

# **AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

## **EIGHTH SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS' INQUIRY INTO THE 2004 FEDERAL ELECTION AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO**

**Responses to requests for information from the JSCEM**

**23 September 2005**

# EIGHTH SUBMISSION TO THE JSCEM 2004 FEDERAL ELECTION INQUIRY

## Introduction

This is the eighth submission by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' (JSCEM's) inquiry into the conduct of the 2004 federal election.

This submission provides statistics in relation to the effectiveness of Continuous Roll Update (CRU). In particular, enrolment forms received during the Close of Rolls period for the past 3 electoral events from electors who had been contacted by CRU activities in the 12 months prior to the election broken up quarter and by state/territory.

The submission also includes information in relation to an issue that arose during the admission of declaration votes to the scrutiny in the division of Calwell during the 2004 federal election.

## Contents

[1. Enrolments received at the close of rolls from electors at addresses that had been sent CRU mail in the 12 months prior to the close of rolls.](#) \_\_\_\_\_ 3

[2. Counting of absent votes in the Division of Calwell](#) \_\_\_\_\_ 6

Attachment A – CRU Statistics for the COR for the 2004 and 2001 Federal elections and the 199 Referendum

Attachment B – Report on the Sample Audit Fieldwork February – March

# **1. Enrolments received at the close of rolls from electors at addresses that had been sent CRU mail in the 12 months prior to the close of rolls.**

*The AEC received the following requests from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM):*

1. The JSCEM requests the AEC to provide statistics as indicated below to assist in its deliberations regarding the effectiveness of CRU and the impact of CRU on Close of Rolls transactions for electoral events:

Statistics showing the number of enrolment forms received during close of rolls for each of the past 3 electoral events from electors and/or addresses to which AEC sent CRU letters or visited in the 12 months previous to the close of roll, broken down by State/Territory into New Enrolments, Changes of Address and Re-enrolments.

The statistics should be organised into time series by quarter (3 months) to indicate where in the 12 months prior to each electoral event the CRU contact occurred, and show the number of enrolment forms from addresses from which a response was received to the initial CRU contact, and the number of enrolment forms received from non response addresses.

The Committee invites the AEC to provide any commentary and/or any analysis of the figures should it wish to, and also invites the AEC to provide any analysis it may have already done on the effect of CRU on enrolments during close of rolls.

2. The Committee has requested the AEC to provide an estimate (if available) of the costs incurred by the AEC in contacting or attempting to contact those same electors. By way of background, the Committee is trying to determine how much money the AEC may have expended in its CRU efforts to contact these electors in advance of a close of roll, which in fact may not have produced any result until the close of roll.

## **Response:**

The AEC's Continuous Roll Update (CRU) methodology is based on continuous, cyclical electoral roll review and enrolment stimulation programs. These incorporate various forms of contact with electors and potential electors aimed at prompting electors to update their enrolment at the time that the change of enrolment entitlement event occurs.

Where the AEC has reason to believe that an elector may need to update their enrolment (for example as a result of matching with external data or internal analysis of AEC data) CRU generates an initial roll review letter. If an elector does not respond to the initial letter within 90 days a reminder letter may be generated in the next available mail review event. Non-response to mail review may also result in the elector's address being visited by an AEC field review officer in 'non-response' fieldwork events.

Roll review letters are generally mailed in bulk every month, except during December and January. Mail review is suspended from mid December until late January to avoid the decreased contact rate that occurs during the holiday period. Non-response fieldwork is generally conducted at least once a year between late September and early May to take advantage of the warmer weather and the extended daylight hours.

The ongoing nature of CRU and the need to make multiple contacts at some addresses creates difficulty in reporting, in fixed time periods, on the link between CRU and the receipt of enrolment transactions processed at a fixed event like a close of roll (COR). The sequential nature of CRU events and the timing of these events often results in a higher level of CRU activity at certain times of the year and in the months prior to anticipated federal and state/territory elections; that is, an impending election may act as a catalyst for the AEC to undertake additional CRU activities.

The statistics provided in the tables at Attachment A set out the number of enrolments processed during the COR for the 2004 and 2001 federal elections and the 1999 Referendum, where CRU contact had occurred with either the elector and/or address within the 12 months prior to the COR period.

As requested, the statistics are reported in a quarterly time series. Due to the continuous nature of CRU and the ongoing follow-up of non-responses, multiple contacts with individual electors and addresses occur over time. It should be noted that the tables show *the most recent CRU contact only* (that is, where multiple CRU contact occurred at an address during the 12 month period, either due to non-response follow-up or receipt of new information, only one contact is reported and is shown in the time period of the most recent contact).

The majority of CRU activities aim to review the enrolment entitlements of all residents at identified addresses not just the elector at whom the contact is directed. Over the course of 12 months, many entitlement changes may occur at a single address making it difficult to establish a direct link between what triggered the initial CRU contact and the receipt of different enrolment types (such as new enrolments, changes of address and re-enrolments) during the COR. It cannot always be assumed that the enrolment received during the COR period relates to the trigger for CRU contact, it may in fact be related to a completely different event.

The attached tables show only the enrolments received from an address that was targeted by CRU in the 12 months prior to the COR. Although an enrolment form has been received from that address during the COR period, this does not necessarily mean that there was no response to the initial CRU contact. It simply means that the AEC received one or more enrolments during the COR period from an address that had been contacted in the previous 12 months. It is possible that the AEC received enrolment forms from that address in response to the CRU mailing and the enrolment form received at the COR is from a newly eligible person at that address, for example, someone who has just turned 18. In the time available, the AEC has not been able to apply CRU non-response information to the enrolments received at the COR.

To assist in identifying the number of enrolment forms obtained from various roll update activities the AEC has recently added a "source code" box on the enrolment form. The source code will relate to the activity or location from which the enrolment form was received, for example, "C" for CRU mailout or "P" for post office. However, as collection and recording of source code information has only just commenced, only limited data is available.

In the attached tables:

- "Change" relates to a change to current elector details (most changes would be to address details).
- "New Enrolment" is an enrolment by a person who has not previously been enrolled.
- "Re-enrolment" is an enrolment by a person who was previously enrolled but had been removed from the roll.

- “All other enrolments” includes change by written advice, amendments made by AEC staff and reinstatements to the roll.

Table 1 shows that 256,513 (60.50%) of the 423,993 enrolments received during the 2004 COR period were from people whose address had been contacted by CRU in the 12 months leading up to the COR, with just over half of these contacts occurring within six months prior to the COR. The AEC believes this reflects the saturation of CRU activities undertaken in the six months prior to the COR. Of the three periods for which the AEC has provided statistics, only 2004 is reflective of a mature CRU program with a comprehensive range of activities and data sources.

Table 2 shows that of 373,766 enrolments during the 2001 COR, 172,605 (46.18%) were from people whose address had been contacted by CRU in the 12 months leading up to the COR, with around one third of these contacts occurring within six months prior to the COR. It should be noted that the CRU program in 2001 was still in the developmental stage with a less comprehensive range of activities and data sources. Additionally, CRU activities were suspended in the three months prior to the 2001 federal election due to the possibility of implementation of significant changes to electoral enrolment provisions.

Table 3 shows that of 320,829 enrolments received during the 1999 COR, 110,466 (34.43%) were from people whose address had been contacted by CRU in the 12 months leading up to the COR, with around one third of these contacts occurring within six months prior to the COR. Note that in 1999, CRU was still in the pilot phase, with a single external data source and had only been in operation for six months prior to the COR.

It should also be noted that the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) runs its own CRU program which generates around 20% of the enrolment in Victoria. The figures for Victoria in the attached tables do not take account of VEC CRU activities.

In relation to the JSCEM's second question, it is difficult to provide a cost for activities directly linked to the enrolments received during the COR period because those who enrolled may have been contacted once, twice or three times depending on when the first contact was made. While 28% were contacted in the last three months prior to the 2004 COR, in the time available, we are unable to determine whether this was the first, second or third contact, only that it was the most recent contact.

An earlier COR could result in savings in election costs because less casual assistance may be required for enrolment processing and there would be no need for a COR advertising campaign after the issue of the writ. However, these savings would be eclipsed by the cost of an ongoing advertising campaign to remind electors to update their enrolment in a timely manner.

The AEC continues to review and refine the CRU program. The AEC recently introduced an activity to test the effectiveness of CRU called Sample Audit Fieldwork (SAF). This consists of a doorknock review of a statistically valid sample of the roll in the areas covered by CRU. The SAF is aimed at measuring the effectiveness of CRU and measures completeness and accuracy of the roll and the AEC's Address Register. The first round of SAF was conducted in March 2004. A copy of the report on the 2004 SAF is at Attachment B (note that this has been provided to the JSCEM previously). The second round of SAF was conducted in March 2005 and a report is currently being prepared. Once finalised, the report on the 2005 SAF will be provided to the JSCEM.

## 2. Counting of absent votes in the Division of Calwell

*The Committee requested information on the counting of votes in the seat of Calwell.*

Response:

An error occurred in relation to the admission of absent votes in the Division of Calwell. The error resulted in some declaration envelopes, which had not been determined to be admissible during preliminary scrutiny (under section 266 and Schedule 3 of the CEA), being opened and the ballot papers admitted to the count. However, the numbers involved were not large enough to affect the outcome of the election.

The following facts have been determined:

There were 5426 absent envelopes in the count concerned. At the initial preliminary scrutiny, 4273 envelopes were determined to be admissible and 1153 were classed as inadmissible at that point.

Unfortunately, an error occurred as a result of transferring the declaration envelopes from the Divisional office to the local counting centre. At the counting centre, all 5426 declaration envelopes were inadvertently opened and processed as if they had been determined to be admissible. Consequently, all the absent ballot papers for the House of Representatives and the Senate were placed in ballot boxes, with the result that the Divisional Returning Officer (DRO) was unable to determine which ballot papers relate to the admissible envelopes, and which relate to the inadmissible envelopes.

The DRO has undertaken a further examination of the envelopes and determined that, in fact, some of the original 1153 envelopes marked for rejection should have been either fully or partially admitted to the scrutiny. The DRO has since advised the following:

- Of the 1153 rejected initially, 260 envelopes should have been fully admitted, 212 should have been partially admitted and 681 rejected.
- This means that the ballot boxes contained a maximum of 893 House of Representatives ballot papers and a maximum of 681 Senate ballot papers that should not have been included in the count (the term "maximum" is used here to account for the fact that in some cases the envelope may have contained either no ballot paper or only one ballot paper).

The AEC sought legal advice from Queen's Counsel who advised that there is no direct legal principle that might usefully determine the appropriate remedy. In discussions with Counsel, several points of argument were considered relevant in determining a remedy. In light of the formal advice and discussions with Counsel, the DRO was advised to consider the remedy of admitting all ballot papers to the scrutiny, as this would ensure that all valid votes required to be counted by the CEA would be. Although the admission of inadmissible ballot papers to the count is a breach of the CEA, if the breach affected the result of the election, candidates or the AEC may then petition the Court of Disputed Returns to seek judicial determination of the appropriate remedy. The only way to demonstrate positively that the result of the election was affected is to admit the ballot papers to the count. On this advice the AEC made the decision to continue the count with the inadmissible ballot papers included, because they cannot be distinguished from the admissible ballot papers. The AEC wrote to all Victorian Senate candidates and the relevant House of Representative candidates on 22 October advising them of the situation.

The number of admissible votes admitted in error in the counts was not large enough to affect the outcome of the elections.

## **Attachment A**

CRU Statistics for the COR for the 2004 and 2001 federal elections and the 1999 Referendum.

2004 (close of roll date 7 September 2004)

CRU Mailout Date	Enrolment Type	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Total	COR Enrolments by type	Percentage of COR Enrolments by type
0-3 months before	Change	24,176	11,482	17,505	9,019	6,674	2,790	2,177	994	74,817	255,022	29.34%
	New Enrolment	5,005	1,748	3,096	4,111	1,843	582	492	258	17,135	78,908	21.72%
	Re-enrolment	9,148	4,153	4,360	2,669	1,803	791	674	375	23,973	78,494	30.54%
	All other enrolments	858	280	1,294	404	136	51	63	309	3,395	11,569	29.35%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39,187</b>	<b>17,663</b>	<b>26,255</b>	<b>16,203</b>	<b>10,456</b>	<b>4,214</b>	<b>3,406</b>	<b>1,936</b>	<b>119,320</b>	<b>423,993</b>	<b>28.14%</b>
4-6 months before	Change	10,608	18,804	11,043	7,312	4,594	752	1,058	80	54,251	255,022	21.27%
	New Enrolment	4,161	7,546	2,276	1,784	2,002	226	284	18	18,297	78,908	23.19%
	Re-enrolment	4,991	5,318	3,586	2,700	1,185	272	482	20	18,554	78,494	23.64%
	All other enrolments	453	1,272	519	333	135	9	73	2	2,796	11,569	24.17%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20,213</b>	<b>32,940</b>	<b>17,424</b>	<b>12,129</b>	<b>7,916</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>1,897</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>93,898</b>	<b>423,993</b>	<b>22.15%</b>
7-9 months before	Change	4,112	2,455	1,302	1,809	894	747	471	668	12,458	255,022	4.89%
	New Enrolment	1,887	647	256	558	308	257	142	126	4,181	78,908	5.30%
	Re-enrolment	1,391	884	314	781	222	207	174	267	4,240	78,494	5.40%
	All other enrolments	151	66	88	65	16	9	30	48	473	11,569	4.09%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7,541</b>	<b>4,052</b>	<b>1,960</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>1,109</b>	<b>21,352</b>	<b>423,993</b>	<b>5.04%</b>
10-12 months before	Change	2,622	4,704	3,563	966	969	310	267	60	13,461	255,022	5.28%
	New Enrolment	665	1,049	913	181	413	105	49	15	3,390	78,908	4.30%
	Re-enrolment	963	2,012	1,053	239	262	60	86	39	4,714	78,494	6.01%
	All other enrolments	98	90	136	24	6	6	15	3	378	11,569	3.27%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,348</b>	<b>7,855</b>	<b>5,665</b>	<b>1,410</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>21,943</b>	<b>423,993</b>	<b>5.18%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>41,518</b>	<b>37,445</b>	<b>33,413</b>	<b>19,106</b>	<b>13,131</b>	<b>4,599</b>	<b>3,973</b>	<b>1,802</b>	<b>154,987</b>	255,022	60.77%
	<b>New Enrolment</b>	<b>11,718</b>	<b>10,990</b>	<b>6,541</b>	<b>6,634</b>	<b>4,566</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>43,003</b>	78,908	54.50%
	<b>Re-enrolment</b>	<b>16,493</b>	<b>12,367</b>	<b>9,313</b>	<b>6,389</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>1,416</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>51,481</b>	78,494	65.59%
	<b>All other enrolments</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>2,037</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>7,042</b>	11,569	60.87%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>71,289</b>	<b>62,510</b>	<b>51,304</b>	<b>32,955</b>	<b>21,462</b>	<b>7,174</b>	<b>6,537</b>	<b>3,282</b>	<b>256,513</b>	<b>423,993</b>	<b>60.50%</b>

