC's rules, guidelines, practices and precedents relating to former decisions and recommendations. These include:

- enrolment requirements published at www.aec.gov.au/enrol
- special enrolment options published at www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Special_Category
- information for candidates and scrutineers published at www.aec.gov.au/Elections/candidates
- party registration guide published at www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/party_registration/guide

- financial disclosure guides published at www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/financial_disclosure.

External scrutiny

Customer scrutiny

Service Charter

An updated AEC Service Charter was published on the AEC website in February 2016. It can be viewed at: www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/service_charter.htm.

The Charter informs the public of the service they can expect to receive when interacting with the AEC. The Charter reflects and supports the AEC values of electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism. As a high-level document, the Charter is also a central link to the more detailed performance standards available in individual event or business area service plans.

Customer enquiries, issues and complaints

The AEC receives enquiries and feedback from the public and other stakeholders through a range of contact channels including telephone, email, social media, facsimile, postal mail and in person.

In 2015–16, outside of the federal election period, the AEC received over 43 000 phone calls, over 30 000 emails and approximately 10 000 in-person contacts from the public.

During the election period the AEC partnered with the Department of Human Services to deliver election contact centre services on behalf of the AEC. These arrangements began on 2 May 2016, ahead of the formal election announcement on Sunday 8 May 2016. In the period to 30 June 2016, the election contact centre service received over 560 000 telephone

enquiries, 56 000 email enquiries and 35 000 requests for products.

National complaints management framework

The AEC Complaints Management Policy is available on the AEC website and sets out the processes the AEC will follow in the management of a complaint. The policy also outlines the six principles of accessibility, responsiveness, confidentiality, fairness, transparency and efficiency, which are fundamental to the AEC's management of complaints. The policy is supported by two internal procedure documents on complaints management and internal review of complaints.

Administrative scrutiny

Guiding legislation

The administrative practices and decisions of the AEC are subject to a number of pieces of legislation as outlined in [Table 29](#).

Table 29: Guiding legislation for AEC administrative decisions

Act	Governing body	Related matters
<i>Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975</i>	Administrative Appeals Tribunal	Certain administrative decisions made under the Electoral Act.
<i>Ombudsman Act 1976</i>	Commonwealth Ombudsman	Complaints about matters of administration relating to AEC functions.
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i>	Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (the Privacy Commissioner)	Complaints about breaches of privacy rights.
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	Australian Information Commissioner Freedom of Information Commissioner	Complaints about, and delays in, the handling of requests for access to information.
<i>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986</i>	Australian Human Rights Commission	Complaints that claim the AEC has unlawfully discriminated against an individual.

Relevant reports and reviews

Administrative Appeals Tribunal

There were three matters before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) during the 2015–16 reporting period.

Matter relating to access refusal under FOI

On 30 June 2014 Mr Michael Cordover made an application to the AAT seeking a review of a decision of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to refuse access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) to the source code of the computer system used to count the votes in Senate and other elections (2014/3361). The AEC had claimed the documents were exempt from disclosure on the grounds that they contained information that had a commercial value that would be diminished if disclosed (see section 47(1) of the FOI Act). A hearing was held in late July 2015 with the AAT allowing further written submissions to be made by 18 August 2015 before determining the matter. A decision affirming the AEC's refusal under the FOI Act was handed down on 11 December 2015.

Matter relating to the abbreviation of party names

On 31 December 2013 the Liberal Party of Australia made an application to the AAT pursuant to section 141(5) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) seeking a review of the decision by the AEC to allow the Liberal Democratic Party to register the abbreviation ‘Liberal Democrats’ (2013/6987). Under the Electoral Act, the registered abbreviation of a political party may appear on a ballot paper. The progress of the application was slowed by the operation of section 127 of the Electoral Act, which prevents an AAT application proceeding during the period between the issuing of the writs for an election or a by-election and the return of the election writs. The Griffith by-election was conducted on 8 February 2014; the WA Senate Election on 5 April 2014; the Canning by-election on 19 September 2015 and the North Sydney by-election on 5 December 2015.

The matter was finally listed for hearing on 21 March 2016. However, before this hearing could take place, the Liberal Party of Australia withdrew the application and the matter was dismissed.

Matter relating to registered officers of a registered political party – Australian Democrats

Mr Horrex sought review of the decision by the Australian Electoral Commission that affirmed the decision of a delegate of the Commission not to change the Register of Political Parties (by substituting Mr Stuart Horrex for Mr John Bell as Registered Officer of the Australian Democrats). The matter was set down for hearing in May 2015.

However, in April 2015, pursuant to section 137 of the Electoral Act, the AEC deregistered the Australian Democrats on the basis of failure to demonstrate that it had the requisite 500 members to maintain registration. Accordingly, the AAT vacated the hearing date

for Mr Horrex’s application and adjourned the matter pending any hearing and determination of proceedings arising from deregistration of the Australian Democrats.

On 4 May 2016, the Electoral Commission upheld the decision to deregister the Australian Democrats under section 137(6) of the Electoral Act. On 9 May 2016 the AAT dismissed Mr Horrex’s application under section 42B of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975* on the basis that the proceedings had become ‘frivolous’ as any decision of the Tribunal would be of no effect due to the deregistration.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

There were no investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman into the AEC’s administration during the reporting period.

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

The AEC reported three privacy breaches to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner during the reporting period. The first breach occurred in the lead-up to the Canning by-election, with two laptop computers being stolen from the home of a polling official that contained the approved list of electors. The information contained on the computers was encrypted in line with Australian Signals Directorate recommendations.

The second and third privacy breaches occurred in the lead-up to the 2016 federal election. Both breaches involved the AEC misdirecting partially completed enrolment claim forms to the wrong elector. The first breach occurred in Victoria, where seven electors were affected. The second breach occurred in Queensland, where two electors were affected. The AEC has since changed its administrative practices to prevent future privacy breaches.

Australian Human Rights Commission

On 26 May 2016, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) advised the AEC that it had received a complaint that the AEC’s assisted voting services were discriminatory to electors who are blind or visually impaired. The complainant also alleged that the AEC was in breach of its obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and had discriminated against the complainant.

On 2 June 2016, the AEC advised the AHRC that the AEC could not agree to entering a conciliation process because the AEC has little discretion to remedy the complaint in the manner sought by the complainant, as the AEC is constrained by both the legislation under which it operates and the allocation of resources by the government. The AHRC’s consideration of this matter is ongoing.

Judicial scrutiny

High Court

Murphy v Electoral Commissioner & Anor (12 May 2016)

The plaintiffs commenced proceedings in the High Court challenging the constitutional validity of the provisions of the Electoral Act that suspend the processing of enrolment claims or transfer of enrolments seven days after the issue of the writs for an election until after polling day. The plaintiffs sought a declaration that those sections of the Electoral Act are invalid, arguing that the suspension period was incompatible with sections 7 and 24 of the Constitution which require that Members of the House of Representatives and Senators be ‘directly chosen by the people’.

In a special case referred to the Full Court, the High Court held that sections 94A(4), 95(4), 102(4), 103A(5), 103B(5) and 118(5) of the Electoral Act are not contrary to sections 7 and 24 of the Constitution and are therefore valid. As at 30 June 2016 the High Court was yet to hand down its reason for decision in this matter.

Further information: Murphy & Anor v Electoral Commissioner & Anor, Case M247/2015 [2016], High Court of Australia Transcripts 108 (11 May 2016) and 111 (12 May 2016).

Day v Australian Electoral Officer for the State of South Australia (13 May 2016); and Madden & Ors v Australian Electoral Officer for the State of Tasmania & Ors (13 May 2016)

On 22 March 2016 Mr Robert Day, a Senator for South Australia, filed an application in the High Court challenging new provisions of the Electoral Act concerning the new form of the Senate ballot paper and the process for marking it either above the line or below the line. The challenge relied principally on sections 7 and 9 of the Constitution. Mr Peter Madden and six other electors also commenced proceedings challenging the provisions and the matters were joined.

The plaintiffs sought declarations and writs of mandamus and prohibition directed to the Australian Electoral Officers for the States and Territories and to the Commonwealth, contending that the new form of ballot paper and the alternative means of marking it above and below a dividing line constitute more than one method of choosing senators, contrary to section 9 of the Constitution. They also contended that allowing a vote for a party or group departs from section 7 of the Constitution that Senators will be ‘directly chosen by the people’.

On 13 May 2016, the full bench of the High Court unanimously dismissed the applications with costs. The High Court held that the term ‘method’ in section 9 of the Constitution is to be construed broadly, allowing for more than one way of indicating choice within a single uniform electoral system. The High Court further held that a vote above the line was a direct vote for individual candidates consistent with section 7 of the Constitution. The Court also held that there was no infringement of the principle of proportional representation and accordingly no disenfranchisement of electors. The contention that the ballot paper misleads electors about their voting options and thereby infringes the implied freedom of political communication or the system of representative government was also rejected.

Further information: Day v Australian Electoral Officer for the State of South Australia & Anor, Case S77/2016 [2016], High Court of Australia 20 (13 May 2016); and Madden & Ors v Australian Electoral Officer for the State of Tasmania & Ors, Case S109/2016 [2016], High Court of Australia 20 (13 May 2016).

Dieter Horn v Electoral Commissioner (23 June 2016)

In this case Mr Horn challenged the existing interpretation of section 206 of the Electoral Act which provides for separate voting compartments at polling booths. In particular, Mr Horn sought a writ of mandamus to compel the AEC to provide fully enclosed voting compartments at the 2 July 2016 federal election. The matter was heard on 23 June 2016 before Chief Justice French in the High Court of Australia. His Honour dismissed the application as an abuse of process and made no order as to costs.

Further information: Horn v Electoral Commissioner [2016], High Court of Australia Transcripts 149 (23 June 2016).

Federal Court

Administrative Decisions Judicial Review

There were no applications to the Federal Court under the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977* during the reporting period.

Industrial elections

The AEC conducts elections in various industrial matters. The AEC is the ballot agent for protected action ballots conducted under the *Fair Work Act 2009* and it conducts elections for office bearers in industrial elections under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*. These industrial elections can give rise to disputes between two or more parties – for example, between the industrial organisation and the employer, or between various candidates standing for election to office-bearer positions. The role of the AEC in these matters is normally to seek to be joined as a party to the proceedings so that it can assist the court in accordance with the principles established by the High Court in the case of *R v Australian Broadcasting Tribunal; Ex parte Hardiman* (1980), Commonwealth Law Reports volume 144, page 13.

Under section 182 of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, the AEC must conduct elections for office bearers in industrial organisations unless the Fair Work Commission has granted an exemption (section 183). Organisations must lodge the required details for an election with the Fair Work Commission (section 189). When that information is provided to the Fair Work Commission, the general manager of the Fair Work Commission is required to pass the information to the AEC. The AEC then conducts the election.

There are a number of offences in relation to actions which hinder or obstruct an election. The AEC refers allegations of breaches to either the general manager of the Fair Work Commission or the Australian Federal Police. If the allegation can be construed as an ‘irregularity’ (see *Mcjannett, in the matter of an application for an inquiry in relation to an election for offices in the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Western Australian Branch (No. 2)* [2009] Federal Court of Australia 1015) that has affected the outcome of the election then, under section 200(2) of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, the AEC is required to apply to the Federal Court for an inquiry.

The AEC was a party to three proceedings before the Federal Court during 2015–16 in relation to industrial elections. These cases are set out in the three following sections.

Electoral Commissioner in the matter of an election for an office in the Australian Federal Police Association Branch of the Police Federation of Australia

On 1 September 2015 the Electoral Commissioner filed an application under section 200 of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* into alleged irregularities in respect of the Australian Federal Police Association Branch of the Police Federation of Australia election 2015 (Federal Court ref. NSD1038/2015). The alleged irregularity was in relation to the conduct of the nominations process, the close of rolls period and the failure to deliver ballot papers to all eligible members. In particular the organisational restructure of the Association was not correctly reflected in the rolls and as a result members were not aware of entitlement to nominate or vote in certain zones.

