



Australian Capital Territory



Elections ACT

ACT Electoral Commission
Annual Report
2006-2007





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Annual Report
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Dear Attorney General

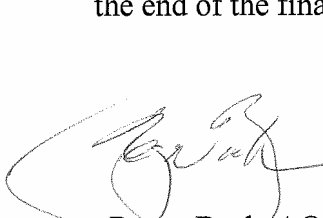
This report has been prepared under section 6(1) of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* and in accordance with the requirements referred to in the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions. It has been prepared in conformity with other legislation applicable to the preparation of Annual 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 2006 to 30 June 2007 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

31 August 2007



Phillip Green
Electoral Commissioner

31 August 2007



Christabel Young
Member

31 August 2007

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Glossary

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

Part A

Performance and financial management reporting

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The organisation

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 2006/2007, the Commission was included in Output Class 1.6 - Electoral Services.

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;*
- *Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994; and*
- *Health Professionals Regulation 2004.*

Organisational structure

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

Table 1 — Members of the ACT Electoral Commission

<p>Mr Roger Beale AO <i>Chairperson</i> Appointed on 21 March 2007 until 28 February 2012</p>
<p>Mr Phillip Green <i>Electoral Commissioner</i> Reappointed until 31 March 2010</p>
<p>Dr Christabel Young FASSA <i>Member</i> Reappointed until 28 February 2012</p>

Note: This table shows appointments in force on 30 June 2007.

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 previous Chairperson, Mr Graham Glenn AO, held the position until 31 January 2007.

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.

In 2006/2007 the Commissioner was assisted by 5 permanent 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 10 — Staff of Elections ACT** on page 38.

Election ACT's mission

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

MISSION	
To provide the ACT community with high quality electoral services that ensure fair and open elections and referendums.	
Goal 1	To conduct high quality elections and referendums
Key result areas:	1.1 Elections for the ACT Legislative Assembly
	1.2 Election and referendum services to other agencies
Goal 2	To provide high quality electoral information, education, advice and services
Key result areas:	2.1 Electoral information and advice
	2.2 Electoral enrolment
	2.3 Electoral education
	2.4 Other electoral statutory requirements
Goal 3	To support high quality electoral services by effective management
Key result areas:	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 most output classes in the JACS portfolio was reduced. The Chief Executive of JACS decided to adopt only 2 performance indicators for the electoral services output class: *High citizen participation in the electoral process*; and *Average time to finalise results of general elections and referendums for the ACT Legislative Assembly*. As these indicators only relate to Legislative Assembly elections, the Commission has no formal performance indicators capable of being listed in the budget papers in non-Assembly election years.

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 Part B.

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

As 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 2006/2007, this preparatory work included progressing the review of the electoral legislation, commencing a redistribution of electoral boundaries, adopting a strategy for upgrading of the Commission's database business systems, seeking tenders for using intelligent character recognition scanning to replace manual data entry of ballot papers, revising the Commission's polling official training strategy and studying the feasibility of using 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 is now intending to introduce 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 2006/2007 is shown at **Highlights** on page 7.

In January 2007 Mr Graham Glenn AO finished his term as the Commission's Chairperson. The present members of the Commission and the staff of the Commission extend their thanks and gratitude to Mr Glenn for his contribution to the Commission. Mr Glenn was the inaugural Commission Chairperson, first appointed to the Commission on 21 December 1992.

Highlights

Major activities undertaken by the Commission and Elections ACT during 2006/2007:

- Commencing the redistribution of electorate boundaries, including the public consultation process;
- Advising the ACT Government on preparation 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* in June 2006;
- Publishing the *Electoral Compendium 1989–2006*;
- Seeking tenders for using intelligent character recognition scanning to replace manual data entry of ballot papers at the 2008 Legislative Assembly election;
- Investigating the feasibility of using electronic certified lists at polling places to replace paper-based scanned electoral rolls;
- Convening the Reference Group to discuss the future of electronic voting and counting and intelligent character recognition scanning;
- Devising and commencing a new strategy for maintaining the Commission's in-house suite of databases in preparation for the 2008 election;
- Making a submission to, and appearing before, the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People inquiry into voting age eligibility.

