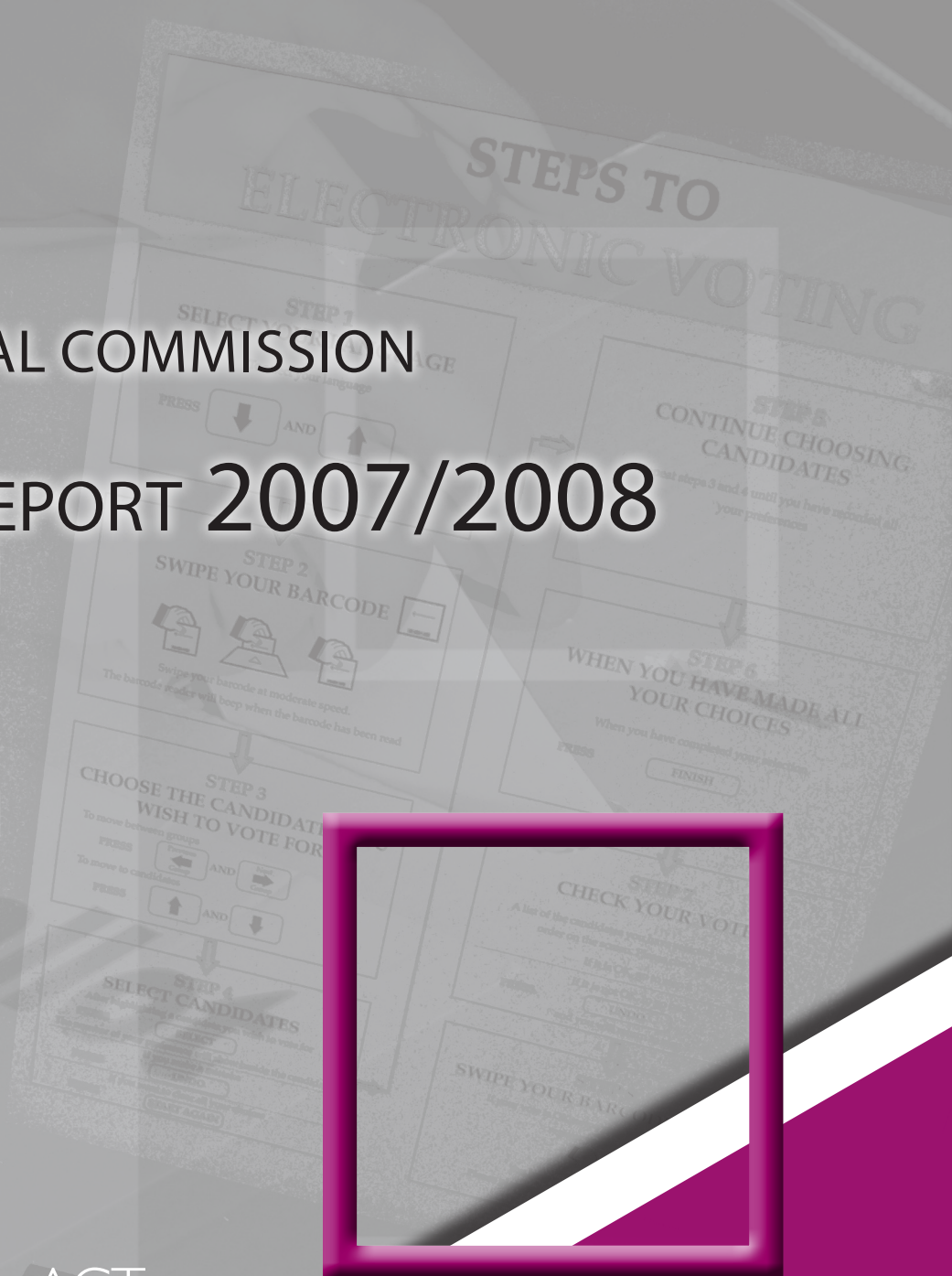


ACT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

# ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008



Elections ACT



ACT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

# ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008



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Dear Attorney General

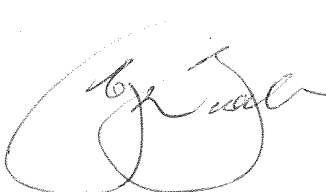
This report has been prepared under section 6(1) of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements referred to in the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions. It has been prepared in conformity with other legislation applicable to the preparation of Annual Reports.

This Annual Report is a joint report covering the operations of the ACT Electoral Commission and the operations of the Electoral Commissioner and the staff employed to assist the Commissioner. Under the *Electoral Act 1992* and other relevant legislation, the Commissioner exercises some functions independently of the Commission. For simplicity, references in this report to Elections ACT are to be taken to refer to the Electoral Commissioner and his staff.

We hereby certify that the attached Annual Report is an honest and accurate account and that all material information on the operations of the ACT Electoral Commission during the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 has been included and that it complies with the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions.

The Electoral Commissioner hereby certifies that fraud prevention has been managed in accordance with Public Sector Management Standard 2, Part 2.4.

Section 13 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* requires that you cause a copy of the Report to be laid before the Legislative Assembly within 3 months of the end of the financial year.



Roger Beale AO  
Chairperson

22 August 2008



Phillip Green  
Electoral Commissioner

22 August 2008



Christabel Young  
Member

22 August 2008



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## Glossary

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<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>AEC</b>	Australian Electoral Commission
<b>ANU</b>	Australian National University
<b>CLDB</b>	Culturally and linguistically diverse background
<b>Commission</b>	ACT Electoral Commission
<b>Commissioner</b>	Electoral Commissioner
<b>CPI</b>	Consumer Price Index
<b>CRU</b>	Continuous Roll Update
<b>ECA</b>	Electoral Council of Australia
<b>Elections ACT</b>	The office of the Electoral Commissioner and the staff appointed to assist the Commissioner
<b>Electoral Act</b>	<i>Electoral Act 1992</i>
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of information
<b>FOI Act</b>	<i>Freedom of Information Act 1989</i>
<b>Hare-Clark</b>	The proportional representation electoral system used in the ACT
<b>InTACT</b>	The ACT Government information technology management agency
<b>JACS</b>	ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety
<b>Joint roll</b>	The common ACT and Commonwealth electoral roll maintained under a formal government-to-government arrangement
<b>MLA</b>	Member of the ACT Legislative Assembly
<b>OH&amp;S</b>	Occupational Health and Safety
<b>Party</b>	A political party registered under the Electoral Act
<b>Redistribution</b>	A redistribution of electoral boundaries





**Part A****Performance and financial management reporting**

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## The organisation

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The ACT Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority comprising a Chairperson, the Electoral Commissioner and a Member, with responsibility for the conduct of elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly and for the provision of electoral advice and services.

It is important to distinguish between the functions of the Commission and the office of the Electoral Commissioner.

The Commission is responsible under the Electoral Act for key over-arching electoral functions, including advising the Minister; conducting education and information programs; providing information and advice to the Assembly, the Executive, agencies, political parties, MLAs and candidates; conducting research; publishing electoral material; providing fee-for-service electoral goods and services; and conducting ballots for prescribed organisations. The Commission is also responsible for key electoral roles, such as its part in the electoral boundaries redistribution process; and as a review body for decisions made by the Commissioner or the Commissioner's delegates.

The Electoral Commissioner serves in a dual capacity as both a member of the Commission and as a statutory officer holder with independent powers and functions. The Commissioner is the chief executive officer of the Commission. In that role, the Commissioner manages the operations of the Commission under the guidance and direction of the full Commission, and undertakes the Commission's functions as the Commission's delegate. The Commissioner also has specific functions under the Electoral Act and other legislation that are given solely to the Commissioner, including most of the procedures related to the conduct of ACT Legislative Assembly elections, as well as registration of political parties and implementing the funding and disclosure scheme.

The Commissioner is assisted by staff employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and under the Electoral Act. For simplicity, the office of the Commissioner and the Commissioner's staff are referred to under the operating title of Elections ACT. The Commissioner and the staff of Elections ACT perform functions that are the responsibility of the Commissioner and perform some functions on behalf of the Commission.

The Attorney General is the Minister responsible for electoral matters and the Commission is included in the Department of Justice and Community Safety (JACS) portfolio for administrative purposes. In the departmental structure for 2007/2008, the Commission was included in Output Class 1.6 - Electoral Services.

## Legislative framework

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

- *Electoral Act 1992*;
- *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994*;
- *Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994*;
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*; and
- *Health Professionals Regulation 2004*.

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## Organisational structure

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The ACT Electoral Commission consists of a Chairperson, the Electoral Commissioner and a third Member.

**Table 1 — Members of the ACT Electoral Commission**

<b>Mr Roger Beale AO</b> <i>Chairperson</i> Appointed until 28 February 2012
<b>Mr Phillip Green</b> <i>Electoral Commissioner</i> Reappointed until 31 March 2010
<b>Dr Christabel Young FASSA</b> <i>Member</i> Reappointed until 28 February 2012

Note: This table shows appointments in force on 30 June 2008.

The 3 Members of the 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. Remuneration for all 3 Members is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal.

The Electoral Commissioner has chief executive powers under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* in relation to staff employed to assist the Commissioner. These staff, acting under the direction of the Commissioner, have been brought together under the operating title Elections ACT.

The Commissioner may also employ casual staff and engage consultants under the Electoral Act, on terms and conditions determined by the Commission after consultation with the Executive.

The Commissioner was assisted throughout 2007/2008 by 5 officers employed under the Public Sector Management Act.

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.

For a list of staff positions see **Table 11 — Staff of Elections ACT** on page 52.

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## Election ACT's mission

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Election ACT's mission is:

*To provide the ACT community with high quality electoral services that ensure fair and open elections and referendums.*

Elections ACT 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 agencies, the media and special interest groups.

Elections ACT's most important function is to conduct elections for the Legislative Assembly. The next election for the Assembly is due to be held on 18 October 2008.

Some of the other tasks for which Elections ACT is responsible include electoral education, maintaining the register of political parties and the funding and disclosure scheme, conducting redistributions of electoral boundaries, working with other electoral authorities to improve the accuracy of the electoral roll, conducting elections for ACT health professionals boards and providing electoral services to other organisations on a fee-for-service basis.