The matter was listed for hearing before Justice Katzmann of the Federal Court on 15 and 16 December 2015, and Orders were handed down on 5 May 2016. The Court declared that the affected elections were void and ordered the Fair Work Commission to issue new arrangements for the AEC to conduct a fresh election.

Further information: Electoral Commissioner in the matter of an election for an office in the Australian Federal Police Association Branch of the Police Federation of Australia [2016], Federal Court of Australia 469 (5 May 2016).

Electoral Commissioner in the matter of an election for offices in the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales

On 13 January 2016 the Electoral Commissioner filed an application under section 200 of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* into alleged irregularities in respect of the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales Election 2015 (Federal Court ref. NSW53/2016). The alleged irregularity was that the AEC had accepted an incorrect roll of voters from the Association and as a result the Hawkesbury City Council voting delegation were issued with ballot papers for the wrong voting area, which affected the result of the election for particular offices. On 29 March 2016 the Court declared the election for the affected offices void and ordered the AEC to re-take steps in the election for the affected offices ([2016] Federal Court of Australia 327). On 15 April the Returning Officer issued a new election notice specifying the conduct of the election by postal ballot closing 30 June 2016.

On 2 June the Association sought leave to the Court to vary the Court Orders in regards to the voting eligibility of Councils that had been abolished as a result of the New South Wales Local Government (Council Amalgamations) Proclamation on 12 May 2016. On 3 June 2016, Justice Buchanan made orders varying the March 29 Orders to the effect that Councils that were abolished as a result of the amalgamations were no longer eligible to field candidates for the offices or nominate voting delegates ([2016] Federal Court of Australia 668). The Court Orders were made by consent between the Association and the AEC, and the postal ballot was conducted in June 2016.

Further information: Electoral Commissioner in the matter of an election for offices in the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales [2016], Federal Court of Australia 327 (5 April 2016); and Electoral Commissioner in the matter of an election for offices in the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales (No. 2) [2016], Federal Court of Australia 668 (3 June 2016).

Lillywhite in the matter of an application for inquiry in relation to elections for offices in the Community and Public Section Union, State Public Services Federation (SPSF) Group, Victorian Branch

On 6 May 2016 Mr Peter Lillywhite, a Branch member of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), filed an application under section 200 of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* into alleged irregularities in respect of the elections for offices in the CPSU, SPSF Group, Victorian Branch. The alleged irregularity was that the Returning Officer accepted nominations from members who were not eligible to nominate for Branch Secretary for the SPSF Group and Branch Council Delegate in Electorate 1 in the SPSF Group.

The matter was listed for hearing before Justice Moshinsky of the Federal Court on 11 May 2016 and Orders were handed down on 31 May 2016. The Court found that the acceptance of nominations from ineligible members resulted in an irregularity in relation to those elections. The Court declared that the acceptance of the affected nominations was void. The CPSU Victoria Branch was not otherwise affected and the conduct of the election proceeded.

Further information: Lillywhite in the matter of an application for inquiry in relation to elections for offices in the Community and Public Sector Union, SPSF Group, Victorian Branch [2016], Federal Court of Australia 700 (31 May 2016).

Parliamentary scrutiny

Services to the Australian Parliament

The AEC is accountable to the Australian Parliament in relation to its statutory responsibilities under the Electoral Act, the Referendum Act and related legislation. The AEC provides evidence and advice to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) and the Finance and Public Administration Committee.

Parliamentary inquiries

The JSCEM continues to be the central point for parliamentary consideration and debate on electoral law, administration and legislative reform. Other parliamentary committees have also conducted inquiries relating to electoral matters. The AEC makes submissions and provides information to parliamentary inquiries where appropriate, and appears at hearings.

Parliamentary inquiries conducted in 2015–16 and contributed to by the AEC are summarised in [Table 30](#).

In addition to contributing to such inquiries, in the normal conduct of its functions the AEC meets regularly with government on electoral matters.

Table 30: Parliamentary inquiries and AEC involvement 2015–16

Inquiry	Committee	Date	AEC involvement	Status
Inquiry into electoral education	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	23 June 2015 – 9 May 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and made a supplementary submission.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Inquiry into campaigning at polling places	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	17 June 2015 – 9 May 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at two public hearings and made a supplementary submission.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Inquiry into political donations	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	15 October 2015 – 9 May 2016	The AEC made a submission.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016 (Senate voting reform)	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	22 February 2016 – 2 March 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and made a supplementary submission.	Advisory report tabled on 2 March 2016.
The matter of a popular vote, in the form of a plebiscite or referendum, on the matter of marriage in Australia	Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee	20 August 2015 – 15 September 2015	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and made a supplementary submission.	Report tabled on 15 September 2016.
Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donations and Other Measures) Bill 2016	Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee	3 March 2016 – 9 May 2016	The AEC wrote a letter to the committee.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Commonwealth legislative provisions relating to oversight of associated entities of political parties	Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee	19 April 2016 – 4 May 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and answered questions taken on notice.	Interim report tabled 29 April 2016. Final report tabled 4 May 2016.



5

FINANCIAL REPORTING

\$232 million
2015–16 BUDGET

\$155 million
AGENCY ASSETS

\$110 million
AGENCY LIABILITIES

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The AEC's 2015–16 financial results were influenced by election expenditure that occurred in the lead-up to the 2016 federal election held on 2 July. The Australian National Audit Office has issued an unqualified audit opinion for the AEC's 2015–16 financial statements.

The AEC's financial reporting consists of a financial performance summary, together with the financial statements and supporting notes.

The financial performance summary provides a snapshot of the AEC's deficit, surplus, balance sheet and net asset information.

The financial statements consist of the auditor's report, the Electoral Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer statement, and various financial statements and administered schedules. Further information on the financial performance of the AEC is provided in the notes sections.

Financial performance summary

For 2015–16, the AEC's operating deficit was \$25.0 million compared with an operating deficit of \$0.4 million in 2014–15. The 2015–16 result was influenced by election expenditure that occurred in the lead-up to the 2016 federal election.

The statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016 shows total assets of \$154.8 million and total liabilities of \$110.0 million for a net asset position of \$44.8 million. Total assets and liabilities have increased from previous years due to the inclusion of balances in relation to the 2016 federal election.

The Australian National Audit Office has issued an unqualified audit opinion for the AEC's 2015–16 financial statements.

No significant issues of non-compliance in relation to the finance law were reported to the Special Minister of State in 2015–16. This included any failure to comply with the duties of accountable authorities (sections 15–19 of the PGPA Act), significant fraudulent activity and other serious breaches (sections 25–29).

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Certification

Auditor's report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Special Minister of State

I have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the Australian Electoral Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016, which comprise the Statement by Electoral Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer; Statement of Comprehensive Income; Statement of Financial Position; Statement of Changes in Equity; Cash Flow Statement; Administered Schedule of Comprehensive Income; Administered Schedule of Assets and Liabilities; Administered Reconciliation Schedule; Administered Cash Flow Statement; and Notes to and forming part of the financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Australian Electoral Commission:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Australian Electoral Commission as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

Accountable Authority's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Electoral Commissioner of the Australian Electoral Commission is responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the rules made under that Act and is also responsible for such internal control as the Electoral Commissioner determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial

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statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Authority of the entity, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Australian National Audit Office

SIGNED

Serena Buchanan
Executive Director

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
15 September 2016

Statement by the Electoral Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION	
STATEMENT BY ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER	
In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 comply with subsection 42(2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.	
In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Australian Electoral Commission will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.	
SIGNED	SIGNED
Signed..... Tom Rogers Electoral Commissioner 15 September 2016	Signed..... Stephen Blackburn Chief Finance Officer 15 September 2016

Primary Financial Statements

Statement of comprehensive income for the period ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES				
Expenses				
Employee benefits	3.1	104 562	73 315	74 751
Suppliers	4.1A	159 515	50 506	51 753
Depreciation and amortisation	2.3A	9 326	9 459	7 995
Finance costs	2.4B	20	39	85
Write-down and impairment of assets	4.1B	(4)	111	–
Losses from asset disposals	2.3A	23	184	–
Total expenses		273 442	133 614	134 584
OWN-SOURCE INCOME				
Own-source revenue				
Sale of goods and rendering of services	1.2A	15 224	19 224	10 841
Other revenue	1.2B	447	480	85
Total own-source revenue		15 671	19 704	10 926
Total own-source income		15 671	19 704	10 926
Net (cost of) services		(257 771)	(113 910)	(123 658)
Revenue from Government	1.1A	232 757	113 528	115 663
(Deficit) on continuing operations		(25 014)	(382)	(16 995)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Items not subject to subsequent reclassification to net cost of services				
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		1 885	2 148	–
Total other comprehensive income		1 885	2 148	–
Total comprehensive (loss)/income	1.4	(23 129)	1 766	(16 995)

This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

BUDGET VARIANCES COMMENTARY

Statement of Comprehensive Income

The AEC's expenses were higher than budgeted due to costs incurred in 2015–16 in preparation for the federal election on 2 July 2016. The AEC's budget did not include election costs as they were originally budgeted for in the 2016–17 financial year. The AEC's revenue is higher than budgeted due to increased funding through an Advance to the Finance Minister to fund election expenditure. The AEC incurred a higher than budgeted loss due to funding some of the increased expenses through a release of appropriations that had previously been quarantined and are not reported as revenue in the period.

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
ASSETS				
Financial assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	2.1A	17 932	891	1 518
Receivables for goods and services	2.1A	2 116	2 312	1 518
Appropriations receivable	2.2A	74 030	55 820	47 050
Other receivables	2.2B	4 417	493	632
Total financial assets		98 495	59 509	49 200
Non-financial assets				
Land and buildings	2.3A	10 359	11 524	12 375
Property, plant and equipment	2.3A	7 696	5 780	7 210
Computer software	2.3A	14 402	13 836	18 353
Intellectual property	2.3A	2 161	–	–
Inventories	2.3B	14 599	3 055	1 898
Lease incentive		38	80	–
Other non-financial assets	2.3C	7 077	1 988	1 689
Total non-financial assets		56 332	36 263	41 525
Total assets		154 827	95 772	90 725
LIABILITIES				
Payables				
Suppliers	2.1A	72 637	8 085	7 930
Other payables	2.4A	11 249	7 947	5 124
Total payables		83 886	16 032	13 054
Provisions				
Employee provisions	3.2	24 611	21 257	25 478
Other provisions	2.4B	1 525	1 561	1 577
Total provisions		26 136	22 818	27 055
Total liabilities		110 022	38 850	40 109
Net assets		44 805	56 922	50 616
EQUITY				
Parent Entity Interest				
Contributed equity		54 202	43 190	54 202
Asset revaluation surplus		22 985	21 100	18 952
Retained earnings		(32 382)	(7 368)	(22 538)
Total equity		44 805	56 922	50 616

This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

BUDGET VARIANCES COMMENTARY

Statement of Financial Position

Increased financial assets offset the increase in payables and provisions. The increase in payables and provisions relates to expenditure incurred in late 2015–16 in preparation for the federal election on 2 July 2016. The increase in inventory and other non-financial assets relates to items on hand and prepayments made in preparation for the election.

Statement of changes in equity for the period ended 30 June 2016

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
CONTRIBUTED EQUITY			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	43 190	35 890	43 190
Adjusted opening balance	43 190	35 890	43 190
Transactions with owners			
Contributions by owners			
Departmental Capital Budget	11 012	7 300	11 012
Total transactions with owners	11 012	7 300	11 012
Closing balance as at 30 June	54 202	43 190	54 202
RETAINED EARNINGS			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	(7 368)	(6 986)	(14 543)
Adjusted opening balance	(7 368)	(6 986)	(14 543)
Comprehensive income			
(Deficit) for the period	(25 014)	(382)	(7 995)
Total comprehensive income	(25 014)	(382)	(7 995)
Closing balance as at 30 June	(32 382)	(7 368)	(22 538)
ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	21 100	18 952	18 952
Adjusted opening balance	21 100	18 952	18 952
Comprehensive income			
Other comprehensive income	1 885	2 148	–
Total comprehensive income	1 885	2 148	–
Closing balance as at 30 June	22 985	21 100	18 952
TOTAL EQUITY			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	56 922	47 856	47 599
Adjusted opening balance	56 922	47 856	47 599
Comprehensive income			
(Deficit) for the period	(25 014)	(382)	(7 995)
Other comprehensive income	1 885	2 148	–
Total comprehensive income	(23 129)	1 766	(7 995)
Transactions with owners			
Contributions by owners			
Departmental Capital Budget	11 012	7 300	11 012
Total transactions with owners	11 012	7 300	11 012
Closing balance as at 30 June	44 805	56 922	50 616

This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Equity Injections

Amounts appropriated which are designated as 'equity injections' for a year (less any formal reductions) and Departmental Capital Budgets (DCBs) are recognised directly in contributed equity in that year.

