



Australian Electoral Commission

National Business Plan

2008–2009





Message from the Electoral Commissioner

One of the priority items for discussion by senior management at Strategic Advisory Committee meetings during the first part of 2008 was the need to reshape the governance framework and make it more functional to meet the needs of the AEC, both in terms of strategic and operational requirements.

To create such a framework is a challenge for all agencies not just the AEC. I believe however, that the new arrangements we are putting in place will go a long way in achieving this outcome.

Our approach has been two pronged, looking at:

- ♦ the key senior management advisory committees
- ♦ the business planning and performance management framework, which underpins the work of the committees.

I have previously circulated advice on the re-structuring of the committees, so I would like to take this opportunity to outline the changes made to the business planning framework. This framework is an essential component of the decision making process and an area in which we could improve. We are introducing a five year Strategic Plan to identify longer term goals and are implementing an annual National Business Plan. At the next level, Branches/States will develop their own business plans. More immediate requirements and targeted business outcomes will be addressed by section/divisional plans and individual performance plans (IPPs). The content of these plans will be underpinned by information derived from other documents such as risk assessments, the election preparation program and the environmental scan.

The transition from one framework to another is not an easy task. Executive Management Group will oversee and facilitate this transition and we will continue with some components of the older framework until we can systematically introduce each new component in a meaningful way.

Developing the Strategic Plan will take time to do properly and ensure appropriate consultation internally and externally. Staff involvement will be paramount to the success of this process. Given this, the Strategic Plan will be implemented from 2009-2010. Prior to the introduction of that plan, business areas still need some guidance on priorities for 2008-09 and this is the aim of this National Business Plan. You will note that it is similar in structure to the Corporate Plan 2007-08.

Some of the key areas that I would like us to focus our attention on for the coming year are:

- ♦ engaging with stakeholders concerning implementation of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) recommendations, in particular those that may result from the inquiry into the conduct of the 2007 federal election
- ♦ contributing to electoral reform through the Green Paper process
- ♦ implementing recommendations flowing from the evaluation of the 2007 federal election
- ♦ continuing to grow the electoral roll and increase participation in electoral events
- ♦ developing the Election Preparation Program
- ♦ completing post election activities.

I look forward to another productive and interesting year at the AEC.

Ian Campbell
Electoral Commissioner
14 July 2008

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 (APS) 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
- ◆ **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. We need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the challenges and emerging issues that could impact the way we do business.

In 2008-09 the review of electoral processes via the government's Green Paper on electoral reform and the JSCEM inquiry into the conduct of the 2007 federal election will be a high priority. The AEC may also be involved in responding to or implementing recommendations stemming from other JSCEM inquiries.

The integrity and accuracy of the electoral roll is a priority for the AEC and needs to be viewed in the context of Australia's changing demographic and cultural environment, stakeholder expectations and changing systems development and enhancements.

The AEC, as with other Australian Public Service 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, addressing 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.





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.

3. An informed community

An Australian community which is well informed about electoral matters.

