



4

MANAGING THE AEC

8.1 years
AVERAGE LENGTH OF
SERVICE ongoing staff

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

47.8 years
AVERAGE AGE
regular workforce

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

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

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

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

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

Governance, ethics and staff consultation

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

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

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

Management committees

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

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

Discussion forums

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

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

Ethical standards

The AEC's ethical standards are implicit in:

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

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

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

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

Staff consultation

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

Consultative forums

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

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

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

The responsibilities of the ACF include:

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

Enterprise agreement negotiations

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

State of the Service survey

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

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

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

Other internal consultation

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

Strategic and business planning

Strategic planning and reporting to government

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

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

Corporate Plan

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

The plan outlines five agency directions:

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

Portfolio Budget Statements and Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements

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

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

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

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

SPOTLIGHT

AEC Digital Transformation Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annual Report

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

Business planning

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

Table 17: Business planning documents

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

SPOTLIGHT

IT Strategic Plan maps technology future for AEC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Risk management and business continuity

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

Addressing risk

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

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

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

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

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

- increased education and empowerment of staff

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

Risk register

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

Business assurance

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

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

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

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

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

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

Business continuity

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

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

Managing resources, assets and procurement

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

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

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

Human resources

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

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

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

Working arrangements

Employment agreements

AEC Enterprise Agreement

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

Section 24(1) determinations

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

Collective Determination under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918

