

ACT Electoral Commission

Annual Report 1998-99



Australian Capital Territory

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Part A — Overview and Major Achievements

The year in review

This is the seventh annual report of the Australian Capital Territory Electoral Commission (the Commission). It covers the period 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999.

The year saw the conclusion of the follow-up activities related to the 21 February 1998 general election for the ACT Legislative Assembly and the beginning of the Commission's planning for the October 2001 election. The Commission also undertook several major projects during the year related to electoral roll maintenance and fee-for-service elections.

Notable activities undertaken during the year included:

- providing the Legislative Assembly with a comprehensive election review, including recommended changes to the Electoral Act;
- conducting a comprehensive survey of formal ballot papers from the 1995 and 1998 elections, concentrating on the impact of the party linear vote;
- finalising the 1998 election non-voter and multiple-voter processes;
- successfully trialling and implementing the "one form does it all" multi-agency change of address and electoral enrolment form;
- commencing a study on options for computerised voting and/or computerised vote counting for ACT Legislative Assembly elections;
- advising the Government and the Legislative Assembly on amendments to the *Electoral Act 1992* to defer the commencement date of the next redistribution of electoral boundaries to October 1999;
- expanding the Commission's fee-for-service program;
- continuing to improve electoral roll maintenance procedures through participation in the Electoral Council of Australia (including the Electoral Commissioner's appointment as Chairperson of the Electoral Council of Australia for the 1999 calendar year);
- reviewing the Commission's Corporate Plan and its performance indicators;
- commencing a complete redraft of the Commission's operational plans;
- revising and updating the Commission's internet site (www.elections.act.gov.au); and
- continuing the schools based electoral education program, including an update of all education materials.

The Commission also achieved a significant budget saving of almost \$44,000 (excluding costs incurred by the Department of Justice and Community Safety). This saving was achieved by continuing use and development of in-house information technology resources and by receipt of greater than expected income from fee-for-service elections.

Outlook for 1999/2000

In the 1999/2000 financial year the Commission will continue to build on the projects commenced in 1998/1999.

Projects to be undertaken will include:

- advising the Legislative Assembly and the Government on any changes to the Electoral Act resulting from consideration of the Commission's recommendations to the Assembly and the report of the Select Committee on the Report of the Review of Governance;
- appointing a redistribution committee to commence a redistribution of Assembly electorates and serving as part of the augmented Electoral Commission to finalise the redistribution process;
- progressing the study on options for computerised voting and/or computerised vote counting for ACT Assembly elections;
- evaluating all procedures used during the 1998 Legislative Assembly election and benchmarking with other electoral authorities with a view to improving procedures for the next election;
- continuing the Commission's fee-for-service program;
- continuing to improve electoral roll quality by extending the use of the "one form does it all" change of address form and working with other electoral authorities in the deliberations and initiatives of the Electoral Council of Australia; and
- implementing an information technology modernisation program, including the upgrading of the Commission's personal computer network and a complete revision of the Commission's election system software to ensure Y2K compliance.

Overview of the Electoral Commission

The ACT Electoral Commission consists of a Chairperson, the Electoral Commissioner and a third Member. The Electoral Commissioner is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission and has Chief Executive powers in relation to staff employed to assist the Commissioner under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

The Attorney General is the Minister responsible for electoral matters and the Commission is included in the Department of Justice and Community Safety portfolio for administrative purposes.

In the departmental structure for 1998/1999, the Commission was included in Output Class 2, as part of Output 2.6 Protection of Rights (with several other agencies). A performance report against the performance measures relevant to the Commission listed in the 1998/1999 budget papers for Output 2.6 is on page 21 of this report.

For the 1999/2000 budget, the Commission was separately identified in Output Class 2, as Output 2.7 Electoral Services.

Description of activities

The ACT Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority with responsibility for the conduct of elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly and for the provision of electoral advice and services to a wide range of clients.

The Commission's primary responsibility is to the electors of the ACT. This responsibility is reflected in the Commission's mission, which is "*to provide the ACT Community with high quality electoral services that ensure fair and open elections and referendums*".

Another major function of the Commission is the redistribution of electoral boundaries between elections. The Commission completed a redistribution in September 1996. The next redistribution is due to begin in October 1999.

The Commission also provides services to a wide and diverse range of clients, including the Attorney General, Members of the Legislative Assembly, political parties, election candidates, ACT Government Service Agencies, the media and special interest groups.

Some of the other tasks for which the Commission is responsible include working with other electoral authorities to improve the accuracy of the electoral roll, electoral education, maintaining the register of political parties and the Funding and Disclosure scheme, conducting elections for ACT Health Professions Boards and providing electoral services to other organisations on a fee-for-service basis.

Legislative framework

The Commission is responsible for the conduct of elections and referendums and for the provision of electoral advice and services under the following Acts:

- Electoral Act 1992;
- Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994; and
- Health Professions Boards (Elections) Act 1980.

Organisational structure

The three Members of the Electoral Commission are appointed by the Executive under the Electoral Act. As Chief Executive Officer of the Commission, the Electoral Commissioner is remunerated as a full-time office holder. The Chairperson and the other Member of the Commission are remunerated as part-time office holders.

The Commissioner is assisted by three permanent officers employed under the Public Sector Management Act. These are the Deputy Electoral Commissioner (Senior Officer Grade C), the Project and Policy Officer (Administrative Service Officer Class 6) and the Administration and Finance Officer (Administrative Service Officer Class 4).

From time to time other staff are employed to assist the Commissioner as necessary. These include officers employed under the Public Sector Management Act and the Electoral Act and officers seconded from other organisations.

The members of the Electoral Commission during 1998/1999 were:

Mr Graham Glenn AO¹	<i>Chairperson</i>
Appointed 17 May 1994-16 May 1999	
Position vacant 17 May 1999-30 June 1999	
Mr Phillip Green	<i>Electoral Commissioner</i>
Appointed 23 September 1994 for 5 years	
Dr Christabel Young FASSA¹	<i>Member</i>
Appointed 17 May 1994-16 May 1999	
Position vacant 17 May 1999-30 June 1999	

Table 1 — Members of the ACT Electoral Commission

Note 1: Mr Glenn and Dr Young were reappointed to the Commission on 11 August 1999.