## Elections ACT Corporate Plan 2006-2009

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MISSION	
To provide the ACT community with high quality electoral services that ensure fair and open elections and referendums.	
<b>Goal 1</b>	To conduct high quality elections and referendums
<b>Key result areas:</b>	1.1 Elections for the ACT Legislative Assembly
	1.2 Election and referendum services to other agencies
<b>Goal 2</b>	To provide high quality electoral information, education, advice and services
<b>Key result areas:</b>	2.1 Electoral information and advice
	2.2 Electoral enrolment
	2.3 Electoral education
	2.4 Other electoral statutory requirements
<b>Goal 3</b>	To support high quality electoral services by effective management
<b>Key result areas:</b>	3.1 Human resources management
	3.2 Financial management
	3.3 Records management
	3.4 Information technology management

The *Corporate Plan 2006–2009* is underpinned by more detailed operational plans.

## Performance indicators

In 2005/2006, the number of performance indicators for the JACS portfolio was reduced. At that time, the Chief Executive of JACS decided to adopt only 2 performance indicators for electoral services, both of which only related to Legislative Assembly elections. Therefore the Commission did not have formal accountability indicators listed in the budget papers for 2007/2008. The budget papers for 2008/2009, being a Legislative Assembly election year, include the following 2 accountability indicators for Output 1.6 – Electoral Services: *High level of voter turnout at ACT Legislative Assembly election*; and *Timely finalisation of election result of ACT Legislative Assembly election*.

The Commission considers that it is worthwhile to maintain an extended set of performance indicators for in-house use and for annual reporting purposes. Set out below are the Commission's performance indicators adopted from 2005/2006. Measurement of the Commission's performance against each of these measures is included in the **Analysis of agency performance** from pages 12 to 38.

Goal 1 – Elections and referendums:	
Objectives	Measures
Increase voter turnout at Legislative Assembly elections	Participation rates
Deliver service within timeline targets	Timelines met
Increase formal voting at Legislative Assembly elections	Formal voting rates
Goal 2 – Information, education, advice and services	
Objectives	Measures
Maintain high client satisfaction	Feedback from clients/electors
Manage registration of political parties	Statutory requirements met
Redraw electoral boundaries for each election	Statutory requirements met
Goal 3 – Effective management	
Objectives	Measures
Manage costs within budget allocations	Budget met
Maintain high staff satisfaction	Performance management feedback
Manage and improve IT business systems	Absence of IT business systems failures

Elections ACT's timeline targets are:

- ☐ All statutory deadlines will be met.
- ☐ Election results will be finalised:
  - For general elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly (where a recount is not needed): within 3 weeks from polling day;
  - For general elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly (where a recount is needed): within 4 weeks from polling day;
  - For a count back to fill a casual vacancy in the Legislative Assembly: within 1 week from the date applications to contest the vacancy close; and
  - For other elections and referendums where the ACT Electoral Commission is responsible for providing election results: within 1 week from the close of the poll.

## Overview

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The Commission and the Commissioner are independent statutory office holders. The operational framework of the Commission and the office of the Commissioner is prescribed by the legislation codifying the functions of the Commission and the Commissioner.

While the Commission's and Elections ACT's largest and most visible roles are the conduct of Legislative Assembly elections and the determination of electorate boundaries, the Commission and Elections ACT have a wide range of functions that provides challenging work at all stages of the election cycle.

These functions include providing advice to Government and others, conducting minor elections, electoral education, administering the political disclosure scheme, maintaining the register of political parties and assisting other electoral authorities in maintaining the national electoral roll.

In addition to this ongoing work, a great deal of effort is put into Legislative Assembly election preparations in each non-election year. In 2007/2008, this preparatory work included finalising a redistribution of electoral boundaries, advising the government on major changes to the Electoral Act, updating publications and procedures in line with the changes to the changes to the Electoral Act, upgrading the Commission's database business systems, contracting for and testing of an intelligent character recognition scanning system to replace manual data entry of ballot papers, contracting for and testing of upgrades to the electronic voting and counting system, revising the Commission's polling official training strategy and tendering for the use of hand-held electronic devices to replace printed electoral rolls for marking names of voters in polling places.

The biggest challenge for Elections ACT staff is to provide a high level of service with limited resources. By comparison with other Australian electoral authorities, Elections ACT has fewer staff and a smaller ongoing budget than all other authorities.

Elections ACT has shown itself equal to the high goals it has set. Its introduction of electronic voting and counting in the ACT is seen as an example of world's best practice in this field. Elections ACT intends to continue this trend with the introduction of further innovations at the 2008 Legislative Assembly election, including scanning of handwritten ballot papers instead of manual data-entry, and the use of electronic rolls in polling places, to replace manually marked and scanned paper rolls.

A list of key activities undertaken in 2007/2008 is shown at **Highlights** on page 7.

Two long-serving officers left Elections ACT in 2007/2008: the Deputy Electoral Commissioner Alison Purvis and the Education and Information Officer Jan Pryor. The members of the Commission and the continuing staff of Elections ACT extend their thanks and appreciation to Ms Purvis and Ms Pryor for their outstanding contributions to the work of Elections ACT.

## Highlights

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Major activities undertaken by the Commission and Elections ACT during 2007/2008:

- ❑ Finalising the redistribution of electorate boundaries;
- ❑ Advising the ACT Government and non-government MLAs on amendments to and passage of legislation to amend the Electoral Act, following the Commission's detailed review of the Electoral Act after the 2004 election and in relation to changes made to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*;
- ❑ Updating a range of publications and procedures to take account of changes made to the Electoral Act in May 2008;
- ❑ Advising the ACT Government on legislation to provide for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and conducting the first election for the Elected Body;
- ❑ Processing several additions and changes to the register of political parties in the lead up to the close of the register to new applicants on 30 June 2008;
- ❑ Finalising a contract for and undertaking testing of an intelligent character recognition scanning system to replace manual data entry of ballot papers at the 2008 Legislative Assembly election;
- ❑ Tendering for the preparation of software for use of electronic certified lists at polling places to replace paper-based scanned electoral rolls;
- ❑ Implementing an upgrade of Elections ACT's in-house suite of databases in preparation for the 2008 election; and
- ❑ Negotiating the electoral roll update program for the close of rolls for the 2008 Legislative Assembly election with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

Other activities undertaken during the year included:

- ❑ Continuing to work with the AEC and the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) to improve ongoing electoral roll maintenance procedures;
- ❑ Continuing the Commission's non-parliamentary election program, conducting 13 certified agreement ballots for ACT agencies and 5 fee-for-service ballots, and assisting with the conduct of 5 interstate elections;
- ❑ Providing a full-time electoral inquiry service over the counter, by phone, by email and by post;
- ❑ Pursuing Continuous Roll Update (CRU) initiatives, including obtaining data from a comprehensive range of ACT agencies; and
- ❑ Continuing the schools based electoral education program.

A continuing challenge during the year was Elections ACT's occupation of temporary accommodation in 12 Moore Street in Canberra City. The office space provided to Elections ACT and the public access to its service in this temporary location were not satisfactory. This situation was resolved in June 2008 when Elections ACT moved its office to the O'Connell Centre in Griffith in anticipation of Elections ACT's need for additional space leading up to the October 2008 Legislative Assembly election.



## Outlook

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The main focus of the Commission and Elections ACT in 2008/2009 will be on the conduct of the 2008 Legislative Assembly election and subsequent legislative and strategic reviews. Elections ACT will also continue its education, staff development, non-parliamentary election and CRU programs.

Projects to be undertaken will include:

- Conducting the October 2008 Legislative Assembly election – components of the election will include:
  - Conducting an advertising and information campaign;
  - Working with the AEC to maximise the accuracy of the electoral roll for the election;
  - Employing, deploying and equipping around 800 staff to work at around 80 polling places, 5 pre-poll voting centres and the Elections ACT central office;
  - Delivering improved training to polling officials;
  - Introducing new procedures for postal voting;
  - Investigating complaints alleging breaches of the electoral legislation;
  - Implementing the electronic voting system at 5 pre-poll voting centres;
  - Using electronic certified lists at polling places to replace paper-based scanned electoral rolls at the 2008 election;
  - Implementing an updated results package for the Tally Room and for the internet for the 2008 election;
  - Implementing electronic scanning for counting paper ballots at the 2008 election;
  - Sending notices to apparent non-voters and processing their replies; and
  - Investigating cases of apparent multiple voting;
- Conducting a review of the conduct of the election and the operation of the Electoral Act after the 2008 election;
- Commencing a strategic review of Elections ACT's staffing, structure, budget, business systems, staff development program, operational plan and corporate plan for 2009 to 2012;
- Moving to new permanent accommodation after the completion of the 2008 election;
- Providing advice to Government and Members of the Legislative Assembly on electoral matters as required;
- Participating in the national review of electoral processes being undertaken by the federal government;
- Continuing to work with the AEC and the ECA to improve electoral roll maintenance procedures;
- Continuing the schools based electoral education program; and
- Continuing the Commission's non-parliamentary election program.

## Management discussion and analysis

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This section of the report is intended to provide a high level narrative of the financial results and financial health of the Commission. These matters are the responsibility of the Electoral Commissioner, exercising delegations made under the *Financial Management Act 1996* by the chief executive of the JACS portfolio. The Commission, however, also has an interest in the adequacy or otherwise of the budget to the extent that it enables the Commission's functions to be met.

The Commission's expenditure was within its budget for 2007/2008.

The Commission does not have financial reporting obligations under the Financial Management Act. The Commission is included in the JACS portfolio for budgetary purposes. In the departmental structure for 2007/2008, the Commission is included in Output Class 1.6 – Electoral Services.

The financial transactions for the Commission for the year ending 30 June 2008 are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the JACS Annual Report. The Commission's financial results have been audited for the purposes of the *Audit Act 1989* as part of the JACS portfolio.

## Financial report

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The Commission does not have financial reporting obligations under the Financial Management Act. The Commission is included in the JACS portfolio for budgetary purposes. In the departmental structure for 2007/2008, the Commission is included in Output Class 1.6 – Electoral Services.

The financial transactions for the Commission for the year ending 30 June 2008 are formally reported in the consolidated financial statements of the JACS Annual Report. The Commission's financial results have been audited for the purposes of the *Audit Act 1989* as part of the JACS portfolio.