2001 (close of roll date 15 October 2001)

CRU Mailout Date	Enrolment Type	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Total	COR Enrolments by type	Percentage of COR Enrolments by type
0-3 months before	Change	11,519	4,014	4,220	4,594	3,046	324	529	129	28,375	232,920	12.18%
	New Enrolment	4,034	767	681	1,354	979	74	189	21	8,099	86,351	9.38%
	Re-enrolment	2,479	807	776	1,181	477	49	112	41	5,922	47,657	12.43%
	All other enrolments	402	108	42	212	120	8	17	12	921	6,838	13.47%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18,434</b>	<b>5,696</b>	<b>5,719</b>	<b>7,341</b>	<b>4,622</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>43,317</b>	<b>373,766</b>	<b>11.59%</b>
4-6 months before	Change	13,209	10,512	9,478	3,976	4,732	1,816	384	496	44,603	232,920	19.15%
	New Enrolment	4,045	2,332	2,620	807	1,420	492	100	78	11,894	86,351	13.77%
	Re-enrolment	3,552	2,593	2,129	980	723	477	100	160	10,714	47,657	22.48%
	All other enrolments	466	248	208	119	48	25	2	7	1,123	6,838	16.42%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21,272</b>	<b>15,685</b>	<b>14,435</b>	<b>5,882</b>	<b>6,923</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>68,334</b>	<b>373,766</b>	<b>18.28%</b>
7-9 months before	Change	11,394	3,196	10,415	910	3,820	330	454	97	30,616	232,920	13.14%
	New Enrolment	2,676	747	3,139	231	1,321	115	85	9	8,323	86,351	9.64%
	Re-enrolment	3,430	764	2,057	235	635	69	154	28	7,372	47,657	15.47%
	All other enrolments	218	59	213	31	37	5	3	1	567	6,838	8.29%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,718</b>	<b>4,766</b>	<b>15,824</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>5,813</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>46,878</b>	<b>373,766</b>	<b>12.54%</b>
10-12 months before	Change	2,211	1,682	2,886	1,124	1,206	258	71	49	9,487	232,920	4.07%
	New Enrolment	826	325	518	310	442	119	18	14	2,572	86,351	2.98%
	Re-enrolment	427	320	538	240	252	48	18	10	1,853	47,657	3.89%
	All other enrolments	52	18	34	36	18	5	1	0	164	6,838	2.40%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,516</b>	<b>2,345</b>	<b>3,976</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>1,918</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>14,076</b>	<b>373,766</b>	<b>3.77%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>38,333</b>	<b>19,404</b>	<b>26,999</b>	<b>10,604</b>	<b>12,804</b>	<b>2,728</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>113,081</b>	<b>232,920</b>	<b>48.55%</b>
	<b>New Enrolment</b>	<b>11,581</b>	<b>4,171</b>	<b>6,958</b>	<b>2,702</b>	<b>4,162</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>30,888</b>	<b>86,351</b>	<b>35.77%</b>
	<b>Re-enrolment</b>	<b>9,888</b>	<b>4,484</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>2,636</b>	<b>2,087</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>25,861</b>	<b>47,657</b>	<b>54.26%</b>
	<b>All other enrolments</b>	<b>1,138</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2,775</b>	<b>6,838</b>	<b>40.58%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60,940</b>	<b>28,492</b>	<b>39,954</b>	<b>16,340</b>	<b>19,276</b>	<b>4,214</b>	<b>2,237</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>172,605</b>	<b>373,766</b>	<b>46.18%</b>

1999 (close of roll date 8 October 1999)

CRU Mailout Date	Enrolment Type	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Total	COR Enrolments by type	Percentage of COR Enrolments by type
0-3 months before	Change	13,285	4,882	8,846	5,699	1,453	817	947	115	36,044	202,190	17.83%
	New Enrolment	1,007	403	834	510	178	83	63	6	3,084	73,761	4.18%
	Re-enrolment	1,966	527	687	513	84	82	115	10	3,984	29,497	13.51%
	All other enrolments	1,372	110	114	236	10	95	83	4	2,024	15,381	13.16%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,630</b>	<b>5,922</b>	<b>10,481</b>	<b>6,958</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>45,136</b>	<b>320,829</b>	<b>14.07%</b>
4-6 months before	Change	11,221	4,440	9,542	8,082	3,779	1,101	1,189	755	40,109	202,190	19.84%
	New Enrolment	1,795	953	1,582	1,330	773	215	167	82	6,897	73,761	9.35%
	Re-enrolment	2,871	1,055	1,027	1,500	297	175	156	121	7,202	29,497	24.42%
	All other enrolments	1,651	135	111	415	44	208	98	20	2,682	15,381	17.44%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,538</b>	<b>6,583</b>	<b>12,262</b>	<b>11,327</b>	<b>4,893</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>56,890</b>	<b>320,829</b>	<b>17.73%</b>
7-9 months before	Change	0	0	5,994	0	0	0	0	0	5,994	202,190	2.96%
	New Enrolment	0	0	1,327	0	0	0	0	0	1,327	73,761	1.80%
	Re-enrolment	0	0	1,042	0	0	0	0	0	1,042	29,497	3.53%
	All other enrolments	0	0	77	0	0	0	0	0	77	15,381	0.50%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,440</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,440</b>	<b>320,829</b>	<b>2.63%</b>
10-12 months before	Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	202,190	0.00%
	New Enrolment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73,761	0.00%
	Re-enrolment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29,497	0.00%
	All other enrolments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15,381	0.00%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>320,829</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>24,506</b>	<b>9,322</b>	<b>24,382</b>	<b>13,781</b>	<b>5,232</b>	<b>1,918</b>	<b>2,136</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>82,147</b>	<b>202,190</b>	<b>40.63%</b>
	<b>New Enrolment</b>	<b>2,802</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>3,743</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>11,308</b>	<b>73,761</b>	<b>15.33%</b>
	<b>Re-enrolment</b>	<b>4,837</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>2,756</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>12,228</b>	<b>29,497</b>	<b>41.46%</b>
	<b>All other enrolments</b>	<b>3,023</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4,783</b>	<b>15,381</b>	<b>31.10%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35,168</b>	<b>12,505</b>	<b>31,183</b>	<b>18,285</b>	<b>6,618</b>	<b>2,776</b>	<b>2,818</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>110,466</b>	<b>320,829</b>	<b>34.43%</b>

## **Attachment B**

Report on the Sample Audit Fieldwork  
February – March 2004



## CONTENTS

<i>Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms</i> .....	4
<b><u>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u></b> .....	<b>5</b>
<u>BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE</u> .....	5
<u>METHODOLOGY</u> .....	5
<u>RESULTS</u> .....	6
<u>CONCLUSION</u> .....	8
<u>FUTURE DIRECTIONS</u> .....	9
<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ROLL INTEGRITY UNIT</u> .....	9
<b><u>2. BACKGROUND</u></b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 <u>INTRODUCTION</u> .....	10
2.2 <u>AEC ROLL MANAGEMENT PROCESSES</u> .....	10
2.2.1 <u>Roll Management System Database</u> .....	10
2.2.2 <u>Address Register</u> .....	10
2.2.3 <u>Geographic Database Areas and walks</u> .....	12
2.2.4 <u>Electoral Roll Reviews and Continuous Roll Updates</u> .....	12
2.3 <u>AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE (ANAO) PERFORMANCE AUDITS</u> .....	14
2.4 <u>REVIEW OF THE ANAO REPORT</u> .....	14
2.5 <u>SAMPLE AUDIT FIELDWORK (SAF) PILOT - 2003</u> .....	14
<b><u>3. OBJECTIVES</u></b> .....	<b>15</b>
3.1 <u>PRIMARY OBJECTIVE</u> .....	15
3.2 <u>SECONDARY OBJECTIVES</u> .....	16
<b><u>4. METHODOLOGY</u></b> .....	<b>16</b>
4.1 <u>SAMPLING METHODOLOGY</u> .....	16
4.2 <u>SAMPLE SIZE SELECTED FOR THE SAF</u> .....	17
4.3 <u>TIMING OF FIELDWORK</u> .....	18
4.4 <u>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND MEASURES</u> .....	18
4.4.1 <u>Introduction</u> .....	18
4.4.2 <u>Enrolment Participation</u> .....	18
4.4.3 <u>Completeness of the Divisional rolls</u> .....	19
4.4.4 <u>Accuracy of the rolls</u> .....	19
4.4.5 <u>Completeness of the Address Register</u> .....	20
4.4.6 <u>Accuracy of the Address Register</u> .....	20
<b><u>5. DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING</u></b> .....	<b>21</b>
5.1 <u>CONDUCT OF FIELDWORK</u> .....	21
5.2 <u>DATA PROCESSING ISSUES</u> .....	21
5.2.1 <u>Introduction</u> .....	21
5.2.2 <u>Compulsory Enrolment System</u> .....	21
5.2.3 <u>Follow-up of Non-Attendance Cards</u> .....	21
5.2.4 <u>Processing of address information and Address Register</u> .....	22
<b><u>6. RESULTS</u></b> .....	<b>22</b>
6.1 <u>FIELDWORK</u> .....	22

<b><u>6.2</u></b>	<b><u>ENROLMENT</u></b> .....	<b>23</b>
6.2.1	<i><u>Enrolment forms processed</u></i> .....	23
6.2.2	<i><u>Enrolment participation</u></i> .....	25
6.2.3	<i><u>Enrolment completeness</u></i> .....	27
6.2.4	<i><u>Enrolment accuracy</u></i> .....	28
<b><u>6.3</u></b>	<b><u>ADDRESS REGISTER</u></b> .....	<b>30</b>
6.3.1	<i><u>Completeness</u></i> .....	30
6.3.2	<i><u>Accuracy of Address Register</u></i> .....	31
<b><u>6.4</u></b>	<b><u>CONTINUOUS ROLL UPDATE (CRU)</u></b> .....	<b>33</b>
6.4.1	<i><u>Introduction</u></i> .....	33
6.4.2	<i><u>CRU activities – Addresses in the sample</u></i> .....	33
6.4.3	<i><u>Effectiveness of enrolment activities in the sample</u></i> .....	36
6.4.4	<i><u>Comparison of enrolment under CRU and Electoral Roll Reviews (ERRs)</u></i> .....	40
6.4.5	<i><u>Enrolments processed at Close of Rolls – 1998 and 2001 Federal Elections</u></i> ...	41
6.4.6	<i><u>Enrolment transactions under ERR and CRU</u></i> .....	42
6.4.7	<i><u>Comparison of the efficiency of ERR and CRU activities</u></i> .....	44
<b><u>6.5</u></b>	<b><u>COSTS</u></b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b><u>7.</u></b>	<b><u>CONCLUSIONS</u></b> .....	<b>47</b>
7.1	<b><u>ENROLMENT</u></b> .....	47
7.1.1	<i><u>Enrolment participation</u></i> .....	47
7.1.2	<i><u>Enrolment completeness and accuracy</u></i> .....	48
7.2	<b><u>ADDRESS REGISTER</u></b> .....	49
7.3	<b><u>CONTINUOUS ROLL UPDATE</u></b> .....	49
7.4	<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ROLL INTEGRITY UNIT</u></b> .....	51
<b><u>APPENDICES</u></b>	.....	<b>52</b>
	<i><u>Appendix 1 – Details of sample selected by Division</u></i> .....	53
	<i><u>Appendix 2 – Response rates to various CRU activities 2002-03 and 2003-04</u></i> .....	55
	<i><u>Appendix 3 – National Standards for CRU Activities</u></i> .....	56

## Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms

<b>Abbreviation or Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Active Address	Address on the AEC's Address Register that is currently in use.
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AJRC	Australian Joint Roll Council (now ECA – see below)
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
CCD	Census Collector District
CE System	AEC's Compulsory Enrolment System – a database of names and addresses of apparent eligible persons who have not enrolled or updated their enrolment.
CRU	Continuous Roll Update – current methodology used to maintain electoral rolls, through data matching and data mining to identify potential enrolment changes.
DRO	Divisional Returning Officer
ECA	Electoral Council of Australia – a consultative forum on electoral matters comprising representatives from State Electoral Authorities and the AEC.
Enrollable Address	Address where persons live and for which they can enrol, for example houses and units.
ERR	Electoral Roll Review – the method used until 1998 to maintain electoral rolls, by doorknocking all addresses to confirm enrolment details.
GDB	Geographical Database Area – Geographical area building block used by the AEC - either a whole CCD or split CCD where a CCD crosses a Federal, State or local government boundary.
G-NAF	Geocoded National Address File – a single authoritative Geocoded address database controlled by Public Sector Mapping Agencies Australia Ltd (PSMA).
Gones	Term used by Review Officer when an elector has left address.
Inactive Address	Address on the AEC's Address Register that is no longer in use, for example due to redevelopment.
JSCEM	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Land use codes	These are specific standard codes that are attached to addresses to describe the types of address and their use for example, houses, residential units, parks, vacant allotments, holiday units, nursing homes, motels and so forth.
MELimit	Multiple Surname and Enrolment Limit System – a CRU data mining process that lists addresses where multiple surnames are enrolled or the number of enrolments exceeds the normal limits for the type of address.
NAC	Non-Attendance Card – a card left by the Review Officer during fieldwork when no one is at home, seeking confirmation of the enrolment details for that address.
Objection	The process of removing a persons name from the roll where they are no longer eligible – usually (but not restricted to) on the grounds of non-residence.
RMANS	The AEC's Roll Management System – a database management system that includes the elector file, the Address Register and data used for the Continuous Roll Update program.
RSE	Relative Standard Error – measure of sampling error used by the ABS.
SAF	Sample Audit Fieldwork
SCU	ABS Statistical Consultancy Unit
Unenrollable Address	Addresses where persons cannot enrol for example commercial premises, parks, holiday homes, and vacant allotments.
VEC	Victorian Electoral Commission

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background and objective

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) conducted a performance audit into the integrity of the electoral rolls and tabled its Audit Report No.42 2001-02, *Integrity of the Electoral Roll*, in April 2002. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) subsequently reviewed the ANAO's report and tabled its own report, *The Integrity of the Electoral Roll, Review of ANAO Report No.42 2001-02*, in October 2002.

