



Australian Electoral Commission

Corporate Plan

2007-08





Message from the Electoral Commissioner

A good corporate plan does not stand apart from the work of the agency, but clearly links the duties and responsibilities of all staff to the wider stated organisational purpose and aim. This corporate plan does just that. While setting this year's agenda for the organisation at large, this plan can also be used by each staff member to determine how and where their individual role contributes to this agenda.

This year the AEC will again be running one of the largest events undertaken in this country. While there has always been a great deal of interest in our performance, the recent changes to the electoral law will mean an even greater level of scrutiny at the 2007 election.

The AEC is well placed to implement these changes. At the start of the last financial year the AEC set out with a clear picture of what it wanted to achieve, and substantial progress has been made. But, as always, there is more to do. Most of the priorities for 2007-08 are not new ones and I frequently wrote or spoke about them during the previous year. With what was achieved last year, we are now able to take these priorities to a higher level.

There can be no doubt that the AEC's strongest focus for 2007-08 is on the election, both preparing for and conducting the event. A continuing priority is getting the electoral roll in good shape and also looking at the processes in place that will make sure it stays that way.

How these priorities are achieved is also going to be a focus for the organisation this year, with further targeted development of the AEC's business capabilities. This will include enhancing:

- ▶ how the AEC communicates both externally and internally
- ▶ the AEC's response to available and emerging technologies
- ▶ leadership and staff development programs
- ▶ the further integration of the three layers of the organisation, and
- ▶ the equity across divisions through workload sharing.

I see the need to position the organisation to effectively recognise and manage change from both within and outside as another important priority. Change is a constant, and it is by working better as one organisation that we are able to more effectively manage an environment of evolutionary change.

As was the case last year, I look forward to again launching this year's Corporate Plan nationally. Last year's visits to the states were invaluable in presenting the AEC's vision and opening channels of communication across the organisation.

I would like to thank all staff for their contribution towards the achievements of last financial year. The section *Building on our capabilities* details the organisation's achievements over the past year in several areas and reflects well on the commitment and capability of its staff.

I know that this election year will be an opportunity to showcase our achievements as individuals and collectively as an organisation.

Ian Campbell
Electoral Commissioner

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to help people have their say in who will represent them in the Parliament of Australia. We do this by providing impartial and accessible electoral services.

Our Aim

Our aim is to be recognised as an organisation that provides excellence in the management and delivery of electoral services.

Our Values

We reflect the values of the Australian Public Service in the high standards of behaviour we observe on a day to day basis. In particular, we stress the following values that assist us in behaving ethically in carrying out our duty. That is, we

- ▶ conduct our business with **fairness** and **impartiality**
- ▶ maintain high standards of **integrity** and **ethical behaviour**
- ▶ respect and **uphold the law**
- ▶ are **open, transparent** and **accountable** for what we do
- ▶ **respect** and **listen** to our clients and stakeholders and each other, and
- ▶ **serve** the Australian people and the Federal Parliament.

Our Environment

The environment in which we work is an important consideration in our business planning process. The AEC is aware of, and sensitive to, the challenges and emerging issues that could impact the way it does its business.

In 2007-08, the federal election will dominate AEC priorities. This event impacts across the AEC and affects all functional areas including the conduct and delivery of elections, the management of the roll, media and communication, IT, staffing, financial management and other support areas. The AEC has identified a number of issues which need to be taken into consideration when developing strategies and identifying priorities for these activities.

- ▶ Customer and stakeholder expectations, demographic changes, and new systems enhancements are of major significance in planning for the 2007 federal election.
- ▶ Changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* and other legislation such as the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005*, outcomes of Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) reviews, and changes to State and Territory electoral legislation impacting on the AEC, will require us to review the way we conduct our business, develop strategies and share our workload.
- ▶ The integrity and accuracy of the electoral roll is a priority for the AEC and needs to be viewed in the context of the changing demographic and cultural environment throughout Australia, stakeholder expectations and changing systems development and enhancements.

- ▶ The AEC, as with other Australian Public Service (APS) agencies, is moving towards an increasing use of e-government services and greater efficiencies in information and resource sharing between agencies.
- ▶ Demographic and cultural changes impact on the way we attract, retain and manage staff.
- ▶ In an environment of cultural and technological change, staff turnover, communication, knowledge management and record keeping have become essential priorities.

