



3

---

PERFORMANCE  
REPORTING

# Performance reporting

## AEC performance report

This section provides performance reporting on the AEC's activities against the agency outcome and three programmes set out in the 2014–15 Portfolio Budget Statements.

In alignment with the National Office structure, this consists of four reporting areas. The specific deliverables and key performance indicators in the Portfolio Budget Statements are the basis for assessing achievement in each area.

### Electoral roll management

This section reports on the AEC's performance in monitoring and maintaining the electoral roll, including changes in the enrolment rate and the strength of related business processes and integrity measures.

### Managing elections

This section provides an update on the ongoing management of work associated with the delivery of federal elections, by-elections and referendums. This includes the AEC's ongoing work as part of its Electoral Reform Programme.

### Election support services

This section reports on the AEC's performance in providing a range of election support services, both nationally and internationally. They range from conducting workplace elections throughout Australia to supporting electoral programs and activities in countries such as Nepal and Myanmar.

### Education and communications

This section covers the diverse range of communication, education and public awareness programmes the AEC undertakes to support eligible Australians to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities.

# Electoral Roll Management

## AEC 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.

### 1.1: Electoral Roll Management

1.2: Election Management and Support Services

1.3: Education and Communication

## Programme objective

Provide Australian voters with access to their entitlement to vote and support for electoral events and redistributions through maintaining an accurate and up-to-date electoral roll.

Under federal electoral law, it is compulsory for eligible Australians to enrol and vote in federal elections, by-elections and referendums. Maintaining an accurate and complete electoral roll is vital to the integrity of Australia's electoral system.

## Overview

This section reports on the AEC's performance in:

- monitoring and maintaining the electoral roll to ensure its integrity and accuracy
- continually updating the electoral roll to include all eligible Australians
- providing electoral roll services that support state and territory electoral authorities
- providing support to electoral redistribution processes.

Performance highlights for 2014–15 include:

- an increase in the enrolment rate of 0.9 percentage points, to 93.2 per cent of eligible voters
- strengthened enrolment business processes and integrity measures
- delivery of three state election close of rolls
- commencement of electoral redistributions in two states and one territory.

Included in this section are the results achieved against the key performance indicators across a three-year period.

## 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 (previously referred to as the participation rate), which is the percentage of eligible Australian voters who are enrolled.

The AEC supports electoral roll completeness by maintaining multiple streams of contact with eligible voters to encourage them to enrol and keep their enrolment up to date. This includes the Federal Direct Enrolment and Update Program (FDEU), the Online Enrolment Service (OES) and the New Citizens Enrolment Program.

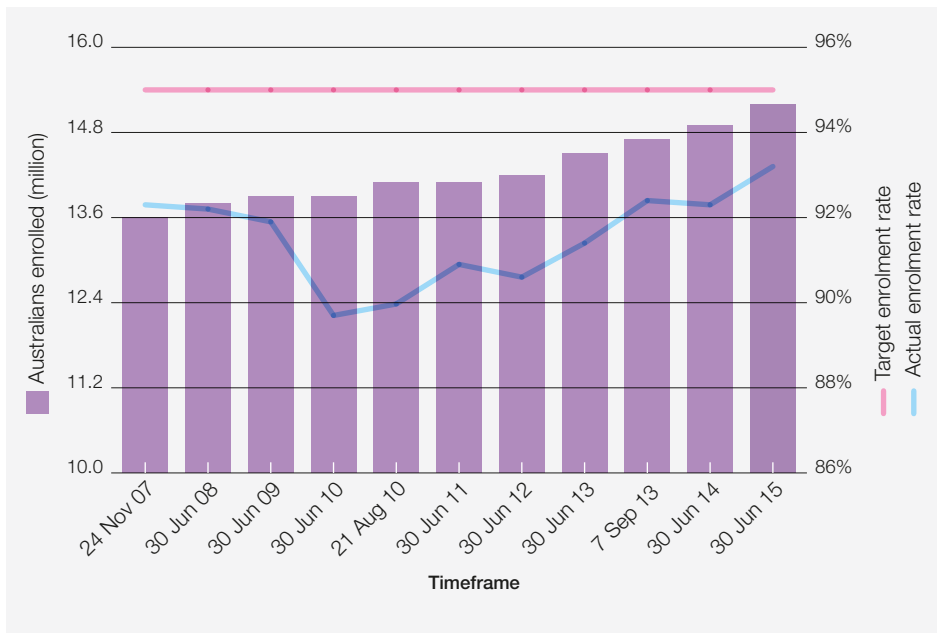
In 2014–15, the enrolment rate increased by 0.9 percentage points – from 92.3 per cent at 30 June 2014 to 93.2 per cent at 30 June 2015. This represents an increase of 336 233 Australians now enrolled. Over the same period there was a corresponding decline in the number of eligible Australians who were not enrolled – from 1.2 to 1.1 million. These figures represent a reverse in the long-term trend of declining enrolment.

Table 2 shows the number of voters enrolled at 30 June 2015 and the estimated number of Australians who were eligible to enrol. Figure 4 shows the enrolment rate and the growth of the electoral roll since 2007. The AEC’s target is to increase enrolment towards 95 per cent of eligible Australians. More detailed data on enrolment is provided in Appendix E. The AEC also publishes monthly and quarterly enrolment statistics on the AEC website.

**Table 2: Electoral roll and enrolment rate as at 30 June 2015**

Australians enrolled	Estimated eligible Australians	Enrolment rate (percentage of eligible Australians enrolled)	Estimated ‘missing’ from the electoral roll
15 195 017	16 295 463	93.2%	1 100 446

**Figure 4: Enrolment rate and enrolled population 24 November 2007 to 30 June 2015**



## Maintaining the electoral roll

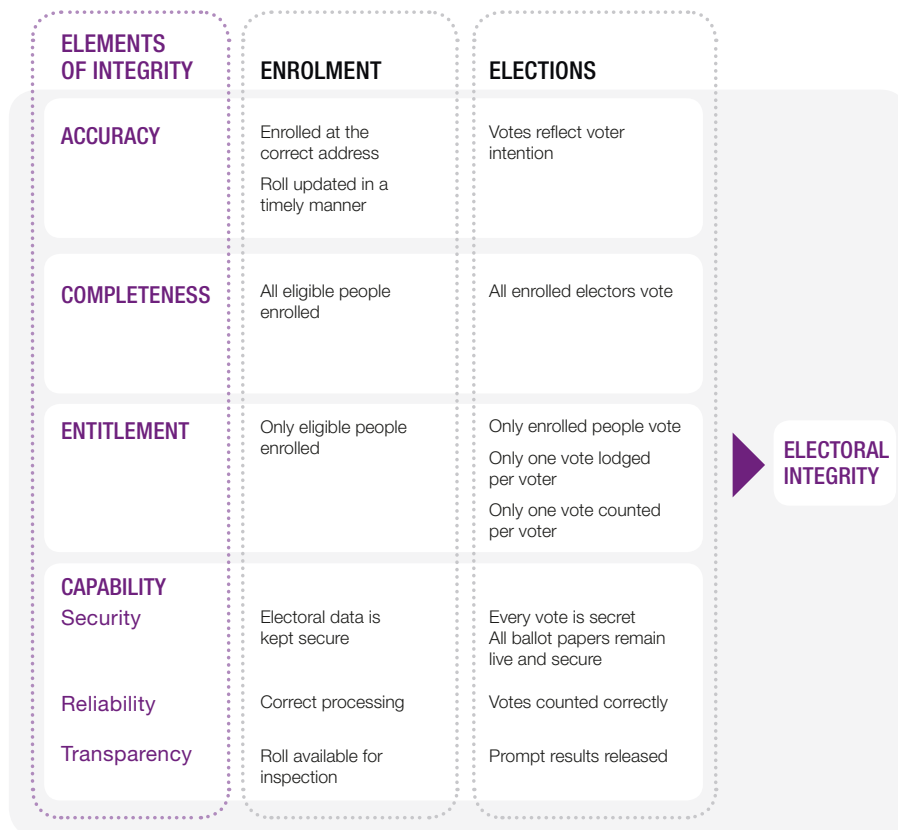
Active electoral roll management is one of the AEC’s primary objectives. The AEC delivers an electoral roll management program which maintains the accuracy and integrity of the electoral roll. The AEC’s key priorities within roll management are to uphold integrity, build the enrolment rate, improve administration, enhance stakeholder relations and deliver services in a timely and efficient manner.

### Electoral roll integrity

In 2014 the AEC established the Electoral Integrity Unit (EIU) as a section within the Roll Management Branch dedicated to assessing and driving electoral integrity through program design and examining the AEC’s policies and procedures to identify opportunities for enhanced integrity measures.

A key component of the EIU’s work in 2014–15 was the development of the [Electoral Integrity Framework](#). This framework, illustrated in [Figure 5](#), is a key document for the AEC and is intended to guide operations by bringing a practical focus to the AEC’s core values of electoral integrity through agility, professionalism and quality. It consists of a three-layered structure of elements, principles and indicators. [Table 3](#) lists the AEC’s electoral integrity indicators.

Figure 5: The Electoral Integrity Framework



**Table 3: Electoral integrity indicators**

Business area	Element	Principle	Indicators
Enrolment	Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolled at the correct address</li> <li>Roll updated in a timely manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolment accuracy (Sample Audit Fieldwork)</li> <li>ABS population movements to Roll update rates</li> </ul>
	Completeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All eligible electors enrolled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolment rate<sup>a</sup></li> </ul>
	Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only eligible people enrolled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entitlement objections</li> <li>Evidence of identity and citizenship checks passed</li> </ul>
	Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data is kept secure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents of breaches</li> <li>Silent elector security</li> <li>Appropriate policies in place</li> </ul>
	Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct processing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolment Quality Assurance Program</li> </ul>
	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll available for inspection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with the Electoral Act</li> <li>Roll access complaints</li> <li>eRoll usage statistics</li> <li>Decision reviews upheld</li> </ul>
	Elections	Completeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All enrolled electors vote</li> </ul>
Accuracy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Votes reflect voter intention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informality rate<sup>a</sup></li> <li>Informal Ballot Paper Survey results</li> </ul>
Entitlement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only enrolled people vote</li> <li>Only one vote counted per voter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unaccounted for multiple marks</li> <li>Multi-voter AFP referrals</li> </ul>
Security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every vote is secret</li> <li>All ballot papers remain live and secure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of confirmed security incidents</li> <li>Ballot paper reconciliation records</li> </ul>
Reliability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Votes counted correctly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcomes of recounts</li> <li>Counting errors identified</li> <li>Stakeholder perceptions of count reliability</li> </ul>
Transparency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All election processes open for scrutiny</li> <li>Integrity issues publicly reported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number/impact of integrity issues reported</li> </ul>

a. Internal KPIs

In 2014–15 the EIU undertook a range of assessments in relation to electoral roll integrity. These included reviews of the FEDU program and OES.