ACT Electoral Commission Corporate Plan 1999-2002

This Corporate Plan for 1999-2002 sets out the Commission's Mission, Goals and Key Result Areas. This Plan was revised and updated early in 1999 with input from all staff of the Commission. The Corporate Plan is underpinned by more detailed Operational Plans, which set out strategies and procedures for each Key Result Area, and by the performance measures and standards reported on in Part B of this Annual Report.

The next section reports on activities undertaken in each Key Result Area in 1998/1999 to achieve the Commission's goals.

MISSION		
To provide the ACT Community with high quality electoral services that ensure fair and open elections and referendums.		
GOAL	ONE	To conduct high quality elections and referendums
<i>Key result areas:</i>		
1.1 Elections for the ACT Legislative Assembly		
1.2 Election and referendum services to other agencies		
GOAL	TWO	To provide high quality information, education, advice and services related to the electoral process
<i>Key result areas:</i>		
2.1 Electoral information and advice		
2.2 Electoral enrolment		
2.3 Electoral education		
2.4 Other electoral statutory requirements		
GOAL	THREE	To improve the quality of electoral services by ensuring best possible management practice
<i>Key result areas:</i>		
3.1 Human resource management		
3.2 Financial management		
3.3 Records management		
3.4 Information technology management		

Table 2 — ACT Electoral Commission Corporate Plan 1999-2002

Achievements for 1998/1999 — Reporting activities against the Electoral Commission's Corporate Plan

This section reports on the Commission's activities in 1998/1999 in terms of the goals and key result areas of the Commission as set out in the Corporate Plan.

**Goal One
To conduct high quality elections and referendums**

Key Result Area 1.1 Elections for the ACT Legislative Assembly

Review of the Electoral Act 1992: The 1998 ACT Legislative Assembly Election

The Electoral Commission's *Review of the Electoral Act 1992: The 1998 ACT Legislative Assembly Election* was provided to the Attorney General on 27 November 1998, and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 10 December 1998.

Issues addressed in the Review included:

- increasing the number of versions of ballot papers printed using Robson rotation to reduce the impact of the "party linear vote";
- the 100 metre ban on canvassing;
- options for computerising the vote counting process;
- parties' methods of canvassing postal voters and authorisation of electoral matter;
- the party registration scheme;
- proposed changes to the Commonwealth enrolment and disclosure laws;
- candidates' use of offensive names or political slogans as names on ballot papers; and
- recommendations intended to rectify some minor anomalies in the Electoral Act.

The Review incorporated a comprehensive survey of formal ballot papers from the 1995 and 1998 elections, concentrating on the impact of the party linear vote.

A copy of the Review can be obtained from the Commission, or viewed on the Commission's internet site.

The Assembly referred the Commission's Review to the Select Committee on the Report of the Review of Governance on 10 December 1998. On 30 June 1999 this Committee tabled its report, which included a series of recommendations related to the Electoral Commission's Review.

Non-voters

The follow-up of non-voters from the 1998 ACT Legislative Assembly Election was finalised in 1998/1999.

Voting is compulsory for ACT elections. It is an offence for an enrolled elector to fail to vote at an election without a valid and sufficient reason.

The following table sets out the results of the action taken to enforce compulsory voting after the 1998 election, compared to the action taken after the 1995 election.

Details	1995	1998
Total enrolment	196 959	205 248
Number of votes counted	176 264	188 484
Total number of apparent non-voters	20 695	16 764
Valid reason for not voting provided before notices sent ¹	≈ 3 000 ²	6 425
Number of electors sent non-voters notices ³	18 200	10 414
Elector claimed to have voted	1 391	747
Elector unable to vote due to mental incapacity or being infirm	323	79
Elector deceased	69	11
Valid and sufficient reason provided	3 864	4019
\$20 penalty paid	1 851	1426
Elector moved permanently interstate or overseas	4 506	1551
Letter returned undelivered	4 067	1625
No valid and sufficient reason provided and penalty not paid ⁴	47	18
No reply ⁴	2 082	938
Number of summonses issued	2 129	956
Summonses withdrawn before Court appearance ⁵	184	549
Summonses heard in Court	1 945	407

Table 3 — Non voter statistics from the 1995 and 1998 elections

Note 1: Includes electors whose postal votes or declaration votes were not admitted to the scrutiny and electors who provided valid excuses in person or by telephone or letter.

Note 2: Exact quantity not recorded for 1995.

Note 3: The number of notices sent and the number of valid reasons provided before notices sent do not sum to the total number of apparent non-voters because of inaccuracies in the scanning process.

Note 4: Electors listed in these categories were summonsed to appear before the Magistrates Court.

Note 5: Summonses withdrawn where responses indicated elector had a valid and sufficient reason for failing to vote or elector had left the address.

Multiple voters

Multiple voting (that is, one person voting more than once) is an offence under the Electoral Act.

As reported in the 1997/1998 Annual Report, an examination of certified lists used at the 1998 election indicated that 53 names had been marked twice on certified lists. At 30 June 1998, letters had been sent to those 53 electors seeking further information.

Responses to these letters indicated that, in 9 cases, unenrolled persons had voted in the names of enrolled electors who were closely related to them or had the same or a similar name (for example, a father and son with the same name living at the same address). In these cases each unenrolled person was sent a warning letter and an enrolment form.

Two other electors were issued with ballot papers but decided they had insufficient information to vote. They returned their unused ballot papers to a polling official and voted later at a different polling place.

Three electors admitted to voting twice. One person had voted before polling day and then voted again on polling day having forgotten he had already voted. Two new citizens with little English were apparently confused by the voting process and voted once before polling day and once on polling day. The Commission did not consider these cases warranted prosecution action and these voters were sent warning letters.

Another 34 electors who appeared to have voted twice claimed to have voted only once. In the absence of any conclusive evidence indicating that the persons named had committed an offence, no further action was taken.

Five electors failed to respond. Again, in the absence of any conclusive evidence, no further action was taken.

Key Result Area 1.2 Election and referendum services to other agencies

Interstate and Commonwealth elections

The Commission provided pre-poll voting facilities and/or enquiry services for five interstate general elections and by-elections and a Commonwealth general election in 1998/1999.