Other activities undertaken during the year included:

- Continuing to work with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) to improve electoral roll maintenance procedures;
- Providing staff on secondment to assist at the Victorian state election held in November 2006;
- Continuing the Commission's non-parliamentary election program, conducting 2 health professionals board elections, 1 health professionals board casual vacancy and 7 fee-for-service ballots, and assisting with the conduct of 5 interstate elections, including general elections for Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales;
- Providing a full-time electoral inquiry service over the counter, by phone, by email and by post;
- Pursuing CRU initiatives, including securing enrolment forms from secondary school students and obtaining data from a comprehensive range of ACT agencies; and
- Continuing the schools based electoral education program.

A particular challenge during the year was a move into temporary accommodation in 12 Moore Street in Canberra City, following a move in the previous year to temporary accommodation in 14 Moore Street. The office space provided to the Commission and the public access to the Commission's service in these temporary locations have not been satisfactory. The Commission hopes that a suitable permanent home for the Commission will be found in 2007/2008.

Outlook

The main focus of the Commission and Elections ACT in 2007/2008 will be on the completion of the redistribution of electorate boundaries that commenced in 2006/2007 and preparations for the 2008 Legislative Assembly election.

Projects to be undertaken will include:

- Completing the redistribution of electorate boundaries;
- Preparing to use electronic scanning for counting paper ballots at the 2008 election;
- Preparing to use electronic certified lists at polling places to replace paper-based scanned electoral rolls at the 2008 election;
- Moving to new accommodation;
- Upgrading the Commission's in-house suite of databases in preparation for the 2008 election;
- Providing advice to Government and Members of the Legislative Assembly on amendments to the Electoral Act as required;
- Implementing CRU processes, including securing enrolment forms from secondary school students and obtaining data from selected ACT agencies;
- Continuing to work with the AEC and the ECA to improve electoral roll maintenance procedures;
- Finalising renegotiation of the joint roll cost with the AEC;
- Continuing the schools based electoral education program;
- Continuing the Commission's non-parliamentary election program; and
- Assisting the ACT Government with elections for an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultative body if required.

Management discussion and analysis

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 2006/2007.

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 2006/2007, the Commission is included in Output Class 1.6 – Electoral Services.

The financial transactions for the Commission for the year ending 30 June 2007 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.

Fraud prevention

Prevention strategies

This is a matter for which the Electoral Commissioner is responsible. Elections ACT employed the following fraud prevention strategies in 2006/2007:

- 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 2006/2007.

Risk management and internal audit

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.

Elections ACT was a participant in the JACS 2006/2007 Strategic Internal Audit Program. Elections ACT took part in sample audits of cash management and credit cards. Assessment of this program will be included in the JACS Annual Report. There were no adverse audit findings related to Elections ACT in 2006/2007.

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

Internal accountability

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 decided to adopt 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 (established in 2006/2007), the JACS Information Management/Information Communication Technology Committee and the JACS Joint Union Management Consultative Committee.

Financial report

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 2006/2007, the Commission is included in Output Class 1.6 – Electoral Services.

The financial transactions for the Commission for the year ending 30 June 2007 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 within its budget for 2006/2007.

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 2006/2007

ACT Electoral Commission	Budget \$'000	Actual Outcome \$'000
Revenue		
Government Payment for Outputs	929	917
Other Revenue	16	16
Total Revenue	945	933
Expenses		
Employee Expenses	500	485
Superannuation	110	107
Administration Expenses	309	337
Depreciation	7	3
Total Expenses	926	932
Operating Result	19	1

Statement of performance

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, the number of performance indicators for most output classes in the JACS portfolio were reduced. The Chief Executive of JACS decided to adopt only 2 performance indicators for the electoral services output class: *High citizen participation in the electoral process*; and *Average time to finalise results of general elections and referendums for the Act Legislative Assembly*. As these indicators only relate to Legislative Assembly elections, the Commission has no formal performance indicators capable of being listed in the budget papers or reported on in non-Assembly election years.

The Commission's in-house performance indicators are listed at **Performance indicators** on page 5 and evaluated under **Analysis of agency performance** from pages 15 to 36.