The EIU also assisted in the examination of a number of allegations of enrolment fraud, and worked towards better systemic detection of enrolment fraud.

### Enrolment processing integrity checks

During the close of rolls process for major electoral events, 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 the 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.

### 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. Any errors found are reported and corrected, and appropriate actions taken to address any systemic issue identified. Introduced in August 2008, the program is an important component of the AEC's drive to achieving electoral integrity through an accurate electoral roll.

EQAP results up to May 2015 indicate that 99.7 per cent of essential data fields (relating directly to voter entitlements) were processed without error, 96.8 per cent of non-essential fields were processed without error and 88.2 per cent of claims for enrolment were processed within three business days.

A full description of these results is available at [Table 35](#) in [Appendix E](#).

### Sample Audit Fieldwork

Sample Audit Fieldwork (SAF) is a component of the AEC's roll integrity program that audits the enrolments of voters at a random sample of addresses. It measures the accuracy and completeness of the electoral roll, and enables an appraisal of the effectiveness of the AEC's program of continuously updating the electoral roll.

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.

The results of SAF are used to measure:

- enrolment rate – the percentage of eligible voters currently enrolled in the sampled group
- enrolment completeness – the percentage of electors who were enrolled in the correct electoral division, but not at the correct address within that electoral division
- enrolment accuracy – the percentage of electors who were enrolled for the address at which they are living; that is, their enrolment details required no amendment.

## Enrolment program activities

The AEC maintains ongoing contact with eligible voters by employing a variety of initiatives throughout the electoral cycle to ensure the electoral roll is accurate and complete.

The most significant enrolment activities are:

- FDEU and mail review programs
- the OES
- targeted enrolment programs (to reach specific groups such as youth and new citizens).

As a result of these enrolment activities, an estimated 93.2 per cent of all eligible Australians were enrolled as at 30 June 2015. These enrolment transactions are depicted in [Figure 6](#).

### Direct enrolment and mail review

Throughout 2014–15 the AEC sent approximately 3.2 million letters to Australians who were not on the electoral roll or appeared to be enrolled for the incorrect address. Of those letters, approximately 1.2 million were sent as part of the FDEU program and resulted in over 1.1 million enrolment transactions.

In April 2015 the AEC began using email in place of postal mail to distribute notices when claims for enrolment are approved and a voter has provided a valid email address. Since the introduction of this email distribution method, 40 per cent of all acknowledgement notices have been sent via email, resulting in significant cost savings and better outcomes for electors.

### Online enrolment

The OES allows voters to complete a claim for enrolment or update their enrolment details entirely online. Since its inception the OES has grown in popularity with voters and subsequent enhancements, such as the online signature capture that allows voters to enrol and change their details entirely online using the AEC website, have further improved the service. The AEC expects the usage of the OES to continue to increase in the future.

The OES forms a key element in the AEC's activities within the government's digital transformation strategy. The OES is well established and delivers a contemporary, convenient and secure way for eligible Australians to enrol and maintain their enrolment.

### Targeted enrolment programs

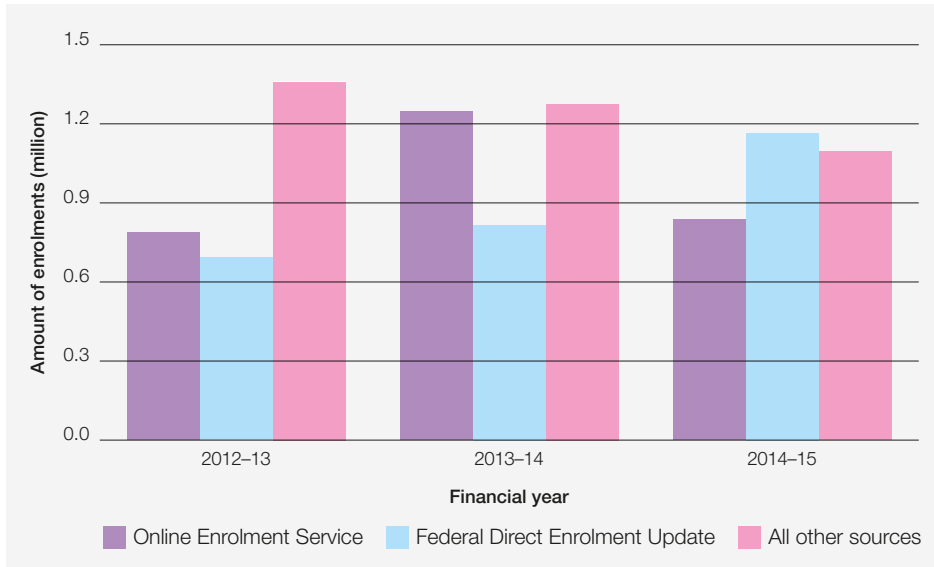
To ensure the completeness of the electoral roll the AEC uses targeted enrolment programs to reach specific groups identified as having an enrolment rate below the national average. The most significant groups are those newly eligible to enrol in Australia – namely young Australians between 18 and 25 years of age and new citizens.

#### *Youth enrolment*

Youth enrolment remains a challenge for the AEC as Australians aged 18 to 25 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.



Figure 6: Enrolment transactions processed



In 2014–15 the youth enrolment rate increased from 78.5 per cent at 30 June 2014 to 80.4 per cent at 30 June 2015, just above the target rate of 80 per cent. The FDEU program and the OES have contributed significantly to this increase, due to their user-friendly and interactive nature which meets community expectations for a contemporary enrolment program. [Figure 7](#) shows trends in the youth enrolment rate since 2009–10.

#### *New citizen enrolment*

Another important target group for AEC enrolment activity is new Australian citizens. In 2014–15, AEC officers attended 1 562 citizenship ceremonies and collected 105 984 enrolment applications from new citizens enrolling for the first time.

[Figure 8](#) illustrates the trend in new citizen enrolment activity, within three and six months of attendance at a citizenship ceremony.

## 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 2014–15, the AEC provided a variety of roll services and products including support for three state elections and 1 834 extracts of roll information.

[Table 4](#) compares the number of voters enrolled in each jurisdiction at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015.

Figure 7: Youth (18–25 years) enrolment rate 2009–10 to 2014–15

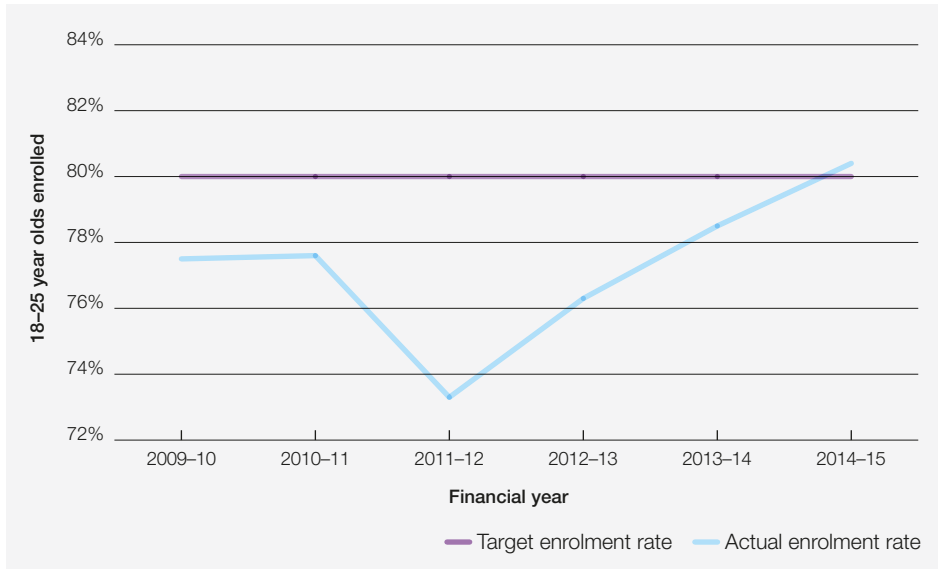
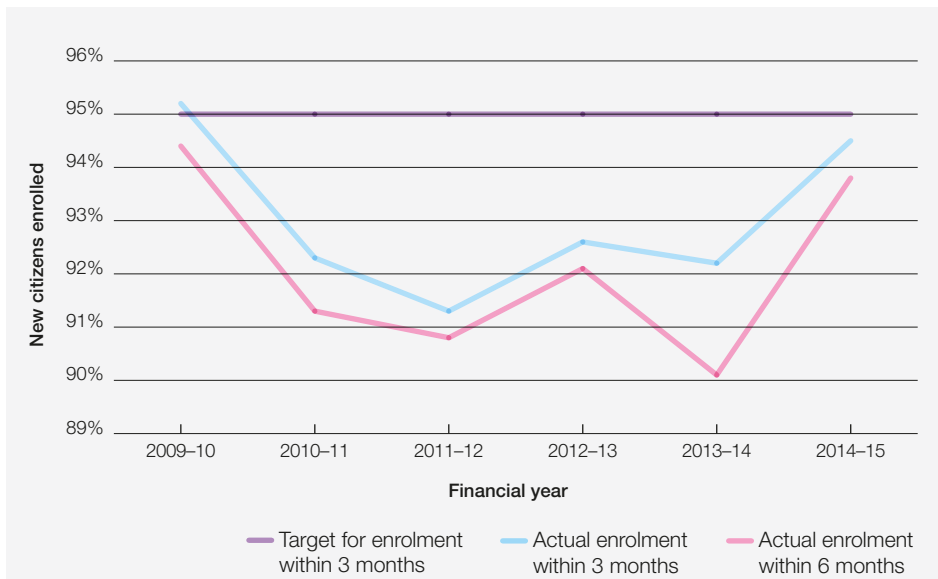


Figure 8: Target and rate of new citizen enrolment within three and six months of attending citizenship ceremonies 2009–10 to 2014–15



Figures include enrolment applications processed to 30 June 2015, but do not take into account applications collected at citizenship ceremonies held at the end of the 2014–15 financial year.