No additional costs were incurred by the Commission in providing this service. The costs of employing additional casual staff to assist with the large number of votes issued for the NSW State election were reimbursed by the NSW State Electoral Office.

Commission staff dealt with a large number of public enquiries about the Commonwealth election held on 3 October 1998. In addition, one staff member was seconded to the Australian Electoral Commission to assist with its international visitor program for the election.

Issuing votes and handling enquiries for other electoral jurisdictions and staff exchanges at election times provide valuable opportunities for training and benchmarking between jurisdictions.

In 1998/1999 the Commission provided assistance for interstate and Commonwealth elections as follows:

Election	Polling day	Assistance provided	Votes
Northcote (Victoria by-election)	15/8/98	postal and pre-poll voting	2
Tasmania general election	29/8/98	postal vote applications	0
Commonwealth general election	3/10/98	enquiries and staff secondment	0
Newcastle (Commonwealth by-election)	21/11/98	enquiries	0
Mulgrave (Queensland by-election)	5/12/98	postal vote applications	0
New South Wales general election	27/3/99	postal and pre-poll voting	1184
Total			1186

Table 4 — Interstate and Commonwealth elections

Statutory and fee-for-service elections

Health Professions Boards Elections

The Commission conducts elections for the Health Professions Boards of the Australian Capital Territory under the *Health Professions Boards (Elections) Act 1980*. These elections are conducted as postal ballots every three years.

The Commissioner is appointed as the Returning Officer and calls for nominations, processes nominations as they are received, prepares and sends ballot material to eligible practitioners, and conducts the scrutiny. The relevant Boards reimburse the Commission for any expenses incurred in conducting these elections.

The following table shows Health Professions Boards elections concluded in 1998/1999:

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Nominations closed	Polls closed	Result provided	Votes
Chiropractors and Osteopaths	2	1	8/2/99	no election required	9/2/99	
Pharmacy	3	4	6/4/99	25/5/99	25/5/99	138
Dental	3	3	31/5/99	no election required	31/5/99	
Total	8	8				138

Table 5 — Health Professions Boards elections

Note: The Medical Board election commenced in 1998/1999 with polling due to close on 9 August 1999.

Fee-for-Service Electoral Services

The Commission conducts elections and provides other electoral services for other organisations under its power to provide services for determined fees. In 1998/1999 the Commission provided election services to the Australian National University and the Southern Cross Club. All multi-member elections were conducted using variations of the Hare-Clark system.

In addition, enterprise bargaining ballots were conducted for four ACT government agencies.

Income generated by the provision of fee-for-service electoral services contributed to the Commission achieving a saving of almost \$44,000 under its allocated budget during the year.

Australian National University elections

The Commission provided assistance with the ANU Students' Association referendum in August 1998. Assistance was provided with preparation and printing of ballot papers, operation of polling places at the ANU and the conduct of the scrutiny. Polling was conducted from 3 to 6 August with the result provided on 6 August. A total of 1775 votes were cast.

The Commission assisted with the ANU Union annual elections and the ANU Students' Association annual elections in 1998. Polling for the Union elections was conducted from 24 to 27 August and the result was provided on 28 August. For the ANUSA, polling was from 14 to 17 September and final results were determined on 21 September.

For these elections, the Commission provided assistance with preparation and printing of ballot papers, operation of

polling places at the ANU and the conduct of the scrutiny.

Details of these elections are as follows:

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Votes
Election of three directors (full two year term)	3	6	562
Election of one director (one year term)	1	3	562
Election of one director (post-graduate student or academic staff)	1	3	562
Total	5	12	1686

Table 6 — ANU Union annual elections, August 1998

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Votes
President	1	6	1178
Education Officer	1	7	1177
General Secretary	1	6	1177
Social Officer	1	5	1178
Treasurer	1	124	1175
General Representatives	13	55	1183
Faculty Representatives:			
Faculty of Arts	2	4	576
Faculty of Asian Studies	2	1	no election
Faculty of Economics and Commerce	2	4	286
Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology	2	5	127
Faculty of Law	2	5	283
Faculty of Science	2	2	no election
Editor of Woroni	1	5	1179
The Sexuality Departmental Officer	1	2	1180
The Environment Departmental Officer	1	3	1178
The Women's Departmental Officer	1	2	556
Delegates to the Meetings of National Conference of the National Union of Students Inc.	4	19	1181
Total	38	255	13614

Table 7 — ANU Students' Association annual elections, September 1998

The ANU Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities (SSAU) Consultative Committee elections were conducted in April 1999. This was a postal election and the Commission provided

assistance with preparation of postal material and the conduct of the scrutiny. Polling closed on 12 April and the result was provided to the ANU on 14 April.

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Votes
Academic staff	1	2	279
General staff	1	2	590
Total	2	4	869

Table 8 — ANU SSAU Consultative Committee elections, April 1999

Southern Cross Club election

In September 1998 the Commission assisted with the conduct of an election for the Southern Cross Club. This was a postal ballot and the Commission's main duty for this election was counting votes. There were six candidates for four vacancies and 3261 votes were received. Polling closed on 11 September and the Commission provided the result to the Club on 14 September.

Enterprise bargaining ballots

The Commission provided assistance to other ACT agencies for their enterprise bargaining ballots. Assistance consisted of preparation and printing of ballot papers, a combination of postal and attendance voting, and conduct of the scrutiny. Details are as follows:

Agency	Close of polling	Result provided	Total Votes
Chief Ministers Department	27/11/98	27/11/98	307
Canberra Hospital	17/12/98	17/12/98	1800
ACT Housing	17/12/98	17/12/98	220
ACT Education Department	28/5/99	28/5/99	399
Total			2726

Table 9 — Enterprise Bargaining ballots

Goal Two
To provide high quality information, education, advice and services related to the electoral process

Key Result Area 2.1

Electoral information and advice

Information service

The Commission provides an ongoing information service to the general public through:

- providing information in person over the counter or by telephone;
- publishing a range of information booklets and pamphlets;
- answering written correspondence; and
- maintaining a comprehensive internet site.