BUDGET VARIANCES COMMENTARY

Statement of Changes in Equity

The AEC incurred a higher than anticipated deficit in 2015–16, resulting in a lower than budgeted equity position.

Cash flow statement for the period ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Cash flow statement \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Cash received				
Appropriations		201 225	106 646	115 663
Sales of goods and rendering of services		18 000	22 309	10 841
Net GST received		4 547	3 237	–
Total cash received		223 772	132 192	126 504
Cash used				
Employees		95 600	73 701	74 301
Suppliers		125 925	59 075	51 762
Total cash used		221 525	132 776	126 063
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities	1.5	2 247	(584)	441
INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Cash used				
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		4 227	1 111	11 453
Purchase of intangibles		5 313	3 136	–
Total cash used		9 540	4 247	11 453
Net cash (used by) investing activities		(9 540)	(4 247)	(11 453)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES				
Cash received				
Contributed equity		3 989	3	11 012
Departmental Capital Budget		20 345	4 201	–
Total cash received		24 334	4 204	11 012
Net cash from financing activities		24 334	4 204	11 012
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		17 041	(627)	–
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		891	1 518	1 518
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	2.1A	17 932	891	1 518

This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

BUDGET VARIANCES COMMENTARY

Cash Flow Statement

The AEC's operating cash used was higher than budgeted due to costs incurred in 2015–16 in preparation for the federal election on 2 July 2016. The AEC's budget did not include election costs as they were originally budgeted for in the 2016–17 financial year. The AEC's operating cash received is higher than budgeted due to increased funding through an Advance to the Finance Minister to fund election payments. The financing cash received is higher than budgeted due to the drawing down of prior year capital appropriations. The increased cash balance reflects the increase in payables and provisions.

Administered schedules

Administered Schedule of Comprehensive Income for the period ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES				
EXPENSES				
Other expenses	5.1A	392	53	–
Total expenses		392	53	–
INCOME				
Revenue				
Non-taxation revenue				
Electoral fines/penalties	5.2A	369	960	33
Candidate deposits	5.2A	25	7	–
Other	5.2A	10		
Total non-taxation revenue		404	967	33
Total revenue		404	967	33
Net contribution by services		12	914	33
Surplus		12	914	33

This schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

BUDGET VARIANCES COMMENTARY

Schedule of Comprehensive Income

The AEC's administered expenditure was higher than budgeted due to candidate funding of by-elections not anticipated in 2015–16. The AEC's administered revenue was higher than anticipated due to electoral fines and penalties for by-elections not anticipated in 2015–16.

Administered Schedule of Assets and Liabilities as at 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
ASSETS				
Financial assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	5.3A	14	–	–
Total financial assets		14	–	–
Total assets administered on behalf of Government		14	–	–
LIABILITIES				
Payables				
Suppliers	5.3B	14	–	–
Total payables		14	–	–
Total liabilities administered on behalf of Government		14	–	–
Net assets		–	–	–

This schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Administered Reconciliation Schedule

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Net cost of/(contribution by) services:		
Income	404	967
Expenses	(392)	(53)
Transfers (to)/from Australian Government:		
Appropriation transfers to OPA		
Transfers (to) OPA	(12)	(914)
Closing assets less liabilities as at 30 June	–	–

This schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Administered Cash Transfers to and from the Official Public Account

Revenue collected by the entity for use by the Government rather than the AEC is administered revenue. Collections are transferred to the Official Public Account (OPA) maintained by the Department of Finance. Conversely, cash is drawn from the OPA to make payments under Parliamentary appropriation on behalf of Government. These transfers to and from the OPA are adjustments to the administered cash held by the entity on behalf of the Government and reported as such in the schedule of administered cash flows and in the administered reconciliation schedule.

Administered Cash Flow Statement for the period ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Electoral fines/penalties		369	960
Candidate deposits		25	7
Other		10	–
Total cash received		404	967
Cash used			
Political Parties/Candidates		344	–
Refund of Electoral fines/penalties		34	53
Total cash used		378	53
Net cash flows from operating activities	5.5	26	914
Cash from Official Public Account			
Appropriations		392	53
Total cash from Official Public Account		392	53
Cash to Official Public Account			
Appropriations		(404)	(967)
Total cash to Official Public Account		(404)	(967)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		14	–

This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Overview

Objectives of the Australian Electoral Commission

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is an Australian Government controlled entity. It is a not-for-profit entity. The objective of the AEC is to conduct elections and referendums, maintain the electoral roll, provide electoral information, education programs and related services, and manage funding and disclosure in relation to political parties.

The AEC is structured to meet the following outcome:

Outcome 1: 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.

The continued existence of the AEC in its present form and with its present programs is dependent on Government policy and on continuing funding by Parliament for the AEC's administration and programs.

The AEC's activities contributing toward this outcome are classified as either departmental or administered. Departmental activities involve the use of assets, liabilities, income and expenses controlled or incurred by the AEC in its own right. Administered activities involve the management or oversight by the AEC, on behalf of the Government, of items controlled or incurred by the Government.

The AEC conducts the following administered activities on behalf of the Government:

- payment of Election Public Funding; and
- collection of Electoral Fees and Fines.

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015* (FRR) for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2015; and
- Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

The 2016 federal election was held on the 2 July 2016. Costs related to this incurred in 2015–16 are included in the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Comprehensive Income. Expenses incurred but not yet paid are included in Accrued Expenses.

New Australian Accounting Standards

Adoption of New Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

The AEC has early-adopted ASB 2015–7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Disclosures of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities. There was no financial impact on the AEC although early adoption has changed the presentation of the AEC's Financial Statements.

Future Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority and Chief Finance Officer, which are expected to have a material impact on the entity's financial statements for future reporting period(s):

Standard/Interpretation	Application date for the entity ¹	Nature of impending change/s in accounting policy and likely impact on initial application
AASB 2015–6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Extending Related Party Disclosures to Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities [AASB 10, AASB 124 & AASB 1049]	1 July 2016	The amendments extend the scope of AASB 124 to include application by not-for-profit public sector entities. Implementation guidance is included to assist application of the Standard by not-for-profit public sector entities. This Standard also makes related amendments to AASB 10 Consolidated Financial Statements and AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting, and an editorial correction to AASB 124. Likely impact: Moderate. At this stage the value of the impact cannot be measured.
AASB 16 Leases	1 Jan 2019	AASB 16 brings all leases onto the balance sheet of lessees, thereby increasing the transparency surrounding such arrangements and making the lessee's balance sheet better reflect the economics of its transactions. Likely Impact: High. At this stage the value of the impact cannot be measured.

1. The entity's expected initial application date is when the accounting standard becomes operative at the beginning of the entity's reporting period.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to future reporting period(s) are not expected to have a future material impact on the entity's financial statements.

Accounting Judgments and Estimates

No accounting assumptions or estimates have been identified that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of any assets or liabilities within the next reporting period.

Taxation

The AEC is exempt from paying Income Tax. The AEC is required to pay Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Reporting of Administered activities

Administered revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities and cash flows are disclosed in the administered schedules and related notes.

Except where otherwise stated below, administered items are accounted for on the same basis and using the same policies as for departmental items, including the application of Australian Accounting Standards.

Events After the Reporting Period

Departmental

There are no events after the reporting date that will materially affect the financial statements.

Administered

There are no events after the reporting date that will materially affect the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Funding

This section identifies the AEC's funding structure and the funds available to the AEC.

1.1: Revenue from Government

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Revenue from Government

Amounts appropriated for departmental appropriations for the year (adjusted for any formal additions and reductions) are recognised as Revenue from Government when the entity gains control of the appropriation, except for certain amounts that relate to activities that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it has been earned. Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

1.1A: Revenue From Government

	Notes	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Departmental appropriation – operating ¹	1.1B	122 520	104 528
Departmental appropriation – Advance to Finance Minister	1.1B	101 237	–
Departmental Special Appropriations	1.1D	9 000	9 000
Total Revenue from Government		232 757	113 528

1. Prior year appropriation of \$0.799 million is included in departmental appropriation – operating in Note 1.1A but excluded in Note 1.1B.

1.1B: Annual Appropriations ('Recoverable GST exclusive')

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Ordinary annual services		
Annual appropriation		
Operating		
Operating ¹	121 721	104 528
Advance to the Finance Minister	101 237	–
Section 74 receipts of PGPA Act	16 749	20 597
Total operating appropriation	239 707	125 125
Capital Budget	11 012	7 300
Total	250 719	132 425
Appropriation applied		
Operating	(208 974)	(118 243)
Capital		
Departmental Capital Budget	(20 345)	(4 201)
Equity injections	(3 989)	(3)
Total capital appropriation applied	(24 334)	(4 204)
Total appropriation applied	(233 308)	(122 447)
Variance²	17 411	9 978

- Prior year appropriation of \$0.799 million is included in departmental appropriation – operating in Note 1.1A but excluded in Note 1.1B.
- During the financial year the AEC agreed with the Department of Finance that all available cash, including amounts that were previously quarantined, would be used to fund election expenses in 2015–16. However, given the timing of the election event and the large volume of expenses that were incurred late in the financial year and paid in 2016–17, the AEC's appropriation receivable increased during the financial year. The variance of \$17.4 million outlined in Table 1.1B represents the movement in appropriation receivable from \$56.6 million in 2015 to \$74.0 million in 2016 (refer Table 1.1C). The AEC received operating appropriation of \$239.7 million for the current year of which only \$209.0 million was applied. A further \$24.3 million was applied to fund election activities against a current year capital appropriation of \$11.0 million and prior year capital appropriations.

1.1C: Unspent Annual Appropriations ('Recoverable GST exclusive')

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
DEPARTMENTAL		
Cash and cash equivalents		
Appropriation Act 1 – 2015–16 – Cash ¹	17 932	–
Appropriation Act 1 – 2014–15 – Cash	–	891
Total Cash and cash equivalents	17 932	891
Appropriations Receivable		
Appropriation Act 1 – 2015–16	74 030	–
Appropriation Act 3 – 2015–16	–	–
Appropriation Act 1 – 2015–16 – Departmental Capital Budget	–	–
Appropriation Act 3 – 2015–16 – Departmental Capital Budget	–	–
Appropriation Act 1 – 2014–15	–	15 011
Appropriation Act 3 – 2014–15	–	992
Appropriation Act 1 – 2014–15 – Departmental Capital Budget	–	6 010
Appropriation Act 3 – 2014–15 – Departmental Capital Budget	–	1 290
Appropriation Act 1 – 2013–14	–	26 495
Appropriation Act 1 – 2013–14 – Departmental Capital Budget	–	2 033
Appropriation Act 2 – Non-Operating – Equity Injection – 2013–14	–	3 989
Appropriation Act 1 – 2013–14	–	323
Appropriation Act 1 – 2012–13	–	476
Total Appropriations Receivable	74 030	56 619
Total departmental	91 962	57 510

1. The AEC's cash balance at 30 June 2016 is higher than normal due to amounts being drawn down close to the end of the financial year to fund election payments early in the 2016–17 financial year.

1.1D: Special Appropriations ('Recoverable GST exclusive')

Authority	Appropriation applied	
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Departmental)	9 000	9 000
Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Administered)	357	–
Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 – s77 Repayment of Receipts	34	27
Total special appropriations applied	9 391	9 027

No entities spent money from the Consolidated Revenue Fund on behalf of the AEC.