Table 4: Trends in the number of voters enrolled in each state and territory 2014–15

Jurisdiction	Size of the electoral roll <sup>a</sup>		Estimated enrolment participation <sup>b</sup>	
	30 June 2014	30 June 2015	30 June 2014	30 June 2015
NSW	4 829 713	4 909 611	93.1%	93.6%
Vic.	3 755 132	3 846 097	93.5%	94.5%
Qld	2 883 153	2 987 406	90.2%	92.2%
WA	1 487 402	1 525 424	89.6%	90.5%
SA	1 139 104	1 156 817	94.0%	94.5%
Tas.	365 641	367 044	95.5%	95.1%
ACT	267 782	273 485	95.9%	98.1%
NT	130 857	129 133	80.8%	79.3%

a. Eligible Australians included in this table at least 18 years of age and are enrolled at federal elections.

b. Calculated based on the 2011 Census – using revised 30 June 2013 and preliminary 30 June 2014 ABS Estimated Eligible Population data.

### 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. The AEC provides various roll products and services under these agreements. In 2014–15 the AEC provided states and territories with 559 roll information products, known as extracts, supporting 71 state, territory and local government elections. The AEC also provided a range of roll services in each jurisdiction in 2014–15, including:

- close of rolls for state and local government elections
- processing of claims for enrolment
- assisting with redistributions of electoral boundaries
- enrolment stimulation events
- liquor licencing polls
- investigation and actioning of information reports.

The close of rolls for each state electoral event, while smaller than a federal election, presented a significant workload for local and national office staff. The AEC employed a range of strategies to coordinate and manage the close of roll processes, such as shared workload pooling across the network.

A detailed breakdown of all roll products and services provided to state and territory electoral authorities for 2014–15 is provided in [Appendix F](#).

### 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 427 roll extracts in 2014–15. 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 2014–15, the AEC provided 314 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 46 roll extracts to 13 government departments and agencies in 2014–15. 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 28](#) 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, including scrutiny by a human research ethics committee and agreement on how the data will be used and protected.

In 2014–15 seven medical researchers and one electoral researcher received electoral roll information. A full breakdown of roll information provided to researchers is provided in [Table 29](#) in [Appendix D](#).

## 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 14 roll extracts to private sector organisations. A full break down is available in [Table 30](#) in [Appendix D](#).

## Redistributions

Electoral boundaries 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.

## Determining the number of members in the House of Representatives

The number of members to be elected to the House of Representatives for each state and territory is usually determined after each federal election. During the 13 month after the first meeting of the newly elected House of Representatives the Electoral Commissioner is required to ascertain the population of the Commonwealth (excluding the territories) according to the latest official statistics available from the Australian Statistician.

This is then used to determine how many members of the House of Representatives (electoral divisions) each state is entitled to. A similar exercise is conducted to calculate the number of members each territory is entitled to.

This determination may result in a change in the number of members in the House of Representatives to which a state or territory is entitled, which will lead to a redistribution in that state or territory.

A redistribution is also required when:

- the number of voters in more than one third of the electoral divisions of a state (or one of the electoral divisions in the ACT or NT) deviates from the average divisional enrolment by over ten per cent for a period of more than two months
- a period of seven years has elapsed since the last redistribution.

On 13 November 2014, the then acting Electoral Commissioner determined that the number of members to be elected to the House of Representatives at the next federal election would remain at 150 members but the entitlement for New South Wales would decrease from 48 to 47 members and the entitlement for Western Australia would increase from 15 to 16 members.

This decision was made in accordance with the requirements of the Electoral Act and was announced in the *Commonwealth Government Notices Gazette*.

### Redistributions underway in 2014–15

Redistributions commenced in New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory in 2014–15, as illustrated in [Table 5](#).

The Redistribution Committees and the augmented Electoral Commissions will release their proposals and finalise the electoral boundaries during 2015–16.

**Table 5: Summary of electoral redistributions commenced in 2014–15**

	New South Wales	Western Australia	Australian Capital Territory
Basis for Electoral Commissioner'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
Public input relating to the redistribution	23 written suggestions were received between 22 April and 22 May 2015	27 written suggestions were received between 11 March and 10 April 2015	Eight written suggestions were received between 29 April and 29 May 2015
	157 written comments on suggestions were received between 25 May and 5 June 2015	16 written comments on suggestions were received between 13 April and 24 April 2015	Two written comments on suggestions were received between 1 June and 12 June 2015

## 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. It is comprised of the Electoral Commissioner, the relevant Australian Electoral Officer (for the ACT this is the senior Divisional Returning Officer for the ACT) the Surveyor-General (or equivalent officer) and the Auditor-General of the relevant state or territory.
- The augmented Electoral Commission 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 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*.

Members of the Redistribution Committees for New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory reported a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the AEC.

## Programme 1.1 Electoral Roll Management – key performance indicators

Key performance indicators	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
Increase enrolment towards 95% of eligible people on the electoral roll. <sup>a</sup>	<b>Not achieved</b> 91.4%	<b>Not achieved</b> 92.3%	<b>Achieved</b> 93.2%
99.5% of enrolment transactions are correctly processed.	<b>Achieved</b> 99.6%	<b>Achieved</b> 99.6%	<b>Achieved</b> 99.8%
At least 98% of roll products are accurate.	<b>Achieved</b> 98.8%	<b>Achieved</b> 100%	<b>Achieved</b> 100%
At least 98% of roll products delivered by agreed deadline.	<b>Achieved</b> 100%	<b>Achieved</b> 100%	<b>Achieved</b> 100%
Those eligible to enrol have enhanced capacity to access certain enrolment services electronically where legislative authority exists.	<b>Achieved</b> Enhanced online enrolment service capturing online electronic signatures and continued collaboration with Australia Post.	<b>Achieved</b> Increased use of online enrolment service for transactions.	<b>Achieved</b> Increasing use of online enrolment service for transactions.
Support services provided by the AEC are appropriate and allow for the effective and timely conduct of redistribution activities.	<b>Achieved</b> Support services provided in a timely manner, in accordance with legislative requirements and to the satisfaction of redistributions committees.	<b>Not applicable</b> No redistributions were conducted.	<b>Achieved</b> Support services provided in a timely manner, in accordance with legislative requirements and to the satisfaction of redistribution committees.
Redistribution support services comply with legislative requirements and are to the satisfaction of redistribution committees.	<b>Achieved</b> Support services provided in a timely manner, in accordance with legislative requirements and to the satisfaction of redistributions committees.	<b>Not applicable</b> No redistributions were conducted.	<b>Achieved</b> Support services provided in a timely manner, in accordance with legislative requirements and to the satisfaction of redistribution committees.

a. The Department of Finance Portfolio Budget Statement 2014–15 changed this KPI from '95% of eligible people' to 'towards 95% of eligible people'.

# Managing Elections

## AEC 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.

1.1: Electoral Roll Management

### 1.2: Election Management and Support Services

1.3: Education and Communication

## Programme objective

Access to an impartial and independent electoral system through the provision of election services, assistance and advice.

Under the Electoral Act and the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984* the AEC delivers federal elections, by-elections and referendums. In 2014–15, the Elections branch in national office underwent significant restructuring as part of the review of the broad range of responsibilities in the branch's work program and to ensure that quality outcomes would be effectively delivered.

## Overview

This section reports on the AEC's performance in:

- election management – consisting of ongoing management of the post-election work from the 2013 federal election, 2014 Griffith by-election and 2014 Western Australian Senate election
- reform and improvement – consisting of ongoing work in election preparation, planning and delivery.

## Election management

In 2014–15, the AEC did not deliver any federal electoral events, however post-election activities continued for the three events held in 2013–14:

- 2013 federal election
- 2014 Griffith by-election
- 2014 Western Australian Senate election.

## Apparent non-voting and multiple voting

The Electoral Act provides that it is an offence to fail to vote without a valid and sufficient reason for the failure to vote.



In late August and early September 2014, summonses were issued against more than 3 000 apparent non-voters at the 2013 federal election. This number was one of the highest on record. Most of these cases proceeded to court and most non-voters were fined and convictions recorded.

In relation to the 2014 Griffith by-election held on 8 February 2014, 59 cases of apparent non-voting proceeded to prosecution and in relation to the 2014 Western Australian Senate election, 1006 cases of apparent non-voting proceeded to prosecution.

The Electoral Act also provides that a person is guilty of an offence if the person votes more than once in the same election. The follow up of apparent multiple voting is an important electoral integrity measure. As noted in the 2013–14 annual report, the AEC referred 7 743 cases of apparent multiple voting at the 2013 federal election to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) for investigation. These represented cases where a voter had been marked against more than one voting list and where the mark could not be positively confirmed as an official error.

The AFP investigated 65 of these cases which were in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. In December 2014, the AFP advised it had completed its investigation and none had been referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) for consideration of prosecution. The AFP concluded that based on the responses received from apparent multiple voters, it could not be established that there was a deliberate intention to cast multiple votes and therefore the offence contained in subsection 339(1C) of the Electoral Act could not be proved.