Analysis of agency performance

This section reports on activities undertaken in each key result area in 2006/2007 to achieve the Commission's goals.

Goal 1 - To conduct high quality elections and referendums

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%

KEY RESULT AREA 1.1 ELECTIONS FOR THE ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Review of the Electoral Act 1992

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 2006/2007 the Commission 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* in June 2006 related to disclosure and enrolment, and other issues that arose after the Commission published its review.

It is expected that this legislation will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly in 2007/2008.

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.

Electronic Voting and Vote Counting

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 previous reporting year, in May 2006, a consultation paper seeking industry feedback on the issue of intelligently scanning ballot papers was released by the Commissioner. Feedback from the industry was very positive and indicated that with available technology it would be possible to scan ACT ballot papers and intelligently read the handwritten numbers on them.

In September 2006 the Commissioner's office prepared a business case and a risk management plan for the use of intelligent scanning for ballot papers during the 2008 election. 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.

On 26 October 2006 the Commissioner convened a meeting of the Electronic Voting and Vote Counting Reference Group to discuss the proposed implementation of electronic voting and counting system at the 2008 election, including the proposal to use scanning of ballot papers. The Reference Group is an ongoing consultation body that consists of representatives of political parties, MLAs, the Proportional Representation Society and the ACT Disability Advisory Council. The Reference Group members at the October 2006 meeting agreed that scanning of ballot papers at the 2008 election would be acceptable,

providing testing demonstrated that an extremely high level of accuracy would be obtained from such a system.

Following the Reference Group's endorsement of the concept of scanning paper ballots, the Commissioner issued a tender for scanning paper ballots at the 2008 election on 23 February 2007. As at 30 June 2007, the Commissioner had selected a preferred tenderer and pre-contract negotiations were underway. In 2007/2008, the Commission expects to sign a contract for the provision of scanning services at the 2008 election, and to finalise development and acceptance testing of the chosen scanning solution.

In 2006/2007 some minor modifications were made to the eVACS® computer data-entry counting system to address issues that arose at the 2004 election. While it is expected that the data-entry system used at the 2001 and 2004 elections 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.

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.

Use of electronic rolls to replace printed rolls in polling places

In 2006/2007 State Electoral Commissions in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria and Tasmania used electronic hand-held devices (Personal Digital Assistants, or PDAs) as electronic electoral rolls in polling places for State elections. In the general elections held in Victoria in November 2006 and in NSW in March 2007, PDAs were used in some polling places to check the enrolment details of electors voting outside their home electorates. At the Tasmanian Legislative Council elections held for 2 Hobart electorates in May 2007, PDAs were used to mark the names of electors who voted, replacing printed rolls in polling places.

Elections ACT officers observed the use of PDAs in each of these State elections, with a view to studying the feasibility of using PDAs to replace printed electoral rolls for marking names of voters in polling places at the 2008 ACT election. Commission officers were satisfied that PDAs had the potential to be deployed successfully at the 2008 election, particularly as it may be possible for the ACT to borrow sufficient numbers of PDAs from other State Electoral Commissions for issuing to all ACT polling place issuing officers.

The possibility of using PDAs as electronic rolls was discussed at the meeting of the Electronic Voting and Vote Counting Reference Group held on 26 October 2006. The Reference Group members were supportive of exploring the feasibility of using PDAs.

In 2007/2008 Elections ACT intends to finalise its investigation of the feasibility of using PDAs to replace printed electoral rolls. If the Commissioner decides to use PDAs, Elections ACT will need to prepare a business case and a risk management plan, and develop and test appropriate software for use at the 2008 election.

KEY RESULT AREA 1.2

ELECTION AND REFERENDUM SERVICES TO OTHER AGENCIES

Elections ACT's program of providing election and referendum services for other organisations continued in 2006/2007.

Interstate elections

Elections ACT provided over-the-counter pre-poll voting, postal vote applications, postal ballot papers and enquiry services for 3 interstate general elections and 2 interstate by-elections in 2006/2007. 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.

In addition 3 Elections ACT staff were seconded to the Victorian State Electoral Commission to assist with postal voting, pre-poll voting, use of electronic electoral rolls on PDAs and the scrutiny of votes.