Both the ANAO and the JSCEM made recommendations regarding sample checking of the electoral rolls. These recommendations were:

*ANAO Recommendation 9:*

*To measure the accuracy of the electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that the AEC consider introducing a periodic review of a sample of the electoral roll.*

*JSCEM Recommendation 9:*

*The Committee recommends that the Australian Electoral Commission conduct periodic, random spot checks of enrolment details at a sample of addresses as a means of testing whether the Continuous Roll Update process is working effectively in maximising accuracy of enrolment details.*

The AEC agreed to the ANAO recommendation and the Government, in its response to the JSCEM report tabled in October 2003, supported the recommendation by the JSCEM. Because of these recommendations, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) commenced plans to conduct statistically valid random sample audit fieldwork (SAF) in each of the States and Territories. The objective of the SAF was to measure the completeness and accuracy of the rolls in order to assess the effectiveness of the Continuous Roll Update (CRU)<sup>1</sup> process. The AEC also sought to use the information collected to assess the accuracy and progress of the development of the Address Register within the AEC's computerised Roll Management System, and the effectiveness of its operational processes and procedures.

### Methodology

In 2003 the AEC conducted a pilot exercise loosely based on the above recommendations. The AEC then provided the results of the pilot to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Statistical Consultancy Unit (SCU) to assist them in developing a sampling model that could be used for the SAF. The sample model that the SCU developed provided the AEC with advice on how the SAF should be conducted and suggested the sample sizes that would be needed to allow confidence to be had in the results from the SAF. The SCU-developed methodology also took into account such variables as the population sizes of States and Territories and movement rates derived from 1998 Electoral Roll Review (ERR)<sup>2</sup> data. Therefore, the least populous

---

<sup>1</sup> CRU is the AEC's primary methodology for maintaining electoral rolls. It involves identifying, mainly through matching the rolls to external data, electors who might need to update their enrolment details and then writing to those electors prompting them to do so.

<sup>2</sup> ERRs were the traditional method used by the AEC for reviewing the roll up until 1999. This involved Review Officers reviewing (by doorknocking) nearly all addresses and confirming the eligible enrolments at those addresses.

States and Territories had higher sample sizes than the more populous States. Victoria had the smallest sample size because of the comparatively lower movement rate in that State.

After considering the SCU sample model, the AEC decided on a sample size of 227 Census Collector Districts (CCDs) across Australia. The SCU advice was that the resulting data could be considered reliable at the State/Territory level and very reliable at the national level.

The SAF measured the following:

- **Enrolment Participation.** This is a measure of the total number of eligible electors currently enrolled, as a percentage of the total number of persons estimated to be eligible to enrol.
- **Enrolment Completeness.** This measures completeness of Divisional rolls. It is a calculation of the number of eligible electors currently on Divisional rolls as a percentage of those who are eligible to be on the Divisional rolls. In measuring completeness, electors who were enrolled in the correct Division, but nevertheless needed to update their address information, were included in the calculations. ‘Enrolment participation’ and ‘enrolment completeness’ are very similar measures; the difference being that completeness considers whether electors are enrolled for their correct Division (hence it is a measure of a *Divisional* roll) whereas participation considers whether the person is enrolled at all.
- **Enrolment Accuracy.** This is the percentage of current electors who are enrolled for the address at which they are living.
- **Address Register Completeness.** This is a measure of the number of valid enrollable (that is, residential) addresses currently on the AEC’s Address Register as a percentage of the number of actual valid enrollable addresses as evidenced at the SAF.
- **Address Register Accuracy.** This is the percentage of current enrollable addresses that have been correctly recorded by the AEC in the Address Register.

The SAF was conducted in the 227 CCDs nationally over 16 days between 28 February and 14 March 2004.

## Results

### Enrolment

The following results were obtained from the SAF:

	<b>Enrolment Participation</b>	<b>Enrolment Completeness</b>	<b>Enrolment Accuracy</b>
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>97.69 per cent</b>	<b>95.18 per cent</b>	<b>89.51 per cent</b>

Calculations for national results were based on a weighting formula advised by SCU and based on population sizes in each State/Territory. The results for enrolment participation (97.69 per cent) and completeness (95.18 per cent) were above the AEC’s performance target of 95 per cent, but the accuracy result (89.51 per cent) was marginally lower than the target of 90 per cent.

An analysis of new enrolments received during the SAF indicates that approximately 185,000 eligible persons nationally might not be enrolled. A separate analysis of SAF data has shown that approximately 80 per cent of these persons are in the 18 to 25 years age group. The analysis also indicates that approximately 165,000 persons nationally, who had previously been enrolled, had not re-enrolled. Most of these would have been removed from the roll, at some stage, by objection.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, at the time of the SAF, an estimated 480,000 electors nationally needed to update their enrolment (for full explanation refer to paragraph 6.2.1 in the report).

### **Address Register**

The following results in relation to address information were obtained from the SAF:

	<b>Address Register Completeness</b>	<b>Address Register Accuracy</b>
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>96.40 per cent</b>	<b>92.93 per cent</b>

The Address Register completeness results were affected, in the main, by newly completed houses and unit developments that were identified during the SAF. Although the Address Register accuracy level of 92.93 per cent was below expectation; this was due mainly to incorrect property descriptions and land use codes, which have no real bearing on the integrity of the Address Register. A lower accuracy result was achieved in Victoria (88.83 per cent) and was largely due to 169 addresses being allocated to the incorrect CCD in one Division. Investigations have shown that this was an isolated situation and not representative of the State; nonetheless, it is included in the result.<sup>4</sup>

### **Effectiveness of Continuous Roll Update**

The AEC conducted several analyses of the SAF and other enrolment data to assess whether CRU was operating effectively. The results of these analyses appear in the following paragraphs.

An analysis of the CRU activity in the CCDs included in the SAF, for the twelve months before the SAF, shows that the number of contacts being made under CRU is more than matching the ABS movement rates.<sup>5</sup> This means that CRU is identifying electors as they are changing their addresses (and so need to update their enrolment information) and, further, CRU is identifying many electors who might move more than once between elections, even though not all electors will respond to a CRU letter.

Approximately 6.4 per cent of electors (5,209) in the SAF sample required an enrolment change. However, just under half of these electors had previously been sent CRU correspondence, but had not responded. Of the remaining electors, it is likely that many had

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Objection' is the means by which the AEC removes from the roll people who are no longer living at their enrolled address and have not done so for at least one month.

<sup>4</sup> Without this error the accuracy result for Victoria would have been 95.48 per cent.

<sup>5</sup> In general, movement rates are a measure of the proportion of the population that changes address in a given period.

only recently moved and were still within the seven-week grace period.<sup>6</sup> These electors might have been contacted by future CRU activity. The low total number of incorrectly enrolled electors identified during the SAF is considered a very satisfactory result and suggests that CRU is operating effectively.

Similarly, the AEC's analyses suggest that CRU is more effective in maintaining a consistently more accurate roll than the traditional ERR. For example, proportionally less enrolment changes were needed during the SAF than during the 1998 ERR – SAF results suggest that nationally the rolls were an average of 5.7 per cent more accurate under CRU than ERR. Again this indicates that CRU has been effective in identifying electors who needed to update their enrolment details and so has maintained a consistently more accurate roll. Further, the 1998 Federal Election was held very shortly after the completion of the 1998 ERR and the 2001 Federal Election was held after the implementation of CRU. Analysis of 1998 and 2001 Federal Election close of rolls statistics shows that the number of enrolment forms received, as a percentage of total enrolment for both elections was identical. This indicates that at the time of the 2001 Federal Election, CRU had been effective in maintaining the rolls to at least a similar level of accuracy as that achieved following the full ERR in 1998.

In addition, over a three-year period, CRU has generated up to 16.52 per cent more enrolment forms than occurred under ERR for a similar period. When the growth of enrolment nationally between the two cycles is considered, the result still shows that CRU has generated up to 10.39 per cent more enrolments. In addition, the results show that CRU avoids the marked peaks and troughs in enrolment numbers that occurred under ERR.

Finally, analysis of enrolment information done as part of the review of SAF results suggests that CRU is also more efficient than ERR. The 1998 ERR cost \$18 million, collected 1,080,205 enrolment forms at an average cost per enrolment form of up to \$16.63. In contrast, the 2003-04 CRU generated 1,153,720 enrolment forms at a cost of approximately \$9 million, or \$7.80 per enrolment form. Therefore, the average cost per enrolment form under CRU in 2003-04 could be as much as 53 per cent less than in the 1998 ERR.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

The AEC is achieving enrolment participation, completion and accuracy rates above or close to its performance targets.

Results from the SAF and other supporting evidence, such as analysis of close of rolls transactions, clearly show that the rolls are in a better state on a more consistent basis than they were under the ERR regime. The number of contacts to addresses under the CRU program exceeds the ABS movement rate indicating that CRU is effectively identifying electors needing to update their enrolment details, although there are gaps in the CRU program that affect

---

<sup>6</sup> Under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* electors must be resident within the Division for one month before they qualify for enrolment. After that they then have three weeks to advise the AEC of their new address. Based on ABS annual movement rates, the AEC estimates that at any time approximately 2.5 per cent of the population is in this seven-week period.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that for all comparisons between CRU and ERR, the 1998 ERR results used represent the 'worst case', as some enrolment forms at the time would have been returned directly to the AEC by mail, rather than being collected by Review Officers, and so would not have been attributed to the ERR. It is not possible for the AEC to quantify this undercount. Even allowing that the actual 1998 ERR results are understated, the AEC believes that CRU would still show significantly better results on all these measures than any amended figures likely for the ERR.

results in some jurisdictions and need to be addressed. However, the challenge for the AEC is getting a response from all those electors that it does identify.

In addition, the Address Register of enrollable addresses is of high integrity. However, in some States, efforts should be made to obtain more advanced information on new houses and residential developments, considerable work needs to be completed on correct describing of addresses and application of land use codes, and further training of staff is required regarding AEC Address Register standards.

### **Future directions**

Further improvements in enrolment participation, completeness and accuracy can be achieved under the CRU program through:

- continued refinement of current data matching and mailout processes;
- development of strategies to reduce under-enrolment of young people (18-25 year age group); and
- ensuring follow up activities for non-respondents to CRU correspondence is included, as a priority activity at regular intervals, in the CRU program in all States and Territories.

### **Recommendations from the Roll Integrity Unit**

1. The Roll Integrity Unit *recommends* that, in conformance with the AEC's National Standard for CRU Activities, Non-Response Fieldwork be undertaken in all States and Territories at least once in every twelve months.

#### **Responsibility: Enrolment Section**

2. The Roll Integrity Unit *recommends* that, to assist the process of encouraging conformance with the AEC's National Standard for CRU Activities, at the earliest opportunity, the AEC approach the Electoral Council of Australia with the aim of having the National Standards for CRU Activities discussed and endorsed by that body.

#### **Responsibility: Roll Integrity Unit**

3. The Roll Integrity Unit *recommends* that a review be undertaken of RMANS Address Register procedures and training activities to address misunderstandings in some Divisions regarding the correct application of procedures and agreed standards. The Roll Integrity Unit further *recommends* that the AEC ensure that a national standard on the information to be maintained on the RMANS Address Register, particularly in regards, but not limited to, unenrollable addresses, is developed and applied consistently in all States and Territories.

#### **Responsibility: Enrolment Section**

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has a statutory responsibility under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* to maintain the Commonwealth electoral rolls. Additionally, all States and Territories have a Joint Roll Arrangement with the AEC, and therefore the AEC has a responsibility also to State and Territory electoral authorities, as well as stakeholders such as members of parliament, political parties, election candidates and the voting public in relation to roll management and maintenance.

The completeness and accuracy of the electoral rolls is integral to free and fair elections at federal, State and Territory, and local government levels in Australia. Since 1984, when the AEC was established, the management of the electoral rolls has evolved considerably. The major developments that have occurred during this period include:

- the establishment and ongoing development of a computerised roll management system (RMANS);
- the ongoing development of an Address Register within RMANS that enables verification of enrolments down to address level and that is also used as a basis of movement of electors between electorates at redistributions of electoral boundaries; and
- replacing two-yearly Electoral Roll Reviews (ERRs), or doorknocking, with Continuous Roll Update (CRU), whereby data matching with Commonwealth and State data, and data mining of the roll (discussed further at paragraph 2.2.4), are applied to identify newly qualified persons and movements of electors.

While these developments have resulted in the AEC having increased opportunities and capacity to interrogate electoral data and manage the rolls, there has been a growing demand on the AEC for greater accountability and feedback to stakeholders on issues related to the management of the electoral rolls.

### 2.2 AEC roll management processes

#### 2.2.1 Roll Management System Database

The electoral rolls are stored on RMANS, which is maintained by the AEC. On-line real-time updating access is available to all AEC Divisional Offices, and on-line access is available to AEC Head Offices and the Central Office in Canberra.<sup>8</sup> Enrolment forms are processed on-line, by Divisional staff, as are other enrolment update processes, such as deletions resulting from deaths and objections for non-residence or other reasons.

#### 2.2.2 Address Register

The AEC maintains an Address Register within RMANS in order that each elector's address can be identified to a specific validated parcel of land. The Address Register is not simply a list of addresses. The AEC also collects and maintains information on the various types of addresses and their uses, and maintains enrolment history links where addresses have changed type and description, for example through redevelopment.