Following the conduct of the 2014 Griffith by-election, 19 cases of apparent multiple voting arising from the by-election were referred to the AFP on 4 November 2014 for investigation. The AFP advised the AEC of the results of the referrals on 24 November 2014. The AFP assessed each matter and advised the AEC that it would not be taking any further action.

A total of 719 cases of apparent multiple voting in relation to the 2014 Western Australian Senate election were referred to the AFP for consideration within AFP prioritisation and referral guidelines.

## Electoral reform programme

In 2014–15, an essential part of election planning and preparations included the implementation of a significant range of reforms arising from the Inquiry into the 2013 Western Australian Senate election (the Keelty Report) and reports by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO).

The reforms cover five major areas where deficiencies were identified:

- logistics and materials management
- contract management
- ballot paper security
- compliance with established processes and procedures
- AEC culture.

During 2014–15, the interim policies, procedures, operating practices and supporting materials implemented at the 2014 Griffith by-election and 2014 Western Australian Senate election were evaluated and the AEC commenced planning for full implementation where appropriate.

To engage AEC staff in the changes occurring within the agency, a number of forums were conducted in each state and territory between December 2014 and June 2015. Designed to provide progress updates on the implementation of reforms and the development of new election policies and procedures, they were well attended by AEC executive staff, state managers, divisional office managers and other staff as appropriate.

### **Ballot paper handling policy**

The ballot paper handling policy will govern the handling of ballot papers from printing through to statutorily authorised destruction. It will address security, packaging, labelling, transport, storage and tracking of ballot papers to ensure all ballot papers in the care of AEC are safe, secure and accounted for at all times. It will also consolidate many of the enhancements implemented at both the 2014 Griffith by-election and the 2014 Western Australian Senate election.

On 30 April 2015, a staff workshop was conducted in response to procedural changes to the parcelling and packaging of ballot papers to inform the implementation of the ballot paper handling policy. The workshop tested new election materials and processes and also helped to inform workforce planning considerations in preparation for the next federal election.

The AEC will also conduct a full test of ballot paper handling procedures with temporary election staff, including those with little or no previous election experience, in the 2015–16 financial year to compare the results from the previous workshop and to further inform future planning that will embed the new processes in the parcelling and packaging of ballot papers.

The ballot paper handling policy was scheduled for release to staff in July 2015.

## **Election readiness**

Election planning and preparation is a continuous process that extends throughout the electoral cycle. During 2014–15, the AEC fundamentally reshaped its election planning and preparation processes to improve its long term planning and preparation for electoral events.

In October 2014, an external consultant was engaged to work with the agency to develop an election preparation blueprint that would provide a unifying set of principles for how the agency plans and prepares for electoral events.

Since introducing the framework, the AEC's planning efforts have been synchronised across all levels of the agency for the first time. In addition, progress against the framework is reported each month and co-ordinated nationally, with clear roles and accountability assigned for completing planning and preparation tasks. As part of the framework, revised governance arrangements have been implemented. The National Election Manager (NEM) and the National Election Delivery Committee provide national oversight of key election planning and delivery activities across the agency.

## Introducing the election readiness framework

The outcome of this review has been the implementation of a new election readiness framework, an important step in driving quality election planning and readiness across the agency. The key elements of the framework are shown in [Figure 9](#).

The election readiness framework allows the AEC to prepare for the delivery of an electoral event seamlessly and comprehensively. It provides assurance to the Electoral Commissioner that the entire agency is at a level of election readiness to conduct a successful electoral event.

The election readiness framework improves the integration of the AEC's functions by:

- supporting a shared understanding of election readiness
- providing better visibility of the actual state of election readiness
- increasing recognition of the interdependencies between election readiness activities undertaken across the agency
- aligning all of the AEC's business processes against the compelling need to deliver successful elections.

As part of the framework, revised governance arrangements have been implemented. Election readiness is led by the First Assistant Commissioner, Election Operations and Reform. One of the key responsibilities of the First Assistant Commissioner is to be the NEM. 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.

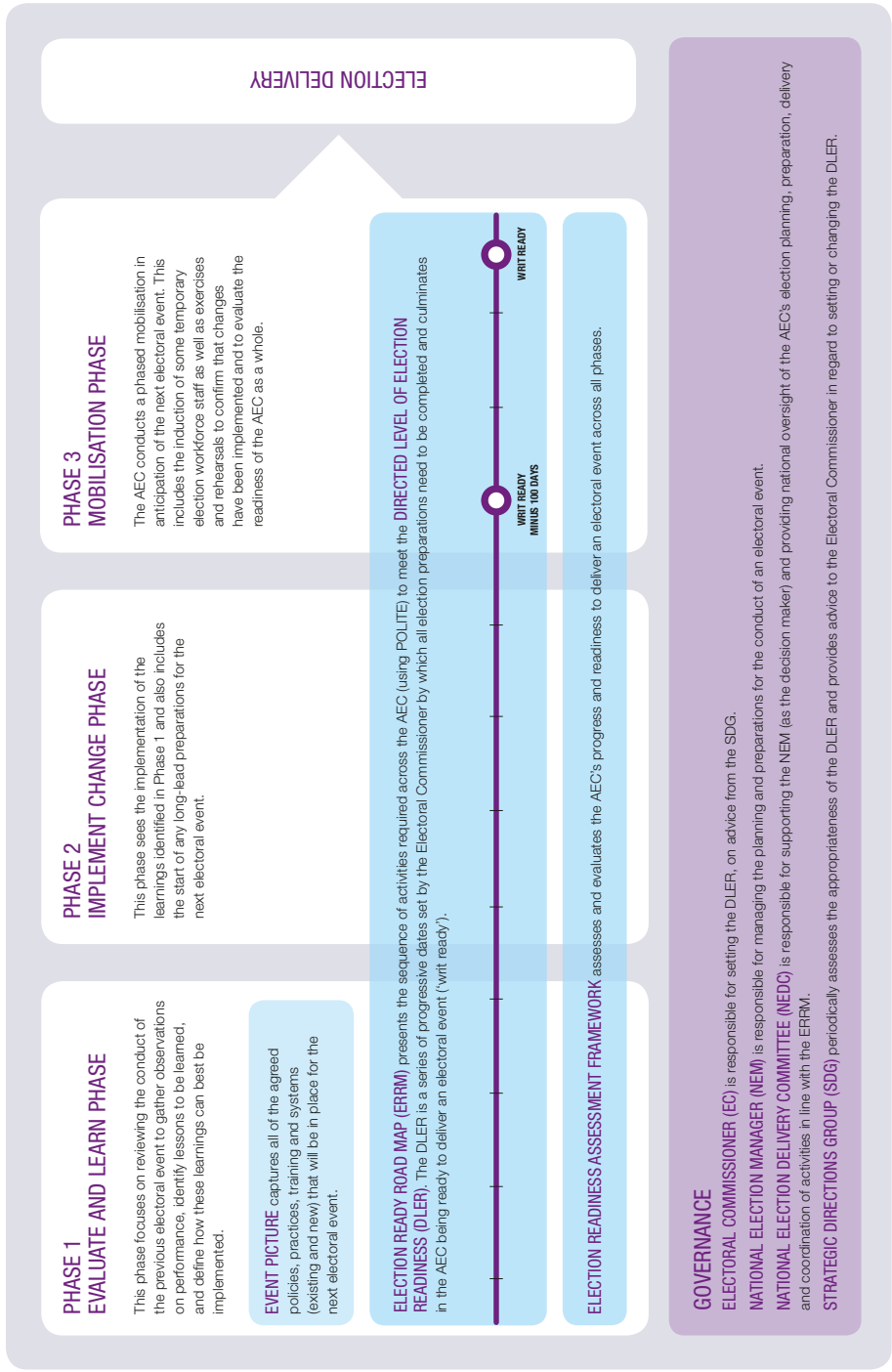
The National Election Delivery Committee has also been established and provides national oversight of the AEC's election planning, preparation, delivery and the coordination of activities in line with the Election Ready Road Map (ERRM).

Progress against the framework is reported each month and co-ordinated nationally, with clear roles and accountability assigned for completing planning and preparation tasks.

## The Election Ready Road Map

At the core of the election readiness framework is the ERRM. The ERRM is a highly visible planning tool that presents the sequence of actions required across the agency to ensure the AEC reaches the desired state of election readiness.

Figure 9: Election Readiness Framework



## Restructure of the Elections Branch

In early 2015, the Executive Leadership Team consulted with senior executive staff to determine what structure in national office would help the agency focus its resources on the change journey and ensure the agency was ready for the next federal election.

The split of the existing Elections Branch into two branches was one of the more significant changes to the national office structure. This split was in recognition of the expanded role of the branch in reforming electoral processes and the work being undertaken to implement the new election readiness framework. The two new 'elections' focused branches were the:

- Election Reform Programme Branch, focused on the development of election policy, procedures, training and forms required to conduct federal electoral events as well as oversight of the electoral reform programme
- Election Planning, Systems and Services Branch, focused on the implementation of the new election readiness framework along with a number of core inputs including the delivery of national election systems, election materials and national logistics activities.

# Election Support Services

## AEC 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.

1.1: Electoral Roll Management

### 1.2: Election Management and Support Services

1.3: Education and Communication

## Programme objective

Access to an impartial and independent electoral system through the provision of election services, assistance and advice.

The AEC provides a range of election services, both nationally and internationally. Domestically, these range from maintaining the Register of Political Parties and administering the Commonwealth funding and financial disclosure scheme, to the conduct of Australian workplace elections. Internationally, this includes the provision of electoral support programs in countries such as, Papua New Guinea and Nepal.

## Overview

This second part of the AEC's reporting on Election Management and Support Services performance outlines activities that:

- maintain the Register of Political Parties
- support transparency in political funding
- provide workplace ballot and election services
- provide assistance to other electoral authorities (nationally and internationally).

## Maintaining the 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. During 2014–15, the AEC continued work to strengthen compliance and assurance in funding and disclosure processes.

Political parties are not required to register with the AEC. For those that register there are benefits and obligations. These 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, 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 applications**

In 2014–15, the AEC received 13 applications to register a political party and three applications to voluntarily deregister a political party. These numbers are slightly higher than 2013–14 and are in keeping with the historical pattern of fluctuations in registrations over the course of an electoral cycle.