1.2: Own-Source Revenue

1.2A: Sale of Goods and Rendering of Services

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Own-Source Revenue		
Sale of goods	10 501	12 775
Rendering of services	4 723	6 449
Total sale of goods and rendering of services	15 224	19 224

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when:

- the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer; and
- the entity retains no managerial involvement or effective control over the goods.

The stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date is determined by reference to the proportion that costs incurred to date compare to the estimated total costs of the transaction.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30-day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

1.2B: Other Revenue

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Other	278	316
Resources received free of charge		
Remuneration of auditors	85	88
Other	84	76
Total other revenue	447	480

The ANAO provides financial statement audit services to the AEC. The ANAO does not provide other services.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Resources Received Free of Charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue when, and only when, a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if they had not been donated. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense. Resources received free of charge are recorded as either revenue or gains depending on their nature.

1.3: Special Accounts

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Services for Other Entities and Trust Monies¹		
Balance brought forward from previous period	1	1 504
Increases	2 295	–
Total increases	2 295	1 504
Available for payments	2 296	1 504
Decreases		
Departmental	28	1 503
Total departmental	28	1 503
Total decreases	28	1 503
Total balance carried to the next period	2 268	1

- Appropriation: *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* section 80.
Establishing Instrument: *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* section 20.
Purpose: For the expenditure of monies temporarily held in trust or otherwise for the benefit of a person other than the Commonwealth. For example, candidate deposits.

1.4: Net Cash Appropriation Arrangements

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Total comprehensive (loss)/income/less depreciation/amortisation expenses previously funded through revenue appropriations	(13 803)	11 225
Plus: depreciation/amortisation expenses previously funded through revenue appropriation	(9 326)	(9 459)
Total comprehensive (loss)/income – as per the Statement of Comprehensive Income	(23 129)	1 766

1.5: Cash Flow Reconciliation

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per Statement of Financial Position and Cash Flow Statement		
Cash and cash equivalents as per		
Cash Flow Statement	17 932	891
Statement of Financial Position	17 932	891
Discrepancy	-	-
Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from/(used by) operating activities		
Net cost of services	(257 771)	(113 910)
Revenue from Government	232 757	113 528
Adjustments for non-cash items		
Depreciation/amortisation	9 326	9 459
Net write down of makegood liability	20	39
Loss on disposal of assets	23	184
Other gain	(799)	-
Movements in assets and liabilities		
Assets		
Decrease in lease incentive asset	42	42
(Increase)/decrease in net receivables	(35 267)	(7 317)
(Increase) in inventories	(11 544)	(1 157)
(Increase) in prepayments	(5 089)	(421)
Liabilities		
Increase/(decrease) in employee provisions	3 354	(996)
Increase/(decrease) in supplier payables	64 552	(215)
Increase in other payable	2 679	298
(Decrease) in other provisions	(36)	(118)
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities	2 247	(584)

2. Departmental Financial Position and Managing Uncertainties

This section analyses the AEC's assets used to conduct its operations and the operating liabilities incurred as a result, and how the AEC manages financial risks related to these and its operating environment. Employee-related information is disclosed in the People and Relationships section.

2.1: Financial Instruments

2.1A: Categories of Financial Instruments

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Loans and receivables		
Cash on hand or on deposit	17 932	891
Receivables		
Receivables for goods and services	2 118	2 319
Less impairment allowance	2	7
Total receivables	2 116	2 312
Total loans and receivables	20 048	3 203
Total financial assets	20 048	3 203
FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Supplier payables	72 637	8 085
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	72 637	8 085
Total financial liabilities	72 637	8 085

Receivables (net) are expected to be recovered within 12 months (2015: within 12 months).

Credit terms for goods and services were within 30 days (2015: 30 days). Settlement of suppliers payable is usually made within 30 days.

The carrying amount of financial instruments does not differ from the fair value.

Decrease in Impairment allowance for the period of \$5 000 (2015: \$6 000 increase) has been recognised in relation to loans and receivables and included in the net cost of service. No amounts have been written off or recovered/reversed.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Financial assets

The entity classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- a. financial assets at fair value through profit or loss;
- b. held-to-maturity investments;
- c. available-for-sale financial assets; and
- d. loans and receivables.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon trade date.

Loans and Receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments and that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment.

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents includes:

- a. cash on hand;
- b. demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value; and
- c. cash in special accounts.

Effective Interest Method

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis except for financial assets that are recognised at fair value through profit or loss.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period.

Financial assets held at amortised cost — if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for loans and receivables or held-to-maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

2.1B: Credit Risk

The AEC's maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date is limited to the balance of total financial assets as disclosed in note 2.1A \$20.9 million (2015: \$3.2 million). The AEC has no collateral held as security and other credit enhancements in respect of the amounts disclosed. Amounts past due but not impaired are limited to the balances below.

Financial Assets that are not past due nor impaired are considered to be high quality and pose a low credit risk to the AEC. The AEC is not carrying any amounts that would otherwise be past due or impaired but whose terms have been renegotiated.

Ageing of loans and receivables that were past due but not impaired

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
0 to 30 days	–	34
31 to 60 days	49	12
61 to 90 days	–	–
90+ days	2	1
Total	51	47

2.1C: Liquidity Risk

The AEC's financial liabilities are supplier payables which will mature within 1 year. The balance of this liability is disclosed in note 2.1A \$72.6 million (2015: \$8.1 million). The exposure to liquidity risk is based on the notion that the AEC will encounter difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. This is highly unlikely due to appropriation funding and mechanisms available to the AEC and internal policies and procedures put in place to ensure there are appropriate resources to meet its financial obligations.

The AEC had no derivative financial liabilities in either 2016 or 2015.

2.1D: Market Risk

The AEC holds basic financial instruments that do not expose the AEC to certain market risks. The AEC is not exposed to 'Currency Risk', 'Other Price Risk' or 'Interest Rate Risk'.

2.2: Other Financial Assets

2.2A: Appropriation Receivable

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Appropriation receivables	74 030	55 820
Total Appropriation receivable	74 030	55 820

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Refer to Note 1.1.

2.2B: Other Receivables

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Statutory receivables	4 417	493
Total other receivables	4 417	493

Other Receivables are not past due or impaired and are expected to be recovered within 12 months (2015: within 12 months).

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Statutory receivables are amounts owed to the AEC from the Australian Taxation Office in relation to the refund of GST collected.

2.3: Non-Financial Assets

2.3A: Reconciliation of the opening and closing balances of property, plant and equipment and intangibles for 2016

	Leasehold Improvements \$'000	Plant & Equipment \$'000	Computer Software ¹ \$'000	Intellectual Property \$'000	Total \$'000
As at 1 July 2015					
Gross book value	12 078	5 780	52 493	–	70 351
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(554)	–	(38 657)	–	(39 211)
Total as at 1 July 2015	11 524	5 780	13 836	–	31 140
Additions					
Purchase	699	3 528	4 437	2 304	10 968
Revaluations and impairments recognised in other comprehensive income					
	657	1 202	–	–	1 859
Depreciation and amortisation	(2 514)	(2 810)	(3 859)	(143)	(9 326)
Disposals	(7)	(4)	(12)	–	(23)
Total as at 30 June 2016	10 359	7 696	14 402	2 161	34 618
Total as at 30 June 2016 represented by					
Gross book value	10 994	7 696	56 675	2 304	77 669
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(635)	–	(42 273)	(143)	(43 051)
Total as at 30 June 2016	10 359	7 696	14 402	2 161	34 618

1. The carrying amount of computer software included \$3 742 771 of purchased software and \$10 658 466 of internally generated software.

Reconciliation of the opening and closing balances of property, plant and equipment and intangibles for 2015

	Leasehold Improvements \$'000	Plant & Equipment \$'000	Computer Software ¹ \$'000	Intellectual Property \$'000	Total \$'000
As at 1 July 2014					
Gross book value	12 529	7 227	49 257	–	69 013
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(467)	–	(34 844)	–	(35 311)
Total as at 1 July 2014	12 062	7 227	14 413	–	33 702
Additions					
Purchase	1 199	472	1 853	–	3 524
Internally developed	–	–	1 383	–	1 383
Revaluations and impairments recognised in other comprehensive income					
	1 472	701	–	–	2 173
Revaluations recognised in the net cost of services					
	–	–	–	–	–
Depreciation and amortisation	(3 145)	(2 501)	(3 813)	–	(9 459)
Disposals	(64)	(119)	–	–	(183)
Total as at 30 June 2015	11 524	5 780	13 836	–	31 140
Total as at 30 June 2015 represented by					
Gross book value	12 078	5 780	52 493	–	70 351
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(554)	–	(38 657)	–	(39 211)
Total as at 30 June 2015	11 524	5 780	13 836	–	31 140

1. The carrying amount of computer software included \$3 742 771 of purchased software and \$10 658 466 of internally generated software.

No indicators of impairment were found for property, plant and equipment and intangibles (2015: nil).

No property, plant and equipment and intangibles are expected to be sold or disposed of within the next 12 months.

Revaluations of non-financial assets

All revaluations were conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated in this note. On 30 June 2016, an independent valuer conducted the revaluations.

A revaluation increment of \$656 757 for leasehold improvements (2015: \$1 472 176) was credited to the asset revaluation surplus by asset class and included in the equity section of the statement of financial position. There was no revaluation increment for provision for restoration (2015: nil). An increment of \$1 202 475 for property, plant and equipment (2015: \$701 127) was credited to the asset revaluation surplus and included in the equity section of the Statement of Financial Position.

Contractual commitments for the acquisition of property, plant, equipment and intangible assets

At 30 June 2016 there were no significant contractual commitments for the acquisition of property, plant, equipment and intangible assets.

Fair Value Measurement

The following tables provide an analysis of assets and liabilities that are measured at fair value. The remaining assets and liabilities disclosed in the statement of financial position do not apply the fair value hierarchy.

The different levels of the fair value hierarchy are defined below.

Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the entity can access at measurement date.

Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.

Level 3: Unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

Fair value measurements at the end of the reporting period^{1,2}

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	Category (Level 1, 2 or 3) ^{4,5,6}	
Non-financial assets³				
Leasehold improvements	10 359	11 524	Level 3	Cost approach valuation technique used and unexpired lease term, ABS indices and market prices used for inputs. Sensitivity — the significant unobservable inputs used in fair value measurement of the AEC's Leasehold Improvements are useful lives. Useful lives for leasehold improvements are based on the unexpired period of the current leases without any allowance for any options that may be available. Significant increase (decreases) in any of those inputs in isolation would result in a significantly lower (higher) fair value measurement.
Property, plant and equipment – Other	32	38	Level 2	Market approach and cost approach valuation technique used and comparable sales, useful life, ABS indices and market prices used as inputs.
Property, plant and equipment	7 664	5 742	Level 3	Cost approach valuation technique used and useful life, ABS indices and market prices used as inputs. Sensitivity — the significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement of the AEC's Property, Plant and Equipment are useful lives. Significant increases (decreases) in any of those inputs in isolation would result in a significantly lower (higher) fair value measurement.

1. There are no non-recurring fair value measurements.
2. There are no changes in valuation techniques.
3. Fair value measurements — highest and best use differs from current use for non-financial assets. The highest and best use of all non-financial assets are the same as their current use.
4. For recurring and non-recurring Level 3 fair value measurements. The AEC procured valuation services from Rodney Hyman Asset Services Pty Ltd (RHAS) and relied on valuation models provided by RHAS.
5. The remaining assets and liabilities reported by the AEC are not measured at fair value in the Statement of Financial Position.
6. There was no transfer between levels of the fair value hierarchy during the 2015–16 financial year (2014–15: Nil).

Reconciliation for Recurring Level 3 Fair Value Measurements

In the 2015–16 year, the fair value of leasehold improvements and plant and equipment, increased by \$656 757 and \$1 202 475, respectively due to the asset being held longer. These increments were taken to the asset revaluation reserve.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transferor's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than \$2 000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The initial cost of an asset includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located. This is particularly relevant to 'make good' provisions in property leases taken up by the AEC where there exists an obligation to restore the property to its original condition. These costs are included in the value of the AEC's leasehold improvements with a corresponding provision for restoration recognised.