---

<sup>8</sup> State and Territory electoral authorities have only enquiry access to RMANS.

The maintenance of the Address Register is a necessary component of enrolment management; however, it is a resource intensive process in a country as vast and diverse as Australia. Large sections of the rural component of the Address Register have properties that continue to be described as lots and portions. Developments in the form of rural acreages, urban residences, and multi-storey unit developments are ongoing, and councils are continually making changes to address information such as locality renaming, locality boundary realignment, house numbering and re-numbering, and rural road numbering.

The AEC has used address sources such as the Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF)<sup>9</sup> and Australia Post with limited success. Largely, the AEC has had to develop and maintain the Address Register itself, from information gathered by Divisional staff in the field, and from various sources such as councils, land information centres and independent spatial data providers. Information is often sketchy and inaccurate, requiring physical inspection for verification. Nevertheless, these activities are important in the overall management of electoral rolls because, as part of the AEC's enrolment processing procedures, electors are enrolled for addresses only after the addresses are verified.

The following are Address Register terms referred to throughout this report:

- **Enrollable.** Enrollable addresses are addresses where persons live and for which they can legitimately enrol. These are actual permanent residences such as houses and flats or units.
- **Unenrollable.** Unenrollable addresses are those where persons do not permanently live and for which persons cannot legitimately enrol. They include addresses such as commercial premises, parks and vacant allotments.
- **Active.** Active addresses are those currently in use, whether they are enrollable addresses or unenrollable addresses.
- **Inactive.** This term is used for addresses that have previously existed but have been superseded by a new address that does not resemble the original. An example of an inactive address is where a number of houses have been demolished to make way for a highway. The former addresses of the houses can never be resurrected.
- **Land use codes.** These are specific standard codes that are attached to addresses to describe the types of address and their use, for example houses, residential units, parks, vacant allotments, holiday units, nursing homes, motels and so forth. While this information is not crucial to the management of the rolls, it is nevertheless useful information in data mining and in the management of CRU activities, for example in distinguishing holiday units from permanent residential units, and a standard residence from, say, a boarding house where it is more likely to have persons of multiple surnames enrolled. The land use codes used in the Address Register are AEC-specific codes.

---

<sup>9</sup> G-NAF is a project to develop a national file of addresses coded to defined geographical coordinates. The project is being progressed by PSMA Australia Limited (a company owned by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments), with organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Electoral Council of Australia, Australia Post and Telstra being involved in the project.

### 2.2.3 Geographic Database Areas and walks

The address 'building blocks' used in RMANS for applying lists of addresses and electors to electoral boundaries (federal Divisions, State Districts and local government external and internal boundaries) are referred to as Geographic Database Areas (GDBs). GDBs generally equate to Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Census Collector Districts (CCDs) or a split CCD where a federal, State or local government boundary crosses a CCD. These GDBs are also referred to as 'walks' as they have been used in the past as a workload of addresses reviewed by Review Officers during ERRs.

### 2.2.4 Electoral Roll Reviews and Continuous Roll Updates

#### Electoral Roll Reviews

Before 1999, the AEC conducted ERRs, which involved doorknocking at each residence where such visits were practical, generally every two years, as a method of checking and updating the electoral rolls. The conduct and effectiveness of ERRs came under increasing scrutiny during the 1990s. Criticisms of their effectiveness has been well documented in submissions to the 1992 and 1993 inquiries of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM). The main criticisms of the ERR process were:

- ERRs delivered rolls that were only up to date at the point in time at which the ERRs were conducted. While they could be timed to coincide with federal electoral cycles, they could never also suit all State and Territory electoral cycles. It should be also noted that by-elections for State and local governments are occurring regularly. Generally, the rate of enrolments received in non-ERR periods was minimal.
- An estimated 60–80 per cent of residences doorknocked had no change to their enrolment details and, at a cost of \$18 million at the time of the last national ERR in 1998, they could not be considered the most effective or efficient way to maintain the rolls.
- ERRs were a large logistical exercise conducted over a concentrated period of about six months with about another six months needed to finalise all the processing work, follow-up of non-enrolments and the processing of objections.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, ERRs needed to commence about midway through a federal parliamentary term to allow a minimum of six months clearance after the completion of ERR work and before the federal election. In a situation of an early election or double dissolution election, there was a good chance of ERRs and/or the follow-up processing not being completed, as occurred in 1987.
- There had been increasing concerns regarding the occupational health and safety issues and the non-contact rate associated with doorknocking. Owing to the high number of working couples, the major part of the work had to be completed after normal work hours if acceptable contact rates were to be achieved. This increased the risks and dangers to Review Officers who often had to work in the dark. In addition, there had been (and still is) an increasing number of security access buildings where contact through doorknocking was extremely difficult and, in most cases, impossible.

---

<sup>10</sup> 'Objection' is the means by which the AEC removes from the roll people, for example those who are no longer living at their enrolled address and have not done so for at least one month.

### Move to CRU process

In 1995, the then Australian Joint Roll Council (AJRC) – now the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA)<sup>11</sup> – commissioned a study into alternatives to ERRs. The 1996 report on the study into alternatives recommended a change to CRU, whereby the rolls are updated on a continuous basis by data mining information held by the AEC, and matching the roll with external databases, to identify potential new electors, such as new citizens and school leavers, and electors who have moved.

### CRU activities

The development of the CRU program has seen the progressive expansion of activities under the categories below.

- **Data Matching.** Information is received from external sources covering change of address or data about persons who are eligible but not enrolled, for example, persons recently turned 17 or 18. This data is matched with the electoral rolls to determine if an enrolment change has already been received for the person or enrolment activity has been recorded at the address. If the person is already correctly enrolled, no further action is taken. In some cases, where a previous address is available, after matching with the electoral roll contact is also made at the ‘from’ address, to encourage new residents at that address to update their enrolment details.
- **Data Mining.** These activities use RMANS data to identify addresses for contact where there are indications that the enrolment details of residents might not be up to date. Such circumstances include apparent vacant addresses (addresses where no one is enrolled) (Vacants) and addresses where there are multiple surnames enrolled or the number of electors at an address exceeds the expected limit of electors for the particular type of address (MElimit).
- **Targeted Reviews.** These activities direct enrolment inquiries to specific addresses or specific groups of electors who may be under-enrolled or who are difficult to contact. These include, but are not limited to, doorknocking at addresses at which there has been no response to previous mail contact (Non-Response Fieldwork). The AEC has also carried out trials of doorknocking at all addresses in a number of high turnover/new growth areas. Targeted review also covers the review of specific categories of electors, for example, Silent Electors and General Postal Voters.
- **Other enrolment initiatives.** These initiatives encourage enrolment by eligible persons when they undertake civic or private business, for example, transactions that require a change of address. Other enrolment opportunities arise when young people turn 17 or 18 years of age or when people attend new citizenship ceremonies.
- **Data Integrity.** Used for checking the accuracy/currency of elector and address details on the roll. This includes matching addresses with Australia Post and councils and checking elector data using de-duplication software.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Electoral Council of Australia is a consultative forum of Electoral Commissioners and Chief Electoral Officers of the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

### **2.3 Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) performance audits**

Since 2000, scrutiny of the electoral rolls has increased. There have been several enquiries into the integrity of the electoral rolls, including a performance audit of the rolls by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) in 2001-02.

The ANAO concluded in its report *Integrity of the Electoral Roll*, Audit Report No.42 2001-02, that the electoral roll was 'one of high integrity, and that it can be relied on for electoral purposes', 'that the AEC is managing the electoral roll effectively' and 'AEC policies and procedures can provide an electoral roll that is accurate, complete, valid and secure'. However, the ANAO also suggested areas of AEC management of the rolls and relationships with key stakeholders that can be improved.

In its report, the ANAO made a number of recommendations relating to the upgrading of the AEC's management information systems including the identification and gathering of relevant information that could be used in measuring roll accuracy and completeness, and providing feedback to stakeholders. Of particular relevance is Recommendation 9, which stated:

*To measure the accuracy of the electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that the AEC consider introducing a periodic review of a sample of the electoral roll.*

The ANAO recommended also (Recommendations 6 and 8) that the AEC develop performance indicators for measuring enrolment activities and roll accuracy and develop measurable targets for roll accuracy.

### **2.4 Review of the ANAO Report**

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) conducted a review of the ANAO's report and tabled its report in October 2002. The JSCEM also supported the conduct of sample fieldwork to measure performance but with a greater emphasis on testing the effectiveness of the CRU process. The JSCEM recommended checks of samples of addresses as a means of testing the effectiveness of CRU.

#### Recommendation 9

*The Committee recommends that the Australian Electoral Commission conduct periodic, random spot checks of enrolment details at a sample of addresses as a means of testing whether the Continuous Roll Update process is working effectively in maximising accuracy of enrolment details.*

### **2.5 Sample Audit Fieldwork (SAF) Pilot - 2003**

In 2003, the AEC conducted a sample audit fieldwork (SAF) pilot of a sample of GDBs in three federal Divisions: Moreton in Queensland, Lowe in New South Wales (NSW) and Jagajaga in Victoria. The States and Divisions were chosen as they provided a mix of CRU activities, they were marginal seats of different political persuasions (one marginal Liberal and two marginal Labor), they are demographically diverse (two inner metropolitan and one outer metropolitan), and for internal staff and resource considerations. Further, one Division was in a State that had had a recent election (NSW), one was in a State where the election had been held more than six months previously (Victoria) and the other was in a State where an election had

not been held for some time (Queensland). Following is a summary of the addresses reviewed in those Divisions.

**Table 1: SAF pilot results – May 2003**

	<b>Moreton</b>	<b>Lowe</b>	<b>Jagajaga</b>
Addresses in Division	56,499	55,782	49,944
Addresses in sample review	10,495	8,109	5,332
Percentage of Division reviewed	18.58%	14.54%	10.70%

As the Divisions for the pilot review were purposely chosen, the GDBs and addresses reviewed did not constitute a statistically valid sample, and therefore the results could not be extrapolated nationally. Nevertheless, apart from the useful statistics produced for each of the participating Divisions, it was an extremely worthwhile exercise for identifying issues and setting the groundwork for future sample fieldwork. Notable outcomes include:

- an automated facility was developed for entering and recording information from the fieldwork, and valuable testing was conducted of this facility by Divisional staff as part of the SAF pilot;
- the information and statistics gathered formed a useful basis for developing performance indicators and future benchmarks;
- the information from the pilot provided meaningful information to assist the ABS Statistical Consultancy Unit (SCU) to calculate variability in data between the three States in the pilot, which could be used for determining appropriate sample sizes for the SAF; and
- statistics from the pilot confirmed concerns regarding the shortcomings in using census data as a benchmark for the completeness of the rolls including factors such as:
  - census undercount (estimated to be at least one per cent of the population);
  - the number of people overseas on census night (estimated at 330,000);
  - the number of people in the census who have no citizenship stated; and
  - eligible British Subjects included on the rolls (estimated at 170,000)
 mean that the level of error increases the more census data is disaggregated below the national and State/Territory levels.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Primary objective**

The primary objective for conducting the SAF is to collect statistically valid information that can be used in measuring the completeness and accuracy of the electoral rolls, and of the AEC's Address Register, in areas covered by the CRU program. This in turn will fulfil the requirements of the relevant ANAO and JSCEM recommendations.

The AEC recognises the importance of having performance indicators and a means of measuring its performance regarding roll completeness and accuracy, and the correctness of its enrolment processing work. However, the AEC also has concerns regarding the validity and

accuracy of information sources against which its performance can be measured. External data sources are arguably not as complete and accurate as the rolls themselves, or the Address Register, and there are a number of shortcomings regarding census data when disaggregated to the Divisional level. With the dearth of reliable information upon which the AEC can base performance, the analysis of information collected through statistically valid sampling is important for the measuring process.

### **3.2 Secondary objectives**

The 2004 SAF was the first occasion that the AEC had conducted fieldwork based on strict random sampling of that part of the rolls covered by the CRU program. Consequently, the sampling included some geographical areas not normally reviewed by fieldwork for practical reasons, and it involved the collection and recording of an expanded suite of information not previously recorded by Divisional staff during ERRs. Therefore, in addition to fulfilling the JSCEM recommendation, there were a number of AEC objectives associated with the first SAF, which included:

- testing and refining sampling processes;
- evaluating and resolving issues in special circumstances arising from fieldwork being conducted in difficult and inaccessible areas chosen through the random selection process;
- evaluating and refining operational processes for an ongoing SAF program, including recording and analysis processes, documentation and training in order to achieve accurate measures;
- measuring enrolment and Address Register procedural knowledge and processing work by Divisional staff in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies for improved performance where necessary; and
- collecting and analysing information that will give reliable and credible measurements of enrolment and Address Register accuracy and procedures.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Sampling methodology**

The AEC sought assistance from the ABS SCU in developing an appropriate sampling model to apply to the SAF. The SCU examined the fieldwork processes, methodology and data from the 2003 SAF pilot and the results from the 1998 ERR when preparing its advice for the AEC.

The SCU advised that three factors affect the sample size:

- the population size (that is, the size of the electoral rolls);
- the required accuracy; and
- the variability of the data being collected.

For statistical purposes, two types of errors affect accuracy – non-sampling error and sampling error. Issues such as inaccurate reporting by respondents, incorrect application of procedures, and inaccurate recording of results can cause non-sampling errors. Non-sampling errors are difficult to measure and the SCU assumed that non-sampling errors will be small as a result of

the AEC putting in place appropriate procedures and processes, and the fact that the 2003 SAF pilot showed high response rates (99.3 per cent in Moreton, 97.8 per cent in Lowe and 96.9 per cent in Jagajaga).

Sampling error is caused by the inability to examine the whole population. The measure of sampling error applied by SCU is referred to as relative standard error (RSE) – the lower the RSE, the higher the reliability of projections. The following table is a guide provided by the SCU on how to interpret RSE.

**Table 2: Reliability of results at different relative standard error levels**

RSE	Accuracy
Less than 5%	Highly reliable
Between 5% and 10%	Reliable
Between 10% and 15%	Exercise some caution in interpreting results
Greater than 15%	Exercise caution in interpreting results – broadly indicative information only.