The Commission's internet site was redesigned and updated in 1998/1999. This included a change in site address. The new site address is www.elections.act.gov.au

The Commission's internet site includes information about the Commission, ACT Legislative Assembly elections and referendums, electoral boundaries, enrolment (including a downloadable change of address and electoral enrolment form), registration of political parties, the election funding and disclosure scheme, Commission publications and links to electoral legislation and other electoral bodies and ACT agencies.

The following reports were published in 1998/1999:

- ACT Electoral Commission Annual Report 1997/1998; and
- Review of the *Electoral Act 1992*: The 1998 ACT Legislative Assembly Election.

These publications are available from the Commission in addition to the following publications which were first provided in previous years:

- ACT Electoral Commission Annual Reports since 1992/1993;
- Election statistics for the 1992, 1995 and 1999 elections;
- Commitment to Service Statement;
- Information brochures on the ACT electoral system;
- Maps of ACT electorates;
- Various electoral enrolment and voting forms;
- Information Fact Sheets for schools;
- Candidates Information booklets and related forms;
- Scrutineers Information booklets and related forms;
- Funding and Disclosure Information booklets and related forms; and
- Redistribution reports, public submissions and statistics.

Advice

The Commission continued to provide advice to the Attorney General, Assembly Committees and other MLAs during the year. Examples of advice provided during the year include:

- advising the Government and other Members of the Legislative Assembly on amendments to the *Electoral Act 1992* to defer the commencement date of the next redistribution of electoral boundaries to October 1999; and
- making submissions to and appearing before Assembly Committees, including the Select Committee on the Report of the Review of Governance and the Select Committee on Estimates.

Key Result Area 2.2**Electoral enrolment****Joint roll arrangement**

Under the ACT/Commonwealth Joint Roll Arrangement the Australian Electoral Commission maintains a joint electoral roll for Commonwealth and ACT purposes. The ACT Electoral Commissioner and the Commonwealth's Australian Electoral Officer for New South Wales constitute a Joint Management Committee which oversees the operation of the Joint Roll Arrangement.

The ACT Electoral Commission pays the Australian Electoral Commission a yearly fee for maintaining the joint roll. In 1998/1999, joint roll payments totalled \$120 950, based on a cost per elector of \$0.59046.

Electoral Council of Australia

The Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) (formerly known as the Australian Joint Roll Council) is a consultative council of Electoral Commissioners and Chief Electoral Officers from the electoral authorities of the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

The ACT Electoral Commissioner was appointed as Chairperson of the ECA for the 1999 calendar year.

In 1998/1999 the ECA changed its name from the Australian Joint Roll Council to recognise that the Council dealt with a wide range of electoral issues and was not limited to enrolment issues only.

Nevertheless, a major focus of the ECA in 1998/1999 remained the implementation of more efficient methods for updating the electoral roll, collectively described as Continuous Roll Update.

Continuous Roll Update (CRU)

Continuous Roll Update is the term used to describe a range of methods used to update the electoral roll that are gradually being introduced to replace the traditional "habitation reviews" where field staff doorknocked households to gain electoral roll information.

CRU methods are intended to target contact with electors and households where information indicates that an enrolment transaction may be needed. The following sub-headings describe the main CRU activities that impact on the maintenance of the ACT electoral roll.

National activities

Several CRU methods were introduced nationally in 1998/1999. The ACT Electoral Commissioner is a member of the sub-committee of the ECA charged with overseeing the national implementation of CRU.

Australia-wide change of address data provided by Australia Post is being used to generate letters to households where electors may need to update their enrolment. This method was successfully trialled in Queensland in 1997/1998 and used for the first time in the ACT in 1999. As at 30 June 1999 insufficient data was available to judge the effectiveness of this method in the ACT.

The Australian Electoral Commission's existing electoral roll data is being used to generate letters to addresses at which no-one is enrolled to vote. These letters were also used in the ACT for the first time in 1999. Again, as at 30 June 1999 insufficient data was available to judge the effectiveness of this method.

Other data sources are being considered for national CRU projects in 1999/2000, including data obtained from Commonwealth agencies and other data generated by the Australian Electoral Commission's roll database.

CRU will be extended in 1999/2000 by development of strategies to follow-up non-responses to CRU letters.

ACT specific activities

In 1998/1999 the Commission worked closely with the Chief Minister's Department on the introduction of a single change of address form for a range of ACT Government Agencies. The form allows ACT residents to change their electoral, motor vehicle, driver's licence, rates, library, dog registration and seniors card address details using the single form.

The "One Form Does It All" project was piloted in January and February 1999 and was judged a success following relatively high rates of return and high customer satisfaction.

The form was distributed to new electricity suppliers by ACT Electricity and Water (ACTEW) and made available at a range of ACT Government public contact areas.

Following evaluation of the pilot in May 1999, a decision was made by the participating agencies to continue use of the form indefinitely. The ACT Electoral Commission is responsible for the design and printing of the form, collecting completed forms, compiling the data on an in-house database and distributing the data to relevant ACT agencies. The enrolment portion of the form is forwarded to the Australian Electoral Commission for processing.

The printing and postage costs for the "One Form Does It All" project are met by the Australian Electoral Commission. The other participating ACT agencies cover the cost of casual staff employed to process the ACT data.

A total of 1955 change of address notifications were processed during the financial year. Feedback from clients on the initiative continues to be very positive.

The Commission intends to explore other CRU methods in 1999/2000 including targeting 17 and 18 year old students through ACT schools and targeting frequent movers through the Office of Rental Bonds.

Key Result Area 2.3

Electoral education

The Electoral Commission provides electoral education to school, community and professional groups. This program is aimed primarily at raising community awareness of the ACT's electoral system and the Legislative Assembly. These sessions include mock elections for school and community groups, conduct of school representative council elections and public service seminars.

The Commission's education sessions are often conducted in cooperation with the Legislative Assembly education officer. Students at these sessions are shown how the Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected and how the Assembly functions.

In addition to conducting face-to-face education sessions, the Commission has developed a range of printed electoral education resources for distribution to schools and community groups.

This material, combined with in-service sessions for ACT teachers, is primarily aimed at providing teachers with the ability to conduct electoral education in their own classrooms. This service is part of an Australia-wide move to incorporate electoral education and civics education in regular school curricula.