Critical to our success is our ability to recognise these challenges and respond by developing appropriate strategies, building on our skills and sharing workloads to ensure more equity of workload across our network of offices.





Our Outcomes

The AEC is funded to deliver three specific outcomes:

1. An effective electoral roll

Australians have an electoral roll which ensures their voter entitlement and provides the basis for the planning of electoral events and electoral redistributions;

2. An impartial and independent electoral system

Stakeholders and customers have access to, and advice on impartial and independent electoral services and participate in electoral events; and

3. An informed community

An Australian community which is well informed about electoral matters.

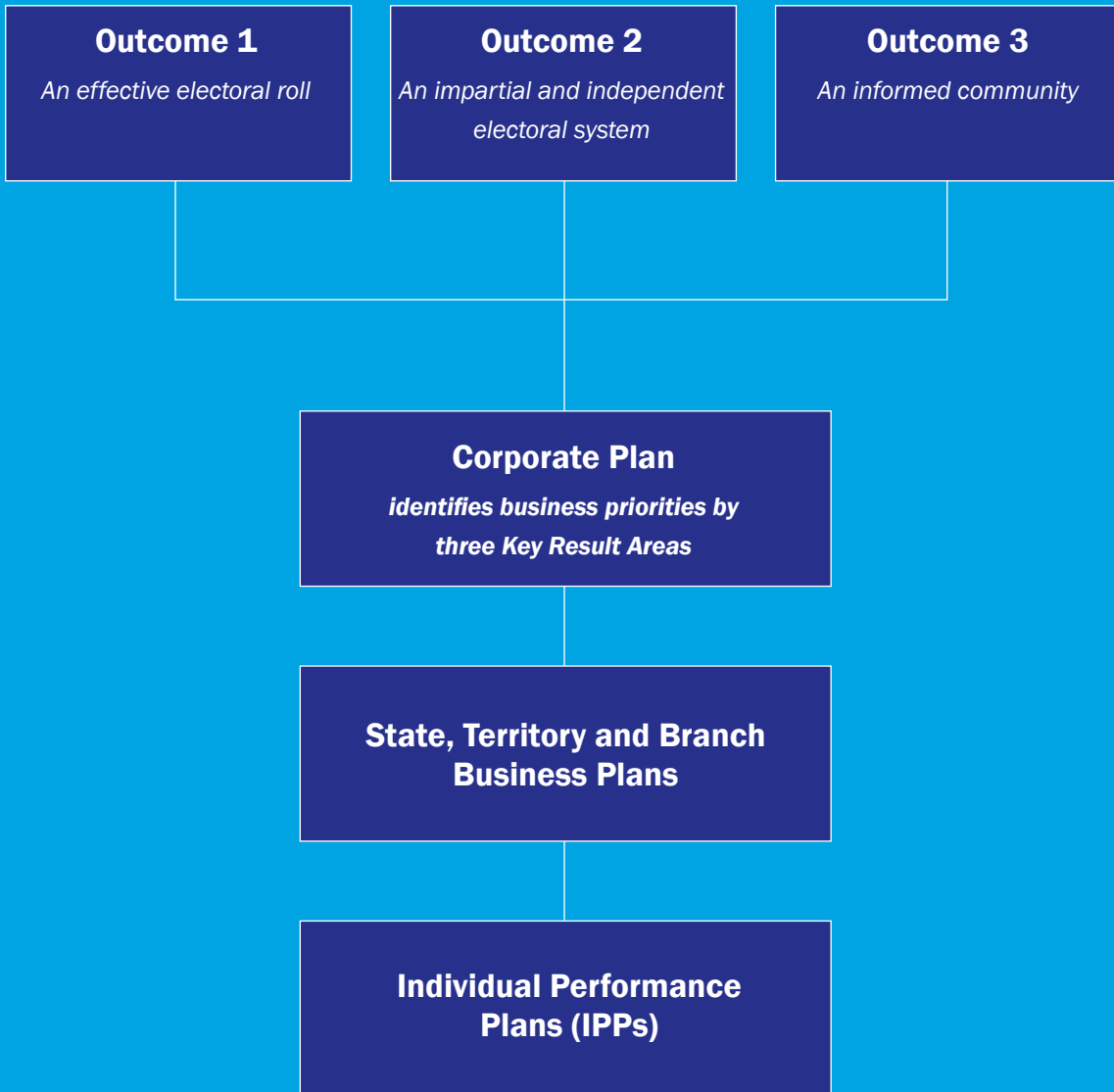
Our Business

To deliver these outcomes the AEC has seven core business functions. These are to:-

- ▶ manage the electoral roll which is used by all levels of government;
- ▶ conduct elections and referendums, including fee-for-service and industrial elections;
- ▶ educate and inform the community about electoral responsibilities;
- ▶ provide research, advice and assistance on electoral matters;
- ▶ provide assistance in overseas elections and referendums;
- ▶ administer election funding, financial disclosure and party registration requirements; and
- ▶ undertake electoral redistributions.