Table 3 – Interstate elections

Election	Polling day	Assistance provided	Votes
Queensland general election	09/09/06	pre-poll voting	420
Northern Territory by-election (Stuart)	23/09/06	pre-poll voting	0
Victorian general election	25/11/06	pre-poll voting	607
Western Australian by-election (Peel)	3/02/07	pre-poll voting	2
New South Wales general election	24/03/07	pre-poll voting	1224
Total			2253

Statutory and fee-for-service elections

Health professionals boards elections

Elections ACT conducts elections for ACT health professionals boards under the *Health Professionals Regulation 2004*. These elections are conducted as postal ballots, generally every 4 years. Elections ACT provided services for 2 such elections in 2006/2007 (1 of which was not contested). Details of these elections are shown in Table 4.

For these elections, Elections ACT staff call for candidate nominations and, where the election is contested, send ballot material to eligible practitioners and conduct the count of votes. The health professionals boards are charged on a fee-for-service basis for the conduct of these elections. This enables Elections ACT to fully recover its costs, including permanent staff costs, incurred in running health professionals boards elections.

Table 4 — Health professionals boards elections

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Polls closed	Result provided	Votes
ACT Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board - Chiropractors	1	1	6/12/06	6/12/06	N/A
ACT Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board - Osteopaths	1	2	6/12/06	6/12/06	19
Total	2	3			19

Elections ACT also ran a casual vacancy for the Dental Board of the ACT during 2006/2007 after a sitting member resigned. For this casual vacancy, Elections ACT staff invited previous unsuccessful candidates to apply to contest the casual vacancy and then recounted the ballot papers in order to determine the successful candidate.

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.

Australian National University elections

Elections ACT assisted with the ANU Union annual elections and the ANU Students' Association (ANUSA) annual elections in 2006. Details of these elections are shown in Table 5.

Nominations for the Union elections closed on 25 July, polling was conducted from 7 to 10 August and the results were determined on 10 August.

For the ANUSA elections, nominations closed on 15 August, polling was from 28 August to 31 August and final results were determined on 5 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

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Votes
Election of 3 ANU Union directors (full 2 year term), August 2005	3	6	306
ANU Students' Association annual elections, September 2005	43	122	1177
Total	46	128	1483

Other elections

Elections ACT conducted or assisted with several other elections in 2006/2007. Details of these elections are shown in the following table.

Table 6 – Other elections

Election	Vacancies	Candidates	Polls closed	Result provided	Votes
Aboriginal Justice Centre	7	10	28/11/06	29/11/06	12
Australian Trucking Association	2	2	31/01/07	1/02/07	N/A
National Press Club of Australia	4	5	28/09/06	29/09/06	126
Royal College of Nursing Australia	9	20	16/03/07	17/03/07	1602
ACT Teachers Collective Agreement Ballot	-	-	12/03/07	13/03/07	1830
Total	22	37			3570

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.

Goal 2 - To provide high quality information, education, advice and services related to the electoral process

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 commenced February 2007 – all statutory requirements met

KEY RESULT AREA 2.1 – ELECTORAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Information service

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

A highlight of 2006/2007 was the publication of the *Electoral Compendium 1989–2006*, a comprehensive collection of facts and figures about the electoral process for the ACT Legislative Assembly. The Compendium was launched by the Electoral Commissioner on 7 February 2007. Copies of the Compendium can be obtained from Elections ACT, or downloaded from the Elections ACT website.

The following items were published in 2006/2007:

- ACT Electoral Commission *Electoral Compendium 1989–2006*;
- *ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2007 Guidelines for submissions*;
- *ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2007 Proposed Redistribution of the ACT into Electorates for the Legislative Assembly*; and
- ACT Electoral Commission *Annual Report 2005/2006*.

In addition, the following are available from the Commission:

- 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*;

-
- Information brochure on voting in the ACT for new citizens;
 - Maps of ACT electorates;
 - Various electoral enrolment and voting forms;
 - Information *Fact Sheets*;
 - *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 2006/2007.