All material was updated in 1998/1999 and was also placed on the Commission's internet site.

The Commission also contributes to civics education activities sponsored by the ACT Chapter of the Constitutional Centenary Foundation. In 1998/1999 the Commission was represented on the committee that organised the ACT Schools Constitution Convention. The Convention looked at the

processes involved in constitutional change, including a mock referendum.

The Commission's education program is advertised, in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly, by direct mail-out to school and community groups, in the newsletter of the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs and by referral from other organisations.

The following table lists electoral education sessions conducted by Commission staff during the 1998/1999 financial year. The total number of participants is down from the number reached in 1997/1998 (1816), reflecting the greater interest in the Commission's electoral education program in Legislative Assembly election years.

Organisation type	Organisation name	Number of participants	Date
Primary Schools	Kaleen Primary School	90	9/3/99
	Garran Primary School	52	28/10/98
Colleges	Dickson College	30	20/10/98
	Radford College	50	5/3/99
	Radford College	80	12/3/99
	MacKillop Catholic College	56	23/6/99
Universities	University of Canberra	20	18/3/99
Community Groups	University of the Third Age	8	22/10/98
	Tuesday Group	11	2/3/99
	Migrant Resource Centre	40	20/5/99
	ACT ATSIC Consultative Council	10	31/5/99
Professional Groups	Legislative Assembly — Old Parliament House Guides	12	25/8/98
	Legislative Assembly — GAAs	25	16/10/98
	Legislative Assembly — Public Service Seminar	19	19/5/99
Total	14 groups	503	

Table 10 — Electoral education provided to organisations during 1998/1999

Key Result Area 2.4**Other electoral statutory requirements****Party register**

The Electoral Commissioner keeps the Register of Political Parties for the purposes of ACT Legislative Assembly elections.

At 1 July 1998 there were eleven parties on the Register. Changes to the register during the year were as follows:

- the United Canberra Party was registered;
- the National Party of Australia — ACT had its registration cancelled as it had failed to contest either of the past two ACT Legislative Assembly elections; and
- the Osborne Independent Group requested its registration be cancelled.

At 30 June 1999 the ten registered parties were:

Australian Democrats
Australian Labor Party, Australian Capital Territory
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)
Democratic Socialist Electoral League
Liberal Party of Australia (ACT Division)
Moore Independents
Progressive Labour Party
The ACT Greens
The Shooter's Party (ACT)
United Canberra Party

Table 11 — Registered political parties as at 30 June 1999

Funding and disclosure scheme**Annual returns**

Under the Funding and Disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act, registered political parties, independent members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), associated entities and persons who donated more than \$1500 to a party or independent MLA were required to lodge an annual return for the 1997/1998 financial year by October 1998.

During the reporting period 11 annual returns were received from political parties, one was received from an independent MLA, three were received from associated entities and 15 from donors.

Checking of these returns indicated substantial compliance with the Electoral Act. These returns were made public on 1 February 1999.

Disclosure following the election

The 1997/1998 annual report indicated that there were 21 candidate election returns and one party return outstanding at 30 June 1998. These outstanding returns were lodged before 17 August 1998, when the returns were made public. A total of 141 third party returns were received, including the 18 reported in the 1997/1998 annual report.

All election returns were made public on 17 August 1998.

Redistributions

The Electoral Act requires a redistribution of electoral boundaries to commence two years before the next scheduled election. The next redistribution is due to commence as soon as practicable after the third Saturday in October 1999.

Goal Three
To improve the quality of electoral services by ensuring best possible management practice

Key Result Area 3.1

Human resource management

Continuous improvement

The Commission endeavours to foster an environment of continuous improvement and strives to provide satisfying work and development opportunities.

Staff are encouraged to pursue secondments to other electoral authorities and to develop new skills through on-the-job training and external training courses. During 1998/1999 one officer was seconded to the Australian Electoral Commission to assist with its international visitor program for the 1998 election. Two other officers were given the opportunity to act in higher positions in the Commission.

Further development opportunities are planned for 1999/2000, including the possibility of secondments to work on the Victorian general election and the Commonwealth constitutional referendum.

Commission staff continued to improve their in-house computer system development skills in 1998/1999, and were responsible for upgrading various database systems and taking over management of the Commission's internet site. Staff also researched international uses of technology for electoral purposes with the intention of using technology to speed the voting and/or counting processes for the next ACT Legislative Assembly election.

The Commission also uses industrial democracy as a tool for enhancing the quality of working life and the delivery of electoral services. As the Commission is a small organisation, all staff meet in regular forums to participate in decision making. These include weekly staff meetings and corporate and strategic planning workshops.

For further information on human resource management in the Commission see part C of this Report.

Enterprise bargaining

The Attorney-General's Department and Legal Aid Commission (Enterprise Bargaining) Agreement 1996 – 1998, which applies to Commission staff, expired in 1998. The Electoral Commissioner and Commission staff engaged in negotiations on a new agreement in 1998/1999, particularly looking at adopting a Commission-specific agreement. As at 30 June 1999 these negotiations were continuing.

Key Result Area 3.2**Financial management****The Commission's Budget**

The Commission achieved a saving in 1998/1999 of almost \$44,000 during the year. This saving was achieved primarily by continuing use and development of in-house information technology resources and by receipt of greater than expected income from fee-for-service elections.

The Commission's budget for 1999/2000 and forward estimates for 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 have been adjusted to take account of the change in the ACT Legislative Assembly election date from February to October 2001.

Benchmarking

In 1998/1999 the Commission continued to participate in a benchmarking exercise coordinated by the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) to facilitate comparisons between the various Australian electoral authorities.

Electoral authorities recognise that it is misleading to compare the total reported election costs across jurisdictions without heavy qualifications, owing to the variations in costing methods used by the different authorities.

The results of this benchmarking exercise are being used by electoral authorities to identify differences in practices and costs between the jurisdictions and to indicate where efficiencies may be made.

Key Result Area 3.3**Records management**

The Commission creates and maintains its registry files through the ACT registry system. All files are stored within the Commission's office. An in-house database records the names and details of all files held by the Commission.