Our Business Planning

The business plans will identify activities to be undertaken in line with the Corporate Plan priorities to achieve the AEC's outcomes and improve our performance.



Key result areas

In all our business activities we will improve our services and build our capability in the following key result areas of:

- ▶ interactions with our clients and stakeholders and understanding and responding to their needs
- ▶ delivery of our services and products, and
- ▶ supporting our people.

In all three key result areas we manage our finances, risk and corporate information efficiently.

KRA 1 Our Clients and Stakeholders

Objectives

- ▶ A high level of client and stakeholder trust and confidence in the way the AEC conducts its business.
- ▶ An increased level of enrolment and participation by eligible Australians in electoral processes.
- ▶ Clients and stakeholders who are well informed about electoral matters and activities including their electoral responsibilities and entitlements.

Business Priorities

- ▶ Implement strategies to increase the level of enrolment and participation in electoral events particularly for younger Australians, new citizens, electors changing their address, indigenous Australians and people living in rural and remote areas.



- ▶ Implement communication strategies to promote enrolment, inform the community about enrolment and voter services and how to vote formally at the next federal election.
- ▶ Maintain relationships with state and territory electoral authorities including through the Electoral Council of Australia and Joint Roll Arrangements.
- ▶ Provide quality and timely electoral information and advice to the Parliament, JSCEM, the Minister, electors and other stakeholders.
- ▶ Ensure political parties, parliamentarians, candidates and other relevant groups and individuals are well informed to enable them to comply with registration, election funding and disclosure requirements.
- ▶ Conduct performance analysis to better understand client and stakeholder needs and identify ways to improve the delivery of our services and information (and electoral preparation).
- ▶ Continue consultation with stakeholders regarding their needs for AEC election services at state and national level, and delivering the agreed services.
- ▶ Further develop the AEC Internet, Intranet and Virtual Tally Room capability.
- ▶ Construct the National Tally Room.

KRA 2 Our Services and Products

Objectives

- ▶ The delivery of quality and timely services and products in line with performance standards and targets.
- ▶ An accurate and complete as possible electoral roll is available to support elections and redistributions.
- ▶ The AEC successfully conducts the 2007 federal election, and any other electoral events for which it assumes responsibility.
- ▶ Continuous improvement and innovation is apparent in the way we deliver our services and products.
- ▶ Build partnerships with other federal, and state government and non-government organisations to expand the promotion of enrolment in the community, display of enrolment forms, and promotional materials.

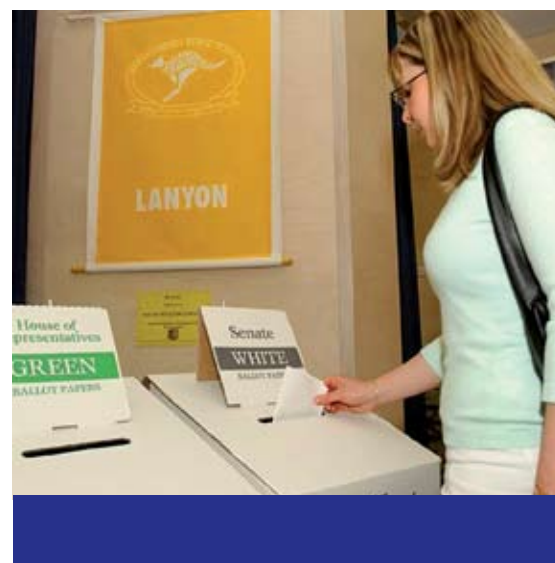
Business priorities

- ▶ Complete election preparation activities as outlined in the AEC's Divisional, State and National Election Preparation Plans.
- ▶ Undertake roll management improvements, particularly for the Address Register and Continuous Roll Update (CRU) programs.
- ▶ Develop an Election Dashboard.
- ▶ Continue to ensure effective and transparent arrangements for registering of political parties, monitoring compliance with financial disclosure requirements and making expeditious payment of election public funding entitlements as required.