The AEC also received three applications to change a party name and one application to change a party abbreviation – these numbers are slightly lower than 2013–14.

### **Applications to update party office holder information**

In 2014–15, the AEC received:

- 33 applications to change the details of the registered officer of a party
- 98 applications to change details of other party officials (deputy registered officers, party agents and party secretaries)
- nine applications to change other party details.

### **Requests for review of party registration decisions**

Section 141 of the Electoral Act provides for a review of certain party registration decisions made by the Electoral Commissioner or the Commissioner's delegate.

In 2014–15, the AEC received three applications for review of the decisions of a Commissioner's delegate. These requests for review comprised:

- a refusal to change a registered officer
- the deregistration of two parties during the review process.

The (three-person) Electoral Commission affirmed the decision of the Commission's delegate in the first case; the two applications requesting a review of the delegate's decision to deregister the parties were still under consideration as at 30 June 2015.

Further details are available on the [AEC website](#).

## 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 2014–15, the AEC received 756 annual financial disclosure returns and amendments. This included:

- 715 returns for 2013–14
- 14 returns and 11 amendments for 2012–13
- seven returns and nine amendments relating to returns received for years prior to 2012–13.

Political party and associated entity financial disclosure returns for 2014–15 are due on 20 October 2015. Donor and third party returns for 2014–15 are due on 17 November 2015. These returns will be published on the [AEC website](#) on the first working day in February 2016. [Table 6](#) 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 2014–15, 64 per cent of returns were completed online, compared with 62 per cent in 2013–14 and 56 per cent in 2012–13.

**Table 6: Financial disclosure returns lodged and published in previous financial years**

Return type	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
Political party	69	73	92
Political party – amendment	16	29	35
Associated entity	191	185	189
Associated entity – amendment	12	16	8
Donor	220	295	360
Donor – amendment	23	35	34
Political expenditure	41	45	35
Political expenditure – amendment	0	3	3
<b>Total financial disclosure returns – lodged</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>756</b>



## Compliance reviews

The AEC undertakes compliance reviews of disclosure returns lodged by political parties and associated entities under section 316(2A) of the Electoral Act. These are undertaken on an annual basis focusing on the most recent returns lodged. In 2014–15, the AEC completed 16 compliance reviews of disclosure returns lodged by political parties and associated entities.

## 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.

If an election had been held in 2014–15, the election funding rates for 2014–15 would have been:

- 256.067 cents per first preference vote for 1 July to 31 December 2014
- 258.372 cents per first preference vote for 1 January to 30 June 2015.

As no federal electoral events, were conducted during 2014–15, no election funding was paid to registered political parties and candidates.

## Support for Australian workplaces

In 2014–15, the AEC conducted 1 553 workplace elections and ballots, consisting of the following (Table 7 provides a full breakdown):

- [industrial elections](#) in accordance with the requirements of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* and the relevant organisation's rules
- [protected action ballots](#) in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* and Fair Work Commission orders
- [fee-for-service elections and ballots](#) at full cost recovery.

### Industrial elections

In 2014–15, the AEC conducted 329 industrial elections to fill offices in employee (unions) and employer organisations registered under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*. In accordance with the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, all elections were secret ballots and were conducted in accordance with the rules of the relevant organisation.

Postal voting was the most common voting method. After each election, the AEC reported to the Fair Work Commission and the organisations involved, including comments on rules that were difficult to interpret or problematic to apply.

### Protected action ballots

Protected action ballots allow working Australians to choose, by secret ballot, whether they agree with proposed industrial action such as strikes, bans or work stoppages. The Fair Work Commission may appoint the AEC to conduct a protected action ballot under the provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009* after a bargaining representative for an employee has lodged a request for such a ballot during negotiations for an enterprise agreement.

Table 7: Industrial elections, protected action ballots and fee-for-service elections/ballots statistics 2014–15

	NSW/ACT	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	Total
<b>Elections and ballots</b>								
Number of contested industrial elections	42	36	8	13	10	9	4	122
Number of uncontested industrial elections	45	37	25	37	36	16	11	207
Enterprise agreement ballots	33	57	16	11	7	9	1	134
Protected action ballots	654	227	58	36	41	20	1	1 037
Other commercial elections and ballots	9	15	15	2	11	0	1	53
<b>Total number of elections and ballots completed</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1 553</b>
<b>Positions</b>								
Number of positions available (industrial)	3 519	4 007	680	930	789	305	82	10 312
Number of unfilled positions (industrial)	786	2 504	62	479	215	73	21	4 140
<b>Candidates</b>								
Number of candidates for uncontested offices (industrial)	2 578	1 412	587	474	554	247	57	5 909
<b>Total number of candidates</b>	<b>3 064</b>	<b>1 836</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>7 186</b>
<b>Ballot papers</b>								
Number of ballot papers issued (industrial)	502 896	670 017	21 921	35 276	42 360	9 589	5 193	1 287 252
Number of ballot papers returned (industrial)	103 523	136 825	7 530	8 223	6 445	2 625	1 598	266 769
Number of ballot papers issued (enterprise agreements)	4 330	24 081	3 739	5 196	2 170	5 876	123	45 515
Number of ballot papers returned (enterprise agreements)	3 705	14 858	3 062	3 494	1 139	3 394	87	29 739
Number of ballot papers issued (protected action)	25 409	19 896	10 653	2 012	1 489	1 695	105	61 259
Number of ballot papers returned (protected action)	17 158	14 102	6 352	1 385	987	1 146	55	41 185
Number of ballot papers issued (other commercial)	2 501	64 503	14 276	654	2 577	–	68	84 579
Number of ballot papers returned (other commercial)	766	5 336	6 800	654	1 472	–	68	15 096
<b>Total number of ballot papers issued</b>	<b>535 136</b>	<b>778 497</b>	<b>50 589</b>	<b>43 138</b>	<b>48 596</b>	<b>17 160</b>	<b>5 489</b>	<b>1 478 605</b>
<b>Total number of ballot papers returned</b>	<b>125 152</b>	<b>171 121</b>	<b>23 744</b>	<b>13 756</b>	<b>10 043</b>	<b>7 165</b>	<b>1 808</b>	<b>352 789</b>

In 2014–15, the AEC conducted 1 037 protected action ballots for employee organisations across a range of industries.

Those ballots were conducted by post or at worksites and usually took around three weeks to complete. Following the declaration of the result, the AEC provided the results to the Fair Work Commission, the bargaining representative of the employees and the organisation itself. Post-ballot reports were sent to the Fair Work Commission where necessary.

### **Fee-for-service elections and ballots**

The AEC conducts fee-for-service elections and ballots for public and private sector organisations that require assistance with elections to office, workplace agreement ballots and other voting processes (such as polls). Authority for the delivery of these fee-for-service elections and ballots is contained in Section 7A of the Electoral Act.

The AEC has minimum standards for the conduct of fee-for-service elections and works closely with organisations to deliver elections and ballots to ensure all voters have a reasonable opportunity to vote via postal voting, attendance voting (conducted on site by AEC staff members) or a combination of both.

In 2014–15, the AEC delivered 187 fee-for-service elections and ballots for public and private sector organisations, consisting of:

- 134 enterprise agreement ballots (the majority of which were for organisations in the manufacturing, retail, transport, mining and finance sectors)
- 42 elections to office
- 11 yes/no ballots.

Of the 116 online enquiries that the AEC received via the AEC's [fee-for-service web page](#), 32 per cent resulted in AEC-managed elections or ballots.

### **Reform**

As an adjunct to the agency-wide electoral reform programme for federal elections, the AEC has commenced a review of the processes and systems currently used to conduct industrial and fee-for-service elections and ballots. Modifications similar to those applied to federal elections will be implemented to reinforce existing processes and systems. These reforms will include ballot paper production controls, ballot paper handling principles, an election personnel identification policy and an election waste control policy.

## Supporting state and territory electoral authorities

The AEC works closely with other electoral authorities throughout Australia to provide a range of services for state, territory and local government elections, including roll maintenance, staffing, facilities and resources.

### **Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand**

The Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand (ECANZ) is a consultative council of electoral commissioners from the electoral management bodies of Australia and New Zealand. The AEC chairs and provides secretariat services for the ECANZ meetings. Activities in 2014–15 included:

- four meetings, coinciding with electoral events enabling members to observe elections in other jurisdictions
- detailed reporting of the state of the electoral roll and enrolment activities
- discussions on issues relevant to a range of jurisdictions, such as postal services, direct enrolment, security and increasing trends of early voting.

At 30 June 2015, the members of ECANZ were:

- Tom Rogers, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission (Chair)
- Colin Barry, Electoral Commissioner, New South Wales Electoral Commission
- Warwick Gately, Electoral Commissioner, Victorian Electoral Commission
- Walter van der Merwe, Electoral Commissioner, Electoral Commission of Queensland
- David Kerslake, Electoral Commissioner, Western Australian Electoral Commission
- Kay Mousley, Electoral Commissioner, Electoral Commission of South Australia
- Julian Type, Electoral Commissioner, Tasmanian Electoral Commission
- Phil Green, Electoral Commissioner, Elections ACT
- Iain Loganathan, Electoral Commissioner, Northern Territory Electoral Commission
- Robert Peden, Chief Electoral Officer, New Zealand Electoral Commission.

### **Joint roll arrangements**

The AEC provides enrolment-related products and services to state and territory electoral commissions under agreements known as joint roll arrangements. The AEC works together with these partner agencies to deliver a range of activities in each jurisdiction, including joint enrolment stimulation events that assist in maintaining and growing the electoral roll.

Further information on joint roll arrangements is available at Section 3: Performance reporting, Electoral roll management.

### **Torres Strait Regional Authority elections**

The Torres Strait Regional Authority is an Australian Government authority. Its governing board consists of at least 20 elected members living in the Torres Strait region and board elections take place once every four years.