Information and services provided on the website in 2006/2007 included:

- General information about Elections ACT;
- Information and submissions regarding electoral boundaries, including the 2007 redistribution process;
- 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 form, 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 2005/2006 annual report;

-
- Providing a submission to and appearing before the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People inquiry into voting age eligibility;
 - Appearing before the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in relation to its inquiry into civics and electoral education; and
 - Briefing members of the Queensland Parliament's Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee on ACT election practices, particularly electronic voting and counting.

Electoral Legislation

In 2006/2007 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* in June 2006 related to disclosure and enrolment, and other issues that arose after the Commission published its review.

It is expected that this legislation will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly in 2007/2008.

On 19 September 2006 the Legislative Assembly passed the Electoral Amendment Bill 2006. This bill was introduced on 30 March 2006 by the then Attorney General, Mr Jon Stanhope MLA. The bill amended the Electoral Act to widen the field of persons who may be appointed as Chairperson of the Commission and to prevent the appointment of people to the Commission who have recently been engaged in political activity through membership of a political party or an Australian parliament. The Commission provided advice to the Government on the content of this bill. The Electoral Amendment Act 2006 commenced on 28 September 2006.

The *Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2006* made a minor amendment to the Electoral Act in relation to the harmonisation of court rules. This amendment came into effect on 29 September 2006.

KEY RESULT AREA 2.2 – ELECTORAL ENROLMENT

Joint roll arrangement

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. This fee was last renegotiated with the AEC in 2003/2004. A fee of \$0.6463 per elector was set for 2006/2007. Joint roll payments for the year totalled \$146,904 (excluding GST). Negotiations commenced on revising the joint roll fee in 2006/2007. A revised fee had not been agreed as at 30 June 2007. Pending finalisation of these negotiations, the fee paid in 2006/2007 was based on the previous year's fee, indexed by the CPI and enrolment changes. It is expected that a new fee will be negotiated in 2007/2008.

Continuous Roll Update

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 2006/2007 to generate letters to households where electors may need to update their enrolment.

With a federal election due to be held in the second half of 2007, the AEC undertook a range of additional enrolment stimulation activities in the first half of 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.

Other enrolment activity undertaken during the year included the school bounty program, where schools are paid a small fee for each student's enrolment form collected, and reviews of silent electors, general postal voters and postal addresses of electors.

The following table shows actual enrolment figures by age group as at 30 June 2006 and as at 30 June 2007, 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 increased from 55.5% of the estimated eligible population in 2006 to 76.5% in 2007. 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 has put into enrolling young people in preparation of the 2007 federal election.

Table 7 — Enrolment by age group 2006-2007

Age group	30 June 2006		30 June 2007	
	Number enrolled	% of estimated entitled to enrol	Number enrolled	% of estimated entitled to enrol
18	2 468	55.5%	3 583	76.5%
19	3 578	75.6%	3 857	71.9%
20-24	22 391	87.8%	23 273	85.8%
25-29	21 801	90.2%	23 250	91.3%
30-34	22 278	95.0%	22 796	95.7%
35-39	22 531	97.5%	23 821	97.0%
40-44	22 267	96.0%	22 391	96.1%
45-49	22 586	97.8%	23 238	97.8%
50-54	21 460	97.3%	21 552	98.9%
55-59	20 159	99.2%	20 190	98.2%
60-64	13 677	98.5%	15 203	103.9%
65-69	9 636	98.7%	10 188	102.3%
70+	20 430	98.4%	21 210	100.4%
Total	225 262	94.4%	234 550	95.3%

Note: This table does not include 17 year olds, for whom enrolment is voluntary.

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 and on 2 different sets of census data. The 2006 estimates are post-censal estimates based on 2001 census data updated by birth and death registrations, and estimated interstate and overseas migration. The 2007 estimates are 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 had delayed the removal of people from the roll where it had information that people had left their enrolled address, pending further investigation of these enrolments.

Electoral Council of Australia

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 3 times in 2006/2007 at the time of the State elections in Queensland, Victoria and NSW. Major projects undertaken and issues considered by the ECA during 2006/2007 included:

- Changes to the Commonwealth Electoral Act to provide for proof of identity at time of enrolment; and
- A review of the operation and effectiveness of the CRU program undertaken by the AEC.