The Commission's expenditure was over budget for 2007/2008. This result was largely outside the Commission's control. Factors that contributed to this result included external calculation of the long service leave liability and recreational leave liability without taking account of staff movements and leave taken during the year, back-pay of executive fringe benefit tax adjustments underpaid in previous years and overstated InTACT IT costs calculated by applying the higher costs incurred in the last few months of the financial year as additional staff were employed for the October election as if those costs had applied throughout the year.

The following table shows the operating costs of the Commission for the reporting year for information purposes only. This table should be read in conjunction with the JACS financial statements shown in its Annual Report. The table excludes JACS corporate overheads.

**Table 2 — Financial summary for 2007/2008**

<b>ACT Electoral Commission</b>	<b>Budget \$'000</b>	<b>Actual Outcome \$'000</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Government Payment for Outputs	916	922
Other Revenue	16	29
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>951</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employee Expenses	550	605
Superannuation	97	104
Administration Expenses	264	315
Depreciation	17	3
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>1027</b>
<b>Operating Result</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-76</b>

## Statement of performance

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The Commission is not required to prepare an annual statement of performance under the Financial Management Act.

In 2005/2006 and again in 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, the number of performance indicators in the JACS portfolio were reduced. The Chief Executive of JACS decided to adopt only 2 performance indicators for electoral services, both of which only related to Legislative Assembly elections. Therefore the Commission did not have formal performance indicators listed in the budget papers for 2007/2008. The budget papers for 2008/2009, being a Legislative Assembly election year, include the following 2 accountability indicators for Output 1.6 – Electoral Services: *High level of voter turnout at ACT Legislative Assembly election*; and *Timely finalisation of election result of ACT Legislative Assembly election*. The Commission will report against these accountability indicators in its 2008/2009 Annual Report.

The Commission's in-house performance indicators are listed at **Performance indicators** on page 5 and evaluated under **Analysis of agency performance** from pages 12 to 38.

## Analysis of Agency Performance

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This section reports on activities undertaken in each key result area in 2007/2008 to achieve the Commission's goals.

### Goal 1 - To conduct high quality elections and referendums

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#### Performance indicator summary

Objectives	Measures	Outcomes
Increase voter turnout at Legislative Assembly elections	Participation rates	Turnout 2004 election: 92.8% Turnout 2001 election: 90.9%
Deliver service within timeline targets	Timelines met	All timelines met
Increase formal voting at Legislative Assembly elections	Formal voting rates	Formal voting 2004 election: 97.4% Formal voting 2001 election: 96.0%

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## KEY RESULT AREA 1.1

### ELECTIONS FOR THE ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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#### *Review of the Electoral Act 1992*

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The Commission's review of the operation of the Electoral Act in relation to the conduct of the 2004 Legislative Assembly election was provided to the Attorney General on 22 July 2005 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 23 August 2005.

In 2007/2008 the Commission provided advice and assistance to the Attorney General on preparation and passage of legislation to amend the Electoral Act, taking into account the Commission's review of the Electoral Act after the 2004 election, changes made to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* related to disclosure and enrolment, and other issues that arose after the Commission published its review.

The Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2007 was introduced in the Legislative Assembly by the Attorney General on 23 August 2007 and passed as the *Electoral Legislation Amendment Act 2008* by the Legislative Assembly on 9 May 2008. This Act gave effect to many of the Commission's recommendations. See **Electoral Legislation** below at page 22 for more information.

Copies of the Commission's review of the operation of the Electoral Act in relation to the conduct of the 2004 election can be obtained from the Elections ACT website at **[www.elections.act.gov.au/adobe/2004ElectionReview.pdf](http://www.elections.act.gov.au/adobe/2004ElectionReview.pdf)**.

#### **Electronic voting and vote counting**

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Following the successful use of the ACT's electronic voting and counting system at the 2001 and 2004 elections, the Commission undertook to explore advances in technology to determine if a cost-effective scanning alternative to the data entry of ballot papers was available.

In the 2006/2007 Annual Report, the Commission reported that the Commissioner had issued a tender for scanning paper ballots at the 2008 election on 23 February 2007, following an industry consultation process, the preparation of a business case and a risk management plan, and conceptual endorsement by the Electronic Voting and Vote Counting Reference Group. The business case recommended that scanning of paper ballots should be introduced as scanning had the potential to produce results that would be at least as accurate as, or more accurate than, the results achieved by data entry; that it would be less costly than data entry; and that it would lead to savings over time that could not be made with data entry. As at 30 June 2007, the Commissioner had selected a preferred tenderer and pre-contract negotiations were underway.

In 2007/2008, the Commissioner contracted SEMA Group Pty Limited to provide scanning services at the 2008 election, with the intention of using a scanning system to electronically record all preferences shown on all formal paper ballots cast at the 2008 Legislative Assembly election. In early 2008 SEMA, in consultation with Elections ACT, developed a scanning solution specifically tailored to the ACT's Robson rotated ballot papers.

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As at 30 June 2008, acceptance testing of the chosen scanning solution was underway. Testing conducted to that time indicated that the scanning system was at least as accurate as the data-entry system used at the previous 2 elections. The Commissioner anticipated making a decision on final acceptance of the scanning system in July 2008 with the intention of demonstrating the system to the Electronic Voting and Vote Counting Reference Group as soon as possible thereafter.

In 2007/2008 further minor modifications were made to the eVACS® electronic voting and counting system to address issues that arose at and since the 2004 election. While it is expected that the data-entry system will be replaced by scanning in 2008, the data-entry software is being kept up to date so that it will be available as a back-up system if the scanning system cannot be used at the election. Elections ACT intends to use the eVACS® electronic voting system at 5 pre-poll voting centres at the October 2008 election.

The Commission's report on the operation of the electronic voting and counting system: *ACT Legislative Assembly Election 2004: Electronic Voting and Counting System Review* can be viewed at the Elections ACT website at [www.elections.act.gov.au/adobe/2004ElectionReviewComputerVoting.pdf](http://www.elections.act.gov.au/adobe/2004ElectionReviewComputerVoting.pdf).

### **Use of electronic rolls to replace printed rolls in polling places**

---

In the 2006/2007 Annual Report, it was noted that Elections ACT was investigating the feasibility of using electronic hand-held devices (Personal Digital Assistants, or PDAs) as electronic electoral rolls in polling places.

Following examination of the use of PDAs as electoral rolls in State elections in Victoria and Tasmania and in the 2007 federal election, Elections ACT completed a business case and a risk management plan recommending adoption of PDAs to replace printed electoral rolls for marking names of voters in polling places at the 2008 ACT election.

A key element in the cost-effective attraction of the use of PDAs was the agreement by the Queensland Electoral Commission to provide Elections ACT with PDA hardware and the agreement by the NSW Electoral Commission to provide Elections ACT with PDA electoral roll software. The assistance provided by these Electoral Commissions is gratefully acknowledged by Elections ACT.

In 2008 the Commissioner contracted Software Improvements Pty Ltd, the developer of the ACT's eVACS® software, to adapt the NSW software to tailor it to the ACT, so as to enable PDAs to replace printed electoral rolls in polling places at the 2008 ACT election.

As at 30 June 2008, software development of the modifications to the NSW PDA software was underway. Testing of the PDA software was expected to commence in July 2008. The Commissioner anticipated making a decision on final acceptance of the PDA system in August 2008 with the intention of demonstrating the system to the Electronic Voting and Vote Counting Reference Group as soon as possible thereafter.

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## KEY RESULT AREA 1.2

### ELECTION AND REFERENDUM SERVICES TO OTHER AGENCIES

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Elections ACT's program of providing election and referendum services for other organisations continued in 2007/2008.

#### Interstate elections

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Elections ACT provided over-the-counter pre-poll voting, postal vote applications, postal ballot papers and enquiry services for interstate electoral authorities in 2007/2008. Details of these elections are shown in Table 3.

No additional costs were incurred by Elections ACT in providing these services.

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

**Table 3 — Interstate elections**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Polling day</b>	<b>Assistance provided</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Queensland Local Government elections	13/03/08	issue of postal vote applications	1
Northern Territory Municipal Council elections	29/03/08	issue of postal vote applications	0
Victorian by-elections (Albert Park & Williamstown)	14/09/07	pre-poll voting	6
Western Australian by-election (Murdoch)	22/02/08	pre-poll voting	7
Tasmanian Legislative Council elections (Huon & Rosevears)	02/05/08	pre-poll voting	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>14</b>

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## Statutory and fee-for-service elections

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### Health professionals boards elections

Elections ACT did not conduct any elections for ACT health professionals boards in 2007/2008.

### Fee-for-service electoral services

Elections ACT conducts elections and provides other electoral services for other organisations under its power to provide services for determined fees.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body election

Legislation to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body in the ACT was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 6 May 2008. This legislation provides for the conduct of an election every 3 years to elect members to the body.

To be eligible to be nominated for and vote in the election, candidates and voters must be an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander, over 18 years of age and be on, or eligible to be on, the ACT Electoral Roll.

The election period began on Monday 26 May with the opening of the nomination period. The electoral roll to be used for the election closed on Wednesday 4 June and the nomination period closed at noon on Tuesday 10 June.

The declaration of the names of 13 candidates who nominated for the election was made by the Commissioner at noon on Wednesday 11 June.

Voting commenced on Monday 16 June. A team of 3 polling officials accompanied by an indigenous Liaison Officer conducted polling in Gungahlin, Belconnen, Woden, Tuggeranong, Civic, Erindale and Narrabundah between 16 June and 21 June. Postal voting was also available.

227 votes were admitted to the count of ballot papers conducted on Tuesday 1 July.

The Electoral Commissioner publically declared the names of the successful candidates on Wednesday 2 July. The result of the election was formally notified on the Legislation Register on 4 July 2008.

**Table 4 — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Polls closed</b>	<b>Result provided</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body	7	13	21/06/08	1/07/08	227
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>			<b>227</b>

### **Australian National University elections**

Elections ACT assisted with the ANU Union annual elections and the ANU Students' Association (ANUSA) annual elections in 2007. Details of these elections are shown in Table 5.

Nominations for the Union elections closed on 24 July, polling was conducted from 6 to 9 August and the results were determined on 9 August.

For the ANUSA elections, nominations closed on 8 August, polling was from 20 August to 23 August and final results were determined on 28 September.

For these elections, Elections ACT provided assistance with receipt and checking of nominations, preparation and printing of ballot papers, operation of polling places at the ANU and the conduct of the count.