- ▶ Implement outstanding recommendations of the JSCEM Review of the 2004 election and JSCEM Committee on Civics and Electoral education that are supported by Government and passed by Parliament.
- ▶ Implement a federal election evaluation plan.
- ▶ Report to JSCEM on the conduct of the 2007 election.
- ▶ Conduct non-parliamentary elections and ballots, including protected action ballots, and state and local government elections where contracted by State and Territory Electoral Commissions.
- ▶ Identify further opportunities to provide electoral services for commercial elections, where this does not adversely impact on core AEC electoral services and priorities.
- ▶ Support the redistributions of federal electoral boundaries in Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory to be commenced in 2007-08.
- ▶ Enhance IT infrastructure and systems, including network capability, to support AEC business activities.
- ▶ Design and develop the 'next generation' roll management and election systems to better position the AEC to meet its core business.
- ▶ Improve our performance monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of our products and services.
- ▶ In line with Australia's foreign policy programs and with the support of AusAID, provide effective international electoral assistance.



- ▶ Improve our financial management, including our forecasting and monitoring.
- ▶ Develop and implement a new three-year information management strategy and action plan to improve recordkeeping and access to, and protection of, the AEC's corporate information.
- ▶ Ensure audit, fraud, business continuity and insurable risks are effectively managed.
- ▶ Ensure contract, procurement and project management activities are consistent with Commonwealth legislation and guidelines and are in line with best practice.
- ▶ Continue to improve the effectiveness of the AEC's electoral education programs through the Electoral Education Centres, school and community visits programs and teacher professional development activities.





KRA 3 Our People

Objectives

- ▶ A sustainable workforce that has the necessary skills and flexibility to meet the AEC's business needs for the current year and into the future.
- ▶ Staff who can perform their work effectively by acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills through access to learning and development programs and corporate information.
- ▶ Staff that have a willingness to participate in workload sharing practices across the network.
- ▶ Effective communication and information sharing across the national, state and the divisional offices network.
- ▶ Managers and staff who demonstrate the APS and AEC values and code of conduct in their work and model those behaviours to others.

Business priorities

- ▶ Ensuring our staff are skilled to enable them to carry out federal election related tasks and responsibilities.
- ▶ Implement AEC wide leadership activities based on the APS values and capability framework.
- ▶ Develop a new workforce planning strategy and action plan to improve the AEC's staff recruitment processes, retention strategies and learning and development programs to meet current and future business needs.
- ▶ Improve internal communications across national and state offices and the divisional office network.
- ▶ Ensure workloads are distributed equitably across national, state offices and the divisional office network.
- ▶ Develop national training packages for delivery of effective and consistent management of the roll and roll management services and for contract management and procurement processes.
- ▶ Develop the AEC intranet and e-learning products to provide staff with timely access to business knowledge and information.
- ▶ Provide national training, frameworks and tools to enable staff to undertake risk assessments and manage risks for new projects and ongoing business activities.

Building on our capabilities

Achievements for 2006-07

KRA 1 – Our clients and stakeholders

Enrolment

- ▶ Undertook a nation wide major enrolment stimulation exercise through targeted fieldwork including enrolment drives at citizenship ceremonies, enrolment promotions at public events, and fieldtrips to rural and remote communities.
- ▶ Extended the availability of enrolment forms and electoral information in the community through Centrelink, Medicare, ATO shopfronts and a number of local Rural Transaction Centres.

Media and public awareness

- ▶ Developed and conducted public awareness initiatives and national advertising to encourage electoral enrolment and to advise the community about changes to the Commonwealth Electoral Act concerning the introduction of new proof of identity requirements for electoral enrolment and new deadlines for enrolling to vote at federal elections.
- ▶ Updated public awareness products including a presentation kit for Divisional Staff to conduct School and Community Visits Program sessions, and a new electoral education resource kit for teachers.
- ▶ Redeveloped the AEC website and initiated enhancements to the AECs VTR, Media Feed and Election Call Centre applications.
- ▶ Improved handling of client inquiries through enhancements to the 132326 national phone line service.