KEY RESULT AREA 2.3 – ELECTORAL EDUCATION

Electoral education program

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 which 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.

Table 8 – Electoral education sessions

Organisation type	Number of participants
Colleges	50
Community Groups	150
High Schools	535
Primary Schools	481
Professional Groups	26
Total	1242

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.

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 2006/2007.

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 staff also spent time in 2006-2007 establishing a closer relationship with the ACT Department of Education and Training in the area of curriculum development. A new curriculum framework will be 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 will establish on its website useful links for teachers to assist them in teaching civics and citizenship appropriate to the Territory.

In the previous reporting year, on 15 June 2006, the Commission provided a submission to the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in response to its inquiry into civics and electoral education. The submission outlined the Commission's current electoral education programs and proposed some new approaches in the teaching of civics and citizenship to be used in the future. A copy of the submission can be found at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/education/subs/sub083.pdf.

The Committee's Report was released on 18 June 2007 and can be found at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/education/Report.htm>. The Committee made a range of recommendations particularly related to the delivery of electoral education by the AEC. The Commonwealth government had not responded to the Committee's recommendations as at 30 June 2007.

KEY RESULT AREA 2.4 – OTHER ELECTORAL STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Registration of political parties

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

At 1 July 2006, there were 8 parties on the register of political parties.

On 8 June 2007 the registrations of the Christian Democratic Party ACT Division and the ACT Equality Party were cancelled. The registration of the Christian Democratic Party ACT Division was cancelled on the basis that it was considered on reasonable grounds that the party had ceased to exist. The registration of the ACT Equality Party was cancelled at the request of the party.

As at 30 June 2007, the following 6 parties were entered on the register of political parties.

Table 9 – Registered political parties as at 30 June 2007

Party name	Party abbreviation
Australian Democrats	ACT Democrats
Australian Labor Party (ACT Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Free Range Canberra	FRC
Liberal Democratic Party	LDP
Liberal Party of Australia (A.C.T. Division)	Liberal Party
The ACT Greens	The Greens

Funding and disclosure scheme

Annual returns

Under the funding and disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act, registered political parties, Members of the Legislative Assembly (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 2005/2006 financial year by October 2006.

For the 2005/2006 financial year, 9 annual returns were received from political parties, 18 from current and former MLAs, 3 from associated entities and 12 from donors.

These returns were made public on 1 February 2007. Copies of the returns can be viewed at **www.elections.act.gov.au/FAD06.html**.

Redistribution of electoral boundaries

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.

Accordingly, 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 be transferred from Molonglo to Brindabella; and
- The suburb of Palmerston 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.

The redistribution process will be finalised in the second half of 2007.

Copies of the current and projected enrolment statistics, the public suggestions and comments, the Redistribution Committee's proposed redistribution, and objections on the proposed redistribution are available to the public at the Elections ACT office and on the Elections ACT website, www.elections.act.gov.au.

Goal 3 –To improve the quality of electoral services by ensuring best possible management practice

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. Retention of all staff.
Manage and improve IT business systems	Absence of IT business systems failures	No IT business systems failures

KEY RESULT AREA 3.1 – HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Continuous improvement

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.

Three Elections ACT staff members assisted at the Victorian state election held in November 2006, taking on a variety of managerial election duties.

During 2006/2007, all Elections ACT staff had several opportunities to undertake a range of learning and development activities (see **Table 11 – Learning and development** activities on page 40).

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 2006/2007, Elections ACT staff held a number of planning sessions, including a review of planning for the 2008 election.

All Elections ACT staff had a performance management plan for 2006/2007. The plans incorporated a formal review schedule, with one-on-one performance reviews conducted regularly during the year.

For further information on human resources management in Elections ACT and in particular staff improvement and development opportunities, see pages 37 to 41.

KEY RESULT AREA 3.2 – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Commission is included in the JACS portfolio for budgetary purposes. However, the Commission continues to monitor its internal operating budget performance. In 2006/2007, 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.