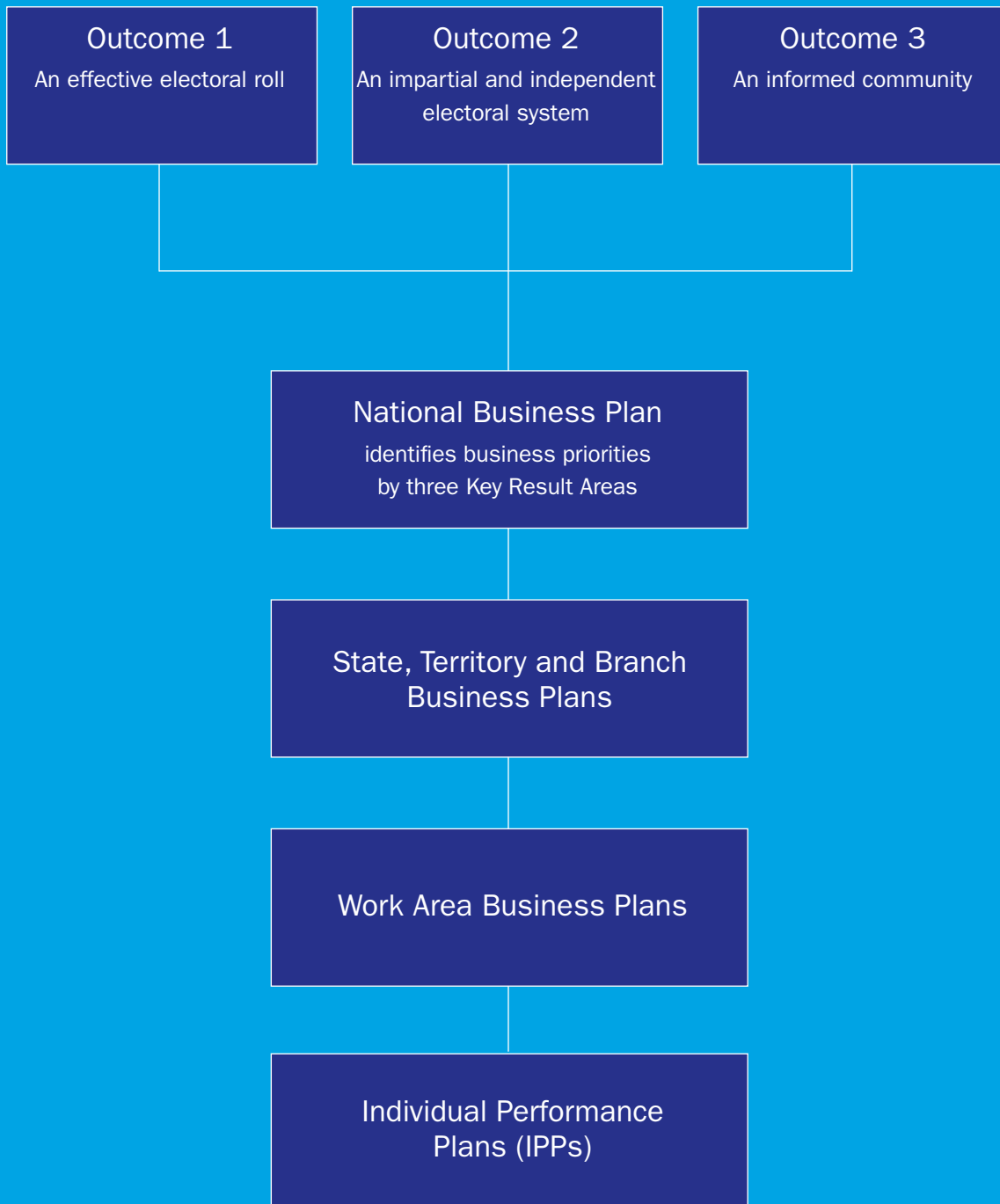
Our Business

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, 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
- ♦ undertake electoral redistributions.

Our Business Planning

State/Branch business plans will identify activities to be undertaken in line with the National Business 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:

- ♦ engaging with our clients and stakeholders and understanding and responding to their needs
- ♦ delivery of our services and products
- ♦ supporting our people.

In all three key result areas we will be accountable and manage our finances, risks 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

- ♦ Continue to further implement and develop 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.
- ♦ Build on communication strategies at the state/territory level to promote enrolment and inform the community about enrolment.



- ♦ 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.
- ♦ Conduct performance analysis to better understand client and stakeholder needs to identify ways to improve the delivery of our services and information (and electoral preparation).
- ♦ Undertake consultations with stakeholders and clients at national, state and local levels to improve delivery of AEC services including for the next federal election.
- ♦ Engage with stakeholders concerning implementing recommendations of the JSCEM inquiry into the conduct of the 2007 federal election and JSCEM Committee on Civics and Electoral Education.
- ♦ Provide input into the Green Paper process on electoral reform.
- ♦ Develop communications strategies and products to inform electors, parties and candidates to enable their participation at the next federal election.