Revaluations

Following initial recognition at cost, property, plant and equipment are carried at fair value less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets did not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depended upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reversed a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reversed a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

Depreciation

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the entity, using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

	2016	2015
Leasehold improvements	Lesser of lease term/useful life	Lesser of lease term/useful life
Plant and equipment	5 to 10 years	5 to 10 years
IT Equipment	3 to 5 years	3 to 5 years

Impairment

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2016. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment made if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the entity were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

Derecognition

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

Intangibles

The entity's intangibles comprise internally developed software, purchased software and intellectual property for internal use. These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life. The useful lives of the entity's software are 1 to 10 years (2015: 1 to 10 years) and the useful lives of the entity's intellectual property are 0 to 4 years (2015: no intellectual property was held by the entity).

All intangible assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2016.

Fair Value

The AEC tests the valuation model at least once every 12 months. The model developed is in compliance with AASB 13. The valuation utilises Australian Producer Price Indexes 6427 Table 12, 'Output of the manufacturing industries, division, subdivision, group and class index numbers' produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The assets in the valuation schedule have been categorised and indexed utilising the industry index to which they most closely align. For example, IT assets have been indexed utilising Index Numbers 242 (computer and electronic equipment manufacturing), while furniture assets have been indexed utilising Index Numbers 251 (furniture manufacturing).

The significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement of the AEC's Leasehold Improvement are useful lives and the abovementioned Australian Producer Price Indexes. Useful lives for leasehold improvements are based on the unexpired period of the current leases without any allowance for any options that may be available. Significant increases (decreases) in any of those inputs in isolation would result in a significantly lower (higher) fair value measurement. The significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement of the AEC's Property, Plant and Equipment are useful lives.

2.3B: Inventories

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Inventories held for distribution	14 599	3 055
Total inventories	14 599	3 055

During 2016, \$2 638 of distribution was recognised as an expense (2015: nil).

No items of inventory were recognised at fair value less cost to sell.

All inventories are expected to be distributed in the next 12 months.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Inventories held for distribution are valued at cost, adjusted for any loss of service potential.

Costs incurred in bringing each item of inventory to its present location and condition are assigned as follows:

- a. raw materials and stores — purchase cost on a first-in-first-out basis; and
- b. finished goods and work-in-progress — cost of direct materials and labour plus attributable costs that can be allocated on a reasonable basis.

Inventories acquired at no cost or nominal consideration are initially measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.

2.3C: Other Non-Financial Assets

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Prepayments	7 077	1 988
Total other non-financial assets	7 077	1 988
Other non-financial assets expected to be recovered		
No more than 12 months	7 027	1 965
More than 12 months	50	23
Total other non-financial assets	7 077	1 988

No indicators of impairment were found for other non-financial assets (2015: nil).

2.4: Other Payables and Provisions

2.4A: Other Payables

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Salaries and wages	6 086	2 434
Superannuation	1 060	394
Lease incentives	2 779	3 307
Straight-line leases	524	519
Unearned revenue	800	1 293
Total other payables	11 249	7 947
Other payables to be settled		
No more than 12 months	8 667	4 799
More than 12 months	2 582	3 148
Total other payables	11 249	7 947

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Parental Leave Payments Scheme

Amounts received under the Parental Leave Payments Scheme by the AEC not yet paid to employees were presented gross as cash and a liability (payable). The total amount received under this scheme was \$181 357 (2015: \$85 745).

Employee Benefits

Refer to Note 3.2.

Leases

Refer to Note 4.1A.

Unearned Revenue

Unearned revenue relates to payments in advance for services provided to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on a reciprocal basis.

2.4B: Other Provisions

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Provision for restoration as at 1 July 2015	1 561	1 577
Additional provisions made	(56)	38
Amounts used	–	(119)
Amounts reversed	–	26
Unwinding of discount or change in discount rate	20	39
Total as at 30 June 2016	1 525	1 561
Other provisions expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	388	281
More than 12 months	1 137	1 280
Total other provisions	1 525	1 561

The AEC currently has 34 (2015: 33) agreements for the leasing of premises which have provisions requiring the AEC to restore the premises to their original condition at the conclusion of the lease. The AEC has made a provision to reflect the present value of this obligation.

2.5: Contingent Assets and Liabilities

Contingent Assets

At 30 June 2016, the AEC had no contingent assets (2015: nil).

Contingent Liabilities

At 30 June 2016, the AEC had no contingent liabilities (2015: nil).

Quantifiable Contingencies

At 30 June 2016, the AEC had no quantifiable contingencies (2015: nil).

Unquantifiable Contingencies

At 30 June 2016, the AEC had no unquantifiable contingencies (2015: nil).

Significant Remote Contingencies

The AEC has no significant remote contingencies (2015: nil).

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are reported in the notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

3. People and Relationships

This section describes a range of employment and post-employment benefits provided to our people and our relationships with other key people.

3.1: Employee Benefits

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Wages and salaries	83 154	53 466
Superannuation:		
Defined contribution plans	7 032	3 925
Defined benefit plans	5 892	6 083
Leave and other entitlements	7 100	6 251
Separation and redundancies	1 384	3 590
Total employee benefits	104 562	73 315

3.2: Employee Provisions

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Leave	24 611	21 257
Total employee provisions	24 611	21 257
Employee provisions expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	7 189	5 455
More than 12 months	17 422	15 802
Total employee provisions	24 611	21 257

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Liabilities for short-term employee benefits and termination benefits expected within 12 months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

Other long-term employee benefits are measured as net total of the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting period minus the fair value at the end of the reporting period of plan assets (if any) out of which the obligations are to be settled directly.

Leave

The liability for long service leave has been determined by reference to the shorthand method as at 30 June 2016. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

Provision is made for separation and redundancy benefit payments. The entity recognises a provision for termination when it has developed a detailed formal plan for the terminations and has informed those employees affected that it will carry out the terminations.

Superannuation

The entity's staff are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), or the PSS accumulation plan (PSSap), or other superannuation funds held outside the Australian Government.

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Australian Government. The PSSap is a defined contribution scheme.

The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government and is settled by the Australian Government in due course. This liability is reported in the Department of Finance's administered schedules and notes.

The entity makes employer contributions to the employees' defined benefit superannuation scheme at rates determined by an actuary to be sufficient to meet the current cost to the Government. The entity accounts for the contributions as if they were contributions to defined contribution plans.

The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions.

3.3: Senior Management Personnel Remuneration

	2016 \$	2015 \$
Short-term employee benefits		
Salary	3 883 248	3 324 563
Other	289 634	325 990
Total short-term employee benefits	4 172 882	3 650 553
Post-employment benefits		
Superannuation	871 026	586 921
Total post-employment benefits	871 026	586 921
Other long-term employee benefits		
Annual leave	368 489	305 605
Long service leave	110 422	98 231
Total other long-term employee benefits	478 911	403 836
Total senior management remuneration expenses	5 522 819	4 641 310

The AEC has 21 senior management personnel positions (2015: 19). These positions were filled by 28 senior management staff (2015: 25).

4. Other information

This section includes additional financial information that is either required by AAS or the PGPA FRR or is relevant to assist users in understanding the financial statements.

4.1: Expenses

4.1A: Suppliers

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Goods and services supplied or rendered		
Consultants	10 335	2 847
Contractors	14 876	4 669
Travel	5 583	4 213
IT services	20 611	9 930
Inventory	383	–
Furniture and venue hire	6 737	161
Property	8 502	3 216
Mail and Freight	13 747	5 042
Advertising	49 695	877
Printing	5 485	723
Legal Costs	1 132	376
Other	6 999	4 716
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	144 085	36 770
Goods supplied	79 641	15 580
Services rendered	64 444	21 190
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	144 085	36 770
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals in connection with		
Minimum lease payments	11 916	10 936
Subleases	3 066	726
Lease restoration	(842)	824
Workers compensation expenses	1 290	1 250
Total other suppliers	15 430	13 736
Total suppliers	159 515	50 506

Leasing commitments

The AEC in its capacity as a lessee, leases office accommodation and storage that are effectively non-cancellable. The lease payments can be varied periodically to take account of an annual Consumer Price Index increase, a fixed increase or a market increase. Commitments are GST inclusive where relevant.

Commitments for minimum lease payments in relation to non-cancellable operating leases are payable as follows:

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Within 1 year	14 525	14 470
Between 1 to 5 years	26 150	32 791
More than 5 years	5 529	12 215
Total operating lease commitments	46 204	59 476

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Operating lease payments are expensed on a straight-line basis which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets.

4.1B: Write-Down and Impairment of Assets

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Impairment on financial instruments	(4)	111
Total write-down and impairment of assets	(4)	111

4.2: Reporting of Outcomes

In determining the full cost of outputs, the AEC charges direct costs to programs and allocates overheads between programs on the basis of full-time-equivalent staff.

The AEC's resourcing consumption varies considerably from year to year and between programs depending on the phase of the electoral cycle.

The AEC has one outcome, so the figures for the Major Classes of Departmental Expenses, Income, Assets and Liabilities by Outcome appear in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and the Statement of Financial Position.

The AEC has one outcome, so the figures for the Major Classes of Administered Expenses, Income, Assets and Liabilities by Outcome appear in Note 5.1 Administered Expenses, Note 5.2 Administered Income and Note 5.3 Administered Assets and Liabilities.

Outcome 1 is described in the Overview. Net costs shown included intra-government costs.

5. Items Administered on Behalf of Government

This section analyses the activities that AEC does not control but administers on behalf of the Government. Unless otherwise noted, the accounting policies adopted are consistent with those applied for departmental reporting.

5.1: Administered – Expenses

5.1A: Other Expenses

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Refunds — electoral fines/penalties	34	53
Election public funding	358	–
Total other expenses	392	53

5.2: Administered – Income

5.2A: Fees and Fines

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Revenue		
Non-Taxation Revenue		
Electoral fines/penalties	369	960
Candidate deposits	25	7
Other	10	–
Total fees and fines	404	967

ACCOUNTING POLICY

All administered revenues are revenues relating to ordinary activities performed by the entity on behalf of the Australian Government. As such, administered appropriations are not revenues of the individual entity that oversees distribution or expenditure of the funds as directed.

Fines are charged for non-voters of federal elections, by-elections and referendums. Administered fee revenue is recognised when received.

Each nomination for the Senate and the House of Representatives must be accompanied by a deposit.

5.3: Administered – Assets and Liabilities

5.3A: Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Cash on hand or on deposit	14	–
Total cash and cash equivalents	14	–

5.3B: Suppliers

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Trade creditors and accruals	14	–
Total suppliers	14	–

5.4: Administered – Financial Instruments

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Financial Assets		
Loans and receivables		
Cash on hand or on deposit	14	–
Total loans and receivables	14	–
Total financial assets	14	–
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Trade creditors and accruals	14	–
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	14	–
Total financial liabilities	14	–

Receivables (net) are expected to be recovered within 12 months (2015: within 12 months).

Credit terms for goods and services were within 30 days (2015: 30 days). Settlement of suppliers payable is usually made within 30 days.

The carrying amount of financial instruments does not differ from the fair value.

5.5: Administered – Cash Flow Reconciliation

	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per Statement of Financial Position and Cash Flow Statement		
Cash and cash equivalents as per		
Administered Cash Flow Statement	14	–
Administered Schedule of Assets and Liabilities	14	–
Discrepancy	–	–
Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from/(used by) operating activities		
Net(cost of)/contribution by services	12	914
Increase in supplier payables	14	–
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities	26	914

5.6: Administered – Contingent Assets and Liabilities

There are no administered contingencies, remote or quantifiable, for the AEC (2015: nil).



APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Resources

This appendix provides details of the AEC's resources and expenses in 2015–16, as required by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit *Requirements for annual reports for departments, executive agencies and other noncorporate Commonwealth entities, 25 June 2015*.