Stakeholder relationships

- ▶ Established fruitful discussions and strong working relationships out of the various Political Stakeholder meetings initiated by the AEC in 2006-07.
- ▶ Developed strategies identified through AEC research aimed at reducing informal voting at future federal elections.
- ▶ Ensured all relevant stakeholders were made aware of the changes to party registration and disclosure responsibilities.
- ▶ Established ongoing liaison with relevant peak bodies and the Australian Defence Force in relation to the implementation of two electronic voting trials for the next federal election.
- ▶ Provided services to State Electoral Offices for Parliamentary and local government elections.
- ▶ Continued development and implementation of the Joint Electoral Services Program (JESP) between the AEC and the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

KRA 2 – Our services and products

Redistributions

- ▶ Managed, implemented and evaluated the NSW and Qld federal redistribution of electoral boundaries.
- ▶ Implemented the NSW State redistribution of State District electoral boundaries and reconciliation with RMANS including the EDGAR project to verify the attribution of state districts to NSW addresses.

Enrolment

- ▶ Implemented provisions of the *Electoral and Referendum (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) Act 2006*, including training and implementation of proof of identity requirements at enrolment.
- ▶ Reviewed and managed the CRU program having regard to other key priorities for the 2006/07 FY and including the use of new CRU data sets.

Elections including Fee-for-service and industrial elections

- ▶ Provided a wide range of election services and products to support AEC election preparation.
- ▶ Developed and implemented the necessary system and procedural enhancements to implement the agreed recommendations from the 2004 Election JSCEM Report.
- ▶ Finalised all major election contracts to ensure associated services are in place.
- ▶ Implemented a new national Fee-for-Service elections policy, procedures and marketing strategies.

- ▶ Conducted and devolved industrial (including protected action ballots) elections.
- ▶ Successfully conducted the 2006 North and Central Australia Remote Area Strategy (NACARAS) Conference and commenced implementation of recommendations established to ensure a consistent level of service will be provided in all remote areas of Australia.

International

- ▶ Continued support to Australian foreign policy objectives through the conduct of technical assistance and capacity building projects in the Asia Pacific region.
- ▶ Expanded the Building Resources In Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Project, which is now a key tool for developing the capacity of electoral administrators internationally. BRIDGE is now used in almost every region of the world and has been translated or partially translated into 11 languages.

Information Technology

- ▶ IT infrastructure and systems support for 2006-07 included:
 - systems changes required to implement the following initiatives of the JSCEM:
 - Proof of Identity
 - changes to APVIS and Dec scrutiny, staged Close of Roll
 - prisoner voting.
 - Changes to CRU and targeted enrolment stimulation.

- ELMS enhancements in preparation for 2007 election and trial election.
- eVoting Trial support.
- Establishment of the AEC's new Data Centre at Tuggeranong.
- Relocation and in-sourcing of the midrange server system from Sydney to Canberra.
- New IT Contractor Panel established.
- Optus Agreement extended.
- Upgraded routers on the network infrastructure.

Governance and strategy

- ▶ Improved the provision of legal advice and assistance through ramping up skills and resources in the area of legal services.
- ▶ Developed high level performance indicators for key business activities with regular performance reports provided to SAC.
- ▶ Developed the 'Environmental Scan' – a three year strategic outlook paper.
- ▶ Developed the Risk Management Plan 2007.

Records Management

- ▶ Undertook recordkeeping training for all AEC staff, and improvements in the AEC's records management administration and policy and procedures.

KRA 3 – Our people

- ▶ Management and staff representatives have successfully negotiated a new three year Collective Agreement for staff endorsement.
- ▶ Conducted a series of workshops for Divisional Returning Officers and their managers aimed to improve organisational capability by enhancing the leadership skills of participants.
- ▶ Conduct a series of roll management workshops involving staff across the AEC aimed at improving the understanding of the roll function, communication, and consultation about the management of the roll.
- ▶ Conducted an Executive Divisional Experience Program through which all senior executives and selected directors spent three days working in a divisional office meeting with staff and contributing to the day to day work of the office.
- ▶ Developed enhanced reporting mechanism and data management to inform workforce planning and retention strategies.
- ▶ Updated all election related training material and systems and advised staff of progress on election readiness.
- ▶ Implemented new divisional resourcing strategies (staff and workload) for both collocated and stand-alone divisional offices. Key to this will be the new arrangements for work and human resource sharing and movements.
- ▶ Undertook significant recruitment and training of staff in the lead-up to the election.
- ▶ Expanded entry level programs for graduate recruits, indigenous cadets and an indigenous trainee.



For further electoral information visit the AEC website www.aec.gov.au