As Queensland was the least populous of the three States in the 2003 SAF pilot, but exhibited the highest level of variability, the SCU applied the variability for Queensland to the other less populous States and Territories as the most conservative assumption and to reduce the risk of not having sufficient sample size. In essence, the higher the variability and the smaller the population size, the larger the sample size has to be in order to ensure a statistically valid sample.<sup>12</sup>

## 4.2 Sample size selected for the SAF

In determining sample size, the AEC needed to consider reliability and the practical and financial implications. While the aim was to achieve as high a reliability factor as possible, other major issues arose with the larger sample sizes including the timing of the fieldwork. The advice given by the ABS SCU was that the fieldwork should be conducted at the same time across Australia in a short period of time.

The AEC considered sample sizes at the five per cent and 7.5 per cent RSE levels and the achievability of conducting fieldwork for the relevant number of CCDs in a relatively short time period. After examining all the issues, it was decided that the sample size relating to the 7.5 per cent RSE level would be applied. The AEC therefore conducted a random selection of 227 CCDs throughout Australia, using proprietary software, and apportioned by State and Territory according to the specifications provided by ABS SCU.

Details of the number of CCDs, addresses and electors by Division are provided in Appendix 2. In conducting the SAF, only CCDs in which CRU occurs were included in the population from which the sample was drawn. However, these account for 34,951 (or 95.54 per cent) of the 36,581 CCDs in Australia.

<sup>12</sup> For example, at a State/Territory level to achieve an RSE of ten per cent, for New South Wales 13 CCDs needed to be reviewed. If RSE was halved to five per cent (meaning that the results would be more reliable), the sample size would increase by over three times, to 50 CCDs.

### **4.3 Timing of fieldwork**

The ABS SCU advised of three important aspects regarding timing of fieldwork:

1. frequency of fieldwork;
2. the actual time of year, for example, away from events such as State elections or other events which would affect the quality of the rolls and hence distort results; and
3. period of time over which the fieldwork is conducted.

The SCU also advised that the fieldwork not only should be conducted in a short period of time but also across Australia at a time when the rolls were not affected by other events.

In considering the SCU's advice, the AEC decided to conduct the fieldwork concurrently over a period of 16 days from 28 February to 14 March 2004. The timing was possibly not the most desirable (as there were electoral events occurring in some States) but was considered one of only a few windows of opportunity considering a number of issues, including an expected federal election in the latter half of 2004. The electoral calendar will always be different in each State and Territory and therefore the timing of a national survey will affect results in individual States or Territories to different degrees.

The major factors regarding the timing of the SAF were:

- difficulty finding a time when no State/Territory electoral events were planned;
- States indicating a preference for conducting fieldwork during daylight saving hours; and
- ensuring that the fieldwork and follow-up was completed well before the expected election.

### **4.4 Performance indicators and measures**

#### **4.4.1 Introduction**

The AEC is developing performance indicators relating to its roll management functions. The SAF allowed the AEC to measure some of the draft performance indicators. These related to:

- enrolment participation;
- completeness of Divisional rolls;
- accuracy of the rolls;
- completeness of the Address Register; and
- accuracy of the Address Register.

Information and issues from both the 2003 SAF pilot and the 2004 SAF were examined to develop and refine formulae, to provide the most effective measurement against the performance indicators.

#### **4.4.2 Enrolment Participation**

Enrolment participation is the percentage of eligible persons who are enrolled. In calculating participation, the AEC has ignored whether electors are enrolled for the correct electoral

Division or address; these factors are dealt with under completeness and accuracy respectively. When determining the participation rate, the AEC compares the current roll, less electors who are deceased and ineligible persons, such as non-citizens, to the estimated total population who should be enrolled. For the SAF, the participation formula is:

$$\frac{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of electors in the} \\ \text{sample at start of the SAF} \end{array} \right. \text{ less deceased} \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{less ineligible for non-} \\ \text{citizenship or unsound mind} \end{array} \right]}{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of electors} \\ \text{in the sample at} \\ \text{start of the SAF} \end{array} \right. \text{ less} \quad \text{less} \quad \text{plus new enrolments} \quad \text{plus estimated new enrolments} \\ \text{deceased} \quad \text{ineligible} \quad \text{including} \quad \text{and re-enrolments on the} \\ \text{re-enrolments} \quad \text{Compulsory Enrolment System} \quad \left. \right]} \times 100$$

#### 4.4.3 Completeness of the Divisional rolls

The rate of completeness of the rolls can vary considerably depending on the definition used and how the completeness figure is calculated. The completeness of the roll is defined as the number of electors on the roll, and eligible to be on the roll in the electoral Division, at the start of the SAF as a percentage of the estimated number of eligible persons who should be on the roll in that Division; or:

$$\frac{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of electors in the} \\ \text{sample at start of the SAF} \end{array} \right. \text{ less estimated objections} \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{less deceased} \end{array} \right]}{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of electors} \\ \text{in the sample at} \\ \text{start of the SAF} \end{array} \right. \text{ less estimated} \quad \text{less} \quad \text{plus new enrolments to} \quad \text{plus estimated new} \\ \text{objections} \quad \text{deceased} \quad \text{the Division} \quad \text{enrolments to Division} \\ \text{on CE System} \quad \left. \right]} \times 100$$

Under this formula, the result will give an average for completeness for Divisional rolls at State and national levels. There are certain unknowns in this formula where assumptions need to be made based on other indicators. The assumptions are:

- the number of objections that will be raised against electors still living in the Division and
- those listed for compulsory enrolment (CE) action (new people identified at addresses) but who are already enrolled elsewhere in the Division.

The objections were weighted according to the known inter- and intra-Divisional movements in 2002-03. The CE component was weighted according to inter- and intra-Divisional enrolments received during the SAF.

#### 4.4.4 Accuracy of the rolls

Accuracy of the rolls is defined as the percentage of electors currently enrolled for the address at which they are living; that is, those for which no change was required during the SAF. Under this measurement, if electors are enrolled in the correct Division but need to update their address details they are not considered to be accurately enrolled.

Conceptually this narrow definition (ignoring the fact that an elector might move within the Subdivision but still be entitled to be enrolled for the Division) was used to address the JSCEM’s concerns over whether electors were actually living at the address for which they were recorded on the electoral rolls. Clearly if electors have moved within the Subdivision then, although they might retain their entitlement to be on the roll for the Division, their current

enrolment information is not accurate. It should be noted that changes to the legislation passed recently by Parliament to implement address-based, rather than Division-based, enrolment mean that this narrow definition will be the only one used for determining enrolment eligibility in the future.

The AEC examined all transactions in the two-month period from start of the SAF in order to identify all electors who were incorrectly enrolled. By using a two-month period, the AEC was not only able to capture information collected by the Review Officers, but also information received after the completion of fieldwork. The formula used for calculating roll accuracy is:

$$\frac{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of electors in the} \\ \text{sample at start of the SAF} \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{objections} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less enrolment changes, either within} \\ \text{the Division or to another Division}^* \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less ineligible} \\ \text{persons} \end{array} \left. \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{deceased} \end{array} \right] \times 100}{\text{Number of electors in the sample at start of the SAF}}$$

\* This figure does not include enrolment changes already identified in the Objection System or Amendments.

#### 4.4.5 Completeness of the Address Register

Completeness of the Address Register is defined as the number of correctly described and classified (that is, classified as enrollable or unenrollable, and active or inactive) addresses at the start of SAF as a percentage of the number of correctly described and classified addresses at the end of SAF; or:

$$\frac{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of} \\ \text{addresses in the} \\ \text{sample at start of} \\ \text{the SAF} \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{less active} \\ \text{addresses changed} \\ \text{to inactive} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less deleted} \\ \text{addresses} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less enrollable} \\ \text{addresses changed to} \\ \text{unenrollable} \end{array} \left. \right] \times 100}{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of} \\ \text{addresses in} \\ \text{the sample at} \\ \text{start of the} \\ \text{SAF} \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{less active} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{changed to} \\ \text{inactive} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{deleted} \\ \text{addresses} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{enrollable} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{changed to} \\ \text{unenrollable} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{plus} \\ \text{unenrollable} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{changed to} \\ \text{enrollable} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{plus} \\ \text{inactive} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{changed to} \\ \text{active} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{plus} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{added} \\ \text{during the} \\ \text{SAF} \end{array} \left. \right]}$$

For the 2004 SAF, the completeness of enrollable addresses only was measured; the reasoning behind this is discussed at paragraph 5.2.4.

#### 4.4.6 Accuracy of the Address Register

Accuracy of the Address Register is defined as the number of correctly described, classified and aligned (that is, allocated to the correct CCD)<sup>13</sup> addresses on the Address Register as a percentage of the number of addresses on the Address Register; or:

$$\frac{\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number of} \\ \text{addresses in} \\ \text{the sample at} \\ \text{start of the} \\ \text{SAF} \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{that changed} \\ \text{land use} \\ \text{code} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less active} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{which were} \\ \text{inactivated} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{deleted} \\ \text{addresses} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less} \\ \text{addresses} \\ \text{in wrong} \\ \text{CCD} \end{array} \begin{array}{l} \text{less addresses} \\ \text{which were changed} \\ \text{from enrollable to} \\ \text{unenrollable} \end{array} \left. \right] \times 100}{\text{Number of addresses in the sample at start of the SAF}}$$

<sup>13</sup> This aspect of address accuracy is important, as electoral boundaries are determined based on CCD information.

## **5. DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING**

### **5.1 Conduct of fieldwork**

As would be expected with a random sample of CCDs, the types of issues and levels of difficulty varied considerably amongst the CCDs selected for the SAF. The sample included a number of CCDs that would not normally be reviewed by doorknocking because of accessibility issues, security, remoteness and so on. CCDs were a mixture of inner and outer metropolitan, regional centres, rural and remote areas across each State and Territory.

Some Divisional Returning Officers (DROs) expressed concerns about having to conduct fieldwork in CCDs with difficult terrain, accessibility and/or security problems. However, it was essential that all CCDs selected for the sample were reviewed and, in spite of the problems and concerns raised, the reviews took place. Nevertheless, special arrangements will need to be made in future SAF to cover difficult circumstances. These might include the hire of four-wheel drive vehicles in CCDs with difficult terrain, and employing two Review Officers to review CCDs where there are security concerns. For some areas, the AEC might also need to consider alternatives to doorknocking, such as telephone contact.

### **5.2 Data processing issues**

#### **5.2.1 Introduction**

The AEC developed a specific RMANS sub-system for the input of SAF findings. For the credibility of the statistics it was essential that all information be processed consistently and accurately. Reports and feedback from Divisions indicated that the processing was generally conducted at a satisfactory standard. However, the SAF did highlight variations in applying procedures across Divisions and States, regarding the processing of certain fieldwork information. While some of these variations have created difficulties in analysing data, the SAF has proved useful in identifying specific areas where the AEC can further improve procedures, policy, training and quality assurance programs.

#### **5.2.2 Compulsory Enrolment System**

The RMANS Compulsory Enrolment (CE) System has been operating since the mid-1990s. However, it became evident during the processing of SAF information that not all Divisions and States have been consistently using this system. This highlights a need for national consistency in managing compulsory enrolment activities, which the AEC will address.

#### **5.2.3 Follow-up of Non-Attendance Cards**

After two unsuccessful visits are made to a residence, the Review Officer leaves a non-attendance card (NAC) at that address. The NAC lists all the electors enrolled for that address and asks the resident(s) to check the list, record any changes, and return the NAC in the reply paid envelope provided.

It was evident from the SAF results that there is inconsistency between Divisions in regards to sending follow-up notices to residences from which NACs have not been returned. Anecdotal evidence suggests that persons at such residences do not want to be contacted and follow up

letters generate a poor response rate. Nevertheless, the AEC will stress for future SAF events that these residences are to be followed up in a timely manner in all Divisions.

#### **5.2.4 Processing of address information and Address Register**

The AEC intended that, as part of the SAF, Review Officers would collect and record on the Walk Book any information on addresses that had changed, such as land use codes, and details of any new addresses whether enrollable addresses or unenrollable addresses (for example, businesses, vacant allotments and parks).

The results from the SAF revealed that the level of recording of unenrollable addresses, and the priority given to this aspect of Address Register data, varied across the country. In some Divisions, information on unenrollable addresses was not, or was only partially, collected and in others the unenrollable address information collected was not fully processed. It was evident there was under-recording of unenrollable addresses to the extent that any calculations that included unenrollable addresses would be unreliable.

Further, analysis of the processing of address information from the SAF by Divisional staff revealed that there is a degree of confusion and misunderstanding with some of the terms and processes,<sup>14</sup> and when to apply other AEC address-related procedures. Awareness of these issues will enable the AEC to develop targeted training and procedures, and assist in preparing for future SAF.

## **6. RESULTS**

### **6.1 Fieldwork**

Fieldwork was conducted between 28 February and 14 March 2004. A total of 52,026 enrollable addresses were included in the Walk Books that were reviewed by Review Officers. Of these, residents at 8,111 (15.6 per cent) of addresses could not be contacted after two visits by the Review Officer. The non-contact rate varied from State to State, the lowest being recorded in Western Australia (WA)(8.2 per cent) and the highest in the Northern Territory (NT)(23.1 per cent). Addresses where the residents refused to provide information to Review Officers numbered 135; this was an average of less than one refusal for each CCD reviewed. A low rate of refusal is important statistically, as it means that the results will be more reliable.

A useful indicator for measuring the effectiveness of Review Officers undertaking fieldwork is to compare the number of enrolment forms collected to the number of identified additional<sup>15</sup> electors. Collecting enrolment forms at the address both avoids the need for further follow up action, and confirms and augments the information collected by Review Officers. The percentage of enrolment forms collected during fieldwork was also very acceptable with around 75 per cent collected at the door. Overall, enrolment forms were received from approximately 80 per cent of the unenrolled eligible electors identified in the SAF, without CE action being necessary – Victoria achieved a rate of 93.0 per cent. It should be noted that these results have no relevance in determining the effectiveness of either CRU or ERRs. However, a

---

<sup>14</sup> For example, the differences amongst ‘enrollable’, ‘unenrollable’, ‘active’ and ‘inactive’ addresses, and how each of these should be treated when processing enrolments or undertaking maintenance activities.