***Table 5 — Australian National University elections***

<b>Election</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Election of 3 ANU Union directors (full 2 year term), August 2007	4	7	812
ANU Students' Association annual elections, September 2007	43	119	1816
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>2628</b>

### **Other elections**

Elections ACT conducted or assisted with several other elections in 2007/2008. Details of these elections are shown in the following table.

***Table 6 — Other elections***

<b>Election</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Polls closed</b>	<b>Result provided</b>	<b>Votes</b>
Chief Ministers Department Collective Agreement	-	-	3/09/07	3/09/07	99
Department of Education and Training – Non-teaching staff Collective Agreement	-	-	07/09/07	07/09/07	649
Department of Treasury Collective Agreement	-	-	10/09/07	10/09/07	448
Department of Treasury Collective Agreement	-	-	10/09/07	10/09/07	448
National Press Club of Australia	4	6	25/09/07	25/09/07	165
Canberra Southern Cross Club	4	5	8/10/07	8/10/07	2348

<b>Election</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Polls closed</b>	<b>Result provided</b>	<b>Votes</b>
ACT Planning and Land Authority Collective Agreement	-	-	26/10/07	26/10/07	144
Territory and Municipal Services Collective Agreement	-	-	26/10/07	26/10/07	575
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services Collective Agreement	-	-	29/10/07	29/10/07	412
ACT Legal Aid Commission Collective Agreement	-	-	1/11/07	1/11/07	35
ACT Public Sector Nursing and Midwifery Collective Agreement	-	-	14/11/07	14/11/07	1195
Department of Justice and Community Safety Collective Agreement	-	-	29/11/07	29/11/07	454
Cultural Facilities Corporation Collective Agreement	-	-	30/11/07	30/11/07	40
ACT Health Clerical, Health Professional, Technical, Health Service Officer's Collective Agreement	-	-	21/12/07	21/12/07	1143
ACTION Buses Collective Agreement	-	-	3/03/08	3/03/08	566
Aboriginal Justice Centre	7	7	8/04/08	8/04/08	0
ACT Fire Brigade Collective Agreement	-	-	29/04/08	29/04/08	207
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>			<b>8928</b>

### Internet resources

A series of documents to guide organisations through their own elections is available on the Elections ACT website and include:

- ☐ Principles for conducting elections;
- ☐ Sample electoral regulations;
- ☐ Ballot papers which can be automatically Robson rotated; and
- ☐ Scrutiny sheets on a spreadsheet where a Hare-Clark count can be calculated automatically.

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## Goal 2 - To provide high quality electoral information, education, advice and services

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### Performance indicator summary

Objectives	Measures	Outcomes
Maintain high client satisfaction	Feedback from clients/electors	All electoral education and fee-for-service election clients expressed satisfaction
Manage registration of political parties	Statutory requirements met	Statutory requirements met
Redraw electoral boundaries for each election	Statutory requirements met	Redistribution concluded in September 2007 – all statutory requirements met

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## KEY RESULT AREA 2.1

### ELECTORAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE

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#### Information service

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Elections ACT provides an ongoing information service to the general public through:

- Providing information in person over the counter, by telephone or by email;
- Publishing a range of information booklets and pamphlets;
- Answering written correspondence; and
- Maintaining a comprehensive website.

#### **Publications**

The following items were published in 2007/2008:

- ACT Electoral Commission *Annual Report 2006/2007*; and
- Report on the *ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2007*

In addition, the following are available from the Commission:

- ACT Electoral Commission *Electoral Compendium 1989–2006*;
- Two workbooks entitled *What is the ACT Legislative Assembly?* for primary and secondary school students visiting the Legislative Assembly (November 1999);
- ACT Electoral Commission *Annual Reports* since 1992/1993;
- *Election Statistics* for the 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections;
- *Review of the Electoral Act 1992* for the 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections;
- *The 2001 ACT Legislative Assembly Election: Electronic Voting and Counting System Review*;
- *The 2004 ACT Legislative Assembly Election: Electronic Voting and Counting System Review*;
- Electronic voting data from the 2001 and 2004 ACT elections on CD-ROM (on request and payment of fee);
- Funding and disclosure information booklets and related forms;
- *Commitment to Service Statement*;
- *Corporate Plan*;
- *Freedom of information statement*;
- Information brochure on voting in the ACT for new citizens;
- Maps of ACT electorates;
- Various electoral enrolment and voting forms;
- Information *Fact Sheets*;

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- ❑ *Candidates Information* booklets and related forms;
  - ❑ *Scrutineers Information* booklets and related forms; and
  - ❑ Redistribution reports, public submissions and statistics for the 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2003 redistributions.

### **Internet**

The Elections ACT website address is **www.elections.act.gov.au**. This website continued to be maintained and updated in 2007/2008.

Information and services provided on the website in 2007/2008 included:

- ❑ General information about Elections ACT;
- ❑ Information and submissions regarding electoral boundaries, including the 2007 redistribution process;
- ❑ Media releases;
- ❑ Information for candidates, voters and the media about the forthcoming 2008 Legislative Assembly election;
- ❑ Detailed results of the 2004 Legislative Assembly election held on 16 October 2004;
- ❑ Details of past ACT Legislative Assembly elections, casual vacancies and referendums;
- ❑ The party register, including details on the registration of political parties;
- ❑ Information on the funding and disclosure scheme, including downloadable copies of returns;
- ❑ Information for organisations wishing to run their own elections;
- ❑ Information for schools to run their own elections;
- ❑ A link to the AEC electoral enrolment forms, and other enrolment information;
- ❑ Printable copies of the Commission's publications; and
- ❑ Links to electoral legislation, other electoral bodies and ACT agencies.

### **Advice**

Providing advice to the Attorney General, Assembly Committees and other MLAs is one of the Commission's most significant tasks. The Commission also provides advice to visiting delegations from other jurisdictions and other countries, makes submissions to Commonwealth parliamentary inquiries and gives presentations at conferences. Examples of advice provided during the year include:

- ❑ Advising the Government and Legislative Assembly Members on matters related to the Electoral Act;
- ❑ Appearing before the Select Committee on Estimates;
- ❑ Appearing before the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs in relation to the Commission's 2006/2007 annual report;
- ❑ Advising the Government on preparation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*.

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## Electoral Legislation

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In 2007/2008 the Commissioner provided advice and assistance to the Attorney General on preparation of legislation to amend the Electoral Act, taking into account the Commission's review of the Electoral Act after the 2004 election, changes made to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* and other changes foreshadowed by the Commonwealth Government related to disclosure and enrolment, and other issues that arose after the Commission published its review.

The Commissioner also provided advice to the Attorney General in relation to the Commonwealth Government's commencement in March 2008 of a green paper process aimed at a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory approach to reforming and modernising electoral processes. This process is expected to continue in 2008/2009.

The Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2007 was introduced into the Assembly by the Attorney-General, Simon Corbell MLA, on 23 August 2007. The *Electoral Legislation Amendment Act 2008* was passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 8 May 2008. The Act came into effect on 21 May 2008 after official notification in the ACT's Legislation Register.

The changes made by the Amendment Act include:

- ❑ Removing the provision for non-party groups to be listed on ballot papers;
- ❑ Reducing all the thresholds for disclosure of political donations and expenditure to \$1000 from 1 July 2008, to bring the ACT disclosure scheme into line with proposed changes to the Commonwealth disclosure scheme;
- ❑ Allowing electors to apply for postal votes by phone, email, internet, fax or post, without the need for a signature or a witness;
- ❑ Providing that an elector is not eligible to apply for a postal vote if they are able to attend at a pre-poll voting centre in the ACT before polling day;
- ❑ Simplifying the requirements for authorisation of published electoral material;
- ❑ Extending the right to enrol and vote to all ACT prisoners otherwise entitled to enrol (before this change, prisoners under sentence for 3 years or more were not eligible to enrol or vote for ACT elections);
- ❑ Providing that an application for registration of a political party that includes the name of a person in the party's name must include a statement signed by that person indicating the person's consent to the party name;
- ❑ Making it an offence to take a photo of a person's marked ballot paper so as to violate the secrecy of the ballot; and
- ❑ A range of other more minor amendments.

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The Commissioner and Elections ACT staff also provided advice to the Government on preparation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 6 May 2008. The Act came into effect on 15 May 2008 after official notification in the ACT's Legislation Register.

The main purpose of this Act is to establish the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. Its goal is to ensure maximum participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT in the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of government policies that affect them. The Commissioner is responsible for the conduct of elections for the Elected Body. For more information on this election, see **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body election** on page 16.

The *Planning and Development (Consequential Amendments) Act 2007* made a minor amendment to the Electoral Act in relation to the application of the offence of marking electoral graffiti. This amendment came into effect on 31 March 2008.

The *Surveyors Act 2007* amended the Electoral Act in relation to the membership of the Redistribution Committee, to replace the reference to commissioner for surveys with a reference to the chief surveyor. This amendment came into effect on 14 November 2007.



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## KEY RESULT AREA 2.2

### ELECTORAL ENROLMENT

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#### Joint roll arrangement

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

The Commissioner pays the AEC a yearly fee for maintaining the joint roll. This fee is adjusted yearly for CPI and enrolment changes, and is due to be renegotiated every 3 years. Negotiations commenced on revising the joint roll fee in 2006/2007 and were concluded during 2007/2008. A fee of \$0.6593 per elector was set for 2007/2008. Joint roll payments for the year totalled \$155,837 (excluding GST). It was agreed that the fee paid in 2007/2008 be based on the previous year's fee, indexed by the CPI and enrolment changes, and that the indexation of the fee would continue on this basis until the next review.

#### Continuous Roll Update

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CRU is the term used to describe a range of methods used to update the electoral roll. These methods are described in detail in the Commission's *Annual Report 2002/2003*. CRU was introduced nationally in 1999.

Change of address data provided by Centrelink, Australia Post, the Rental Bond Board, the ACT Motor Registry, the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies and ActewAGL continued to be used in 2007/2008 to generate letters to households where electors may need to update their enrolment.

Due to the federal election being held in the second half of 2007, the AEC undertook a range of additional enrolment stimulation activities throughout 2007. These included targeted enrolment stimulation fieldwork and the inaugural Enrol to Vote Week, intended to encourage enrolment of 17 and 18 year old school students. These activities were suspended on the announcement of the federal election in October 2007.