The AEC delivers a range of products and services to support the conduct of these elections in line with the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*. There was no board election in 2014–15. The next election is due in 2016.

## Supporting overseas electoral authorities

The AEC maintains cooperative working relationships with other electoral authorities in a range of countries and delivers electoral support through a range of programs and partnerships. These initiatives support democracy and electoral administration internationally.

### Providing advice and assistance

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:

- 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).

Australia is also a partner of the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) program, along with International IDEA, IFES, UNDP and UNEAD. BRIDGE first met in December 1999 and focuses on the professional development of those involved in electoral processes and administration.

### Regional support

#### 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 2014–15, 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 2014–15, the AEC worked with Indonesia's three election management bodies – the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Elections Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) and the Indonesian Elections Ethics Council (DKPP) – and with academics and local organisations to strengthen electoral capacity and improve regional democracy and governance.

During 2014–15, the AEC delivered support through its Jakarta office, which had an in-country director and two locally engaged staff. In 2014–15 it delivered DFAT funded programs throughout Indonesia at the national and provincial levels, addressing:

- the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to the study, reform and management of election administration systems
- education and capacity development programs on election management and administration
- research programs to support election management and administration.

Activities included:

- the establishment of an Electoral Research Institute in Indonesia that produced research into the 2014 national elections and a policy paper on design options for the 2019 simultaneous elections
- the establishment of a postgraduate-level electoral management course for Indonesian electoral management officials
- handover activities of the BRIDGE Indonesia program to the KPU
- a series of knowledge sharing sessions between Indonesian electoral management bodies and the AEC on communication (external and internal), electoral education and human resource management.

As at June 2015, the AEC had trained 1 558 public servants (1 075 male and 483 female). The AEC trained 762 non-public servants (459 male and 303 female) under the Australia Indonesia Electoral Support Program. The AEC estimates a total of 1 261 600 people were indirectly exposed to AEC initiatives.

### **Timor-Leste**

The AEC worked with the election 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.

In 2014–15, the AEC worked with STAE and CNE to develop and deliver a pilot electoral education program. The pilot included a series of voter information and civic education sessions for senior students in selected schools in Dili who were about to become first time voters. Additional activities included:

- an ongoing mentoring and coaching program for STAE and CNE staff in the field, led by the AEC's Timor-Leste program officer
- delivery of two modified BRIDGE strategic and financial planning modules in Dili in June 2015
- accreditation of BRIDGE facilitators in both STAE and CNE
- attendance by selected leaders from STAE and CNE at two PIANZEA network meetings and BRIDGE workshops.

### **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 2015. Under the program, the AEC provides targeted, short-term technical expertise.

Assistance provided in 2014–15 included:

- two staff seconded to assist the PNGEC with updating manuals and training modules in preparation for the 2017 General Election
- additional short-term expertise from five staff in the areas of training and enrolment
- attendance at electoral support program board meetings.

### Autonomous Bougainville Government

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville, previously known as the North Solomons Province, is an autonomous region in Papua New Guinea. In 2014–15, the AEC, as part of a broader international group including the PNGEC and the New Zealand Electoral Commission, provided advice and support to the Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner (OBEC) during the delivery of the 2015 Autonomous Bougainville Government Elections.

Assistance provided by the AEC included:

- an operations advisor to provide support in managing the overall planning and implementation of the election
- a procurement and logistics advisor to assist in shaping the focus of the electoral logistics office
- an awareness advisor to assist with the strategic planning, implementation and evaluation of a community focused electoral awareness program
- arranging for a PNG-based IT expert to assist the OBEC with technical expertise relating to the electoral roll.

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

### Pacific Islands

In 2014–15, 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:

- supporting Fiji in its conduct of national elections, hosting a study program and deploying two AEC advisors to the Fijian Elections Office, to assist with ballot paper printing and logistics
- providing operational support to the Tonga Electoral Commission in its delivery of its national elections
- providing expertise in procurement and logistics to assist the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission in its conduct of national elections
- facilitating the sharing of best practices and common challenges for Pacific electoral officials through the coordination of two PIANZEA network meetings and BRIDGE workshops on election operations
- conducting a learning clinic on the AEC's generic voter registration system, software and hardware for 16 Pacific Island electoral officials and providing ongoing technical support for users
- delivering BRIDGE workshops on civic education and media and elections to over 40 participants from the PIANZEA network.

### Myanmar

In January 2015, the AEC commenced targeted peer-to-peer electoral support to Myanmar's Union Election Commission (UEC) in preparation for Myanmar's national elections in November 2015. This assistance is funded by DFAT.

This support is focused on building upon the UEC's internal capacity to conduct poll worker training. The AEC's assistance complements activities implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

## Nepal

The AEC assisted the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) and its Nepalese Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) staff to continue to strengthen its electoral capacity in 2014–15.

In March 2015, two AEC staff assisted the ECN in its delivery of a modified BRIDGE strategic and financial planning module and a civic education module in Kathmandu which also provided for the accreditation of additional ECN and EEIC BRIDGE facilitators.

## Other international partnerships and programs

### Meetings with international counterparts

In 2014–15, senior AEC staff met with a range of international counterpart organisations. These included the:

- Commonwealth Electoral Network Steering Committee
- Four Countries Conference (United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia)
- Working Group on Accountability of Electoral Management Bodies
- Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre.<sup>1</sup>

### Hosting international visitors

In 2014–15 the AEC hosted international study programs, delegations and visitors from a number of countries including Afghanistan, Botswana, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vietnam, as well as from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

<sup>1</sup> Association of World Electoral Bodies.



## Programme 1.2 Election Support Services – key performance results

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
<b>Register of Political Parties</b>			
Party registration processed in accordance with relevant legislation and the Register of Political Parties updated in a timely manner.	<b>Achieved</b> Met requirements of the Electoral Act. Received and processed unusually large numbers of applications to register new political parties (33). Party Registration Guide and related forms updated on AEC website. Reasons for AEC decisions about party registration applications published on the AEC website.	<b>Achieved</b> Processed all applications in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act and in a timely manner. Formed a new Funding and Disclosure Branch in January 2014, which is responsible for party registration functions in response to 2012 McLeod Inquiry recommendations. <sup>a</sup>	<b>Achieved</b> Processed all applications in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act. The Register of Political Parties was maintained with all new applications and officer changes processed according to the legislative requirements.
<b>Funding and disclosure services</b>			
Election and administrative funding calculated and paid in accordance with relevant legislation.	<b>Not applicable</b> No federal elections.	<b>Achieved</b> See above for details of payments for each event.	<b>Not applicable</b> No federal elections.
Financial disclosures obtained and placed on the public record in accordance with legislated timeframes.	<b>Achieved</b> 2011–12 annual returns received and processed in time for publication on 1 February 2013. Received all 2011–12 annual returns, so no prosecutions necessary.	<b>Achieved</b> Received and processed 681 out of 682 annual returns expected for 2012–13 in time for publication on 3 February 2014. No cases referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecution (CDPP) for non-lodgement. Received and processed 1 726 out of 1 736 candidate and Senate group returns for 2013 federal election. Referred 10 candidates to CDPP for non-lodgement of a candidate return. Received all 11 candidates returns for the Griffith by-election.	<b>Achieved</b> The AEC received 756 annual financial disclosure returns which included 715 returns for 2013–14, 14 returns and 11 amendments for 2012–13 plus seven returns and nine amendments relating to returns received for years prior to 2012–13. Cases of non-lodgement of 2013–14 annual returns are being considered for referral to the CDPP.

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
<b>Industrial elections and protected action ballots</b>			
Industrial elections delivered in accordance with relevant legislation and each organisation's rules.	<b>Achieved</b> All industrial elections are delivered in accordance with the <i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i> and the rules of relevant organisations and legislated timeframes.	<b>Achieved</b> All industrial elections are delivered in accordance with the <i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i> and the rules of relevant organisations and legislated timeframes.	<b>Achieved</b> Industrial elections delivered in accordance with the <i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i> and the rules of relevant organisations and legislated timeframes.
Protected action ballots delivered in accordance with relevant legislation and Fair Work Commission orders. <sup>b</sup>	<b>Achieved</b> All protected action ballots completed in accordance with the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> and Fair Work Commission orders.	<b>Achieved</b> All protected action ballots completed in accordance with the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> and Fair Work Commission orders.	<b>Achieved</b> Protected action ballots completed in accordance with the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> and Fair Work Commission orders.
All election tasks carried out in accordance with legislated timeframes.	<b>Achieved</b> All industrial election tasks delivered in accordance with legislated timeframes and timetables.	<b>Achieved</b> All industrial election tasks delivered in accordance with legislated timeframes and timetables.	<b>Achieved</b> Industrial election tasks delivered in accordance with legislated timeframes.
<b>Fee-for-service elections</b>			
Fee-for-service elections successfully delivered, as required, on a full cost recovery basis.	<b>Achieved</b> Complied with all relevant legislative requirements, internal policies and organisational rules to conduct fee-for-service elections on a full cost recovery basis.	<b>Achieved</b> Complied with all relevant legislative requirements and organisational rules to conduct fee-for-service elections on a full cost recovery basis. Updated relevant internal policies.	<b>Achieved</b> Complied with all relevant legislative requirements, internal policies and organisational rules to conduct fee-for-service elections on a full cost recovery basis.
Effective assistance is provided with the conduct of state, territory and local government elections where requested by the relevant electoral body.	<b>Achieved</b> Continued to provide skilled and trained staff and resources to successfully conduct or assist with parliamentary elections. Provided assistance to state and territory electoral bodies.	<b>Achieved</b> Continued to provide skilled and trained staff and resources to successfully conduct or assist with parliamentary elections. Provided assistance to state and territory electoral bodies.	<b>Achieved</b> Continued to provide skilled and trained staff and resources to successfully conduct or assist with parliamentary elections. Provided assistance to state and territory electoral bodies.