<sup>15</sup> These electors are ‘additional’ in the sense that the SAF identified them as not being included on the Divisional roll. They might be persons previously unenrolled (that is, they are ‘new’ electors), or they might be currently or previously enrolled for another Division.

high collection rate is important to reduce non-sampling errors (refer paragraph 4.1 Sampling Methodology) and ensures that the results from any analyses can be relied on.

A relatively small number of death transactions (24) were identified as outstanding during the SAF with Queensland recording the highest number (11). However, further research on dates of deaths, where possible, revealed that they were recent deaths for which the AEC had received no advice.

The following table summarises the results for fieldwork activities.

**Table 3: Sample Audit Fieldwork – Summary of fieldwork**

State	Addresses at Start	NACs		Refusals	SABs	New Electors & Changes	EF Processed		Gone	Deaths
		No.	%				No.	%		
NSW	5,577	788	14.1%	8	175	776	593	76.4%	743	2
VIC	2,542	291	11.4%	2	1	342	318	93.0%	302	2
QLD	7,434	920	12.4%	31	27	885	732	82.7%	870	11
WA	7,548	620	8.2%	22	18	1,397	1,257	90.0%	1,278	2
SA	7,189	1,441	20.0%	31	31	767	658	85.8%	1,048	3
TAS	5,854	597	10.2%	11	31	642	526	81.9%	788	0
ACT	8,242	1,690	20.5%	7	1	1,646	1,338	81.3%	1,276	4
NT	7,650	1,764	23.1%	23	106	1,068	677	63.4%	1,781	0
Australia	52,036	8,111	15.6%	135	390	7,523	6,099	81.1%	8,086	24

*EF Processed = Enrolment Forms Collected plus enrolments returned in the mail; this figure is all the enrolment forms processed whether they be for new enrolments, changes of existing enrolments or no-change enrolments (that is where the information provided by the elector is the same as that already on the roll).*

*NAC = Non Attendance Cards (Not at home); SAB = Security Access Buildings.*

## 6.2 Enrolment

### 6.2.1 Enrolment forms processed

The following table details the number of enrolment forms collected and processed because of the SAF.

A total of 6,099 enrolments were processed from the fieldwork and this represented 7.44 per cent of total electors at the start of fieldwork. The composition of enrolment types was fairly consistent across States although there was significant difference between the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and other States/Territory regarding inter-State and inter-Division enrolments due to the close proximity and transience between the ACT and NSW. Tasmania had the least number of enrolments processed overall, indicating the highest accuracy and completeness rate.

**Table 4: Sample Audit Fieldwork – Summary of enrolment forms processed**

State	17 Year Olds	New - 18+	Re-enrolments	From Interstate	Electors who changed within Division	Electors transferred from another Division	Enrolments Processed *	Enrolment at Start
NSW	11	62	83	15	253	169	593	9,191
	1.85%	10.45%	14.00%	2.53%	42.66%	28.50%	6.45%	
VIC	2	55	40	11	115	95	318	4,186
	0.63%	17.30%	12.58%	3.46%	36.16%	29.87%	7.60%	
QLD	26	91	105	43	311	156	732	11,543
	3.55%	12.43%	14.34%	5.87%	42.49%	21.31%	6.34%	
WA	20	205	218	36	427	351	1,257	11,585
	1.59%	16.31%	17.34%	2.86%	33.97%	27.92%	10.85%	
SA	15	126	71	19	289	138	658	11,011
	2.28%	19.15%	10.79%	2.89%	43.92%	20.97%	5.98%	
TAS	18	83	72	28	267	58	526	9,376
	3.42%	15.78%	13.69%	5.32%	50.76%	11.03%	5.61%	
ACT	25	232	171	207	610	93	1,338	13,902
	1.87%	17.34%	12.78%	15.47%	45.59%	6.95%	9.62%	
NT	9	102	104	106	155	201	677	11,235
	1.33%	15.07%	15.36%	15.66%	22.90%	29.69%	6.03%	
Australia	126	956	864	465	2,427	1,261	6,099	82,029
	2.07%	15.67%	14.17%	7.62%	39.79%	20.68%	7.44%	

\* Percentage of enrolments processed to total enrolment at start of fieldwork.

The above table also shows that, of the enrolment forms received as a result of the SAF, 956 (15.67 per cent) came from first time enrollees 18 years of age or older. These 956 enrolments equate to 1.17 per cent of all electors in the sampled CCDs at the start of the SAF. However, to calculate a national estimate for newly qualified persons not yet enrolled, the number of apparently unenrolled newly eligible persons in the CE system also needs to be included (these represent people identified during fieldwork as apparently eligible to enrol but who have never enrolled). If it is assumed that the same proportion of newly qualified persons will return enrolment forms following their receipt of CE correspondence, as did so without further prompting (81.1 per cent), then the adjusted proportion of enrolments returned for apparent newly eligible persons equates to 1.44 per cent. For the whole electoral roll this would equate to an estimated 185,000 newly eligible persons nationally who are not enrolling when they qualify.

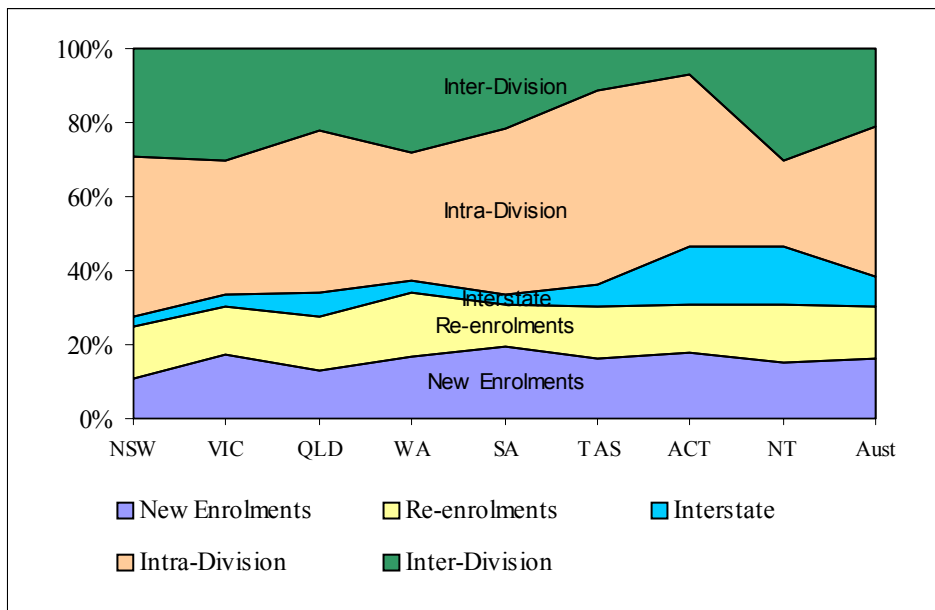
There were 864 re-enrolments in the SAF for persons who had been removed from the roll by objection at some stage and had not re-enrolled. This represents approximately one per cent of electors in the CCDs reviewed by the SAF or 1.3 per cent if adjustment is made for unreturned enrolments (as discussed in the previous paragraph). This result extrapolated to the whole roll indicates that approximately 165,000 persons previously enrolled have not re-enrolled. Therefore, nationally the SAF indicates that approximately 350,000 newly eligible persons and persons previously enrolled were not enrolled at the time of the fieldwork.

The AEC also used the results of the SAF in an attempt to estimate the number of eligible persons who are currently not correctly enrolled. There were 4,153 electors at the SAF who needed to change their enrolment details. This equates to approximately 5.1 per cent of SAF

enrolments or 6.2 per cent after adjusting for unreturned enrolment forms. This suggests for the whole roll that approximately 800,000 electors nationally might need to update their enrolment information. If the percentage of electors who are likely to have recently moved<sup>16</sup> is taken into account, the SAF indicates that around 480,000 electors nationally (or 3.7 per cent of the roll) are not updating their enrolment within the period required under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. The remaining 320,000 (of the estimated 800,000 needing to update their enrolment) are likely to be recent movers.

The figure below illustrates the break-up of the enrolments forms processed during the SAF.

Figure 1: Enrolment forms processed by State/Territory



### 6.2.2 Enrolment participation

As explained earlier, the participation rate is a reflection only of the estimated number of eligible persons who are enrolled. It does not take into account the electors who might need to change their addresses on the rolls. For the SAF most of the States/Territories showed consistent participation rates of between 96 and 98 percent, with WA and the ACT having participation rates of below the weighted average. The following table and Figure 2 show the participation rate by State/Territory, as determined from the SAF, and the method of calculation.

<sup>16</sup>Estimated to be 2.5 per cent based on a seven-week period, calculated on the basis of the ABS annual movement rate of 18.2 per cent.

**Table 5: Sample Audit Fieldwork – Enrolment participation rates**

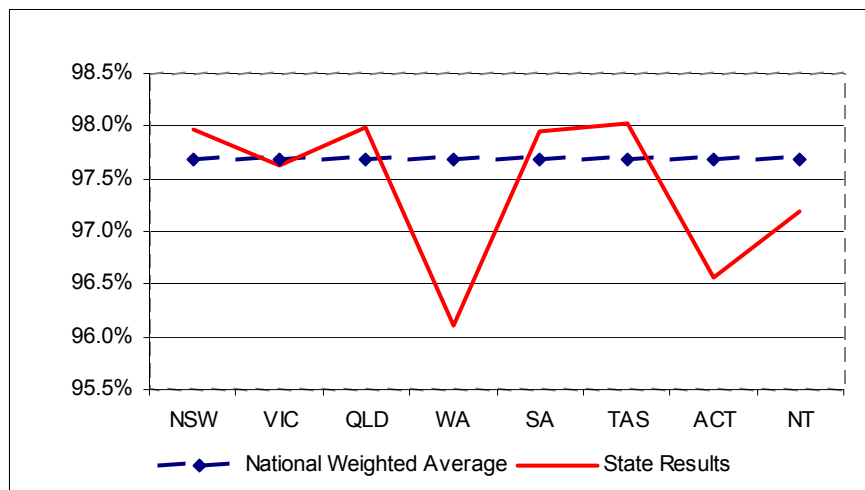
	Start Enrolment (a)	Deceased (b)	Ineligible (c)	Start Eligible Enrolment (d)	New Enrolments (e)	Re-Enrol (f)	CE Estimate, New and Re-enrol (g)	End Enrolment (h)	Participation (i)
NSW	9,191	2	1	9,188	62	83	45	9,378	97.97%
VIC	4,186	2	0	4,184	55	40	7	4,286	97.62%
QLD	11,543	11	0	11,532	91	105	41	11,769	97.99%
WA	11,585	2	7	11,576	205	218	47	12,046	96.10%
SA	11,011	3	1	11,007	126	71	33	11,237	97.95%
TAS	9,376	0	0	9,376	83	72	34	9,565	98.02%
ACT	13,902	4	0	13,898	232	171	93	14,394	96.55%
NT	11,235	0	0	11,235	102	104	119	11,560	97.19%
Australia	82,029	24	9	81,996	956	864	419	84,235	97.69%

$(d) = (a)-(b)-(c)$        $(h) = (d)+(e)+(f)+(g)$        $(i) = (d)/(h) \times 100$

**Notes:**

1. The number of persons in the CE system who were potential new enrolments or re-enrolments was estimated by applying the same ratio that applied to enrolment forms processed to the total number in the CE system.
2. The national participation rate of 97.69 per cent is calculated using a weighting formula advised by ABS SCU, based on a weighting for State according to the sample ratio, which is then applied nationally.

**Figure 2: Enrolment participation**



Tasmania recorded the highest participation rate at 98.02 per cent, marginally ahead of Queensland (97.99 per cent), NSW (97.97 per cent) and South Australia (SA) (97.95 per cent). However, results in Queensland were affected favourably by roll closes for State and local government elections held in January and February 2004. Similarly, in NSW during February there was large CRU mailout and a close of rolls for local government elections on 16 February

2004. These events had a positive impact on new enrolments estimated at 0.7 per cent of total enrolment in Queensland and 0.25 per cent of total enrolment in NSW.

While the AEC considers that CRU can be effective in identifying people newly eligible to enrol, it acknowledges that there are factors that currently reduce the effectiveness of the program. These factors include gaps in the current CRU program across jurisdictions, meaning that not all potential enrolment changes are identified, and the fact that not all persons contacted by CRU respond. Therefore, close of rolls and other electoral events, such as elections and referenda, act as important catalysts in prompting many people to enrol.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, it is not surprising that WA, the ACT and the NT, the three States/Territories that prior to the SAF had no major electoral events since the 2001 Federal Election to further stimulate enrolment, were below the national average for enrolment participation.

### 6.2.3 Enrolment completeness

As stated at 4.4.3, the completeness rate reflects the degree of completeness of the Divisional rolls. The following table shows the results for Divisional roll completeness and the method of calculation.

**Table 6: Sample Audit Fieldwork – Enrolment completeness**

	Start Enrolled (a)	Obj (b)	Ineligible (c)	Deceased (d)	Base Enrolled (e)	New and Change (f)	Intra-Division (g)	CE (h)	End Enrolled (j)	Completeness (k)
NSW	9,191	222	1	2	8,966	582	253	103	9,398	95.40%
VIC	4,186	90	0	2	4,094	316	115	15	4,310	94.99%
QLD	11,543	278	0	11	11,254	706	311	86	11,735	95.90%
WA	11,585	372	7	2	11,204	1,237	427	92	12,106	92.55%
SA	11,011	352	1	3	10,655	643	289	60	11,069	96.26%
TAS	9,376	237	0	0	9,139	508	267	55	9,435	96.86%
ACT	13,902	431	0	4	13,467	1,313	610	165	14,335	93.94%
NT	11,235	557	0	0	10,678	668	155	300	11,491	92.92%
Australia	82,029	2,539	9	24	79,457	5,973	2,427	876	83,879	95.18%

$$(e) = (a)-(b)-(c)-(d)$$

$$(j) = (e) + (f) + (h) - (g)$$

$$(k) = (e)/(j) \times 100$$

Note: Obj = Estimate of number of objections left the Division.