Review activity by letter recommenced in April 2008 and will continue until August 2008, in the lead-up to the 2008 ACT election. Fieldwork involving visits to targeted households (where there is evidence of a change of resident, in areas of high mobility or new housing estates, and where residents are not enrolled) commenced in June 2008 and will also continue in the lead-up to the election.

The school bounty program, where schools are paid a small fee for each student's enrolment form collected, was suspended during 2007/2008 because of the range of other activities aimed at school students. The continuation of the scheme will be considered during 2008/2009 in the light of the review of the effectiveness of those other activities.

The following table shows actual enrolment figures by age group as at 30 June 2007 and as at 30 June 2008, compared to estimates of the eligible population in those groups. The eligible population excludes estimated numbers of non-citizens and other people ineligible to enrol in the ACT.

The table indicates that the proportion of 18 year-olds enrolled in the ACT had decreased from 76.5% of the estimated eligible population in 2007 to 61.0% in 2008. This outcome is consistent with observed trends that indicate that high proportions of young people do not enrol unless an election is imminent, and reflects the efforts the AEC put into enrolling young people in preparation of the 2007 federal election, and the subsequent decline in enrolment stimulation activity in the post-federal-election of the first half of 2008. The decline in the proportion of 18 year-olds enrolled contrasts with the increase in the estimated enrolled population of 19 year-olds from 71.9% to 86.3%. This is in large part likely due to the 18 year-olds of 2007 moving into the 19 year-old group. With the forthcoming ACT Legislative Assembly election in October 2008 the proportion of 18 year-olds enrolled is expected to increase. Elections ACT and the AEC intend to specifically promote enrolment among 17 and 18 year-olds in the period leading to the ACT election. Specific programs during 2008 include the AEC's Enrol to Vote Week (in late July 2008) and the re-commencement of the birthday card program (where a birthday card and enrolment application are sent to people having their 18th birthday on or before polling day) and the review-by-mail and fieldwork programs mentioned above.

The table does not include the number of enrolled 17 year olds for whom enrolment is voluntary. The number of 17 year olds on the roll at 30 June 2007 was 1 821. At 30 June 2008, the number was 532. The reasons for this decline will be similar to those detailed above regarding the decline in the proportion of 18 year olds enrolled.

**Table 7 — Enrolment by age group 2007-2008**

Age group	30 June 2007		30 June 2008	
	Number enrolled	% of estimated entitled to enrol	Number enrolled	% of estimated entitled to enrol
18	3 583	76.5%	2 888	61.0%
19	3 857	71.9%	4 393	86.3%
20-24	23 273	85.8%	23 846	90.4%
25-29	23 250	91.3%	24 496	93.9%
30-34	22 796	95.7%	23 190	98.0%
35-39	23 821	97.0%	24 764	97.8%
40-44	22 391	96.1%	22 790	99.2%
45-49	23 238	97.8%	23 594	98.1%
50-54	21 552	98.9%	21 697	100.0%
55-59	20 190	98.2%	20 460	103.0%
60-64	15 203	103.9%	16 421	99.1%
65-69	10 188	102.3%	10 615	100.3%
70+	21 210	100.4%	21 958	100.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>234 550</b>	<b>95.3%</b>	<b>241 112</b>	<b>96.9%</b>

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The percentages in the above table showing the proportion of electors who are actually enrolled compared to the estimated number of people eligible to enrol need to be treated with caution as they are based on various assumptions about residency and eligibility. The estimates for the 2 years shown are post-censal estimates based on 2006 census data updated by birth and death registrations, and estimated interstate and overseas migration. The 2007 estimates were based on preliminary results from the 2006 census and are subject to future adjustment. The fact that some age groups show participation rates greater than 100% is likely to be due to the preliminary nature of the estimates, and because the AEC delays the removal of people from the roll, where it has information that people may have left their enrolled address, pending further investigation of these enrolments.

### **Electoral Council of Australia**

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The ECA is a consultative council of Electoral Commissioners from the electoral authorities of the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

The ECA considers issues related to the maintenance of the electoral rolls, the operation of new electoral legislation, best practice in the management of elections and other matters of common interest. The ECA met 4 times in 2007/2008.

A major item of consideration by the ECA in 2007 was the AEC's activity in updating the national electoral roll in preparation for the November 2007 federal election.

The main focus of the ECA in 2008 was the Commonwealth Government's commencement in March 2008 of a green paper process aimed at a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory approach to reforming and modernising electoral processes.

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## KEY RESULT AREA 2.3

### ELECTORAL EDUCATION

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#### Electoral education program

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The key objectives of the Commission's electoral education program are:

- To ensure that the voters of the ACT know at election time when the election is to be held, where and when they can vote, how to vote and when a timely, accurate and transparent result is expected; and
- To facilitate school and community programs that place elections within a civics and citizenship framework, illustrate the process of the Hare-Clark electoral system and encourage enrolment.

Elections ACT provides ongoing electoral education to school, community and professional groups. This activity is aimed primarily at raising community awareness of the ACT's electoral system. Sessions include mock elections for school and community groups, conduct of school representative council elections and public service seminars.

Elections ACT's education sessions are often conducted in cooperation with the Legislative Assembly Education Officer at the Assembly. Participants at these sessions are shown how the Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected and how the Assembly functions. The Assembly has prepared audio-visual material that includes material on the electoral system. An education session can be taken into schools using these same materials.

The following table lists electoral education sessions conducted by Elections ACT staff in 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

**Table 8 — Electoral education sessions**

Organisation type	Number of participants 2006/2007	Number of participants 2007/2008
Colleges	50	386
Community Groups	150	72
High Schools	535	1280
Primary Schools	481	604
Professional Groups	26	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>1242</b>	<b>2458</b>

In addition to conducting face-to-face education sessions, Elections ACT has developed a range of printed electoral education resources for distribution to schools and community groups. This material is primarily aimed at providing teachers with the ability to conduct electoral education in their own classrooms. This service is a contribution to an Australia-wide incorporation of electoral education and civics education into compulsory school curricula.

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All electoral education material is available from the Elections ACT website.

A campaign to encourage secondary schools to elect members to their Student Representative Council by conducting their own elections using the Hare-Clark system continued in 2007/2008.

A series of documents is available on the website to guide teachers through the electoral process so they can run their own school elections. The documents include:

- ❑ Instructions on the election process, the voting system, election day and counting the votes;
- ❑ A nomination form;
- ❑ Ballot papers; and
- ❑ A scrutiny sheet that calculates the Hare-Clark system automatically.

The Commission's education program is advertised, in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly, by direct mail-out to schools and by referral from other organisations.

Elections ACT continued its relationship with the ACT Department of Education and Training in the area of curriculum development. A new curriculum framework was implemented in ACT schools in 2008 including a detailed Essential Learning Achievement titled "*The student understands and values what it means to be a citizen within a democracy*". Elections ACT established a document on its website linking the Essential Content of this Essential Learning Achievement with activities and resources provided by Elections ACT and the Legislative Assembly to assist ACT teachers with teaching civics and citizenship appropriate to the local context.

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## KEY RESULT AREA 2.4

### OTHER ELECTORAL STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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#### Registration of political parties

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The Electoral Commissioner keeps the register of political parties for the purposes of ACT Legislative Assembly elections.

As 2008 is a Legislative Assembly election year, applications received after 30 June 2008 for registration of new parties, or for changes to the register for existing parties, cannot be considered until after polling day for the election. This deadline led to an increase in party register applications in the first half of 2008.

At 1 July 2007, there were 6 parties on the register of political parties.

On 30 September 2007 the registration of the Australian Democrats was cancelled on the basis that it was considered on reasonable grounds that the party did not have at least 100 members who were electors in the ACT.

On 6 June 2008 the abbreviation of the name of the Liberal Party of Australia (A.C.T Division) was changed in the register from Liberal Party to Canberra Liberals.

On 13 June 2008 the Australian Motorist Party and The Community Alliance Party (ACT) were registered as political parties.

Prior to 30 June 2008, the Commissioner had received applications for registration from the Pangallo Independents Party and the Richard Mulcahy Canberra Party, but the registration process had not been completed by the end of the reporting period. At 30 June 2008, objections had been received against the registration of both these parties. Decisions to register both these parties were made in July 2008.

Also at 30 June 2008, applications to change the name of the abbreviation of the Liberal Democratic Party from LDP to Liberal Democrats and of The Community Alliance Party (ACT) from CAP to Community Alliance had been received and were being processed. Objections had been received against making the change of the abbreviation of the Liberal Democratic Party. The objection period for the change to the abbreviation of The Community Alliance Party (ACT) had not closed by 30 June. Decisions to register both these changes to the parties' abbreviations were made in July 2008.

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As at 30 June 2008, the following 7 parties were entered on the register of political parties.

**Table 9 — Registered political parties as at 30 June 2008**

Party name	Party abbreviation
Australian Labor Party (ACT Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Motorist Party	A.M.P.
Free Range Canberra	FRC
Liberal Democratic Party	LDP
Liberal Party of Australia (A.C.T. Division)	Canberra Liberals
The ACT Greens	The Greens
The Community Alliance Party (ACT)	CAP

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## Funding and disclosure scheme

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### **Annual returns**

Under the funding and disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act, registered political parties, MLAs, associated entities and persons who donated more than \$1500 to a party, MLA or associated entity were required to lodge an annual return for the 2006/2007 financial year by October 2007.

For the 2006/2007 financial year, 7 annual returns were received from political parties, 17 from MLAs, 2 from associated entities and 16 from donors.

These returns were made public on 1 February 2008. Copies of the returns can be viewed at the Elections ACT website.

On 21 May 2008 amendments to the financial disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act became law. Some of those amendments were subject to transitional provisions that had the effect of delaying their implementation until 1 July 2008.

One of the main amendments for 2008/2009 and beyond is that most of the thresholds for reporting obligations have decreased from \$1500 to \$1000.

However, the threshold for reporting of receipts (including gifts and loans) by associated entities has been removed with effect from the 2008/2009 financial year. Associated entities will be required to report details of all receipts in their annual return for that year and beyond, with the following exceptions:

- While associated entities must report the total of all receipts, reporting of details of individuals is not required for amounts received for the supply of liquor or food under a liquor license (provided it is a reasonable consideration for the supply), or for the playing of gaming machines under a gaming license; and
- Also, from 1 July 2008, associated entities that receive \$1000 or more from the same person in a financial year are required to inform the person in writing of the person's obligation to lodge an annual return of donations.