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 all electoral events for which it assumes responsibility.
- ♦ Support the redistributions of federal electoral boundaries.
- ♦ 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.
- ♦ Develop an Election Preparation Program for the 2010 election.
- ♦ Undertake procurement processes as set out in the Election Preparation Plan for delivery of services for the next federal election.
- ♦ Implement outcomes of the 2007 federal election evaluation.
- ♦ Conduct federal by-elections as required and 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 fee for service elections.
- ♦ Support the finalisation of redistributions of federal electoral boundaries in Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory commenced in 2007-08 and others that may be required in 2008-09.

Business priorities

- ♦ Undertake roll management improvements, particularly for the Address Register and Continuous Roll Update (CRU) programs.
- ♦ 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 recommendations of the JSCEM inquiry into the conduct of the 2007 federal election and JSCEM Committee on Civics and Electoral Education that are supported by government and passed by parliament.
- ♦ 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 record keeping 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.
- ◆ Improve delivery of AEC electoral education programs, including the Schools and Community Visits Program (SCVP), Teacher Professional Development Program and Electoral Education Centres (EECs).
- ◆ Develop online forms to facilitate clients seeking to lodge enrolment and other forms electronically with the AEC.
- ◆ Use of green procurement checklist where relevant in the management of existing contracts and the procurement of future contracts i.e. paper, printing, cardboard equipment, office equipment, equipment consumables, office furniture, waste management, cleaning and building management.
- ◆ Better co-ordination of procurement through consulting with other stakeholders and considering co-ordination or consolidation of procurement activities e.g. GIS, Australia Post, ballot paper, envelopes, storage, logistics etc.
- ◆ Implement business planning and performance framework and implement new governance arrangements.



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 participate in workload sharing practices across the network.
- ◆ Effective communication and information sharing across the national, state and 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

- ◆ Ensure our staff are skilled to carry out public awareness/education sessions and to market the AEC's capability in conducting a wide range of elections, including fee for service elections.
- ◆ Implement AEC wide leadership and management activities based on the APS values and capability framework.
- ◆ Enhance utilisation of workforce data to improve the AEC's staff recruitment processes, retention strategies, succession planning and learning and development programs to meet current and future business needs.
- ◆ Implement a range of activities to enhance and report upon organisational health.
- ◆ Develop a suite of human resource (HR) metrics that will assist managers with future business activities.
- ◆ Further enhance 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.
- ◆ Review how the AEC delivers election training and associated manuals to better cater for a changing workforce and provide consistency across business areas.



- ◆ Continue development and refinement of 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.
- ◆ Implement the new Disability Action Plan.
- ◆ Continue to raise awareness and build skills in contract management and procurement.

Measuring our performance

We will measure our performance against the AEC outcomes using the performance indicators identified in the Finance and Deregulation Portfolio Budget Statement and other indicators set out in our business plans.

Some key indicators include:

- ◆ Accuracy and completeness of the electoral roll
- ◆ Extent to which clients and stakeholders have access to impartial and independent electoral advice and services
- ◆ Client and stakeholder satisfaction with our services and products.

Building on our capabilities

Achievements for 2007-08

KRA 1 – Our clients and stakeholders

Enrolment

- ♦ Supported conduct of the 2007 federal election by timely provision of certified lists, reference rolls and related roll products and services.
- ♦ Provided a high quality roll for the 2007 federal election following the targeted enrolment stimulation exercise with significant success in terms of increases in numbers of people enrolled, correctness of details and reduction in enrolment transactions at close of rolls.

Media and public awareness

- ♦ Conducted public awareness initiatives and national advertising to:
 - encourage electoral enrolment and advise the community about changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* concerning the introduction of new proof of identity requirements for electoral enrolment and new deadlines for enrolling to vote at federal elections.
 - inform electors, parties and candidates about their roles and responsibilities for the 2007 federal election.
- ♦ Delivered quality and timely election information to the public through the AEC election website, the election call centre and publications.
- ♦ Improved the delivery of election results through enhancements to the AEC's Virtual Tally Room (VTR) and Media Feed applications.

- ♦ Delivered the National Tally Room (NTR) on election night.