As part of the JACS 3 Year Strategic Audit Plan, a review related to cash management, including petty cash and banking procedures, was undertaken during May and June 2006. The result of that review was published in August 2006. It recommended that Elections ACT should introduce a more detailed internal cash management procedure for over-the-counter payments and should ensure that petty cash reconciliation is performed on a monthly basis. In response, Elections ACT included a more detailed cash management procedure in its operation plan. Petty cash reconciliation is routinely carried out on a monthly basis.

Refer to ***Financial report*** on page 13 for more information on the Commission's finances.

KEY RESULT AREA 3.3 – RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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.

KEY RESULT AREA 3.4 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) MANAGEMENT

IT resources

InTACT, the ACT Government information technology management agency, continued to provide IT resources to Elections ACT in 2006/2007.

IT applications

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 intends to engage contract programmers to upgrade its most important IT business systems, particularly the election results system and the postal voting system.

Another significant IT project in 2006/2007 involved the upgrading of all Elections ACT's IT business systems to be compatible with the Windows XP operating system and associated Microsoft Office programs newly installed on all Elections ACT computers.

Internet

Elections ACT continued to maintain and update the Elections ACT website during 2006/2007, with all work being completed in-house. The Elections ACT website address is **www.elections.act.gov.au**.

For more detail on the Elections ACT website see *Information service* on page 22.

Human resources performance

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

There were no changes to Elections ACT's staff establishment in 2006/2007.

In 2006/2007 Elections ACT updated its staff induction manual, and prepared a Commission Member induction manual in readiness for the appointment of the first new Member of the Commission since 1994.

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.

Staffing profile

The following table sets out details of permanent staff employed during 2006/2007. The figures presented are as at pay 26, 28 June 2007. The table does not include the 2 part-time Commission Members.

Table 10 – Staff of Elections ACT

Title	Classification	Female	Male	CLDB	Category	Length of service		Employment authority
Electoral Commissioner	Statutory Office Holder		1		5 year appointment	25	full-time	Electoral Act
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	Senior Officer Grade B	1			Permanent	16	part-time	Public Sector Management Act
Election Projects Manager	Administrative Service Officer Class 6		1		Permanent	2	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Project and Office Manager	Administrative Service Officer Class 6	1		1	Permanent	14	full-time	Public Sector Management Act
Education and Information Manager	Acting Administrative Service Officer Class 6	1			Permanent	7	part-time	Public Sector Management Act
Finance and Administrative officer	Administrative Service Officer Class 4	1			Permanent	6	Part-time	Public Sector Management Act
Election Casual	Election Casual	1			Election Casual	on ad-hoc basis		<i>Electoral Act 1992</i>
Totals		5	2	1				

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 2007, 1 staff member was in the 25-29 age group; 1 in the 35-39 age group, 3 in the 45-49 age group and 2 in the 55-59 age group.

Workplace health and safety

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 floor 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.

Learning and development

During 2006/2007, all Elections ACT permanent staff participated in learning and development activities, including attending various courses and seminars, and observing or working on other state elections.

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 maintained a formal individual performance management and development plan during 2006/2007. 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 2006/2007 are shown in the following table.

Table 11 – Learning and development activities

Staff Members	Course/seminar/development opportunity
Electoral Commissioner	Executive leadership development program – coaching sessions
	Cultural change presentation
	Observing state elections: NSW, Victoria, Tasmania
	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) introductory module
	Bullying, harassment and complaints
Deputy Electoral Commissioner	Assistance at Victorian state election
	Procurement seminar
	Take the lead program
	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) introductory module
Administrative Service Officer Class 6	Record management - understanding of using a thesaurus
	Assistance at Victorian state election
Administrative Service Officer Class 6	Assistance at Victorian state election
	CIT on-line Microsoft Access training
	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) introductory module
	Bachelor of Education – graduate entry
Acting Administrative Service Officer Class 6	Values, Education and Effective Leadership conference
	National Civics and Citizenship Education forum
	International Engaging Youth in Modern Democracy Symposium
Acting Administrative Service Officer Class 4	Outlook training
	Ministerial writing
	Bullying and harassment

Workplace relations

Certified agreements

The JACS Officers Certified Agreement 2004/2007, which covers Elections ACT staff and to which the Electoral Commissioner was a signatory, expired on 31 March 2007. Whole of government negotiations on new certified agreements were underway on 30 June 2007.

