



2

ABOUT THE AEC

150

**ELECTORAL DIVISIONS
ADMINISTERED**

1 020

**REGULAR
STAFF**

1902

YEAR ESTABLISHED

as part of Department of Home Affairs

1984

YEAR ESTABLISHED

as a statutory authority

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

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

What is the AEC?

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is an independent statutory authority established by the Australian Government to:

Maintain an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters through active electoral roll management, efficient delivery of polling services, and targeted education and public awareness programs.

We do this by:

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

Associated activities include:

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

Values and principles

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

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

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

Outcome and programs

The AEC has one outcome: 'Maintain an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters through active electoral roll management, efficient delivery of polling services and targeted education and public awareness programs'.

SPOTLIGHT

Our history

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

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

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

Organisational structure and leadership

Structure

National office

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

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

State/territory offices

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

Divisional offices and electoral divisions

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

Leadership

Electoral Commissioner

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

The Commission

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



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

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

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

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

Executive management

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

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

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

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

Figure 1: Australia’s 150 electoral divisions

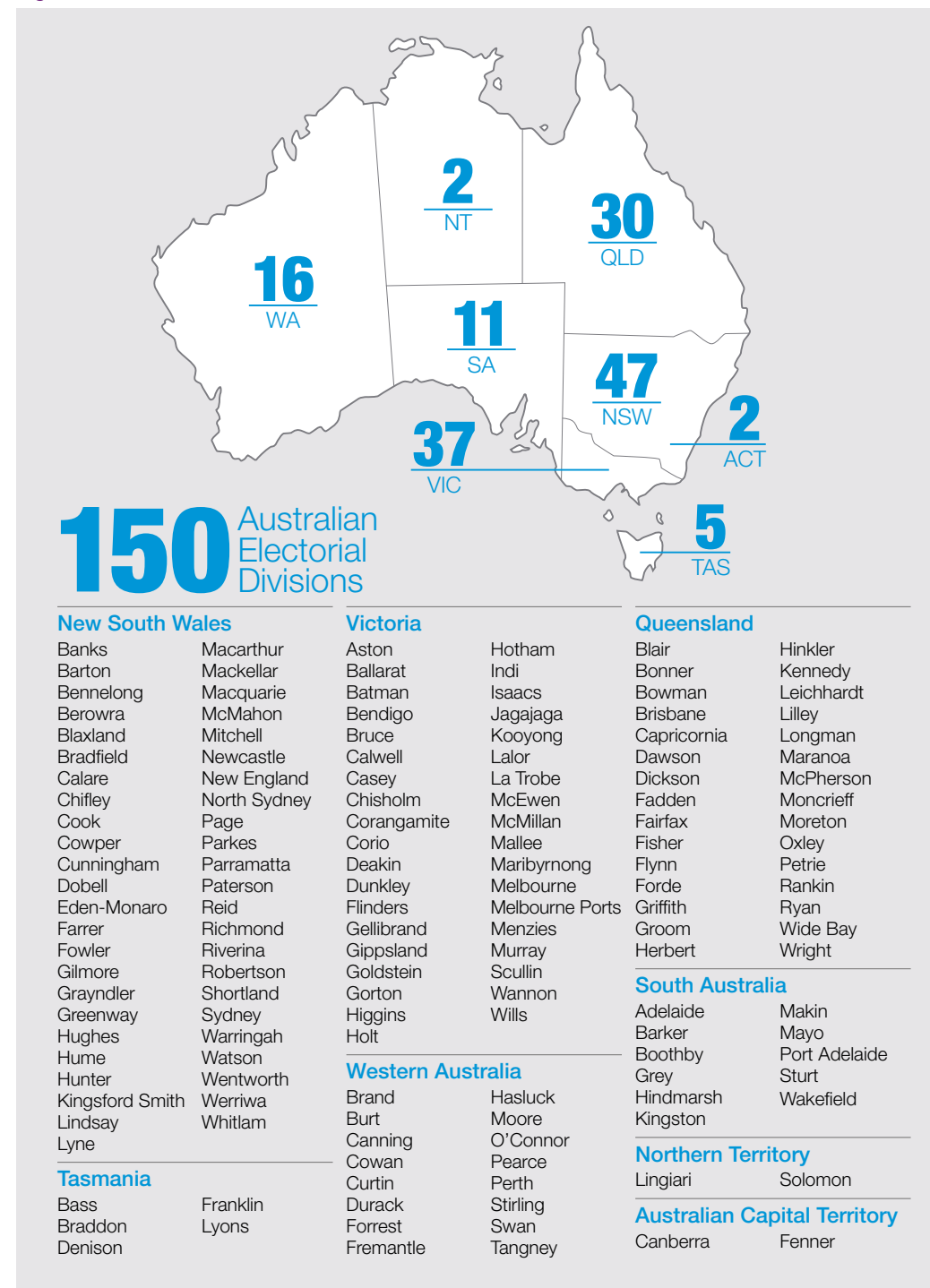
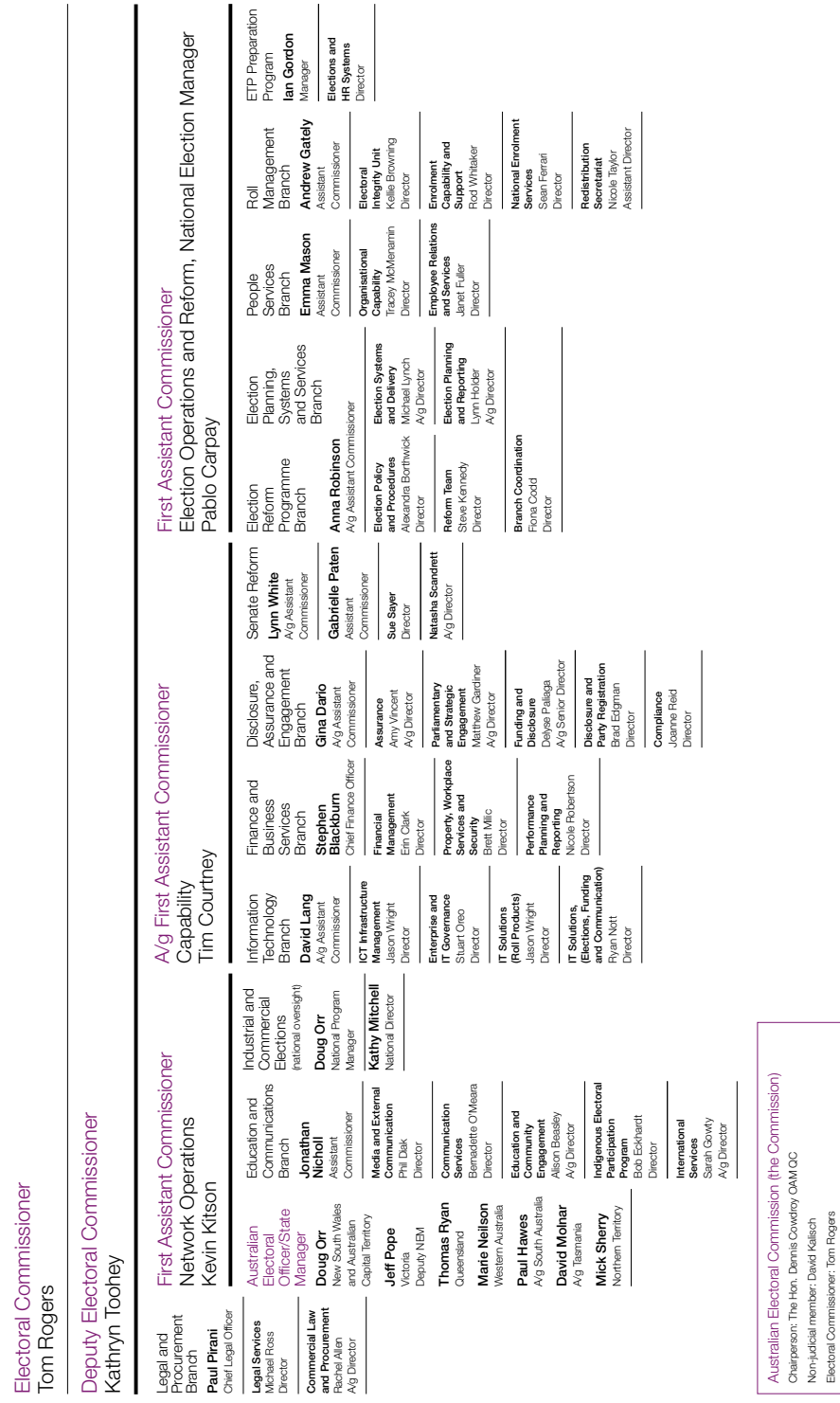


Figure 2: Organisation chart and leadership structure as at 30 June 2016



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

Guiding legislation

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

Table 1: Legislative framework

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