In 1998/1999, the Commission's electronic records were stored on a server maintained within the Commission's office. These records were backed up onto tape each week night. In 1999/2000, the Commission's electronic records will be transferred to a centralised server maintained by InTACT, the ACT Government information technology management agency, which will be responsible for backing up Commission data.

In 1998/1999 the Commission also developed an in-house database to record details of correspondence received. This will assist the Commission to comply with its standard of replying to all correspondence within 4 weeks. Since this was implemented on 30 March 1999, 107 items were recorded as having been received and all were replied to within the standard. Over 91% of items were replied to within three days.

Key Result Area 3.4 Information technology (IT) management

IT applications

The year in review saw further use being made of IT to streamline Commission processes. Commission staff create and maintain databases and other IT applications in-house. This results in significant savings, both in IT maintenance costs and in time and costs in performing essential functions.

Databases created in 1998/1999 include:

- Operational Database of Electoral Education Resources (ODEER);
- Registration of Parties and Funding and Disclosure (ROPAFAD);
- Register of Correspondence (ROC);
- Register of Electoral Files (REF);
- One Form Does It All change of address database;
- Various databases for use with Health Professions and fee-for-service elections; and
- MLAs Electoral Roll System (awaiting modernisation).

These new applications supplemented the following applications already in use in the Commission:

- The Integrated Gathering of Election Records (TIGER);
- Monitoring of Election Telephone Enquiries (METE);
- the Electoral Roll Inquiry System;
- the Postal Vote System;
- the Declaration Vote System;
- the Non Voters System;

- the Election Results System; and
- The Hare-Clark Scrutiny System (HC-Auto).

The Commission continues to be represented on the Justice and Community Safety portfolio IT Steering Committee. The Committee met during the year to discuss issues affecting agencies across the portfolio.

Y2K Compliance

The Commission worked with InTACT in 1998/1999 towards securing an upgrade of its software to ensure that the Commission's systems will be Y2K compliant. This upgrade has been scheduled as part of the Whole of Government modernisation process. This upgrade is due to be completed in September 1999.

Contingency plans have been put in place should any of the Commission's IT systems fail as a result of Y2K. Similarly, should the building in which the Commission is housed experience Y2K related problems, plans for the operation of the Commission have been made.

Internet

The Commission's internet site was redesigned and updated in 1998/1999. This included a change in site address. All work was completed in-house. The new site address is www.elections.act.gov.au

For more detail on the Commission's internet site see Information service on page 11.

Part B — Financial and Performance Reporting

The Commission is included in the Department of Justice and Community Safety for budgetary purposes. In the departmental structure for 1998/1999, the Commission is included in Output Class 2, as part of Output 2.6, Protection of Rights with a number of other agencies.

The Electoral Commission has been audited for the purposes of the *Audit Act 1989* as part of the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The financial

transactions for the Commission for 1998/1999 are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements included in the Department of Justice and Community Safety's Annual Report.

The following financial statement, which relates only to electoral services and includes costs incurred by the Department of Justice and Community Safety on electoral services, is presented for information.

	Budget (\$ '000)	Variation ¹ (\$ '000)	Outcome (\$ '000)
Revenue			
Government payment for outputs	713	698	698
User charges	0	0	32
Resources received free of charge	18	7	7
Interest	0	1	0
Other	2	0	0
Total revenue	733	706	737
Expenditure ²			
Employee expenses	322	322	391
Administrative expenses	400	381	306
Depreciation and amortisation	8	5	4
Interest	0	0	0
Other expenses	0	0	0
Total expenditure	730	708	701
Operating result	3	-2	36

Table 12 — 1998/1999 Operating Statement: Output 2.6 — Protection of Rights (Electoral Services portion only)

Note 1. The variation column represents an adjustment from the 1998/1999 budget papers to reflect a change in the method of allocating departmental costs.

Note 2. This table includes costs incurred by the Department of Justice and Community Safety on electoral services. These costs include Ministerial, corporate, finance and information technology services.

Details of 1998/1999 expenditure and revenue

The following more detailed breakdown of expenditure and revenue for 1998/1999 lists expenditure and revenue incurred on an accrual basis by the ACT Electoral Commission only. It does not include expenditure incurred on electoral services by the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Administration expenditure and revenue	expenditure (\$)	revenue (\$)	outcome (\$)
Accommodation (including car parking)	39 855		39 855
Advertising	342		342
Computers — leasing, repairs, maintenance and other costs	7 985		7 985
Consultants and contractors — computing	5 737		5 737
Consultants and contractors — other	3 010		3 010
Depreciation	3 999		3 999
Joint roll costs	121 650		121 650
Miscellaneous	4 697		4 697
Office machines and furniture — purchases, repairs and maintenance	4 455		4 455
Postage and freight	33 785	2 852	30 933
Printing	27 216	3 575	23 641
Resources received free of charge	6 875		6 875
Storage	7 480		7 480
Supplies and stationery — general	1 504		1 504
Telephones	6 884		6 884
Training	2 264		2 264
Travel	2 974		2 974
Vehicle hire	10 123		10 123
Total administration expenditure and revenue	290 835	6 427	284 408
Employee expenditure and revenue			
Fringe benefits tax	5 272		5 272
Leave entitlements	13 706		13 706
Productivity superannuation	11 853	764	11 089
Remuneration of part-time Commission Members	56 301		56 301
Salaries	245 106	24 358	220 748
Superannuation liability	39 846		39 846
Workers compensation	2 904		2 904
Total employee expenditure and revenue	374 988	25 122	349 866
Total expenditure and revenue	665 823	31 549	634 274
Budget	678 000	0	678 000
Saving	12 177	31 549	43 726

Table 13 — Detailed statement of expenditure and revenue for 1998/1999

Reporting outcomes against performance indicators set out in 1998/1999 budget papers

This section reports on the Commission's performance in 1998/1999 in terms of the following performance indicators set out in the 1998/1999 budget papers.

Note: For 1998/1999 the Commission was included as part of output 2.6 along with several other agencies. The following table reports only on the performance of the Electoral Services component of output 2.6.