Elections ACT is represented by a staff officer and the Electoral Commissioner on the JACS Workplace Consultative Committee (General). The Electoral Commissioner is a member of the JACS Joint Union Management Consultative Committee. Both these committees are established under the JACS Officers Certified Agreement.

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

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

The Commission did not undertake any capital works projects in 2006/2007.

Government contracting

Procurement principles and processes

The processes used to select and manage all contractors during 2006/2007 complied with the *Government Procurement Act 2001* and the ACT Government Procurement Principles and Procurement Circulars.

External sources of labour and services

In 2006/2007, 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

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

Territory records

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 35.

Part B

Consultation and scrutiny reporting

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Community engagement

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 will conclude in 2007/2008. See **Redistribution of electoral boundaries** on page 31.

Elections ACT also consults with interested groups through its Electronic Voting and Counting System Reference Group. This group met in 2006/2007. See **Electronic Voting and Vote Counting** on page 16.

Internal & External scrutiny

The Commission was not subject to significant internal or external scrutiny in 2006/2007.

Legislative Assembly Committee inquiries and reports

The Commission was subject to the following Legislative Assembly Committee inquiry and report in 2006/2007:

- Standing Committee On Legal Affairs, *Report on Annual & Financial Reports 2005-2006*, Report 5, May 2007.

The Committee made no recommendations that specifically related to the Commission.

The Committee recommended that smaller agencies (such as the Commission) be permitted to contribute to the annual report of the Department of Justice and Community Safety and not be required to prepare a report of their own. The Commission does not support this recommendation. The Commission considers that provision of an independent annual report to the Legislative Assembly is an essential indicator of the Commission's statutory independence and of its need to be, and to be seen to be, independent of the government of the day.

In 2006/2007 the Commission also made a submission to the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People in relation to its inquiry into voting age eligibility, and the Commissioner appeared before the Committee on this issue. This Committee had not reported on this inquiry as at 30 June 2007.

Legislative report

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; and*
- *Health Professionals Regulation 2004.*

The Commission's role in providing advice on amendments to this legislation is discussed above at ***Electoral Legislation*** on page 24.



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Other reporting

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Public interest disclosure

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

During 2006/2007 no public interest disclosures related to the Commission were lodged.

Freedom of information

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* and the *Health Professionals Act 2004*.

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.

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 22 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**.

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** 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 2006/2007, nor were any FOI matters outstanding at 1 July 2006.

Contact officer

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

The Deputy Electoral Commissioner
ACT Electoral Commission
Level 2
12 Moore St
Canberra City ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6205 0033

Fax: (02) 6205 0382

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

Or email:
elections@act.gov.au

Website:
www.elections.act.gov.au

Human Rights Act 2004

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 2006/2007.

Commissioner for the Environment

The Commission did not contribute to the *State of the Environment Report* in 2006/2007. The Commission has not been the subject of an investigation or recommendations made by the Commissioner for the Environment.

ACT multicultural strategy 2006-2009

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. Links to contact details for the Telephone Interpreter Service are also included on the Elections ACT website. Professional interpreter services are used as required.

In the lead-up to an ACT election electoral services and information are advertised in the newsletter of the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs (*Comunicado*). 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 election. It was used again at the 2004 election in pre-poll voting centres and 8 polling places on polling day. The Commissioner intends to use this system again at the 2008 election.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reporting

In 2005/2006 Elections ACT held discussions with the Chief Minister and relevant departmental officers regarding the Chief Minister's commitment to establish an elected representative body for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT. Discussions with departmental officers continued in 2006/2007 with a view to progressing this matter in 2007/2008.

Ecologically sustainable development

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 follow 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 will lead, in time, to a reduction in the use of paper products during an election period.

In August 2005 the Electoral Commissioner elected not to use a Government vehicle.

Elections ACT has participated in the ACT Green House energy efficiency data collection program.

ACT Women's Plan

The ACT Women's Plan 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. As of 29 June 2007, there were 236,371 electors on the electoral roll aged 17 and over; 122,082 were women and 114,289 were men.

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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