Another amendment provides that in calculating total payments towards electoral expenditure, amounts paid by or on behalf of an MLA using funds provided by the Legislative Assembly to assist the MLA in exercising his or her functions as an MLA, should not be taken into consideration.



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## Redistribution of electoral boundaries

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The Electoral Act requires a redistribution of ACT Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries to commence as soon as practicable after the start of the period 2 years before each scheduled general election for the Assembly.

As reported in the 2006/2007 Annual Report, a redistribution commenced on 12 December 2006 with the appointment by the Commission of a Redistribution Committee. The Redistribution Committee consisted of the Electoral Commissioner, Phillip Green; the Chief Planning Executive of the ACT Planning and Land Authority, Neil Savery; the Commissioner for Surveys, Frank Blanchfield; and the Regional Director, ACT Office, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Karen Macdonald.

Public suggestions and comments were invited by the Redistribution Committee on 8 February 2007. To assist people making submissions, the Redistribution Committee published guidelines for submissions, including current and projected enrolment statistics. These included projected enrolment estimates for each suburb of the ACT as at October 2008, as projected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Five suggestions were lodged with the Redistribution Committee by the close of the suggestions period on 8 March 2007. Two comments on the suggestions were received by the closing date on 22 March 2007.

The Redistribution Committee published its proposed redistribution on 31 May 2007. The Redistribution Committee proposed that the current electoral boundaries in the ACT Capital Territory be altered as follows:

- The suburb of Farrer to be transferred from Molonglo to Brindabella; and
- The suburb of Palmerston to be transferred from Molonglo to Ginninderra.

Seven objections to the Redistribution Committee's proposed redistribution were received by the closing date on 28 June 2007, with an additional late objection received on 30 June 2007.

Objections to the proposed redistribution were considered by the Augmented ACT Electoral Commission. The Augmented Commission consisted of the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, Roger Beale AO, the other Member of the Commission, Christabel Young, and the 4 members of the Redistribution Committee.

A public hearing into the objections was held by the Augmented Commission on 18 July 2007. Three people made oral submissions at the hearing.

As a result of its consideration of the written objections and the matters raised at the public hearing, the Augmented Commission decided to alter the boundaries proposed by the Redistribution Committee, and proposed that the current electoral boundaries in the ACT be altered as follows:

- The suburb of Farrer to be transferred from Molonglo to Brindabella.

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As this proposal was significantly different from the Redistribution Committee's proposal, the Augmented Commission was required to invite further objections to its proposal. Four objections to the Augmented Commission's proposed redistribution were received by the closing date on 23 August 2007.

After considering these further written objections, the Augmented Commission was not satisfied that any proposed alternative boundaries better met the redistribution criteria than its proposed boundaries. Therefore the Augmented Commission decided to adopt the electorate boundaries proposed by the Augmented Commission.

Therefore the Augmented Commission determined, in accordance with section 35 of the Electoral Act, that the ACT was to be divided into three electorates as follows:

- BRINDABELLA, a five member electorate comprising the district of Tuggeranong (excluding the suburb of Hume), the Woden Valley suburbs of Chifley, Farrer, Pearce and Torrens and the districts of Booth, Coree, Cotter River, Paddys River, Rendezvous Creek, Tennent and Mount Clear;
- GINNINDERRA, a five member electorate comprising the districts of Belconnen and Hall (including the entire Village of Hall) and the Gungahlin suburb of Nicholls; and
- MOLONGLO, a seven member electorate comprising the districts of Gungahlin (excluding the suburb of Nicholls), Canberra Central, Weston Creek, Woden Valley (excluding the suburbs of Chifley, Farrer, Pearce and Torrens), Jerrabomberra (including the entire suburb of Hume), Kowen, Majura, and Stromlo.

The determination of the redistribution was officially notified on the Legislation Register on 10 September 2007. The formal report on the redistribution was presented to the Attorney General on 28 September 2007 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 16 October 2007.

Copies of the formal report on the redistribution, incorporating current and projected enrolment statistics, the public suggestions and comments, the Redistribution Committee's proposed redistribution, objections to the proposed redistribution, the Augmented Commission's proposed redistribution, further objections to its proposed redistribution and the Augmented Commission's final determination are available to the public at the Elections ACT office and on the Elections ACT website, **[www.elections.act.gov.au](http://www.elections.act.gov.au)**.

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### Goal 3 – To support high quality electoral services by effective management

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#### Performance indicator summary

Objectives	Measures	Outcomes
Manage costs within budget allocations	Budget met	Budget met
Maintain high staff satisfaction	Performance management feedback	High staff satisfaction reported
Manage and improve IT business systems	Absence of IT business systems failures	No IT business systems failures

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## KEY RESULT AREA 3.1

### HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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#### Continuous improvement

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Elections ACT endeavours to foster an environment of continuous improvement and strives to provide satisfying work and development opportunities for its staff.

Permanent staff are encouraged to pursue secondments to other agencies to contribute to international, interstate and national electoral projects and to develop new skills through on-the-job training and external training courses.

During 2007/2008, Elections ACT staff had several opportunities to undertake a range of learning and development activities (see **Learning and Development** on page 53).

Elections ACT also uses industrial democracy to enhance the quality of work for Elections ACT staff. As Elections ACT is a small organisation, all staff meet in regular forums to participate in decision-making processes. These include regular staff meetings and corporate and strategic planning workshops.

In 2007/2008, Elections ACT staff held a number of planning sessions, focusing on preparations for the 2008 election.

All Elections ACT staff had a performance management plan for 2007/2008. The plans incorporated a formal review schedule, with one-on-one performance reviews.

For further information on human resources management in Elections ACT and in particular staff improvement and development opportunities, see pages 51 to 53.

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## KEY RESULT AREA 3.2

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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The Commission is included in the JACS portfolio for budgetary purposes. However, the Commission continues to monitor its internal operating budget performance. In 2007/2008, the Commission's budget outcome was within its budget allocation.

The Shared Services Unit of the Department of Treasury has responsibility for processing all the Commission's finances on the Commission's behalf.

Refer to ***Financial report*** on page 10 for more information on the Commission's finances.

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## KEY RESULT AREA 3.3

### RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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As required by the *Territory Records Act 2002*, Elections ACT has in place a records management program.

Elections ACT has an identified Records Management Policy that has been approved by the Electoral Commissioner as the agency's Principal Officer. Records management procedures have been created and implemented. Appropriate training has been provided to staff.

Elections ACT's Records Disposal Schedule is listed on the Legislation Register as *Territory Records (Records Disposal Schedule – Electoral Records) Approval 2004 (No 1)*, notifiable instrument NI2004—178.

Elections ACT has its own internal files as well as ACT Registry Files.

All active files, including internal and ACT Registry files, are stored within the Elections ACT office. Inactive files that are to be stored long-term in accordance with the Commission's Records Disposal Schedule are archived by ACT Registry. An in-house database records the names and details of all files held by Elections ACT.

Elections ACT's electronic records are stored on a centralised server maintained by InTACT, the ACT Government information technology management agency. InTACT is responsible for backing-up Elections ACT's data.

Elections ACT does not create or hold records containing information that may allow people to establish links with their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Elections ACT reviewed its records management policy in November 2006 and decided no changes to the policy were needed. Elections ACT will review its record management policy after the October 2008 ACT election.

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## KEY RESULT AREA 3.4

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

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#### IT resources

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InTACT, the ACT Government information technology management agency, continued to provide Information Technology (IT) resources to Elections ACT in 2007/2008.

#### IT applications

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Elections ACT maintains a wide range of databases and other IT applications. In 2006/2007, in conjunction with InTACT, Elections ACT finalised a review of its IT business systems in preparation for the 2008 election. As a result of this review, the Commissioner sought and received funding in the 2007/2008 budget for a comprehensive upgrade of Elections ACT's key IT business systems.

In 2007/2008 Elections ACT engaged a contract programmer to upgrade its most important IT business systems, particularly the election results system and the postal voting system.

Other significant IT projects in 2007/2008 included contracting external providers to undertake work on the electronic voting and counting system, a ballot paper scanning system and the use of electronic hand-held devices as electoral rolls in places. For more details on these projects, see **Electronic voting and vote counting** on page 13 and **Use of electronic rolls to replace printed** rolls in polling places on page 14.

#### Internet

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Elections ACT continued to maintain and update the Elections ACT website during 2007/2008, with all work being completed in-house. The Elections ACT website address is **[www.elections.act.gov.au](http://www.elections.act.gov.au)**.

For more detail on the Elections ACT website see **Information service** on page 20

**Part B**

**Consultation and scrutiny reporting**

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## Community engagement

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This section is intended to outline major or significant community consultations undertaken during the year.

The electoral boundaries redistribution process undertaken in the lead up to every ACT Legislative Assembly election is one of the most significant community consultation activities carried out by the Commission in the election cycle. A redistribution process commenced in 2006/2007, and concluded in 2007/2008. See **Redistribution of electoral boundaries** on page 32.

Elections ACT also consults with interested groups through its Electronic Voting and Counting System Reference Group. The Commissioner intends to convene this group again in the lead up to the October 2008 election.

## Internal and external scrutiny

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The Commission was not subject to significant internal or external scrutiny in 2007/2008.

## Legislative Assembly Committee inquiries and reports

The Commission was subject to the following Legislative Assembly Committee inquiries and report in 2007/2008:

- ❑ Standing Committee On Legal Affairs: *Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports (Legal Affairs) 2006-2007* (no report as at 30 June 2008); and
- ❑ Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People: *Inquiry into the Eligible Voting Age*, Report No 5, September 2007.

The Standing Committee On Legal Affairs had not published its report on its inquiry as at 30 June 2008.

The Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People published its report: *Inquiry into the Eligible Voting Age* in September 2007.

