



SECTION 2

ABOUT THE AEC

A strong focus on electoral integrity,
through the values of quality, agility and
professionalism



=ONE=
AGENCY
PURPOSE

150
ELECTORAL DIVISIONS
ADMINISTERED

837
REGULAR STAFF

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What is the Australian Electoral Commission?

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

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

We do this by:

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

Values and principles

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

The AEC is also guided by the Australian Public Service ICARE values:

- impartiality
- committed to service
- accountable
- respectful
- ethical.

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

Outcome and program

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. This program has six areas of performance for 2016–17, as outlined below. The program areas are reported separately in the Portfolio Budget Statements for the AEC (Budget-Related Paper No. 1.8) available on the Department of Finance website:

- federal elections, by-elections and referendums
- electoral roll management
- support services for electoral redistributions
- party registrations and financial disclosure
- industrial and commercial elections
- public awareness.

Organisational structure and leadership

National office

At 30 June 2017, the National Office in Canberra consisted of eight key functional areas:

- Legal and Procurement
- Education and Communications
- Election Planning, Policy and Operations
- Roll Management
- Disclosure, Assurance and Engagement
- Finance and Business Services
- Information Technology
- People Services.

State/territory offices

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

Divisional offices and electoral divisions

Divisional offices are responsible for electoral administration within each of the 150 electoral divisions. Each division is represented by a member of the House of Representatives. Divisional offices administer the conduct of electoral events, manage the electoral roll and carry out public awareness activities. Australia's electoral divisions as at 30 June 2017 are shown in Figure 1.

INTERESTING FACT

The smallest federal electorate is Grayndler in NSW – 32km².
The largest is Durack in WA – 1,629,858km²

Figure 1: Australia's 150 electoral divisions





Senior Executive Group 2016-17. Back row left to right: Stephen Blackburn, Anna Stewart, Thomas Ryan, Martyn Hagan, David Lang, Warwick Austin, Steve Kennedy, Bernadette O'Meara, David Molnar. Front row left to right: Jonathan Nicholl, Fleur Hill, Andrew Gately, Jeff Pope, Tom Rogers, Tim Courtney, Stuart Ore, Paul Pirani, Gina Dario. Absent: Gabrielle Paten

Electoral Commissioner

The Electoral Commissioner, Mr Tom Rogers, as the Chief Executive Officer of the AEC, both leads and is responsible for day-to-day management of the organisation. He is also the accountable authority under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Commission

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

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

As at 30 June 2017, the members of the Commission were:

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

Executive management

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

They are supported by the State Managers, who also hold statutory appointments as Australian Electoral Officer for their respective state or territory (with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory, see State/territory offices on page 11).

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

- **Network and Election Operations Division** – the Australian Electoral Officer/State Manager and Divisional network, Election Planning, Policy and Operations, Education and Communications, Roll Management, and the Industrial and Commercial Elections Program. The First Assistant Commissioner also performs the role of National Election Manager.
- **Capability Division** – Finance and Business Services, Information Technology, Disclosure Assurance and Engagement, and People Services.

Figure 2: Organisational chart and leadership structure at 30 June 2017



Guiding legislation

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

Table 1: AEC legislative framework

Legislative instrument	AEC function
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005</i>	Conduct Torres Strait Regional Authority elections
<i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>	Conduct federal elections
	Maintain and update the Commonwealth electoral roll
	Promote public awareness of electoral and parliamentary matters through information and education programs
	Provide international electoral assistance in cases approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs
	Conduct and promote research into electoral matters and other matters that relate to AEC functions
	Register political parties
	Pay public funding to election candidates and parties, and publish financial disclosure returns of political parties and others
	Provide support to the independent redistribution process that determines representation entitlements
Electoral and Referendum Regulations 1940	Reporting of spending on advertising and market research generally (not restricted to electoral matters)
	Conduct federal elections and referendums and provide voter information
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	Manage activities in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development
<i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>	Conduct protected action ballots
<i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i>	Conduct industrial elections
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	Hold and release documents
<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>	Management of Commonwealth resources
<i>Public Service Act 1999</i>	Ensure the effective and fair employment, management and leadership of AEC employees
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i>	Store, use and disclose personal information
<i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i>	Conduct federal referendums
<i>Representation Act 1983</i>	Set numbers for Senate elections
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>	Implement and report on matters concerning the health, safety and welfare of AEC workers