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
State/local government stakeholders and fee-for-service clients are fully satisfied with the services provided.	<b>Achieved</b> Received positive feedback on the conduct of fee-for-service elections from stakeholders and clients, with 100% of respondents surveyed indicating that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the service provided.	<b>Achieved</b> Received positive feedback on the conduct of fee-for-service elections; 60% of elections delivered were 'repeat business' for previous clients.	<b>Achieved</b> Received positive feedback on the conduct of fee-for-service elections, with 93% of respondents to client survey indicating they were 'very satisfied'; 60% of elections delivered were 'repeat business' for previous clients.
<b>Torres Strait Regional Authority elections</b>			
Elections delivered in accordance with relevant legislation on a full cost recovery basis.	<b>Achieved</b> Conducted successful elections on 15 September and 8 December 2012.	<b>Not applicable</b> No elections held.	<b>Not applicable</b> No elections held.
<b>International advice and assistance</b>			
International assistance by the AEC meets the goals specified for individual projects undertaken, with stakeholders fully satisfied with the services provided.	<b>Achieved</b> All specified goals met.	<b>Achieved</b> All specified goals met. Feedback from stakeholders on how the AEC met commitments was overwhelmingly positive.	<b>Achieved</b> All specified goals met. Feedback from stakeholders on how the AEC met commitments was overwhelmingly positive.

a. R McLeod 2012, *Review of the Australian Electoral Commission's disclosure compliance function under Part XX of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

b. On 1 January 2013, Fair Work Australia became the Fair Work Commission. The previous name is maintained for the relevant KPI.

# Education and Communications

## AEC 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.

1.1: Electoral Roll Management

1.2: Election Management and Support Services

**1.3: Education and Communication**

## Programme objective

Informed Australians through the provision of information services on electoral matters.

The AEC conducts a range of education and public awareness campaigns to promote knowledge of, and participation in, the electoral process. This includes information and services that address the needs of Indigenous Australians and those with diverse needs.

## Overview

This section reports on the AEC's performance in:

- providing electoral education services to schools, students, teachers and the general public
- delivering public awareness programs to help Australians understand and fulfil their electoral obligations
- delivering targeted programs so that all eligible voters can participate in Australian democracy regardless of individual background or circumstances.

## Education

In 2014–15 the AEC provided education services to teachers and students in schools through a variety of channels and programs.

### National Electoral Education Centre

The AEC's National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC) at Old Parliament House in Canberra provides electoral education on Australian government and democracy, federal electoral processes and the democratic responsibilities of all citizens. While the majority of visitors are school students, the centre also conducts sessions for adults. For visitors aged 16 or older, the sessions include the opportunity to enrol.

In 2014–15 the NEEC hosted visitors from 149 electoral divisions and delivered 2 592 education sessions to 90 982 participants. This is a record number of visitors to the NEEC and can be attributed in part to the special events in the capital for the commemorations of the Centenary of ANZAC.

During 2014–15 three reviews were conducted involving the NEEC. Two of the reviews evaluated the goals and outcomes of programs delivered at the NEEC and one reviewed the use and design of the centre foyer space. All final reports and recommendations have now been received.

The NEEC also participated in a longitudinal study conducted by the University of Queensland. The aim of this study was to measure the impact of a 'Canberra visit' on students' knowledge of the federal electoral system. Findings of this study will be returned to the AEC and will feed into the ongoing evaluation of the program.

## Get Voting

The AEC's national school education programme, [Get Voting](#), helps primary and secondary schools to conduct in-school elections for real positions, such as representatives on student councils. These authentic election experiences help students to understand the federal electoral system and prepare them to fulfil their democratic responsibilities as adults.

Get Voting provides self-serve, online resources and planning tools for teachers. Free election resources, including ballot boxes, posters and other equipment, are also distributed on request to schools. AEC education staff support the program, providing advice on good electoral practice through an online enquiry tool.

In 2014–15 the Get Voting website:

- received 22 088 visitors
- logged 465 requests for election equipment packs
- was used to deliver school elections for 57 462 students.

During 2014–15, the AEC developed and launched a feedback process in the form of a teacher survey. This web-based survey is forwarded directly to teachers who have registered their school on the Get Voting website. The online survey is sent to the teacher a week after the nominated election date. This process began in November 2014 and as at 30 June 2015, a total of 306 schools had received surveys – 38 of which had been returned.

The survey responses received from teachers will assist the AEC to better understand how Get Voting resources are used in schools and to identify ways to expand the reach of the program.

## Assisting teachers

### Professional learning

The 2014–15 financial year was a time of re-focus for the AEC's professional learning programme. Work aligning the AEC professional learning programme with the National Teaching Standards enabled official accreditation with the teacher registration bodies of two jurisdictions. The newly developed session, 'Voting in the classroom' is a two-hour interactive workshop presented by AEC staff to in-service teachers. The programme aims to develop the knowledge and skills needed to teach electoral education in primary and secondary schools.

Between the programme's accreditation in February 2015 and 30 June 2015, more than 60 in-service teachers participated in the 'Voting in the classroom' workshop. Investigations to identify other delivery methods to reach a wider education sector will continue in 2015–16.

### **Civics education**

In 2014–15, the AEC also contributed to:

- the Australian Government's National and ACT Schools Constitutional Conventions
- the National Capital Civics Education Group – the peak forum for Canberra-based civics and citizenship institutions.

### **Online education resources**

The AEC provides a range of education resources to schools and information to the general public through its [website](#). In an effort to make these education resources more accessible and attractive to teachers, work was undertaken to develop a new visual identity and design for the AEC's education website. The new website design allows users to easily discover the large variety of classroom resources that are available.

The AEC's education section also offers a dedicated email service for teachers. This service has enabled the AEC to provide timely information and advice for school election activities. A subscriber list for teachers and educators is used to distribute updates and additional information about resources and services.

## **Public awareness**

The AEC engages with the Australian public across a range of platforms as it manages enquiries, feedback, complaints and information dissemination.

### **AEC website**

The AEC website, [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au), continues to be the main external communication platform of the agency. Since 2012, the website has employed a responsive design to ensure it is usable on any device (e.g. desktop computer, tablet and mobile phone).

In 2014–15 it serviced 2.5 million users and the most popular content concerned enrolling or updating enrolment details (i.e. updating an address) on the electoral roll.

### **Web accessibility**

In 2015, the AEC developed a web accessibility action plan to set out the mandated activities to be undertaken to ensure its existing and future websites and web systems are appropriately accessible by people with disability.

### **AEC social media**

In 2014–15 the AEC's social media presence included Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Social media played a role in the AEC's external communication activities, allowing the agency to distribute messages and respond to enquiries in a timely manner.

### Twitter

On 30 June 2015 the AEC Twitter account (@AusElectoralCom) had over 8 500 followers. Followers of the AEC on Twitter include media organisations, journalists, electoral enthusiasts and members of the general public. The AEC Twitter account was used throughout 2014–15 to communicate with this audience regarding newsworthy federal electoral matters including party registration, redistribution processes, electoral enrolment and financial disclosure.

A total of 85 proactive tweets were sent from the AEC Twitter account during 2014–15, receiving a total of 957 retweets.

### Facebook

Throughout 2014–15 the AEC Facebook page received 47 direct enquiries and as at 30 June 2015 had a total of 20 141 page likes.

### YouTube

Launched in December 2013, the AEC YouTube account features video content such as television advertisements from public information campaigns (e.g. how to make your vote count). The most popular content on the channel in the past 12 months included television advertisements encouraging the involvement of Indigenous Australians and the participation of all Australians in the electoral process.

### National enquiry service

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

### National telephone service

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

### 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, public policy, research and evaluation reports.

### Media relations

In 2014–15 the AEC distributed [17 media releases](#), of which more than half concerned the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries.

## Internal communication

The AEC's network of national, state, territory and divisional offices requires the agency to operate a comprehensive and efficient suite of internal communication channels. Since the establishment of the communication framework in 2011, the AEC's internal communication has been carefully aligned with its strategic direction to support the delivery of business outcomes. The agency's intranet system provides information to staff across the national network of AEC offices, providing platforms for discussion, collaboration and information sharing.

The AEC's intranet, as a primary communication channel for all staff provides information as part of the AEC's change journey. In June 2015, the *Getting ready for 2016* brand was launched on the AEC intranet to provide staff with consolidated details about the key projects being implemented ahead of the anticipated 2016 federal election.

### Move of the national office

In 2014–15, a key aspect of internal communication for the AEC was the move of the national office involving 320 staff members. As an exercise in active change management, this project was successful for the AEC and received positive staff feedback.

In the lead-up to the move in May 2015, staff based in the national office were provided with extensive information, resources, tips and guidance via the intranet.

Staff throughout the national network were encouraged to participate in an online discussion forum and to submit queries to a dedicated email address.

## Assisting Australians with diverse needs

### Social inclusion

As voting is compulsory in Australia, the AEC addresses the needs of a diverse range of people when managing electoral events and preparing information for the public. As a result, the AEC utilises a range of education and communication initiatives that address the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; those suffering disadvantage (such as homelessness); those who have difficulty communicating; and those with hearing, sight or other physical impairments.

In addition to supporting the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, the agency utilises a number of initiatives and outreach activities to improve awareness of, and access to, electoral services. The AEC provides a service for voters who are deaf or 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.

### 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 multi-language information line. It handled 3 033 calls in 2014–15. A total of 2 073 callers used the translator service to speak directly to AEC staff. The top three languages used were Mandarin (825 calls), Arabic (420 calls) and Korean (367 calls).



For new citizens who speak a language other than English, the AEC also provides translated information about enrolment and voting in 26 languages available on the AEC website.

## Services for Indigenous Australians

Indigenous Australians are less likely to enrol, less likely to vote and less likely to vote formally than any other Australians. The AEC's Indigenous Electoral Participation Program (IEPP) aims to close this gap. Under the programme, AEC staff at national, state and local levels work directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their local communities or in partnership with other organisations to deliver services in ways that meet cultural and regional needs.

In 2014–15, the core IEPP objectives were to:

- develop and maintain relationships with Indigenous organisations and other government agencies providing services to Indigenous Australians
- improve the AEC's capability to deliver effective, culturally appropriate services to Indigenous Australians
- prepare for the next federal election.