Details of the Committee's recommendations, and the Government response to the recommendations, are set out in the following table:

**Table 10 — Recommendations in the Inquiry into the Eligible Voting Age report**

Recommendation	Government view
1. The Committee recommends that the level of support for the proposal to lower the voting age be reconsidered by the Legislative Assembly before the end of 2010.	Noted
2. The Committee recommends that the Australian Parliament be asked to amend Section 67B of the <i>Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988</i> to ensure consistency between the ACT and Commonwealth Electoral Acts on the intent of provisional enrolment	Not supported
3. The Committee recommends that, should a proposal to lower the voting age be pursued, the integrity of the compulsory voting system be preserved.	Supported
4. The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly consider the opportunities provided to young people to actively engage in aspects of the political process and develop strategies to increase participation of young people in formal political events and in processes to provide feedback on policy or legislative proposals.	Supported
5. The Committee recommends that all civics and citizenship resources provide explanations of how public administration can account for the interests and needs of all citizens, the scope of this capacity in our democracy and the avenues open for public participation in decision-making processes.	Noted
6. The Committee recommends that the Minister for Education and Training ensures that accurate and engaging learning materials, that deal with the specific attributes of the ACT political system and ensure all schools actively promote democratic principles and the attributes of active citizenship, be developed for use in all ACT schools.	Agreed
7. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake to extend the effectiveness of civics education strategies in promoting awareness and confidence in young people of the specific characteristics of the ACT system of democracy.	Agreed
8. The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the potential for the "student vote" model to extend and enhance the delivery of practical civics education opportunities for all young people in the ACT.	Noted

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Recommendation	Government view
9. The Committee recommends that the ACT Electoral Commission provide indicators of youth participation in the annual report by including data on the current rate of provisional enrolment for 17 year olds.	Noted
10. The Committee recommends that the ACT Electoral Commission, the Legislative Assembly and the Department of Education and Training continue to collaborate in the development and expansion of opportunities for active learning about democracy in the ACT.	Agreed

Two of the Committee's recommendations specifically refer to the Electoral Commission and other recommendations refer to civics education strategies in which the Commission may play a part.

In relation to the Committee's recommendation (9) that the ACT Electoral Commission provide indicators of youth participation in its annual report by including data on the current rate of provisional enrolment for 17 year olds: this information is provided in this report at page 25.

In relation to the Committee's recommendation (10) that the ACT Electoral Commission, the Legislative Assembly and the Department of Education and Training continue to collaborate in the development and expansion of opportunities for active learning about democracy in the ACT and the Committee's recommendation (8) that the ACT Government consider the potential for the "student vote" model to extend and enhance the delivery of practical civics education opportunities for all young people in the ACT, the ACT Government has agreed to establish a cross agency committee to consider the potential for a student vote in the ACT and determine the resourcing implications. The Electoral Commissioner and the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Training have discussed the establishment of the proposed cross agency committee. The Department of Education and Training has agreed to be the lead agency of the committee. This committee is expected to be convened later in 2008.

In addition to this formal cross agency committee process, Elections ACT remains committed to working with the Legislative Assembly and Department of Education and Training to extend the effectiveness of its electoral education programs and strategies.

## Legislation report

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The Commission and the Electoral Commissioner are responsible for the conduct of the elections and referendums and for the provision of electoral advice and services under the following legislation:

- *Electoral Act 1992*;
- *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994*;
- *Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994*;
- *Health Professionals Regulation 2004*; and
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*.

The Commission's role in providing advice on amendments to this legislation is discussed above at ***Electoral Legislation*** on page 22.



## Part C

# Legislative and policy based reporting

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## Risk Management & Internal Audit

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Under the direction of the Electoral Commissioner, Elections ACT undertakes risk management assessments for all its major projects and contracts. The Commission takes a strategic interest in these assessments where they bear on its statutory duties. During the reporting period the Commission and Elections ACT continued the task of assessing risks for new processes expected to be introduced for the 2008 ACT election.

As Elections ACT is too small to undertake its own internal audit processes, it takes part in the JACS internal audit arrangements.

The Commission's finances are also audited as part of the JACS portfolio.

## Fraud prevention

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### Prevention strategies

This is a matter for which the Electoral Commissioner is responsible. Elections ACT employed the following fraud prevention strategies in 2007/2008:

- ☐ Adherence to fraud prevention procedures in office administration;
- ☐ Inclusion of fraud prevention procedures in the Commission's operational plans;
- ☐ Avoidance of potential conflicts of interests;
- ☐ Analysis of risk assessments in all major contracts;
- ☐ Use of a code of conduct relating to the use of information technology, particularly as it relates to electoral roll information;
- ☐ Use of standard procedures for viewing proof of identity documents when witnessing applications for enrolment;
- ☐ Secure storage of ballot material for all elections; and
- ☐ Secure website.

Elections ACT also continued to work closely with the AEC and the ECA on strategies and performance measures related to detection and prevention of electoral enrolment fraud.

### Detection strategies

Elections ACT's election procedures include many mechanisms designed to provide for transparency. In particular, scrutineers appointed by candidates are entitled to be present throughout polling and the count for Legislative Assembly elections and for most fee-for-service elections.

There were no reports or allegations of fraud or corruption received in 2007/2008.

## Public interest disclosure

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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 JACS.

During 2007/2008 no public interest disclosures related to the Commission were lodged.

## Freedom of information

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### **Section 7 statement**

Section 7 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* (the FOI Act) requires agencies to publish a statement showing functions of the agency, how the public can participate in the work of the agency, categories of documents in the possession of the agency, and facilities provided for access to the agency's documents.

The Chairperson of the Commission is the principal officer of the Commission for the purposes of the FOI Act in relation to functions and powers vested in the 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 Commission and the Electoral Commissioner exercise powers under the Electoral Act, the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994*, the *Health Professionals Act 2004* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*.

### **Arrangements for external participation**

There are several avenues available under the Electoral Act for external participation in electoral matters.

- ☐ Members of the public are invited to make suggestions, comments and objections regarding proposed changes to electoral boundaries;
- ☐ Members of the public are invited to lodge objections to applications for registration of political parties;
- ☐ An elector may object to the enrolment of a person on the ground that the person is not entitled to enrolment; and
- ☐ Approaches from the community on any electoral matter are welcomed by the Commission.



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## Documents

Extracts, updated at least once each year, from the ACT electoral roll are made available for public inspection (but not purchase) without charge at the office of the Commission.

Lists of registered practitioners eligible to vote in health professionals boards elections are made available for public inspection (but not purchase) without charge at the office of the 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 Commission 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, MLAs, associated entities and donors; and
- ☐ Election returns of donations and expenditure submitted by political parties, candidates, broadcasters and publishers, donors and other political participants.

The documents listed under *Publications* on page 20 are provided free of charge (except for electronic voting data on CD-ROM).

## Facilities for access

Publicly available documents can be obtained from Elections ACT's office. FOI requests should be directed to the Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

Most items are also available on the Elections ACT website at **[www.elections.act.gov.au](http://www.elections.act.gov.au)**.

## Section 8 Statement

Section 8 of the FOI Act requires the Commission to publish a statement of documents used for the purpose of making decisions or recommendations. This statement is available on request and is included on the Elections ACT website at **[www.elections.act.gov.au/FOI.html](http://www.elections.act.gov.au/FOI.html)** and in the statement published by JACS.

## Section 79 Statement

Section 79 of the FOI Act states that each responsible Minister must prepare an annual report on the operation of the FOI Act in relation to each agency for which the Minister is responsible.

The Commission did not receive any FOI requests in 2007/2008, nor were any FOI matters outstanding at 1 July 2007.

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**Contact officer**

For further information about the ACT Electoral Commission, FOI or any other matters raised in this annual report, contact:

The Electoral Commissioner  
ACT Electoral Commission  
O'Connell Centre  
Cnr Stuart Street & Blaxland Crescent  
Griffith ACT 2603

Telephone: (02) 6205 0033

Fax: (02) 6205 0382

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

Or email:  
[elections@act.gov.au](mailto:elections@act.gov.au)

Website:  
**[www.elections.act.gov.au](http://www.elections.act.gov.au)**

## Internal accountability

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As a very small agency, the Commission does not have complex internal accountability structures and processes.

The full Commission, consisting of the Chairperson, the Electoral Commissioner and the third Member, oversees the operation of the Commission, sets general directions and approves reports to the Legislative Assembly. The Commission adopted new internal governance guidelines in 2006/2007.

Under the Electoral Act, the Commission is also responsible for undertaking internal reviews of a range of decisions that can be made in the first instance by the Commissioner or by his or her delegate.

The full Commission forms part of the Augmented Electoral Commission, together with the members of a redistribution committee. The Augmented Electoral Commission considers objections to proposed electoral boundaries and makes final determinations of electorate names and boundaries.

The Electoral Commissioner performs the legislative role of chief executive officer of the Commission. The Commissioner is empowered to make a wide range of decisions under the Electoral Act and the Public Sector Management Act. The Commissioner generally approves all major projects undertaken by Elections ACT staff, including contracts, legislative instruments, publications and memorandums of understanding for fee-for-service elections. The Commissioner also carries a delegation under the *Financial Management Act 1996* to commit expenditure up to the limit of the Commission's budget.

The Deputy Electoral Commissioner performs a range of management functions in support of the Commissioner, including contracts manager, funding and financial disclosure manager and registrar of political parties. The Deputy Electoral Commissioner carries a standing delegation to perform the Commissioner's functions should the Commissioner be unavailable.

The Commission's management structure is described under **Organisational Structure** on page 3. Details of the Commission's corporate and operational plans can be found at **Corporate Plan 2006-2009** on page 4. Details of the Commission's performance reporting arrangements can be found at **Performance indicators** at page 5.

Remuneration of the Commission members is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal.

For administrative purposes the Commission is an independent statutory authority within the Justice and Community Safety portfolio. The Commissioner exercises financial powers under the Financial Management Act as a delegate of the Chief Executive of the Department of Justice and Community Safety, who retains legislative responsibility for and maintains an oversight role of the Commission's budget. The Commissioner is a member of the Department's consultative management committee, JACSCOM, the JACS Statutory Officer Holders Forum, the JACS Information Management/Information Communication Technology Committee and the JACS Joint Union Management Consultative Committee.

## Human resource performance

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Elections ACT is a small agency with a small permanent work force.

There were no changes to the number of permanent staff employed by Elections ACT in 2007/2008. However, there were some changes in personnel. During the year, one new staff member was appointed to a permanent position in Elections ACT to replace a staff member who retired and two other staff members were appointed on contract to replace two permanent staff members who had transferred to other agencies.