CE = Estimate of number of persons in compulsory enrolment system new to the Division

New and Change = Enrolments processed less 17 year olds' enrolments.

The national completion rate of 95.18 per cent is calculated using a weighting formula advised by ABS, which is based on a weighting in each State according to the sample ratio then applied nationally.

To derive meaningful and reliable performance information for the SAF, in some instances the AEC has had to adjust the initial results obtained from the fieldwork. For example, in considering objections (one of the variables used to calculate the completeness indicator) allowance must be made for persons that have been removed from the Divisional roll, but nevertheless still live in that same Division. In calculating the completeness of the rolls, to deduct all objections from the starting enrolments figure would produce a result worse than the

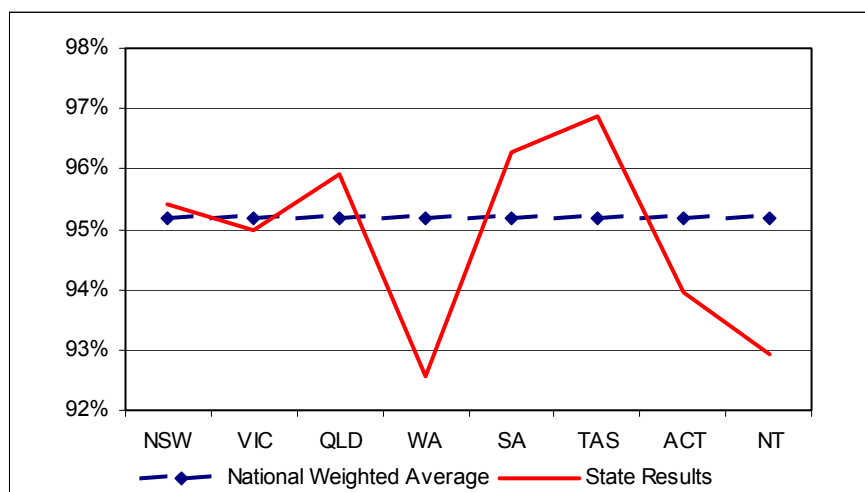
<sup>17</sup> The significance of close of rolls in measuring CRU effectiveness is discussed further in Section 6.4.5.

actual. Therefore, the AEC has adjusted the objection figure for the completeness calculations to reflect those electors who remain in the Division. Similarly, some of the people in the CE system are new enrollees to the Division; others are persons previously or currently enrolled for that Division, but who need to update their enrolments. Again the AEC needed to adjust the CE figure to identify only those electors that were actually new enrollees for the Division.

In calculating the number of objections for electors that had actually left the Division, ignoring those that had simply moved within the Division, the total number of objections was weighted according to the ratio of movements derived from statistics in the AEC's *2002-03 Annual Report* (p.30). Similarly, the number of electors identified for CE action was weighted in accordance with the ratio for various types of enrolments processed during the SAF. These included potential new enrolments, re-enrolments and transfers from other Divisions or States.

Based on the nation-wide results below, the average Divisional roll is 95.18 per cent complete. This result exceeds the AEC's performance target for completeness of 95 per cent. The results obtained in each State and Territory, and the national weighted average, are shown in the following figure.

Figure 3: Divisional roll completeness



The results show that Tasmania has the most complete roll at 96.86 per cent while WA, the ACT and the NT are below the average at 92.55 per cent, 93.94 per cent, and 92.92 per cent respectively. As was the case with participation, the results are affected, to some degree, by the history of events prior to the fieldwork – Queensland and NSW enrolments were boosted to some extent by recent roll closures while WA, the ACT and the NT have had no major electoral events since 2001.

#### 6.2.4 Enrolment accuracy

The accuracy rate is a measure of the electors who have been identified as still living at the addresses for which they are enrolled, and therefore require no change to their enrolment. Any changes identified during the SAF, including electors who had moved address from one address in the Division to another, affected the accuracy result. After applying the ABS SCU weighting, the overall accuracy rate for the country was 89.51 per cent. This result is marginally below the AEC performance target for enrolment accuracy of 90 per cent.

The results show that a high percentage of deceased electors are being identified and removed from the roll with only 0.03 per cent outstanding, most of who are believed to be recently deceased (based on limited research possible).

The following table presents the calculations of, and the results for, each State and Territory as well as the national average.

**Table 7: Sample Audit Fieldwork – Enrolment accuracy**

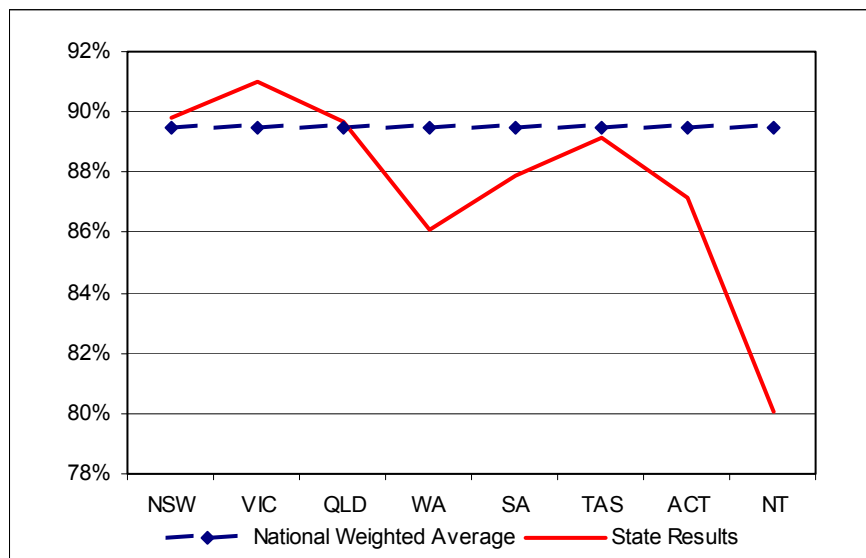
State	Enrolment at Start (a)	Objections (b)	Deaths (c)	Ineligible (d)	Changes (e)	No Change (f)	Accuracy (g)
NSW	9,191	743	2	1	188	8,257	89.84%
VIC	4,186	302	2	0	73	3,809	90.99%
QLD	11,543	870	11	0	314	10,348	89.65%
WA	11,585	1,278	2	7	322	9,976	86.11%
SA	11,011	1,048	3	1	285	9,674	87.86%
TAS	9,376	788	0	0	229	8,359	89.15%
ACT	13,902	1,276	4	0	507	12,115	87.15%
NT	11,235	1,781	0	0	457	8,997	80.08%
Australia	82,029	8,086	24	9	2,375	71,535	89.51%*

$$(f) = (a)-(b)-(c)-(d)-(e) \qquad (g) = (f)/(a) \times 100$$

Enrolment accuracy refers to the accuracy of electors already on the Divisional roll, so persons who enrol or re-enrol during the SAF are not included in calculations for accuracy (these people are considered in the measurement of completeness). Therefore, the number of changes in the above table does not equal the number of enrolment forms processed mentioned in previous tables.

\* The national accuracy rate of 89.51 per cent is calculated using a weighting formula advised by ABS SCU, which is based on a weighting in each State according to the sample ratio then applied nationally.

**Figure 4: Enrolment accuracy**



Victoria recorded the highest enrolment accuracy at 90.99 per cent, while NSW (89.84 per cent), Queensland (89.65 per cent) and Tasmania (89.15 per cent) were just below the performance target. The NT accuracy result was well below the average at 80.08 per cent. However, the NT also has the highest movement rate (26.39 per cent) in the country, highlighting the particular challenges faced by the AEC in maintaining enrolments in that jurisdiction.

### 6.3 Address Register

#### 6.3.1 Completeness

Because of the inconsistent application of procedures, only enrollable addresses are reported for the 2004 SAF. The completeness result for addresses was affected by factors such as newly completed housing estates or unit developments identified during the fieldwork. The following table shows the results obtained in each State and Territory for Address Register completeness.

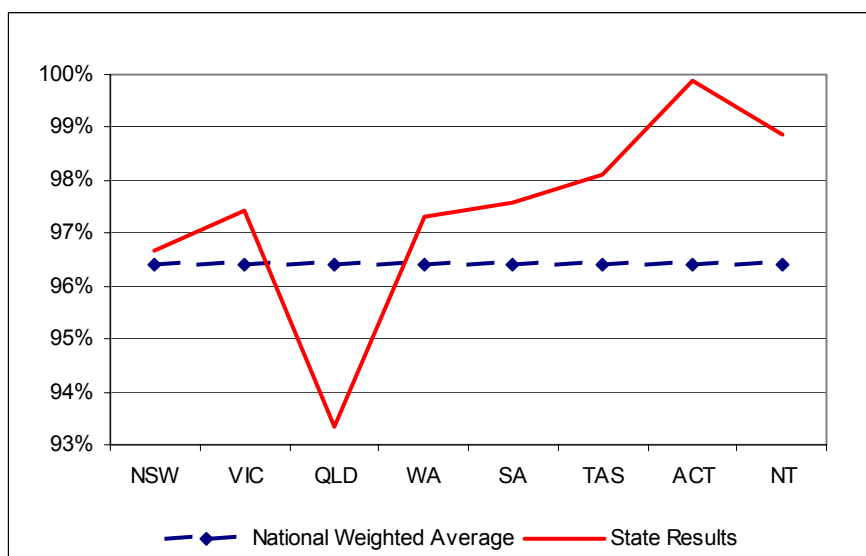
**Table 8: Address Register completeness (enrollable addresses only)**

State	Start (a)	Changed to Inactive (b)	Deleted (c)	Changed to unenrollable (d)	Start less inactive, deleted and unenrollable (e)	Changed to Active (f)	Changed to enrollable (g)	Added (h)	Active enrollable at End (j)	Completeness (k)
NSW	5,577	2	54	63	5,458	2	33	154	5,647	96.65%
VIC	2,542	0	47	52	2,443	0	2	63	2,508	97.41%
QLD	7,434	0	165	115	7,154	31	38	440	7,663	93.36%
WA	7,548	0	63	120	7,365	30	9	164	7,568	97.32%
SA	7,189	9	56	84	7,040	1	2	171	7,214	97.59%
TAS	5,854	1	38	125	5,690	4	31	75	5,800	98.10%
ACT	8,242	0	17	5	8,220	1	4	4	8,229	99.89%
NT	7,650	0	5	2	7,643	1	0	86	7,730	98.87%
Australia	52,036	12	445	566	51,013	70	119	1,157	52,359	96.40%*

$$(e) = (a)-(b)-(c)-(d); (j) = (e)+(f)+(g)+(h); (k) = (e)/(j)$$

\* The national completeness rate of 96.40 per cent is calculated using a weighting formula advised by ABS SCU, which is based on a weighting in each State according to the sample ratio then applied nationally.

Figure 5: Address Register completeness – enrollable addresses



The ACT recorded the highest completeness rate for enrollable addresses in the Address Register at 99.89 per cent, with only four dwellings added during the fieldwork. Alternatively, Queensland showed a lower completeness rate than the national weighted average at 96.40 per cent. The lower completeness rate for Queensland appeared to be because of higher numbers of new estates and developments being identified during fieldwork; altogether Queensland added 440 new addresses.<sup>18</sup>

### 6.3.2 Accuracy of Address Register

The table below shows the accuracy of enrollable addresses on the Address Register at the time of the SAF. The results are predominantly affected by type changes, mainly the correct application of land use codes. Whilst it is highly desirable that the correct land use codes are applied, they have no impact on the integrity of the Address Register. One Division with 169 addresses coded to the incorrect CCD affected significantly Victoria's accuracy result.<sup>19</sup> Investigations have shown that this was an isolated situation and not representative of the State.

The following table presents the SAF results for Address Register accuracy.

<sup>18</sup> Some of these changes were actually the result of rural road numbering occurring in several areas.

<sup>19</sup> Without this error the accuracy result for Victoria would have been 95.48 per cent.

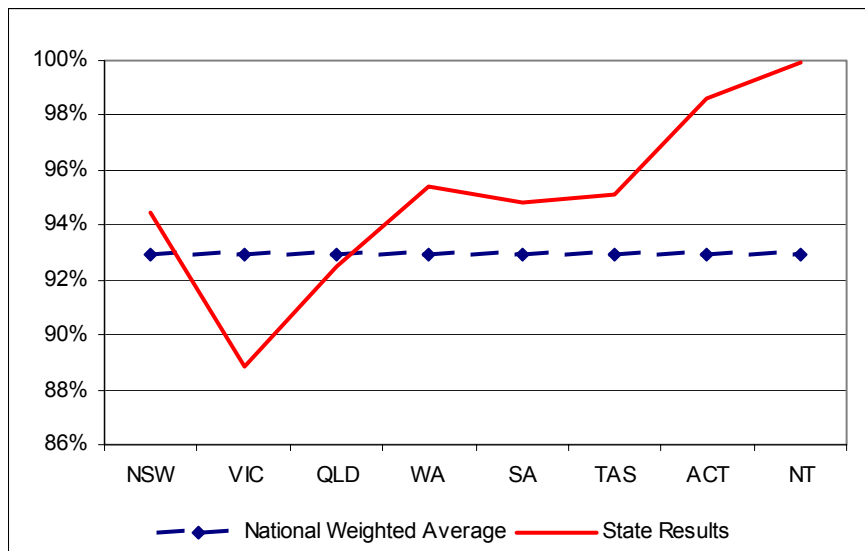
Table 9: Address Register accuracy

State	Start (a)	Type Changes (b)	Changed to Inactive (c)	Deleted (d)	Addresses in Wrong CCD (e)	Changed to Unenrollable (f)	Addresses with no change (g)	Accuracy (h)
NSW	5,577	179	2	54	10	63	5,269	94.48%
VIC	2,542	16	0	47	169	52	2,258	88.83%
QLD	7,434	278	0	165	0	115	6,876	92.49%
WA	7,548	140	0	63	21	120	7,204	95.44%
SA	7,189	207	9	56	18	84	6,815	94.80%
TAS	5,854	48	1	38	73	125	5,569	95.13%
ACT	8,242	91	0	17	0	5	8,129	98.63%
NT	7,650	1	0	5	0	2	7,642	99.90%
Australia	52,036	960	12	445	291	566	49,762	92.93%*

$(g) = (a)-(b)-(c)-(d)-(e)-(f)$ :  $(h) = (g)/(a) \times 100$

\* The national accuracy rate of 92.93 per cent is calculated using a weighting formula advised by ABS SCU, which is based on a weighting in each State according to the sample ratio then applied nationally.