### **Strategic partnerships to engage Indigenous audiences**

Partnerships allow the AEC to extend the reach and increase the impact of communication to Indigenous audiences. Throughout the year the AEC worked in partnership with government and non-government agencies to widen the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This was particularly important in remote locations with the additional barriers of distance and access.

These activities included sponsorship of key Indigenous cultural and sporting events to disseminate messages about enrolment, voting and electoral processes.

A Community and Stakeholder Engagement (CASE) system is being developed to improve the AEC's ability to engage and maintain relationships with Indigenous organisations and other government agencies providing services to Indigenous Australians.

### **Indigenous service delivery is everyone's business**

Capability to deliver effective, culturally appropriate services to Indigenous Australians is important across the AEC. Key activities designed to build capability in this area include:

- celebrating Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and similar events
- the AEC's Reconciliation Action Plan which sets out how the agency will contribute to the reconciliation with our Indigenous employees and other Indigenous Australians
- making cultural appreciation training available to all AEC staff.



Strategic partnerships allow the AEC to provide culturally appropriate services to Indigenous Australians.

### **Reconciliation action plan**

The AEC's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) works with stakeholders across the AEC network to transform good intentions into genuine action for reconciliation in Australia, by acknowledging areas of influence that can actively contribute to reconciliation in Australia, in the AEC and in our everyday working lives.

The AEC's RAP 2012–14 expired in December 2014. A dedicated RAP Working Group was assembled to develop a new RAP with Indigenous representatives from every state and territory. Having reflected on the outcomes of the previous RAP, the Working Group is developing a range of strategies to embed the 2016–19 RAP into the AEC's core business planning and processes. The key objective of the 2016–19 RAP is to promote an agency culture that acknowledges the achievements and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – particularly the AEC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

### **Services for the next federal election**

Evaluation showed increased electoral knowledge, enrolment and turnout by Indigenous Australians at the 2013 federal election.

Activities to build on this success include:

- communication and media plans tailored for an Indigenous audience
- assessing culturally appropriate polling venues for areas with significant Indigenous populations
- reviewing polling official recruitment and training strategies to increase employment of Indigenous Australians in polling places.

Programme 1.3 Targeted Education and Public Awareness Programmes – key performance results

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
<b>Electoral education</b>			
78 000 visitors to the National Electoral Education Centre (NEEC) per annum.	<b>Achieved</b> 90 400	<b>Achieved</b> 87 065	<b>Achieved</b> 90 982
2 000 NEEC sessions delivered per annum.	<b>Achieved</b> 2 600	<b>Achieved</b> 2 542	<b>Achieved</b> 2 592
100 000 participants in AEC education outreach services.	<b>Achieved</b> 100 717	<b>Not achieved</b> 83 025 Reduced number is due to the diversion of AEC operational capacity to election delivery throughout 2013–14.	<b>Not achieved</b> 57 462 students reached by Get Voting website. The School and Community Visits programme has ceased and outreach activities are in transition to develop greater online delivery.
1 200 participants in teacher professional development sessions.	<b>Achieved</b> 3 184 students from 18 universities.	<b>Achieved</b> 2 079 students from eight universities.	<b>Not achieved</b> 65 teachers nationally. Delivery of the Professional Learning programme ceased, to allow for redevelopment, including a pilot programme concentrating on fully-qualified teachers working in schools (rather than students studying teaching).
Contemporary service delivery options, including partnerships that promote public awareness of electoral matters.	<b>Achieved</b> Get Voting operating in all states.	<b>Achieved</b> Get Voting take-up in 127 electoral divisions.	<b>Achieved</b> Accreditation of Teacher Professional Learning Programme in two education jurisdictions. Get Voting programme implemented a feedback survey for teachers.

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
Contemporary online education resource material that responds to curriculum needs.	<b>Achieved</b> Delivered education modules linked to national history curriculum.	<b>Achieved</b> Education modules available through the national teacher resource portal.	<b>Achieved</b> New visual identity created for education website.
Participant feedback indicates 90% satisfaction with AEC education services.	<b>Achieved</b> Over 90% satisfaction rate with AEC education programmes.	<b>Achieved</b> Over 90% satisfaction rate with AEC education programmes.	<b>Achieved</b> Over 90% satisfaction rate with AEC education programmes.
<b>Communication strategies and services</b>			
AEC communication strategies and services developed, implemented and reviewed as appropriate.	<b>Achieved</b> Developed communication strategies for 2013 federal election including enrolment, pre-election, referendum and special audience strategies.	<b>Achieved</b> Implemented communication strategies for 2013 federal election, 2014 Griffith by-election and 2014 WA Senate election, including tailored delivery to special audiences.	<b>Achieved</b> Communication strategies reviewed for next federal election and preparation in-progress.
Positive audience feedback on effectiveness of advertising and public awareness activities through surveys, market research and stakeholder consultation.	<b>Achieved</b> Market research supports effectiveness of Count Me In campaign enrolment publicity materials.	<b>Achieved</b> Market research supports effectiveness of election campaigns in raising public awareness.	<b>Not applicable</b> Relevant in years where federal elections or electoral communications campaigns implemented.
Published information is timely and accurate, makes appropriate use of available technology and meets online accessibility standards.	<b>Achieved</b> Public information and key services (e.g. enrolment) delivered using online technology, including AEC website and social media.  Social media fully integrated into communication campaigns.  Website meets AGIMO National Transition Strategy accessibility standards.	<b>Achieved</b> Timely and accurate public information delivered through AEC website and social media for 2013 federal election, 2014 Griffith by-election and 2014 WA Senate election.	<b>Achieved</b> Timely and accurate public information delivered through AEC website and social media.

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
<b>Community strategies</b>			
Evaluation shows the Indigenous Elector Participation Program, is meeting its objectives.	<b>Achieved</b> Implemented findings of program review (evaluation) to meet program objectives. Applied more strategic approach; reduced focus on community engagement staff delivered services in remote areas balanced by increased emphasis on urban and regional locations, and partnerships with government and non-government agencies. IEPP objectives were mainstreamed into core AEC business.	<b>Achieved</b> Mainstream and targeted services for Indigenous Australians during the 2013 federal election were delivered and evaluated. A focus in 2013–14 was the increase in electoral knowledge, enrolment and participation by Indigenous Australians through strategic partnerships and employment opportunities.	<b>Achieved</b> Increased emphasis on engaging with Indigenous Australians through stakeholders and partnership arrangements. Culturally appropriate service delivery supported by training and guidance from Indigenous AEC staff.
Feedback from target audience on the Indigenous Electoral Participation Program shows the program is well received.	<b>Achieved</b> Developed tailored and customised community education services and national communications strategy include new visual identity and suite of information products. Implemented redesigned program based on feedback from program review. Developed business rules for national actions to increase Indigenous electoral participation ahead of an election and referendum. Feedback positive.	<b>Achieved</b> Feedback by Indigenous Australians during federal election was positive. Attitudes to enrolment and voting improved, particularly in communities surveyed in the Northern Territory and Queensland and through online mediums such as Facebook and the AEC's website.	<b>Achieved</b> Positive feedback from Indigenous Australians for AEC engagement and awareness of electoral processes.

## CASE STUDY

# AEC develops new election materials and operating procedures

A federal election involves a vast array of complex and interdependent activities to ensure that more than 15 million Australians throughout 150 electoral divisions have the opportunity to vote. One of the AEC's responsibilities in managing election services is the provision of election staff, materials and related procedures.

The range and scale of materials required and the related security and logistic arrangements is significant. During the 2013 federal election, more than 43 million ballot papers were printed, more than 50 000 ballot boxes produced, 140 km of string used and more than 150 000 cardboard voting screens distributed.

A key component of the AEC's Electoral Reform Programme has been the development and enhancement of new and existing policies, procedures, election materials and resources. Designed to improve the effectiveness of a number of logistic and security procedures, these initiatives will further support the safety of electoral materials and the integrity of the electoral process.

During 2014–15, the Electoral Reform Programme has reached a number of key milestones.

### **Policy and procedures**

Four new policies have been developed to strengthen the processes and standards relating to the handling of ballot papers, the management of waste during an electoral event, the identification of election staff and scrutineers and minimum requirements to be met by venues temporarily hired by the AEC to undertake key election activities.

New standard operating procedures have also been developed to accompany key election activities. These include the fresh scrutiny (or second count) of votes and managing the return of election materials from approximately 7 500 polling places to the AEC on election night.

## Materials

New and enhanced forms and materials have been developed to support the new policies and procedures. One such example is a new series of ballot paper tracking forms which support the ballot paper handling policy by recording the chain of custody at every stage of a ballot paper's movement.

Other new materials include:

- ballot paper parcel bags and transport containers
- election material packaging labels
- tamper-evident tape
- specially-made screens for use as a ballot paper secure zone in polling locations
- boxes for final storage of ballot papers (which are black in colour to prevent non-compliant hand-written labelling)
- new posters to mark specific areas within AEC offices and out-posted venues (e.g. ballot paper secure zones that are out-of-bounds except to authorised staff).

A range of vests and bibs which identify staff roles and responsibilities as supervisors, AEC management and visitors have also been introduced. These vests and bibs, designed to clearly signal personnel status, access and responsibilities, provide a consistent voter experience in each polling place. Lanyards have also been introduced and will be worn by scrutineers at AEC out-posted premises, to enable them to be easily identified.

## Resourcing

Election staffing has been adjusted to ensure the new policies and procedures are successfully implemented. For example, a new Divisional Materials Manager role will oversee activities pertaining to ballot papers and election materials with a particular focus on the accountability and security of ballot papers.

Another measure to enhance the security of ballot papers is the placement of a dedicated ballot box guard at every polling place. The existing Polling Place Liaison Officer role has also been refined to provide greater support to polling staff.

To assist with the development of staffing plans, new standard operating procedures clearly identify staffing requirements for particular key activities.

These changes will be implemented at the next federal election.