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

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

Individual flexibility arrangements

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

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

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

Employee non-salary benefits

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

Statutory appointees and executive remuneration

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

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

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

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

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

Performance management

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

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

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

Performance pay

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

AEC workforce statistics

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

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

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

Regular workforce

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

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

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

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

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

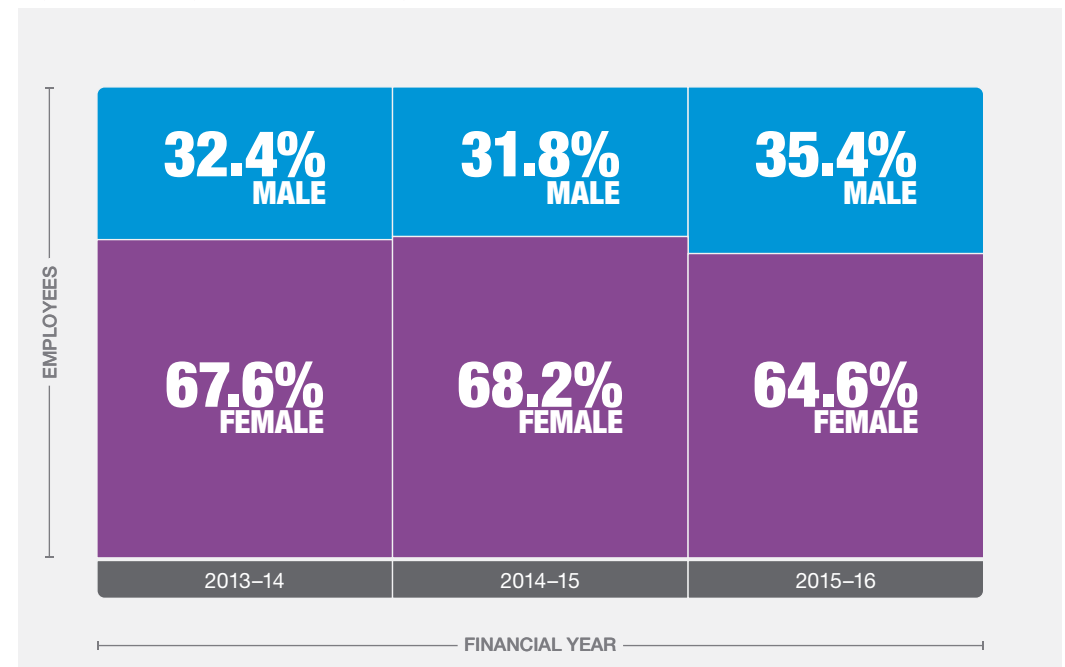


Figure 6: The regular workforce by age group as at 30 June 2016

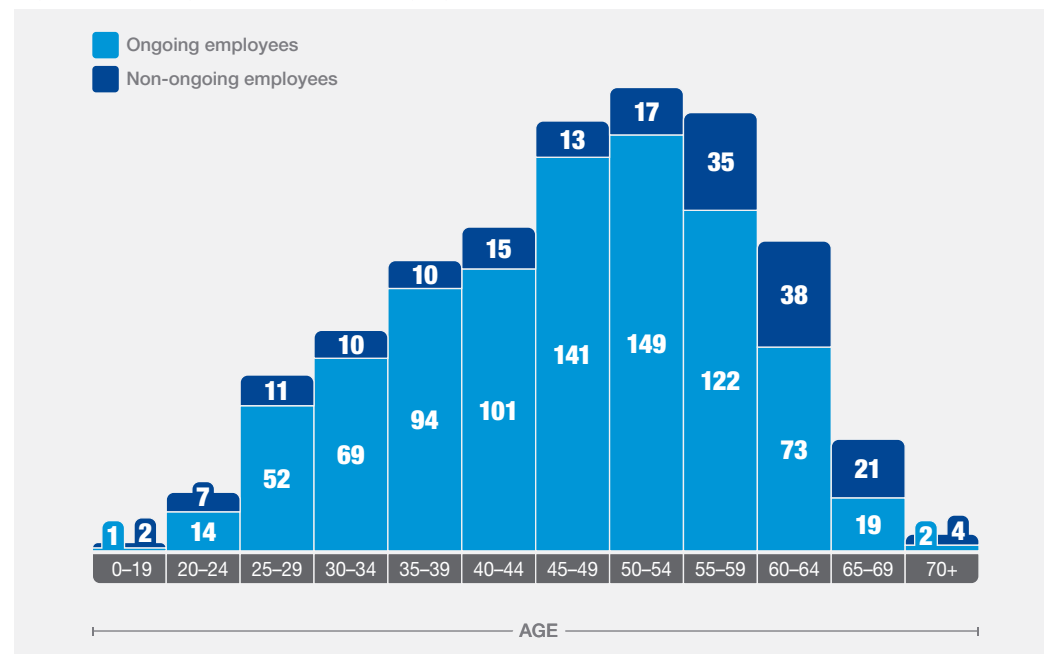
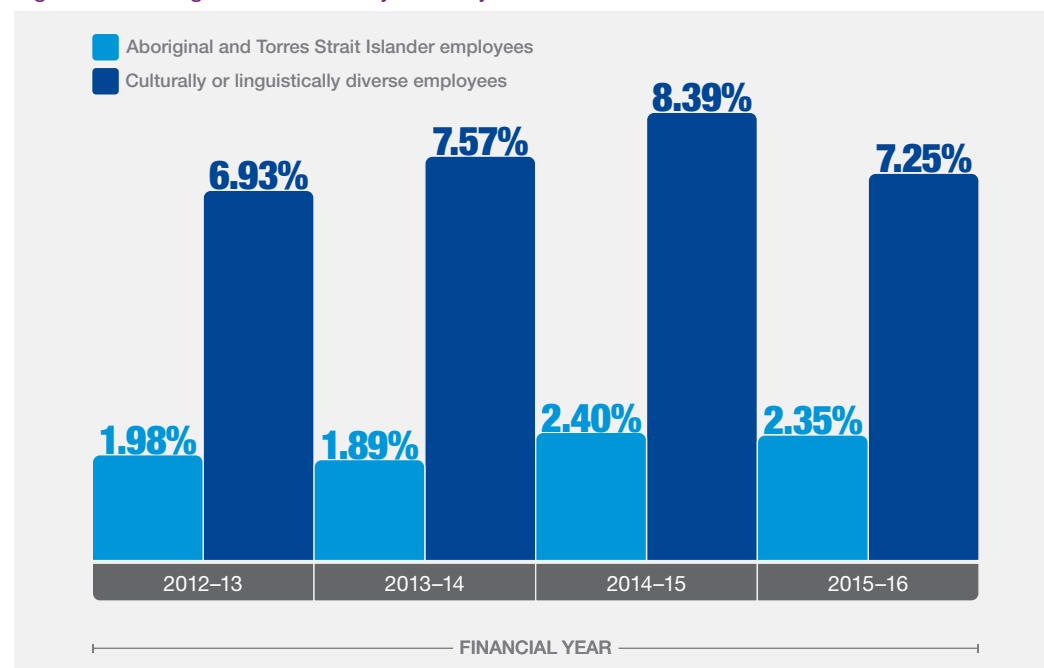


Figure 7: AEC regular workforce by diversity 2012–13 to 2015–16



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

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

Irregular or intermittent employees

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

Indigenous employees

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

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

Indigenous election workforce

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

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

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

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

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

Table 20: Intermittent or irregular employees by classification

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

APS = Australian Public Service, EL = Executive Level

SPOTLIGHT

Reconciliation Action Plan

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

Through the 2016–18 RAP, the AEC will:

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



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

Disability reporting

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

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

Recruitment and employee retention

Recruiting employees

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

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

Job advertising

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

Graduate program

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

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

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

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

Retaining employees

Retention rate

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

State of the Service employee survey results

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

The survey results also highlighted areas for development such as:

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

Support of the Carer Recognition Act 2010

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

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

Learning and development

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



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

AEC Learning

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

Election training review development

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

Certified Trainer Program

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

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

Workforce planning

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

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

Key activities included:

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

Work health and safety

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

WHS outcomes

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

Claims management

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

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

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

Health and wellbeing programs

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

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

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

Physical assets

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

Office fit-outs

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

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

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

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

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

Information assets

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

Security enhancements

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

ICT infrastructure

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

Procurement

Purchasing

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

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

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

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

Initiatives to support small business

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

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

Requests for Tender

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

Grants

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

Consultancies

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

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

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

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

SPOTLIGHT

Election Readiness Program

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

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

The program's learning outcomes included:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANAO Access Provisions

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

Exempt Contracts

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

Sustainability principles

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

Environmental performance

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

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

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

Sustainable development

Sustainable use of premises

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sustainable procurement practices

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

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

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

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

Minimising impact

Building design

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

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

Energy conservation

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

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

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

Table 24: Legislative compliance and reporting for environmental management

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

a. National Australian Built Environment Rating System.

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

Water conservation

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

Water conservation measures at the National Office include:

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

Table 25: AEC sustainable procurement requirements

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

Table 26: National office environmental ratings

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

a. National Australian Built Environment Rating System

Table 27: Energy consumption considerations across the network

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

Table 28: Water consumption considerations across the network

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

Responsible disposal of waste

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

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

Vehicle use and travel reduction

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

National Electoral Education Centre waste reduction program

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

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

Compliance

Legal compliance

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

Internal audit

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

Internal Audit Plan

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

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

Internal Auditors

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

Fraud control

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fraud Control Committee

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

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

Freedom of Information

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

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

Information Publication Scheme and FOI Disclosure Log

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

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

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

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

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

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

External scrutiny

Customer scrutiny

Service Charter

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

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

Customer enquiries, issues and complaints

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

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

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

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

National complaints management framework

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

Administrative scrutiny

Guiding legislation

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

Relevant reports and reviews

Administrative Appeals Tribunal

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

Matter relating to access refusal under FOI

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

Table 29: Guiding legislation for AEC administrative decisions

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

Matter relating to the abbreviation of party names

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commonwealth Ombudsman

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

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

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

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

Australian Human Rights Commission

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

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

Judicial scrutiny

High Court

Murphy v Electoral Commissioner & Anor (12 May 2016)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dieter Horn v Electoral Commissioner (23 June 2016)

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

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

Federal Court

Administrative Decisions Judicial Review

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

Industrial elections

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parliamentary scrutiny

Services to the Australian Parliament

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

Parliamentary inquiries

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

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

In addition to contributing to such inquiries, in the normal conduct of its functions the AEC meets regularly with government on electoral matters.

Table 30: Parliamentary inquiries and AEC involvement 2015–16

Inquiry	Committee	Date	AEC involvement	Status
Inquiry into electoral education	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	23 June 2015 – 9 May 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and made a supplementary submission.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Inquiry into campaigning at polling places	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	17 June 2015 – 9 May 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at two public hearings and made a supplementary submission.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Inquiry into political donations	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	15 October 2015 – 9 May 2016	The AEC made a submission.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016 (Senate voting reform)	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	22 February 2016 – 2 March 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and made a supplementary submission.	Advisory report tabled on 2 March 2016.
The matter of a popular vote, in the form of a plebiscite or referendum, on the matter of marriage in Australia	Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee	20 August 2015 – 15 September 2015	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and made a supplementary submission.	Report tabled on 15 September 2016.
Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donations and Other Measures) Bill 2016	Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee	3 March 2016 – 9 May 2016	The AEC wrote a letter to the committee.	Lapsed when Parliament dissolved on 9 May 2016.
Commonwealth legislative provisions relating to oversight of associated entities of political parties	Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee	19 April 2016 – 4 May 2016	The AEC made a submission, appeared at a public hearing and answered questions taken on notice.	Interim report tabled 29 April 2016. Final report tabled 4 May 2016.