An additional staff member was appointed on short-term contract from April to July 2008 to conduct the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body election.

Casual staff are employed by the Commissioner as required to assist with fee-for-service elections and other state general elections.

Elections ACT maintains an in-house database of applicants for casual and temporary employment. Casual staff appointed under the Electoral Act, including polling officials, are employed following a merit selection process based on equal employment opportunity principles, previous experience and performance ratings.

In 2008/2009, Elections ACT intends to expand its workforce in the lead up to, and during the conduct of, the October 2008 ACT election.

## Staffing profile

The following table sets out details of permanent staff employed during 2007/2008. The figures presented are as at pay 26, 24 June 2008. The table does not include the 2 part-time Commission Members.

**Table 11 — Staff of Elections ACT**

Title	Classification	Female	Male	CLDB	Category	Length of service		Employment authority
Electoral Commissioner	Statutory Office Holder		1		5 year appointment	26	full-time	Electoral Act
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	Senior Officer Grade B		1		Temporary acting	35	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Election Projects Manager	Senior Officer Grade C		1		Short term contract	28	Full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Election Projects Manager	Administrative Service Officer Class 6		1		Permanent	5	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Project and Office Manager	Administrative Service Officer Class 6	1		1	Permanent	15	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Education and Information Manager	Administrative Service Officer Class 5	1			Permanent	21	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Finance and Administrative officer	Administrative Service Officer Class 5	1			Permanent	5	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Election Casual	Election Casual	2	2		Election Casual	on ad-hoc basis		<i>Electoral Act 1992</i>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>				

Notes:

CLDB: Culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Length of Service: Includes all years of service in the public sector.

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

For privacy reasons, an age range is not shown for each staff member. As at 30 June 2008, 1 staff member was in the 18-19 age group; 1 in the 20-24 age group; 1 in the 30-34 age group; 1 in the 35-39 age group; 1 in the 45-49 age group; 3 in the 50-54 age group; 2 in the 55-59 age group; and 1 in the 60+ age group.

## Learning and development

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During 2007/2008, Elections ACT permanent staff participated in learning and development activities, including attending various courses and seminars. Two staff members were undertaking part-time university courses during the year.

To facilitate Elections ACT's learning and development strategy, each staff member is allocated up to \$2,000 in the Commission's budget each year.

Each Elections ACT staff member maintains a formal individual performance management and development plan. These plans are regularly reviewed. Through weekly meetings of all staff, the Commissioner also monitors and updates Elections ACT's performance as a team.

Learning and development opportunities undertaken in 2007/2008 are shown in the following table.

**Table 12 — Learning and development activities**

Staff Members	Course/seminar/development opportunity
Electoral Commissioner	360 degree feedback program
Administrative Service Officer Class 6	Records management – understanding and using a thesaurus
	Senior first aid – refresher
Administrative Service Officer Class 6	Bachelor of Education – graduate entry
Administrative Service Officer Class 5	Records management – understanding and using a thesaurus
	Privacy, copyright & FOI seminar
	What works in working in and with Aboriginal & Torres Straits Islander communities
	Workstation awareness
Acting Administrative Service Officer Class 5	Records management – understanding and using a thesaurus
	Privacy, copyright & FOI seminar
	Bachelor of Education – undergraduate entry
	Salary packaging information seminar

## Workplace health and safety

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In all of its activities Elections ACT gives careful consideration to occupational health and safety (OH&S) principles and practices. Elections ACT has adopted the JACS OH&S policy.

Incoming post is scanned by the ACT Government Registry before being opened by Elections ACT staff.

Elections ACT has 1 staff member who is a designated fire warden and another staff member who is a designated qualified first aid officer. Elections ACT has access to JACS OH&S representatives.

There were no workers compensation claims during the reporting period.

## Workplace relations

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### Collective agreements

The Justice and Community Safety Union Collective Agreement 2007-2010 was lodged with the Workplace Authority on 30 November 2007 and became operational from that day. The Electoral Commissioner is a signatory to this Agreement, which covers Elections ACT staff employed under the Public Sector Management Act.

### Australian Workplace Agreements

No Elections ACT staff were employed under an Australian Workplace Agreement.

### Special Employment Arrangements

No Elections ACT staff were employed under a Special Employment Arrangement.

## Strategic asset management

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Elections ACT's assets, accommodation details and energy reduction strategies are included in the JACS asset management strategy and reported on in the JACS Annual Report.

To assist with tracking computing and office equipment Elections ACT uses the InTACT ATLAS system, which is updated to reflect any equipment changes.

## Capital Works

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The Commission did not undertake any capital works projects in 2007/2008.

## Government contracting

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### Procurement principles and processes

The processes used to select and manage all contractors during 2007/2008 complied with the *Government Procurement Act 2001* and the ACT Government Procurement Principles and Procurement Circulars.

### External sources of labour and services

In 2007/2008, the Commissioner did not enter into any reportable contracts for labour and services that exceeded \$20,000 for the reporting period.

## Community grants/assistance/sponsorship

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The Commission does not fund or receive community grants, assistance or sponsorship.

## Territory records

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A description of the Commission's compliance with the Territory Records Act is set out at **Key result area 3.3 – Records management** on page 37.



## Human Rights Act

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Respect for human rights is a key driver behind the Commission's statutory functions and its organisational mission and goals.

The focus on customer service contained in Elections ACT's mission, key goals and training programs is intended to ensure that all staff respect, protect and promote human rights in the course of their duties.

The Commission considers that its conduct of elections under the Electoral Act gives effect to section 17(b) (Taking part in public life) of the *Human Rights Act 2004*, which provides that every citizen has the right, and is to have the opportunity, to vote and be elected at periodic elections that guarantee the free expression of the will of the elector.

Human rights principles are taken into account in the Commission's regular reviews of the electoral legislation. The JACS Human Rights Unit was consulted on proposals to amend the electoral legislation in 2007/2008.

## Commissioner for the Environment

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The Commission did not contribute to the *State of the Environment Report* in 2007/2008. The Commission has not been the subject of an investigation or recommendations made by the Commissioner for the Environment.

## ACT multicultural strategy

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Elections ACT has integrated the key themes of the *Multicultural Strategy 2006-2009* into its strategic and operational planning processes insofar as they are relevant. This strategy addresses the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and members of the ACT community who have a disability.

Elections ACT is committed to client focused service delivery in a culturally diverse society.

The special needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are given particular attention in the Commission's election information strategy.

The Telephone Interpreter Service information panel is printed on the Commission's major election publications, encouraging electors with limited ability in English to make use of the service to assist with understanding electoral information. Professional interpreter services are used as required.

In the lead-up to an ACT election, electoral services and information are advertised in various community newsletters. Bi-lingual educators are engaged to communicate electoral information to their communities.

Elections ACT takes a range of steps intended to ensure that its services are accessible to members of the ACT community who have a disability.

Elections ACT maintains office space where public documents can be viewed. This space is accessible to people who have a disability.

All staff at all polling places are trained in providing appropriate service to people who have a disability. Special provision is made to provide assistance to any person who is unable to vote without help.

All lists of polling places provided in the Commission's public information material indicate which polling places are accessible to people using wheelchairs. Polling place locations are chosen to maximise the number of polling places that have wheelchair access. All pre-poll voting locations are accessible by wheelchair.

Elections ACT's electronic voting system is designed to allow people with disabilities to vote in secret, without assistance. Every electronic polling place is equipped with a voting terminal that can be used by a person seated in a wheelchair or in the supplied seat. Each of these terminals has a 21 inch monitor (compared to 17 inch monitors used in standard voting screens). These terminals are also equipped with headphones that broadcast spoken instructions. Using this system, people with visual impairment are able to vote in secret using a keypad. On-screen voting instructions are also provided in 12 languages.

Electronic voting was used for the first time at a parliamentary election in Australia at the 2001 ACT Legislative Assembly election. It was used again at the 2004 ACT election in pre-poll voting centres and 8 polling places on polling day. Elections ACT intends to use this system again at the 2008 election at 5 pre-poll voting centres, open for the 3 weeks before polling day and on polling day itself.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting

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The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 6 May 2008. This Act established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body in the ACT and provides for the conduct of an election every 3 years to elect members to the body.

Elections ACT provided advice to the ACT Government on development of this legislation.

The first election for the Elected Body was conducted by Elections ACT in May-July 2008. For more information on this election see **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body election** on page 16.

## Ecologically sustainable development

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The *Environment Protection Act 1997* requires agencies to report on how its actions accorded with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Elections ACT's delivery of service is generally office based. Elections ACT staff are very mindful of waste management. Elections ACT staff adhere to the following environment-friendly practices:

- ❑ Power to computers, printers, photocopier and lights is turned off every night;
- ❑ Recyclable consumables are used when available and recycled paper is used for normal office work and for publications where appropriate;
- ❑ Office waste paper and toner is recycled; and
- ❑ Election material is reused or recycled where possible.

It is expected that the provision of computer voting and computerised electoral rolls will lead to a reduction in the use of paper products during an election period.

In aligning with the Government's commitments to waste minimisation, greenhouse emission reductions, water efficiency and transport efficiency, agencies are required to provide relevant data on their resource use. The Department of Justice and Community Safety (JACS) will collect and report on the resource data for Elections ACT as part of the JACS 2007/2008 Annual Report. However, the data for Elections ACT will not be disaggregated from other agencies; the data will represent an average resource use across the department.

## ACT Women's Plan

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The ACT Women's Plan 2004-2009 sets out the ACT Government's vision for working with the community to improve the status of all women and girls, and provides a shared approach for working towards this vision across ACT Government agencies.

Two of the objectives set out in Women's Plan are related to the work of the Commission: Representation and Recognition; and Safe, Inclusive Communities.

Elections ACT aims to conduct elections in which women are free to participate as electors and as candidates. At the 2004 election, 40 candidates were women and 54 candidates were men. Of the 17 elected Members of the Assembly, 6 were women. At 30 June 2008, there were 241,112 electors on the electoral roll aged 18 and over; 124,247 were women (estimated to be 98.1% of the eligible population) and 116,865 were men (estimated to be 95.9% of the eligible population).

In order to promote a safe community, Elections ACT continues to work with the AEC to ensure that silent enrolment is available and offered to community members who, for reasons of safety, do not want their addresses published on the electoral roll.

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