The tables in this appendix correspond to tables in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2015–16 and staff statistics, namely:

- the Agency Resource Statement, which provides information about the various funding sources that the AEC was able to draw on during the year (Table 31)
- Expenses and Resources by Outcome, showing the detail of Budget appropriations and total resourcing for Outcome 1 (Table 32)
- Average staffing levels from 2013–14 to 2015–16 (Table 33).

Table 31: Agency Resource Statement 2015–16

	Column a: Actual appropriation for 2015–16 \$'000	Column b: Payments made for 2015–16 \$'000	Balance remaining 2015–16 (a – b) \$'000
Ordinary annual services^a			
Prior Year Departmental appropriation	52 630	52 630	0
Departmental appropriation ^b	233 970	159 940	74 030
Section 74 relevant agency receipts	22 119	22 119	0
Total	308 719	234 689	74 030
Total ordinary annual services	A 308 719	234 689	74 030
Other services^c			
Departmental non-operating			
Prior year equity injections	3 989	3 989	0
Total	3 989	3 989	0
Total other services	B 3 989	3 989	0
Total available annual appropriations and payments	312 708	238 678	74 030
Special appropriations			
Special appropriations limited by criteria/entitlement			
Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Administered)	357	357	
Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 – s77 Repayments	34	34	
Special appropriations limited by amount			
Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Departmental)	9 000	9 000	0
Total special appropriations	C 9 391	9 391	0
Special accounts^d			
Opening balance	1	0	
Non-appropriation receipts to special accounts	2 295	0	
Payments made	0	28	
Total special accounts	D 2 296	28	
Total resourcing (A + B + C + D)	324 395	248 097	
Total net resourcing for agency	324 395	248 097	

- Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2015–16, Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015–16 and Advance to the Finance Minister 2015–16. This also includes Prior Year departmental appropriation and section 74 relevant agency receipts.
- Includes an amount of \$11.012 million in 2015–16 for the Department Capital Budget. For accounting purposes this amount has been designated as 'contributions by owners'.
- Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2015–16.
- Does not include 'Special Public Money' held in accounts like Other Trust Monies accounts (OTM), Services for other Government and Nonagency Bodies accounts (SOG) or Services for Other Entities and Trust Monies Special accounts (SOETM).

Table 32: Expenses and resources for Outcome 1

	Column a: Budget ^a 2015–16 \$'000	Column b: Actual expenses 2015–16 \$'000	Variation (a – b) \$'000
Program 1.1			
Administered expenses			
Special appropriations	664	391	273
Departmental expenses			
Departmental appropriation ^b	132 647	255 116	(122 469)
Special appropriations	9 000	9 000	0
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the Budget year	7 995	9 326	(1 331)
Total for Program 1.1	150 306	273 833	(123 527)
Total expenses for Outcome 1	150 306	273 833	(123 527)

- Full-year budget, including any subsequent adjustment made to the 2015–16 Budget at Additional Estimates.
- Departmental appropriation combines 'Ordinary annual services (Appropriation Bill No. 1)' and 'Revenue from independent sources (section 74)'.

Table 33: Average staffing levels 2013–14 to 2015–16

	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Average staffing level (number)	1 007	759	819

Appendix B: Electoral Roll information

Members of Parliament and Senators who received roll information in 2015–16 are set out in the table below. Please note that as there were redistributions in Western Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory during the year, some recipients (in Western Australia and New South Wales in the list below) received both pre-redistribution and post-redistribution roll data relevant to their electorates/constituencies.

Table 34: Recipients of electoral roll extracts July 2015 – June 2016

Name	Electorate/State	Roll data provided	Date provided
Mr Nickolas Varvaris MP	Member for Barton	Barton, Banks, Cook, Watson	Apr 2016 – May 2016
Mr John Alexander OAM, MP	Member for Bennelong	Bennelong	Apr 2016 – May 2016
Mr Andrew Hastie MP	Member for Canning	Canning, Burt, O'Connor	Nov 2015 – Apr 2016
The Hon Richard Marles MP	Member for Corio	Corio	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Mr Luke Simpkins MP	Member for Cowan	Cowan, Moore, Pearce	Feb 2015 – May 2016
Mr Andrew Wilkie MP	Member for Denison	Denison	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Mr Clive Palmer MP	Member for Fairfax	Fairfax	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Hon Kenneth Wyatt AM, MP	Member for Hasluck	Hasluck, Burt, Canning, Swan, Pearce	Feb 2016 – May 2016
The Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP	Member for Higgins	Higgins	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Ms Clare O'Neil MP	Member for Hotham	Hotham	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Ms Catherine McGowan AO, MP	Member for Indi	Indi	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Hon Robert Katter MP	Member for Kennedy	Kennedy	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Ms Fiona Scott MP	Member for Lindsay	Lindsay	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Hon Karen Andrews MP	Member for McPherson	McPherson	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Mr Adam Bandt MP	Member for Melbourne	Melbourne	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Mr Alexander Hawke MP	Member for Mitchell	Mitchell, Berowra, Greenway, Parramatta	Apr 2015 – May 2016
Mr Graham Perrett MP	Member for Moreton	Moreton	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP	Member for New England	New England, Lyne, Parkes, Page	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Dr Dennis Jensen MP	Member for Tangney	Tangney	May 2016

Name	Electorate/State	Roll data provided	Date provided
Mr Stephen Jones MP	Member for Throsby	Throsby, Cunningham, Hume, Whitlam	Apr 2016 – May 2016
The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP	Member for Wentworth	Wentworth	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells	Senator for New South Wales	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – Sep 2015, May 2016
Senator Sam Dastyari	Senator for New South Wales	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator David Leyonhjelm	Senator for New South Wales	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Marise Payne	Senator for New South Wales	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Lee Rhiannon	Senator for New South Wales	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator John Williams	Senator for New South Wales	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Glenn Lazarus	Senator for Queensland	Queensland	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald	Senator for Queensland	Queensland	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon James McGrath	Senator for Queensland	Queensland	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Larissa Waters	Senator for Queensland	Queensland	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Cory Bernardi	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Robert Day AO	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Sean Edwards	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Sep 2015 – May 2016
Senator David Fawcett	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Sarah Hanson-Young	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Anne Ruston	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Penelope Wright	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – Oct 2015
Senator Nicholas Xenophon	Senator for South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator David Bushby	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Jacqui Lambie	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Nicholas McKim	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	Sep 2015 – May 2016
Senator Christine Milne	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	Jul 2015 – Sep 2015
Senator the Hon Lisa Singh	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	August 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Stephen Parry	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	Jul 2015 – May 2016

Name	Electorate/State	Roll data provided	Date provided
Senator Peter Wish-Wilson	Senator for Tasmania	Tasmania	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Richard Di Natale	Senator for Victoria	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Ricky Muir	Senator for Victoria	Victoria	Apr 2016 – May 2016
Senator James Patterson	Senator for Victoria	Victoria	Apr 2016 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson	Senator for Victoria	Victoria	Jul 2015 – Mar 2016
Senator the Hon Scott Ryan	Senator for Victoria	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Christopher Back	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Joseph Bullock	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator the Hon David Johnston	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Scott Ludlam	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Rachel Siewert	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Dean Smith	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Linda Reynolds CSC	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Senator Zhenya Wang	Senator for Western Australia	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016

Appendix C: Roll information for registered political parties

Registered political parties that received roll information in 2015–16 are set out in the table below. Please note that as there were redistributions in Western Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory during the year, some recipients received both pre-redistribution and post-redistribution roll data relevant to their electorates/constituencies. In May 2016, registered parties received two cycles of information: a regular monthly update and close-of-rolls information.

Table 35: Parties provided with electoral roll extracts, July 2015 – June 2016

Registered political party	Roll data provided	Date provided
Australian Christians	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Australian Country Party (previously Country Alliance)	Victoria	Nov 2015 – May 2016
Australian Equality (Marriage) Party	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Australian Greens	National	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Australian Greens – Australian Capital Territory Branch	Australian Capital Territory	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Australian Labor Party – Federal Secretariat	National	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party	Queensland	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Australian Sports Party	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – Aug 2015
Australian Voice Party	Queensland	Jul 2015 – Aug 2015
Christian Democratic Party	New South Wales	May 2015
Country Alliance (renamed Australian Country Party)	Victoria	Jul 2014 – Oct 2015
Country Liberals – Northern Territory Branch	Northern Territory	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Drug Law Reform	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Family First Party	Victoria, Queensland, South Australia	Jul 2014 – June 2015
Family First South Australia	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Health Australia Party (previously Natural Medicine Party)	New South Wales	Nov 2015 – May 2016
Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Liberal Party of Australia – Federal Secretariat	National	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Liberal Party of Australia – South Australia Division	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016

Registered political party	Roll data provided	Date provided
Mature Australia Party	Queensland	Oct 2015 – May 2016
National Party of Australia – Victoria	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
National Party of Australia – WA Branch	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Natural Medicine Party (renamed Health Australia Party)	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – Oct 2016
Nick Xenophon Team	South Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	Queensland	Oct 2015 – May 2016
Pirate Party Australia	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Greens Queensland	Queensland	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Republican Party of Australia	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – Feb 2016
Rise Up Australia Party	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
Socialist Alliance	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Arts Party	New South Wales	Nov 2015 – May 2016
The Greens NSW	New South Wales	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Greens – Victoria Branch	Victoria	Jul 2015 – May 2016
The Greens (WA) Inc.	Western Australia	Jul 2015 – May 2016
VOTEFLEX.ORG Upgrade Democracy!	New South Wales	May 2016

Appendix D: Other recipients of roll information

Table 36: Government departments and agencies that received electoral extracts, July 2015 – June 2016

Institution	Data provided			
	Aug 2015	Nov 2015	Feb 2016	May 2016
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)		Yes		
Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI)	Yes			Yes
Australian Crime Commission (ACC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service	Yes			
Australian Federal Police (AFP)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian Taxation Office (ATO)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commonwealth Superannuation Commission		Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)			Yes	
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian Passport Office	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Department of Human Services – Centrelink	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (Austrac)	Yes		Yes	Yes

Table 37: Medical and electoral researchers provided with electoral roll extracts July 2015 – June 2016

Contact, institution	Data provided
Medical researchers	
Professor Winston Cheung, Intensive Care Unit, Concord Repatriation General Hospital	Random sample of 2 000 records of men and women, for the purpose of 'Researching the Australian public opinion on methods to triage intensive care patients in an influenza pandemic'.
Professor Dedee Murrell, Director, Department of Dermatology, St George Hospital, Sydney	Random sample of 2 700 records of men and women, in age ranges from 31–89 years, from the states of NSW, ACT, Queensland and Victoria for a study: 'To determine the occupational and environmental triggers for autoimmune blistering conditions of the skin: an epidemiological study'.
Associate Professor Sharon Goldfeld, Paediatrician, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne	Random sample of 25 000 records of men and women, in age ranges from 31–89 years, from the states of NSW, ACT, South Australia, Queensland and Victoria for a study: 'Research Kids in Communities Study'.
Professor Graham Giles, Cancer Epidemiology Centre, Victoria	Random sample of 250 000 records of men and women, in age ranges from 40–74 years, from across Australia for a study 'Australian Breakthrough Cancer Study'.
Professor Ian Hickie, Brain and Mind Research Institute, Sydney	Random sample of 75 000 records of men and women, from the NSW electoral divisions of Grayndler, North Sydney, Reid, Sydney, Warringah, Watson and Charlton, for persons aged 60–69 years, for a study 'The Beyond Ageing Project'.
Mr Stephen Cole, Chief Investigator, Repatriation General Hospital, South Australia	Random sample of 2 700 records of men and women selected from six electoral divisions in South Australia for the purpose of 'Evaluation of FIT first, a new colorectal cancer screening strategy'.
Electoral researchers	
Associate Professor Betsy Blunsdon, Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated (ACSPRI)	Random sample of 2 500 records of men and women, in two-year age ranges, across all states and territories, for the purpose of '2016 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes: Role of Government'.