Output 2.6 Protection of Rights (Electoral Services)		Price (\$'000): 713		
Description:				
The provision of services:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> by the Electoral Commissioner to enable the conduct of elections and referendums and the maintenance of the electoral roll and related programs. 				
Measures:	Original Target	Amended Target	Result	Variation
Quantity				
• Number of people on electoral roll.	206 000	206 000	208 572 ①	+1%
• Number of elections/referendums conducted or assisted with.	14	14	18 ②	+29%
Quality				
• Compliance with standards.	100%	100%	100% ③	0%
• Percent of clients satisfied with electoral services.	95%	95%	99% ④	+4%
Timeliness				
• Compliance with standards and statutory requirements.	100%	100%	100% ⑤	0%
• Election results finalised within standards.	100%	100%	100% ⑥	0%
Cost				
• Average cost per elector for electoral services.	\$3.54	\$3.44	\$3.36 ⑦	-1%
Total Cost: (\$'000)	\$730	\$708	\$701 ⑧	-1%

Table 14 — 1998/1999 Reporting outcomes against performance indicators: Output 2.6 — Protection of Rights (Electoral Services portion only)

Notes on 1998/1999 results:

1. This is the ACT enrolment figure as at 30 June 1999.
2. Result is client driven. Target is an estimate only. There has been a greater than expected demand for services. Refer to *Key Result Area 1.2 Election and referendum services to other agencies* on page 7.
3. The Commission's quality standards are:
 - absence of adverse findings that reflect on the performance of the Commission as a result of legal action (met if none, not met if one or more);
 - voter turnout at ACT Legislative Assembly general elections is 90% or more; and
 - unintentional informal voting at ACT Legislative Assembly general elections is 5% or less.

The first of these was met as there was no legal action against the Commission, the other two did not apply in 1998/1999.

4. Feedback from Ministerial briefings indicated that the Attorney General was satisfied with the Commission's service during the period. All organisations for whom electoral services were provided indicated satisfaction with the service provided. Of a total of 238 clients surveyed in 1998/1999, only 3 indicated a lack of satisfaction with the change of address service.
5. The Commission's timeliness standards are:
 - all correspondence shall be responded to within 4 weeks; and
 - all statutory deadlines will be met.

These were both met. Refer to *Key Result Area 3.3 Records management* on page 17 and *Key Result Area 2.4*

Other electoral statutory requirements on page 15.

6. The Commission's standards for providing election results are as follows:
 - for general elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly (where a recount is not needed): 3 weeks from polling day;
 - for general elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly (where a recount is needed): 4 weeks from polling day; and
 - for other elections and referendums where the ACT Electoral Commission is responsible for providing election results: one week from the close of the poll.

The first two of these did not apply and the third was met in all cases in 1998/1999. Refer to *Key Result Area 1.2 Election and referendum services to other agencies* on page 7.

7. Performance is calculated as the total cost divided by the number of people on the electoral roll (\$701 000 divided by 208 572 electors). The budget papers erroneously listed the original target as \$3.40 instead of \$3.54. When taking user charges into consideration the actual cost per elector for electoral services was \$3.21 (expenditure of \$701 000 minus \$32 000 user charges divided by 208 572 electors).
8. This figure represents only the expenditure for electoral services, it does not take into account revenue received for the conduct of miscellaneous elections. Significant savings were achieved by continuing use and development of in-house information technology resources and by receipt of greater than expected income from fee-for-service elections.

Part C — Whole of Government Issues

Key Issues

Customer focused public service

The Electoral Commission is a participant in the ACT Government's customer commitment program. The Commission's commitment to service statement is available at the Commission's counter. The Commission's strategic plan was rewritten in 1999, taking into account customer requirements.

The "One Form Does It All" project was launched in 1999 with the aim of making notification of change of address for a variety of ACT Government services easier for customers. The form has been well accepted with many positive comments received from customers.

Electoral education continued throughout the year. Customer feedback on the electoral education program has indicated that customers are very satisfied with program delivery, resources and content. Additional staff resources were made available to ensure the education program continued to be of a high standard.

The Commission's standards and procedures are continually reviewed to consider any issues arising from elections run by the Commission. After the 1998 ACT Legislative Assembly election the Commission reviewed and recommended changes to electoral legislation to improve the election process. Recommendations that dealt directly with customer service included:

- adoption of a legislative or voluntary code of conduct related to campaigning that would minimise any delays or confusion related to the application of postal votes; and

- further information about who is responsible for electoral matter to be published in the authorisation statement.

Fraud prevention and detection

The Commission continued to employ the following fraud prevention strategies in 1998/1999:

- continued improvement of office administration procedures;
- continuation of a code of conduct relating to the use of information technology particularly as it relates to electoral roll information;
- continuation of the use of standard procedures when witnessing an application for enrolment; and
- close attention to the secure storage of ballot material for all elections.

There were no reports or allegations of fraud or corruption received in 1998/1999.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The ACT Electoral Commission is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer and recognises the necessity of discouraging all forms of discrimination and ensuring the effective use of the abilities and skills of staff from diverse backgrounds.

The Commission has adopted the Department of Justice and Community Safety's EEO policy.

The following table provides statistical information for staff of the Commission as at 30 June 1999:

Classification	Female	Male	NESB
Electoral Commissioner		1	
Senior Officer Grade C	1		
Administrative Service Officer Class 6		1	
Administrative Service Officer Class 5	1		
Administrative Service Officer Class 4	1		1
Electoral Casual		1	
Total	3	3	1

Table 15 — Electoral Commission staff by EEO groups

Note: There were no staff in either the disabled or Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander categories.

Resources

Staffing profile

The Commission operates with a permanent staff of four, including the Electoral Commissioner.

The Commission's permanent staff are supplemented during election and other periods by additional staff employed under the Public Sector Management Act and the Electoral Act.

Staff are also seconded from other organisations, such as the Australian Electoral Commission, State electoral authorities and other ACT government departments.