Electoral education

- ♦ Improvements were made to the operations of the EECs including:
 - the implementation of a marketing and promotion plan for each EEC
 - relocation of the Melbourne EEC to the parliamentary precinct
 - the launch of new interactive displays
 - strengthening the EEC management team through professional development opportunities, strategic planning and fortnightly management meetings.

Stakeholder relationships

- ♦ In all states and territories the AEC provided assistance in relation to local and/or state government elections and electoral activities.
- ♦ AEC and AusAID signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement under which both agencies have agreed to work together in a range of areas.
- ♦ The 2007 federal election visitor program attracted 63 participants representing 28 organisations from 19 different countries.
- ♦ Continued liaison with relevant peak bodies and the Australian Defence Force in relation to the conduct of two electronic voting trials at the 2007 federal election.
- ♦ Continued relationships with state and territory electoral authorities through the Electoral Council of Australia and Joint Roll Arrangements.
- ♦ The AEC provided its first submission to the JSCEM on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2007 federal election.



KRA 2 – Our services and products

Redistributions

- ◆ Provided support to redistribution committees for Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Enrolment

- ◆ Operated the first full year of proof of identity requirements for enrolment.

Elections including fee for service and industrial elections

- ◆ Successful delivery of the 2007 federal election.
- ◆ Successful implementation of two electronic voting trials - for defence force personnel in 4 locations overseas and for electors who are blind or have low vision in 29 locations across Australia.
- ◆ Finalised and implemented all major election contracts to ensure associated services were in place.
- ◆ Conducted and devolved industrial (including protected action ballots) elections.

- ◆ Development of national policy on issues that impacted on the delivery of electoral services to rural/remote areas across northern and central Australia.
- ◆ Election evaluation conducted for the first time as a nationally consistent program, informing state and national post election conferences.
- ◆ Election dashboard operated for the first time during the election period.

Funding and disclosure

- ◆ Processed changes to the Register of Political Parties arising from the passage of the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) Act 2006 (the Integrity Act)*.
- ◆ Processed public election funding for the 2007 federal election and received and processed 1410 election period financial disclosure returns from candidates and Senate groups.

International

- ◆ Continued support to Australian foreign policy objectives through the conduct of technical assistance and capacity building projects in the Asia Pacific region.
- ◆ Continued improvements to the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) modules including the launch of Version 2 in early 2008 and an upgrade of the BRIDGE website.

Information Technology

- ♦ IT infrastructure and systems support for 2007-08 included:
 - implementation of enhancements to the VTR and Media Feed
 - timely delivery of the National Tally Room IT infrastructure
 - refresh of desktop, laptop and mobile phone fleet
 - changes to CRU and targeted enrolment stimulation
 - ELMS enhancements in preparation for 2007 federal election and trial election
 - electronic voting trial support
 - contract management and procurement exercises conducted for various infrastructure elements
 - maintained PDA eRoll delivery capability and formulated strategies and approaches for future mobile eRoll capability
 - continued to provide industrial and commercial elections (ICE) eVote capability, e.g. CSIRO certified agreement vote
 - significant progress on general enrolment, elections support and information system (GENESIS), the new roll management and election management system
 - remote access pilot that provided access from remote locations during the election.

Governance and strategy

- ♦ New governance, business planning and performance management frameworks developed.

Records management

- ♦ Provided record keeping support for the 2007 federal election.
- ♦ Commenced development of an in-house sentencing program, completed a file census in national office and commenced sentencing review of records held off site.
- ♦ Records management training continued for new AEC employees in national and some state offices.

KRA 3 – Our people

- ♦ A standard presentation package for face-to-face information and education sessions delivered by AEC staff was distributed to all divisional staff early in 2007-08.
- ♦ Continued the Executive Divisional Experience Program.
- ♦ Continued reporting mechanisms and data management to inform workforce planning and retention strategies.
- ♦ New Disability Action Plan was completed.
- ♦ Leadership program continued and evaluated. Learning Pathway was developed.
- ♦ Reviewed procurement practices and policies and conducted training and awareness-raising sessions.
- ♦ Implemented changes stemming from the new Collective Agreement.
- ♦ Developed and delivered training programs on ethical behaviour for election administration.