Table 38: Provision of electoral roll information to organisations verifying identity for financial purposes July 2015 – June 2016

Institution	Data provided			
	Aug 2015	Nov 2015	Feb 2016	May 2016
ACXIOM Australia Pty Ltd	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FCS OnLine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VEDA Advantage Information Services and Solutions Ltd	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix E: Advertising and market research

In 2015–16, the AEC delivered a national public information campaign for the 2016 federal election and changes to Senate voting that were introduced in March 2016. Advertising was tailored and translated for culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous audiences.

Further information on the advertising campaign is available on the AEC website and in reports on Australian Government advertising prepared by the Department of Finance. Those reports are available on the Department of Finance's website at www.finance.gov.au.

The Canning and North Sydney by-elections in 2015–16 were supported by local and online advertising and direct mail.

Table 39 provides particulars of payments of not less than \$12 700 (GST inclusive) to advertising agencies, and market research, polling, direct mail and media advertising organisations, as required under Section 311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Figures reflect payments above the threshold unless otherwise specified. (There were no payments of \$12 700 or more to polling or direct mail organisations.)

Table 39: Advertising and media placement payments, \$12 700 or more

Agency type	Agency name	Details	Amount (GST inclusive)
Advertising agency	BMF Advertising	Creative head hours associated with the Senate education campaign and the 2016 federal election.	\$609 549
Advertising agency	Cultural Perspectives	Creative head hours associated with the Senate education campaign and the 2016 federal election.	\$91 765
Market research	Orima	Developmental, concept and refinement testing of the AEC's advertising campaign.	\$342 923
Market research	Wallis Consulting Group	Qualitative and quantitative market research services including campaign benchmark and tracking.	\$528 026
Media advertising organisations	Dentsu Mitchell ^a	Media placement: campaign advertising associated with the Senate education campaign and the 2016 federal election; non-campaign advertising associated with the election campaign, electoral redistributions, industrial and commercial elections, recruitment and other advertising.	\$49 289 800
Total			\$50 862 063

a. Due to the way payments are reported to the AEC, figures from Dentsu Mitchell include invoices below the threshold.

Appendix F: AEC regular staff

Table 40: APS ongoing staff (including staff on higher duties arrangements) demographics as at 30 June 2015 and 30 June 2016

Classification	Female part-time		Female full-time		Male part-time		Male full-time		Total	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
New South Wales										
EL 2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	2
EL 1	1	1	5	7	0	0	6	6	12	14
APS 6	1	1	27	37	0	0	13	19	41	57
APS 5	0	0	14	4	0	0	5	2	19	6
APS 4	0	0	9	11	0	0	2	2	11	13
APS 3	5	1	15	27	1	0	7	6	28	34
APS 2	23	6	7	25	3	1	1	3	34	35
Total	30	9	79	112	4	1	34	39	147	161
Victoria										
EL 2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
EL 1	0	0	7	6	0	0	3	2	10	8
APS 6	1	0	22	21	0	0	21	24	44	45
APS 5	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	5	2
APS 4	2	0	3	4	1	0	0	1	6	5
APS 3	4	1	18	32	0	0	5	4	27	37
APS 2	26	1	4	30	1	1	1	1	32	33
Total	33	2	58	95	2	1	32	34	125	132
Queensland										
AEO	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
EL 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
EL 1	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	4	5
APS 6	1	0	11	20	0	0	12	15	24	35
APS 5	0	0	11	6	0	0	4	1	15	7
APS 4	0	0	5	7	0	0	0	2	5	9
APS 3	3	0	17	22	0	0	4	3	24	25
APS 2	16	1	10	19	0	0	1	1	27	21
Total	20	1	57	77	0	0	24	25	101	103

Classification	Female part-time		Female full-time		Male part-time		Male full-time		Total	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Western Australia										
AEO	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
EL 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
EL 1	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	2	4	3
APS 6	1	0	7	12	0	0	7	8	15	20
APS 5	0	0	3	5	0	0	3	1	6	6
APS 4	1	0	4	4	0	0	1	2	6	6
APS 3	6	2	6	15	0	0	0	0	12	17
APS 2	11	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	11	10
Total	19	3	23	47	0	0	14	14	56	64
South Australia										
AEO	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
EL 2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
EL 1	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
APS 6	0	0	6	12	0	0	3	3	9	15
APS 5	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	6	1
APS 4	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	3	3	6
APS 3	1	0	6	7	0	0	2	1	9	8
APS 2	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	5	3
Total	3	0	24	29	1	0	8	9	36	38
Tasmania										
AEO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
EL 1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	2	4
APS 6	0	0	3	2	0	0	3	3	6	5
APS 5	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	2	4	5
APS 4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
APS 3	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	1	3	5
APS 2	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	3	0	10	14	0	0	7	10	20	24

Classification	Female part-time		Female full-time		Male part-time		Male full-time		Total	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Australian Capital Territory										
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
SES Band 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	3
SES Band 1	0	1	5	3	0	0	4	4	9	8
EL 2	2	0	21	19	0	0	14	20	37	39
EL 1	8	6	31	48	0	1	37	40	76	95
APS 6	4	6	35	37	2	0	29	27	70	70
APS 5	5	5	24	14	0	2	18	16	47	37
APS 4	7	7	14	22	0	0	7	6	28	35
APS 3	1	1	3	6	0	0	0	4	4	11
APS 2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	2
Total	28	26	133	150	2	3	113	121	276	300
Northern Territory										
EL 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
APS 6	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	3	3
APS 5	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	1	3	4
APS 4	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
APS 3	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	3	3
APS 2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	0	0	7	10	0	0	5	4	12	14
AEC total	136	41	391	534	9	5	237	256	773	836

- a. AEO = Australian Electoral Officer, APS = Australian Public Service, SES = Senior Executive Service.
b. Figures include all ongoing staff employed at 30 June 2016 under the *Public Service Act 1999*.
c. ACT electoral divisions are co-located with National Office employees in the ACT.
d. Graduates are included in the APS 3 classification.

Source: Aurion HR System.

Table 41: APS non-ongoing staff (including staff on higher duties arrangements) demographics as at 30 June 2015 and 30 June 2016

Classification	Female part-time		Female full-time		Male part-time		Male full-time		Total	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
New South Wales										
EL 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
APS 6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
APS 4	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
APS 3	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	27	1	35
APS 2	8	0	0	11	0	0	0	1	8	12
Total	8	0	3	21	0	0	0	33	11	54
Victoria										
EL 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
APS 6	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
APS 5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
APS 4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
APS 3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
APS 2	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	5
Total	0	3	0	8	0	0	0	4	0	15
Queensland										
EL 1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
APS 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
APS 5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
APS 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
APS 3	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	7	0	12
APS 2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	1	1	0	10	0	0	0	13	1	24
Western Australia										
APS 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2
APS 5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
APS 4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
APS 3	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	10	0	14
APS 2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	0	1	7	0	0	1	13	2	20

Classification	Female part-time		Female full-time		Male part-time		Male full-time		Total	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
South Australia										
APS 6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
APS 3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
APS 2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
Tasmania										
APS 4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
APS 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Total	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	5
Australian Capital Territory										
SES Band 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
EL 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	1
EL 1	0	0	4	5	0	1	3	2	7	8
APS 6	0	1	1	7	1	0	1	6	3	14
APS 5	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	3
APS 4	7	6	11	1	1	1	1	3	20	11
APS 3	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	8	4	11
APS 2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	2
Total	7	7	19	19	3	2	11	22	40	50
Northern Territory										
APS 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
APS 3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
APS 2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	5
AEC total	16	11	23	71	3	2	12	93	54	177

a. AEO = Australian Electoral Officer, APS = Australian Public Service, SES = Senior Executive Service.

b. Figures include all non-ongoing staff employed at 30 June 2016 under the *Public Service Act 1999* except Irregular or Intermittent employees.

c. ACT electoral divisions are co-located with National Office employees in the ACT.

Source: Aurion HR System.

Table 42: Staff employed under the Electoral Act by demographics as at 30 June 2015 and 30 June 2016

Classification	Female part-time		Female full-time		Male part-time		Male full-time		Total	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
New South Wales										
AEO NSW	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Victoria										
AEO Vic.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Queensland										
AEO Qld	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Western Australia										
AEO WA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Australia										
AEO SA	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Tasmania										
AEO Tas.	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Australian Capital Territory										
Electoral Commissioner	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
SES Band 1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	3
Northern Territory										
AEO NT	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
AEC total	0	0	3	2	0	0	4	5	7	7

a. AEO = Australian Electoral Officer, SES = Senior Executive Service.

b. This table includes full-time statutory office holders of the AEC engaged under the Electoral Act working in, or in conjunction with, an agency that operates under the *Public Service Act 1999*. This table excludes the temporary election workforce.

Source: Aurion HR System.

Appendix G: Industrial and commercial elections

Table 43: AEC industrial and commercial elections program 2015–16

	NSW/ACT	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	Total
Elections and ballots								
Number of contested industrial elections	37	26	12	7	10	5	4	101
Number of uncontested industrial elections	41	35	14	20	30	23	9	172
Certified agreement ballots	22	27	5	3	8	15	1	81
Protected action ballots	122	375	670	75	25	36	0	1 303
Other commercial elections and ballots	11	12	7	5	2	1	5	43
Other elections and ballots	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of elections and ballots completed	233	475	708	110	75	80	19	1 700
Positions								
Number of positions available (industrial)	1 496	2 379	658	629	831	415	109	6 517
Number of unfilled positions (industrial)	430	1 550	191	293	397	120	33	3 014
Candidates								
Number of candidates for uncontested offices (industrial)	871	785	405	305	474	278	74	3 192
Total number of candidates	1 227	1 030	555	381	561	341	94	4 189
Ballot papers								
Number of ballot papers issued (industrial)	123 321	399 302	32 408	51 921	109 633	12 735	6 490	735 810
Number of ballot papers returned (industrial)	29 763	108 036	7 619	10 967	19 259	2 839	1 138	179 621
Number of ballot papers issued (certified agreements)	5 087	13 183	21 281	360	1 381	4 867	163	46 322
Number of ballot papers returned (certified agreements)	3 810	5 763	5 395	113	1 075	3 249	65	19 470
Number of ballot papers issued (protected action)	11 994	75 458	23 404	1 995	1 469	2 025	0	116 345
Number of ballot papers returned (protected action)	7 468	47 157	13 264	1 372	1 171	1 166	0	71 598
Number of ballot papers issued (other commercial)	5 284	6 884	201 893	382	600	37	540	215 620
Number of ballot papers returned (other commercial)	2 170	2 125	12 660	165	562	37	500	182 19
Number of ballot papers issued (other)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of ballot papers returned (other)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of ballot papers issued	145 686	494 827	278 986	54 658	113 083	19 664	7 193	1 114 097
Total number of ballot papers returned	43 211	163 081	38 938	12 617	22 067	7 291	1 703	288 908

Appendix H: List of requirements for annual report

Section and description	Requirement	Pages
Opening pages		
Letter of transmittal.	Mandatory	iii
Table of contents.	Mandatory	v
Index.	Mandatory	169
Glossary.	Mandatory	166
Contact officer(s).	Mandatory	ii
Internet home page address and Internet address for report.	Mandatory	ii
Review by Secretary		
Review by departmental secretary.	Mandatory	2
Summary of significant issues and developments.	Suggested	2
Overview of department's performance and financial results.	Suggested	3
Outlook for following year.	Suggested	3
Significant issues and developments – portfolio.	Suggested for portfolio departments	N/A
Departmental overview		
Role and functions.	Mandatory	8
Organisational structure.	Mandatory	9–12
Outcome and program structure.	Mandatory	8
Where outcome and program structures differ from PB Statements/PAES or other portfolio statements accompanying any other additional appropriation bills (other portfolio statements), details of variation and reasons for change.	Mandatory	N/A
Portfolio structure.	Mandatory for portfolio departments	N/A
Report on performance		
Review of performance during the year in relation to programs and contribution to outcomes.	Mandatory	15–61
Actual performance in relation to deliverables and KPIs set out in PB Statements/PAES or other portfolio statements.	Mandatory	15–23
Where performance targets differ from the PBS/PAES, details of both former and new targets, and reasons for the change.	Mandatory	N/A
Narrative discussion and analysis of performance.	Mandatory	15–61
Trend information.	Mandatory	15–61
Significant changes in nature of principal functions/services.	Suggested	2–5, 18–22, 23–61
Performance of purchaser/provider arrangements.	If applicable, suggested	5, 73, 83–90
Factors, events or trends influencing departmental performance.	Suggested	2–5, 15–61
Contribution of risk management in achieving objectives.	Suggested	72

