

Overview of the ACT Electoral Commission

The ACT Electoral Commission conducts elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The Commission is an independent statutory authority. The Attorney General is the Minister responsible for electoral matters. On 1 July 2014 the members of the Commission became officers of the Assembly, and report to the Assembly through the Speaker.

The Commission consists of a Chairperson, the Electoral Commissioner and a third Member. The Electoral Commissioner is also the chief executive officer of the Commission and has director-general powers in relation to staff employed to assist the Commissioner under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and director-general powers under the *Financial Management Act 1996*.

From 1 July 2014 the three Members of the Electoral Commission are appointed by the Speaker under the Electoral Act.

The members of the Electoral Commission are:

- **Ms Dawn Casey** – *Chairperson*
Appointed to 19 April 2022
- **Mr Damian Cantwell AM** – *Electoral Commissioner*
Appointed to 31 October 2022
- **Mr Philip Moss** – *Member*
Appointed to 6 June 2022

The Electoral Commissioner is a full-time office holder. The Chairperson and the other Member of the Commission are part-time office holders.

The Commissioner is currently assisted by 8 permanent officers employed under the Public Sector Management Act:

- Deputy Electoral Commissioner;
- Elections Operations Manager;
- Funding and Disclosure Manager;
- Finance Manager;
- Office Manager;
- Education & Information Officer;
- Education & Information Officer; and
- Administration Officer.

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

The office of the Electoral Commissioner and the staff appointed to assist the Electoral Commissioner operate under the title Elections ACT.

Vision
Continuous improvement through innovation and leadership
Mission
To provide the ACT community with high quality electoral services that ensure fair and open elections and referendums.
Values
The ACT public service values and behaviours of respect, integrity, collaboration, innovation.
Guiding principles
Transparency, accessibility, impartiality, independence.

Description of activities

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

The Commission's primary responsibility is to the electors of the ACT. This responsibility is reflected in the Commission's mission, which is:

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

Another major function is the redistribution of electoral boundaries between elections.

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

Some of the other tasks for which the Commission is responsible include working with other electoral authorities to improve the accuracy of the electoral roll, electoral education, maintaining the register of political parties and the election funding, expenditure and financial disclosure scheme, conducting elections for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board and providing electoral services to other organisations on a fee-for-service basis.

Section 7 of the *Electoral Act 1992* sets out the legislative functions of the Electoral Commission:

- (a) To advise the Assembly on matters relating to elections;
- (b) To consider, and report to the Assembly on, matters relating to elections referred to it by the Assembly;
- (c) To promote public awareness of matters relating to elections and the Assembly by conducting education and information programs and by any other means it chooses;
- (d) To provide information and advice on matters relating to elections to –
 - i. The Assembly; and
 - ii. The Executive; and
 - iii. The head of service; and
 - iv. Directors-general; and
 - v. Statutory office-holders; and
 - vi. Territory authorities; and
 - vii. Territory instrumentalities; and
 - viii. Political parties; and
 - ix. MLAs; and
 - x. Candidates at elections;
- (e) To conduct and promote research into matters relating to elections or other matters relating to its functions;
- (f) To publish material on matters relating to its functions;
- (g) To provide, on payment of the determined fee (if any), goods and services to persons or organisations, to the extent that it is able to do so by using information or material in its possession or expertise acquired in the exercise of its functions;
- (h) To conduct ballots for prescribed persons and organisations;
- (i) To exercise any other function given to it under this Act or another Territory law.

The Commission may exercise any of its functions under subsection (1) (a) to (f) in conjunction with the Australian Electoral Commission.

Legislative framework

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

- *Electoral Act 1992*
- *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1994*
- *Electoral Regulation 1993*
- *Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994*

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*
- *Health Professions Regulation 2004* [for the Veterinary Surgeons Board only]

Joint Roll Arrangement

Under the ACT/Commonwealth joint roll arrangement the Australian Electoral Commission (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 Commission pays the AEC a yearly fee for maintaining the joint roll. The fee is adjusted yearly for CPI and is renegotiated every three years.

Documents

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

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.
- Gift returns of donations of \$1,000 or more received by political parties, candidates, associated entities and third party campaigners.

The documents listed on our [publications page](#) are provided free of charge.

The following documents are used by the ACT Electoral Commission for the purposes of administering the [Electoral Act 1992](#), the [Referendum \(Machinery Provisions\) Act 1994](#) and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008](#).

- Candidates information handbook
- Customer commitment statement
- Declaration vote scrutiny procedures manual
- Election funding and financial disclosure handbooks for annual returns
- Election funding and financial disclosure handbooks for election returns
- Elections ACT operational plan
- Guidelines for receipt of gifts of \$1000 or more
- How to Register a Political Party for ACT Legislative Assembly Elections
- Interstate electoral authorities manual

- Liaison officer procedures manual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body elections
- Mobile polling procedures manual
- Polling area manager manual
- Polling place management procedures manual
- Polling place procedures manual
- Polling place procedures manual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body elections
- Postal voting procedures manual
- Pre-poll management procedures manual
- Pre-poll officer procedures manual
- Review panel procedures manual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body elections
- Scrutineers information handbook
- Scrutiny centre scanning procedures manual
- Second-in-charge procedures manual

Facilities for access

FOI requests should be directed to the Deputy Electoral Commissioner at the [ACT Electoral Commission](#).

For FOI requests, please ensure your application provides all the details required for us to assist you. In general:

- Identify the documents you need.
- Write out the request giving as much information as you can about the documents you want (for example, give a file number, a reference to a newspaper report or describe the subject matter in which you are interested).
- Provide a postal address in Australia where correspondence can be sent to you.
- [Post or email](#) your request to the Deputy Electoral Commissioner who fulfils the role of FOI Information Officer for the ACT Electoral Commission.