For the pay period ending 23 June 1999, the Commission had the following staff members:

Title	Classification	Female	Male	Category	Employment authority
Electoral Commissioner	Statutory Office Holder		1	5 year appointment	Electoral Act
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	Senior Officer Grade C	1		permanent	Public Sector Management Act
Project and Policy Officer	Administrative Service Officer Class 6		1	permanent	Public Sector Management Act
Project Officer	Administrative Service Officer Class 5	1		temporary	Public Sector Management Act
Administration and Finance Officer	Administrative Service Officer Class 4	1		permanent	Public Sector Management Act
	Electoral Casual		1	casual	Electoral Act
Totals		3	3		

Table 16 — Staff of the ACT Electoral Commission

Workers compensation

There were no workers compensation claims during the reporting period.

Training and staff development

During 1998/1999 all permanent staff of the Commission received training and gained other experience by attending various courses, seminars and by secondment to other agencies. These staff development initiatives were consistent with the needs identified in each staff member's performance agreement.

The expenditure for training courses and seminars, as outlined in the following table, was \$2144.30.

Staff member	Date	Course/Seminar name	Cost
Electoral Commissioner	14/7/98	Effective Enterprise Bargaining	\$0.00
	2/12/98	Ethics	\$0.00
	3/2/99	The role of the National Capital Authority	\$0.00
	10/3/99	Web spinning seminar	\$498.10
	12/5/99	A Decade of Self Government - Visions for the Future	\$250.00
Senior Officer Grade C	10/3/99	Web spinning seminar	\$498.10
	12/5/99	A Decade of Self Government - Visions for the Future	\$250.00
Administrative Service Officer Class 6	various	Public sector management course (attendance continuing from previous year)	\$0.00
	16/10/98	The Legislative process	\$150.00
	10/3/99	Web spinning seminar	\$498.10
	17/6/99	Internet file transfer	\$0.00
	24/6/99	Fringe Benefits Tax information session	\$0.00
	25/6/99	Future for internet-enabled e-commerce	\$0.00
Administrative Service Officer Class 5	3/6/99	Smartcard workshop	\$0.00
Administrative Service Officer Class 4	Sep/Oct 1998	Secondment to Australian Electoral Commission	\$0.00
	24/6/99	Fringe Benefits Tax information session	\$0.00
	25/6/99	Future for internet-enabled e-commerce	\$0.00
Total			\$2144.30

Table 17 — Training courses, seminars and other development activities attended by staff of the Electoral Commission in 1998/1999

Consultancy and contractor services

In the course of the 1998/1999 financial year the Commission did not engage any consultants for \$5000 or more or any contractors for \$15000 or more.

Capital works management

The Commission did not undertake any capital works projects in 1998/1999.

Passenger vehicles

The Commission has a single 6 cylinder passenger vehicle. This is the same number of vehicles as in the previous year.

Statutory Requirements

Occupational Health and Safety

In all of its activities, the Commission gives careful consideration to occupational health and safety principles and practices. The Commission has adopted the Department of Justice and Community Safety's OH&S policy.

The Commission has a fire warden and access to a designated qualified first aid officer.

There were no work-related accidents in 1998/1999.

Commissioner for the Environment

The Commission has not contributed to the *State of the Environment Report* in 1998/1999. Commission activities have not had a significant environmental impact. The Commission has not been the subject of an investigation by the Commissioner for the Environment.

Public interest disclosure

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994* requires each ACT Government agency to establish and maintain procedures to facilitate the making of public interest disclosures. The Commission has adopted procedures implemented by the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

During 1998/1999 no public interest disclosures related to the Electoral Commission were lodged.

Government Contractual Debts (Interest) Act 1994

The *Government Contractual Debts (Interest) Act 1994* applied to all contracts entered into by the Electoral Commission during 1998/1999.

Freedom of Information Act Section 7 Statement

The Chairperson of the Electoral Commission is the principal officer of the Electoral Commission for the purposes of the FOI Act in relation to functions and powers vested in the Electoral Commission.

The Electoral Commissioner is the principal officer of the office of the Electoral Commissioner for the purposes of the FOI Act in relation to functions and powers vested in the Electoral Commissioner.

Establishment and powers

The ACT Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority established by the Electoral Act 1992.

The Electoral Commission and the Electoral Commissioner exercise powers under the *Electoral Act 1992*, the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994* and the *Health Professions Boards (Elections) Act 1980*.

Arrangements for external participation

Members of the public are invited under the *Electoral Act 1992* to make submissions on proposed changes to electoral boundaries. Informal approaches from the community on any electoral matter are welcomed.

Documents

Extracts from the ACT electoral roll are made available for public inspection (but not purchase) without charge at the office of the Electoral Commissioner.

Lists of registered practitioners eligible to vote in Health Professions Boards elections are made available for public inspection (but not purchase) without charge at the office of the Electoral Commission during the relevant election period.

Records related to the issue of declaration votes for ACT Legislative Assembly elections are made available for public inspection (but not purchase) without charge at the office of the Electoral Commissioner during the relevant election period.

The following documents are available for inspection and purchase:

- The Register of Political Parties
- Annual Returns of donations, expenditure and debts submitted by political parties, independent MLAs, associated entities and donors
- Election Returns of donations and expenditure submitted by political parties, candidates, broadcasters and publishers, donors and other political participants.

The following documents are provided free of charge:

- Annual Reports
- Election statistics
- Commitment to Service Statement
- Information brochures on the ACT electoral system
- Maps of ACT electorates
- Various electoral enrolment and voting forms
- Information Fact Sheets for schools
- Candidates Information booklets and related forms
- Scrutineers Information booklets and related forms

- Funding and Disclosure Information booklets and related forms
- Redistribution reports, public submissions and statistics.

Many items are also available on the Electoral Commission's Internet site at: www.elections.act.gov.au

Facilities for access

FOI requests should be directed to the Deputy Electoral Commissioner (see contact details below).

Freedom of Information Act Section 79 Statement

The ACT Electoral Commission did not receive any FOI requests in 1998/99, nor were any FOI matters outstanding at 1 July 1998.

Contact officer

For further information about the ACT Electoral Commission, FOI, or any other matters raised in this Annual Report, please contact:

The Deputy Electoral Commissioner
ACT Electoral Commission
Plaza Level
Allara House
50 Allara Street
Canberra City ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6205 0033

Fax: (02) 6205 0382

or write to:
PO Box 272, Civic Square ACT 2608

or email:
elections@dpa.act.gov.au

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