Section and description	Requirement	Pages
Performance against service charter customer service standards, complaints data, and the department's response to complaints.	If applicable, mandatory	92–93
Discussion and analysis of the department's financial performance.	Mandatory	101–102, 107–108
Discussion of any significant changes in financial results from the prior year, from budget or anticipated to have a significant impact on future operations.	Mandatory	101–102, 107–108
Agency resource statement and summary resource tables by outcomes.	Mandatory	140–141
Management and accountability		
Corporate governance		
Agency heads are required to certify their agency's actions in dealing with fraud.	Mandatory	iii
Information on preventing, detecting and dealing with fraud.	Mandatory	91
Statement of the main corporate governance practices in place.	Mandatory	64–68
Statement of any significant issue reported to the responsible Minister that relates to non-compliance with finance law.	Mandatory	N/A
Names of the senior executive and their responsibilities.	Suggested	9–10, 12
Senior management committees and their roles.	Suggested	64–65
Corporate and operational plans and associated performance reporting and review.	Suggested	68–71
Internal audit arrangements including approach adopted to identifying areas of significant financial or operational risk and arrangements to manage those risks.	Suggested	72, 90–91
Policy and practices on the establishment and maintenance of appropriate ethical standards.	Suggested	8, 67
How nature and amount of remuneration for SES officers is determined.	Suggested	73–74
External scrutiny		
Significant developments in external scrutiny.	Mandatory	92–99
Judicial decisions and decisions of administrative tribunals and by the Australian Information Commissioner.	Mandatory	93–98
Reports by the Auditor-General, a Parliamentary Committee, the Commonwealth Ombudsman or an agency capability review.	Mandatory	94, 98–99
Management of human resources		
Assessment of effectiveness in managing and developing human resources to achieve departmental objectives.	Mandatory	73–81
Workforce planning, staff retention and turnover.	Suggested	78–79
Impact and features of enterprise or collective agreements, individual flexibility arrangements (IFAs), determinations, common law contracts and Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs).	Suggested	73–75
Training and development undertaken and its impact.	Suggested	79–80

Section and description	Requirement	Pages
Work health and safety performance.	Suggested	81–82
Productivity gains.	Suggested	18–61
Statistics on staffing.	Mandatory	73–77, 141, 150–155
Statistics on employees who identify as Indigenous.	Mandatory	77
Enterprise or collective agreements, IFAs, determinations, common law contracts and AWAs.	Mandatory	73–75
Performance pay.	Mandatory	75
Assets management		
Assessment of effectiveness of assets management.	If applicable, mandatory	73–83
Purchasing		
Assessment of performance against Commonwealth Procurement Rules.	Mandatory	83–90
Consultants		
Summary statements detailing the number of new consultancy services contracts let during the year; the total actual expenditure on all such contracts (inclusive of GST); the number of ongoing consultancy contracts entered into in a previous year; and the total actual expenditure in the reporting year on the ongoing consultancy contracts (inclusive of GST).	Mandatory	84–85
Summary of policies for selecting and engaging consultants; procedures for selecting consultants; and main categories of purposes for which consultants were engaged.	Mandatory	84–85
Statement noting that information on contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website.	Mandatory	83–85
Australian National Audit Office access clauses		
Absence of provisions in contracts allowing access by the Auditor-General.	Mandatory	85
Exempt contracts		
Contracts exempted from publication in AusTender.	Mandatory	85
Small business		
Procurement initiatives to support small business.	Mandatory	83
Financial statements		
Financial statements.	Mandatory	101–137
Other mandatory information		
Work health and safety (Schedule 2, Part 4 of the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>).	Mandatory	81–82
Advertising and market research (Section 311A of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>) and statement on advertising campaigns.	Mandatory	49–52, 149
Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance (Section 516A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>).	Mandatory	85–90

Section and description	Requirement	Pages
Compliance with the agency's obligations under the <i>Carer Recognition Act 2010</i> .	If applicable, mandatory	79
Grant programs.	Mandatory	83
Disability reporting – explicit and transparent reference to agency-level information available through other reporting mechanisms.	Mandatory	78
Information Publication Scheme statement.	Mandatory	92
Correction of material errors in previous annual report.	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
Agency Resource Statements and Resources for Outcomes.	Mandatory	140–141
List of requirements.	Mandatory	157–160



READER GUIDES

Abbreviations and acronyms

Term	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AEO	Australian Electoral Officer
AGIMO	Australian Government Information Management Office
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
APM	Australian Project Management
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
BAC	Business Assurance Committee
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CDPP	Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecution
CNE	Comissão Nacional de Eleições (National Electoral Commission of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste)
CRU	Continuous Roll Update
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DKPP	Dewan Kehormatan Penyelenggara Pemilu (Indonesian Elections Ethics Council)
DLER	Directed Level of Election Readiness
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
DRO	Divisional Returning Officer
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
ECANZ	Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand
ECN	Election Commission of Nepal
ECSA	Electoral Commission South Australia
EEIC	Electoral Education and Information Centre
EEN	Electoral Education Network
EIU	Electoral Integrity Unit
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation
EQAP	Enrolment Quality Assurance Program
ERRM	Election Ready Road Map
FCC	Fraud Control Committee
FDEU	Federal Direct Enrolment and Update
FMA Act	<i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</i>
FOI	Freedom of Information
HCO	Harassment Contact Officer
ICARE	APS values – Impartial, Committed to service, Accountable, Respectful, Ethical

Term	Description
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDEA	(International) Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEPP	Indigenous Electoral Participation Program
IFA	Individual flexibility arrangements
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IPS	Information Publication Scheme
JSCEM	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
KPI	Key performance indicator
KPU	Komisi Pemilihan Umum (General Elections Commission of Indonesia)
MFD	Multi-function device
NEDC	National Election Delivery Committee
NEEC	National Electoral Education Centre
NEM	National Election Manager
No.	Number
NRS	National Relay Service
OBEC	Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner
OCG	Operational Compliance Group
OES	Online Enrolment Service
OTM	Other Trust Monies
PAES	Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statements
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGEC	Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission
POI	Proof of identity
PSB	People Services Branch
SAF	Sample Audit Fieldwork
SDG	Strategic Directions Group
SE	Senior Executive
SME	Small and medium enterprises
STAE	Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral (Timor-Leste's Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration)
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
VEC	Victorian Electoral Commission
VITS	Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEAD	United Nations Electoral Assistance Division
WHS	Work health and safety

Glossary

Term	Description
Amortisation	Reductions in the value of assets to reflect their reduced worth over time.
Ballot	A secret vote, normally written.
Ballot box	The sealed container into which a voter places a completed ballot paper.
Ballot paper	A paper that shows the questions to be put or the names of the candidates who are standing for election and on which voters mark their vote.
By-election	An election held to fill a single vacancy in the House of Representatives.
Candidate	A person standing for election to the House of Representatives or Senate.
Certified list	The official electoral roll used to mark off voters at an election.
Claims for enrolment	Application form to enrol to vote or update enrolment.
Close of rolls	The date the electoral roll closes for the federal election, which is 8 pm local Australian time on the seventh calendar day after the writs are issued.
Compulsory voting	The requirement for Australian citizens aged 18 years and over to enrol to vote and to vote at each election.
Constitution (Australian)	The document that sets out the structure under which the Australian Government operates. It can only be amended through a referendum.
Court of Disputed Returns	A court (in Australia the High Court) that determines disputes about elections.
Declaration vote	Any vote where, instead of the voter being marked off the certified list, the vote is sealed in an envelope and signed by the voter and admitted to the count only after further checks are completed.
Declaration of Nominations	Formal announcement of registered candidates whose names will appear on a ballot paper in an election.
Depreciation	A method of allocating the cost of a tangible asset over its useful life.
Division	See <i>Electoral division</i> .
Double dissolution election	In a double dissolution election the Governor-General dissolves both the Senate and the House of Representatives at the same time, meaning every seat in both chambers is contested.
Electoral cycle	The period from one federal election to the next – usually three years.
Electoral division	The voting area, containing approximately equal numbers of voters, for which one member is elected to the House of Representatives. Australia is divided into 150 electoral divisions.
Electoral roll	The list of people entitled to vote in an election or referendum.
Electorate	See <i>Electoral division</i> .
Employee	Member of staff who is ongoing, non-ongoing, intermittent or irregular.
Enrolment form	See <i>Claims for enrolment</i> .
Enrolment rate	The percentage of eligible electors on the electoral roll.
Federal election	A general election for the House of Representatives and Senate.
Fee-for-service election	An election or ballot conducted on a full cost recovery basis.
Financial disclosure return	A document detailing information on the receipts and expenditure of participants in the political process.

Term	Description
Formality or formal vote	A vote in an election or referendum where the ballot paper has been marked correctly and is counted towards the result. A ballot paper incorrectly marked is called informal.
Franchise	The right to vote.
Funding and disclosure	Public funding of election campaigns and disclosure of certain financial details by candidates, political parties and others.
General postal voter	A voter who is registered to have postal ballot papers sent automatically.
House of Representatives	The house of parliament in which the government is formed. Under a preferential voting system, each electoral division elects one member of the House of Representatives.
Inventory balance	The worth of held goods and materials.
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM)	The parliamentary committee that reports on, and refers inquiries into, matters relating to electoral laws, practices and administration.
Member	Any person elected to parliament, but commonly used for the House of Representatives.
Mobile polling team	Polling officials who bring polling to hospitals, nursing homes and remote locations.
Nomination	Submission for candidacy for election to the Senate or House of Representatives.
Operating deficit	Financial status in which expenditure exceeds revenue.
Ordinary vote	A vote cast on or before election day within the electoral division in which the voter is enrolled.
Out-posted centres	Premises leased for critical election activities during election periods, usually because there is limited space to undertake these activities in AEC offices.
Plebiscite	In Australia, this is an issue put to the vote which does not affect the Constitution. Can also be referred to as a simple national vote.
Poll	An election – a count of votes or opinions.
Polling day	The day fixed for the election.
Polling place	A location for people to vote.
Postal vote	Ballot papers sent to a voter and posted back.
Preferential voting	A system of voting where a voter shows an order of preference for candidates by numbering their choices.
Pre-poll vote	A vote cast before election day.
Protected action ballot	A workplace voting system whereby employees participate in a fair and secret ballot to determine whether industrial action should proceed in their workplace.
Provisional vote	Vote cast at a polling place where the elector's name cannot be found on the roll, the name has been marked off, or the voter has a silent enrolment.
Redistribution	A re-drawing of electoral boundaries to ensure (as closely as possible) the same number of voters in each electoral division.
Referendum	A vote to change the Constitution.
Returned candidate	Candidate who is officially declared elected by a returning officer.
Returning officer	The person responsible for conducting an election in a particular area. A divisional returning officer is responsible for conducting the House of Representatives election in their electoral division. An Australian Electoral Officer is the returning officer for the Senate election in their state or territory.

Term	Description
Registered political party	A party registered with the AEC under Part XI of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> .
Revenue appropriations	Federal funds set aside each year for specific government programs.
Roll	The list of people entitled to vote in an election or referendum.
Scrutineer	Someone nominated by a candidate to watch the counting, or scrutiny of votes.
Scrutiny	The counting of votes is also known as the scrutiny.
Secret ballot	A vote made in secret.
Senate	The house of parliament representing the states. A total of 76 senators are elected – 12 from each state and two from each territory – under a proportional representation system.
Silent elector	A voter whose address does not appear on the electoral roll, for reasons of personal safety.
Turnout	The percentage of people who voted in the election (formal and informal votes as a percentage of eligible enrolled electors).
Vote	To choose a representative, or indicate a preference, in an election.
Writ	A document commanding an electoral officer to hold an election, containing dates for the close of rolls, the close of nominations, the election day and the return of the writ.

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