Figure 6: Address Register accuracy – enrollable addresses



## 6.4 Continuous Roll Update (CRU)

### 6.4.1 Introduction

The major component of the AEC's CRU program is the matching of data received from organisations and other government agencies, such as Centrelink, Australia Post, Road Transport Authorities and Rental Bond Authorities, to identify electors needing to update their enrolment details, or potential new electors. Persons so identified are sent letters inviting them to enrol or amend their enrolment details. The AEC also interrogates RMANS to identify instances such as:

- addresses with no electors enrolled (Vacants);
- addresses that have multiple elector surnames or the number of enrolments at that address exceed the expected limits for type of dwelling (Melimits); and
- addresses where there has been no enrolment activity for some period of time (Supplementary Mail Reviews).

In addition, the CRU program provides for the conduct of fieldwork at addresses where there has been no response to CRU mailouts (Non-Response Fieldwork).

During the twelve months before the SAF, CRU activities occurred in all States and Territories to varying degrees according to the available funding, the election timetables and the program activity agreed by the relevant State/Territory Joint Roll Partners.

#### *Measurement of CRU performance and comparisons to ERR*

The following segments present analyses of CRU performance, and some comparisons to ERRs, based on the results obtained from the SAF. However, a thorough analysis of CRU is not included, as this would be outside the objective of the SAF.

The results of the analyses presented in this section, and the conclusions derived from those results, should be viewed as indicative rather than definitive. Detailed information on many aspects of ERRs was either never kept or is no longer available, and while information in the CRU program is more extensive than that available for ERRs, at present not all the information that would enable a comprehensive analysis of CRU performance is available. The AEC's development of the Enrolment Management Information System might assist such activities in the future, by allowing easier and more effective analysis of available data.

### 6.4.2 CRU activities – Addresses in the sample

The table below provides a summary of the CRU activity in the CCDs included in the sample, for the twelve months before the SAF. It shows the number of addresses where there were responses to mailouts and those where contact was attempted and there was no response.

**Table 10: Summary of CRU activity in sample CCDs**

	Addresses at Start (a)	Total Attempts (b)	Percent of Addresses where contact attempted (c)	Responses (d)	Percent of Addresses with responses (e)	Contacts No Responses (f)	ABS Movement Rate (g)	ABS New 18 yr olds (h)	Notional CRU Target (i)
NSW	5,577	2,336	41.89%	689	12.35%	1,647	17.12%	1.76%	18.88%
VIC	2,542	575	22.62%	278	10.94%	297	16.16%	1.74%	17.90%
QLD	7,434	3,047	40.99%	1,797	24.17%	1,250	21.82%	1.87%	23.69%
WA	7,548	2,125	28.15%	1,020	13.51%	1,105	19.86%	1.93%	21.79%
SA	7,189	1,928	26.82%	761	10.59%	1,167	15.99%	1.75%	17.74%
TAS	5,854	1,914	32.70%	1,056	18.04%	858	17.55%	1.89%	19.44%
ACT	8,242	2,464	29.90%	1,106	13.42%	1,358	21.38%	1.84%	23.22%
NT	7,650	3,624	47.37%	2,230	29.15%	1,394	26.39%	2.03%	28.42%
Australia	52,036	18,013	34.62%	8,937	17.17%	9,076	18.20%	1.80%	20.00%

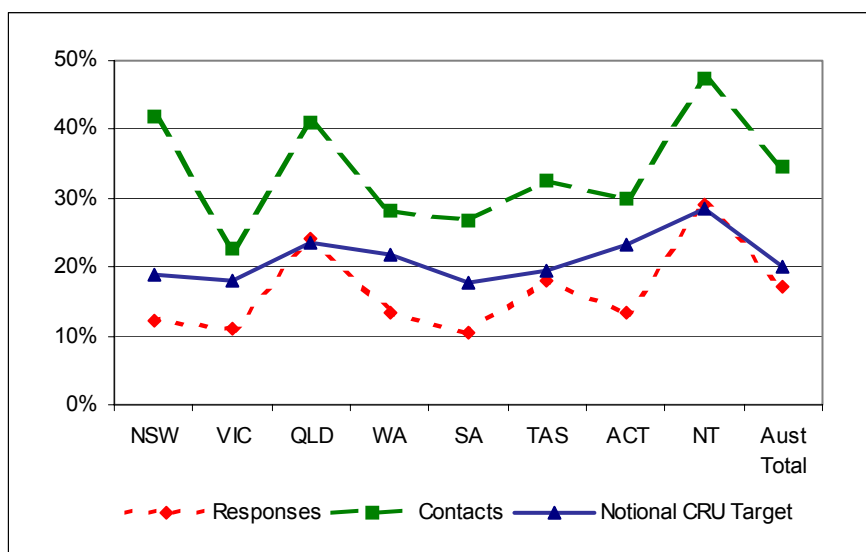
*Note: This table includes AEC-generated CRU activities in the CCDs included in the SAF. The notional CRU target is g + h.*

It should be noted that the ‘responses’ figures and the ‘no responses’ figures have no direct relationship with each other. Responses might relate to an earlier mailout. Nevertheless, the figures for the total attempts (column (b)) and for no response (column (f)) represent the number of addresses, in the sample CCDs, where the AEC had sent CRU letters in the twelve-month period. The measurement of non-responses is affected by the timing of the mailouts. For example, NSW had a higher level of non-responses because two large mailouts (totalling 310,000 letters) occurred just before fieldwork. An estimated 600 addresses or 10.76 per cent of the sampled CCDs were affected by these mailouts.

In the above table, the ABS movement rate is based on the number of persons who move in a twelve-month period and does not include multiple movements, that is, people who move more than once during a given period; the AEC cannot quantify such movements. The figure for new 18 year olds is based on the ABS estimate of the population who will turn 18 years in a twelve-month period and who are Australian citizens.

To consider CRU effective, it would need to meet a ‘notional’ target of capturing, within a given period, all the people who move plus the 18 year olds who become qualified to enrol. For the analysis of CRU activities in the sampled CCDs, the AEC determined the notional CRU target to be the sum of the ABS movement rate and the proportion of 18 year olds in the whole population (column (i) in the above table). It should be noted that the notional target is understated slightly; by the amount of the unquantified multiple movements mentioned in the previous paragraph. In preparing the notional CRU target nationally, and for each State and Territory, the AEC assumed for addresses that the movement rate and the proportion of new 18 year olds would be at the same ratio as for people. However, this assumption might inflate slightly the movement rate at addresses due to factors such as vacant addresses.

Figure 7: CRU response rates compared to the notional CRU target



The figure above shows that the total number of attempted contacts by CRU activities is well above the notional CRU target in the twelve-month period. This indicates that the AEC is identifying not only single movements but also a considerable number of multiple movements.<sup>20</sup> In addition, it should be noted that there are also non-CRU initiated enrolments (for example, State and local government elections, Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) mailouts, self-initiated actions) by electors where CRU contact is not necessary. Approximately 40 per cent of enrolment changes that occur each year, or around seven per cent of total electors, fall into this category.

Queensland and the NT have achieved CRU response levels above the notional CRU target while Tasmania is just marginally lower. Each of these States and the Territory are achieving these results through a higher level of CRU activity than other States. As mentioned earlier, NSW carried out several large mailouts (310,000 letters) just before the commencement of fieldwork. However, insufficient time had elapsed for these to have an impact on the results of the SAF.

The results show that CRU activities are identifying a high number of movements and potential new enrolments and that acceptable enrolment results are being achieved. However, the challenge for the AEC is in obtaining responses from electors who do not appear to place enrolment as a high priority, by not responding to AEC correspondence. To address this issue the AEC, in collaboration with an organisation with direct mailout experience, has been reviewing some CRU letters, and trials of revised letters have occurred in NSW and SA. This initiative might lead to some improvement in the response rates for CRU mailouts. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the population, for whatever reason, will never respond to CRU correspondence, so there is a strong case for increased follow-up activities for such people.

<sup>20</sup> As stated previously, the latter movements are not included in the notional CRU target, thus explaining in part why some jurisdictions appear to be sending on CRU mailouts far in excess of what would appear necessary from the notional CRU target.

The CRU program does include Non-Response Fieldwork, which is currently the only practical means left<sup>21</sup> to contact persons who have failed to respond to at least two CRU letters. The fieldwork has a three-fold purpose:

1. to follow-up apparent recalcitrant eligible persons who are failing to comply with enrolment provisions of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*;
2. to correct and update the electoral roll at addresses where known changes have occurred; and
3. to identify and correct any errors in the Address Register that might have generated the CRU activity.

The conduct of Non-Response Fieldwork has been sporadic due mainly to doubts, in some States and Territories, regarding the benefits and effectiveness of conducting this type of fieldwork. However, statistics show that Non-Response Fieldwork can be one of the most effective CRU strategies; Appendix 10 provides a comparison of the various response rates achieved by CRU activities in 2002-03 and 2003-04. Nevertheless, in the twelve months before the SAF, Non-Response Fieldwork was carried out only in Queensland in August/September 2003.<sup>22</sup> During the 2003 Non-Response Fieldwork in Queensland, 86,061 addresses were visited, 43,295 new enrolments or enrolment changes were identified, and 31,729 enrolment forms were collected.

### **6.4.3 Effectiveness of enrolment activities in the sample**

Enrolment transactions in the sample CCDs, whether new enrolments or changes to current enrolments, resulted from AEC's CRU activities, other non-CRU activities such as State and local government elections, VEC mailouts in Victoria, or self-initiated enrolments. The notional CRU target, mentioned in the previous section, represents approximately how many enrolments from all sources, whether CRU-generated or otherwise, the AEC would have received if enrolment activities were fully effective and all persons met their legislative obligations for enrolment.

An analysis was conducted to determine to what degree actual enrolments matched the level of enrolments that should occur if all potential transactions were being captured. This involved identifying in the sample CCDs the likely source of enrolment transactions (whether CRU-generated or otherwise) for the twelve-month period before the SAF and then comparing this to the notional CRU target. The following table summarises the results from this analysis.

---

<sup>21</sup> In 2001 the AEC undertook in Queensland a trial of telephone contact with electors with very poor results. It should be noted that electoral events also act as a catalyst for encouraging enrolments; section 6.4.5 presents some analysis of close of roll processing for the 1998 and 2001 Federal Elections.

<sup>22</sup> Tasmania commenced its Non-Response Fieldwork at the same time as the SAF, that is in February 2004, and visited 13,150 addresses, identified 9,734 enrolment changes and collected 5,200 enrolment forms.

**Table 11: Enrolment transactions in the twelve months before the SAF**

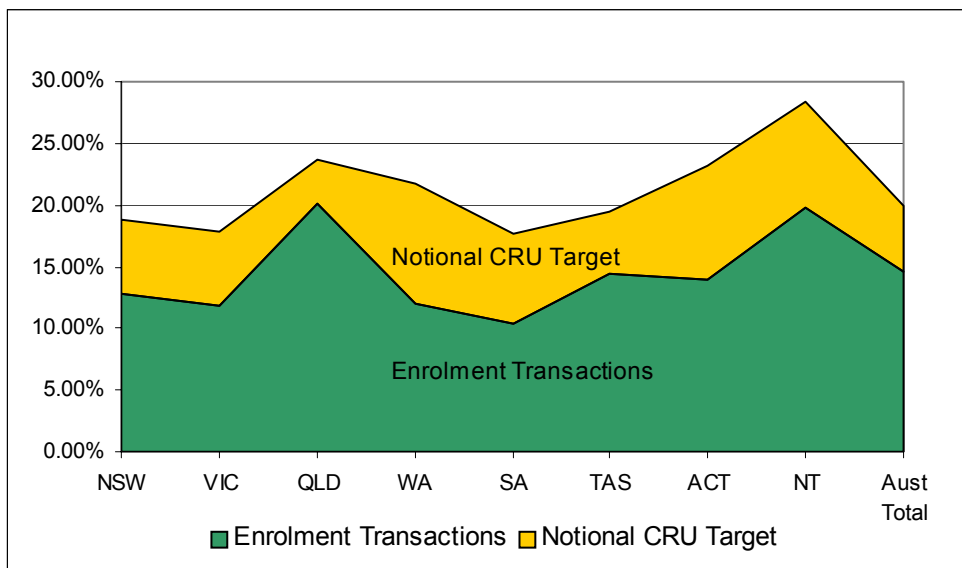
State	Enrolment at start (a)	Change as a result of CRU (b)	Subsequent non-CRU initiated change (c)	Non-CRU initiated change last 12 months (d)	Total changes - prior to the SAF (e)	Percentage changes effected (f)	Notional CRU target (g)	Difference (h)
NSW	9,191	484	70	619	1,173	12.76%	18.88%	6.12%
VIC	4,186	159	49	286	494	11.80%	17.90%	6.10%
QLD	11,543	1,040	360	917	2,317	20.07%	23.69%	3.62%
WA	11,585	659	89	647	1,395	12.04%	21.79%	9.75%
SA	11,011	616	102	422	1,140	10.35%	17.74%	7.39%
TAS	9,376	823	83	453	1,359	14.49%	19.44%	4.95%
ACT	13,902	1,148	180	604	1,932	13.90%	23.22%	9.32%
NT	11,235	1,396	260	569	2,225	19.80%	28.42%	8.62%
Australia	82,029	6,325	1,193	4,517	12,035	14.67%	20.00%	5.33%

$(e) = (b) + (c) + (d)$ ;       $(f) = (e) / (a) \times 100$ ;       $(h) = (g) - (f)$

Only new enrolments and changes effected within three months of the CRU contact (for example, posting of letter) have been counted as CRU generated and included in column (b). Transactions received outside this three-month period are shown in column (c) and could be either non-CRU initiated or generated by an earlier CRU mailout.

The figure below illustrates the comparison between the enrolment transactions and the notional CRU target.

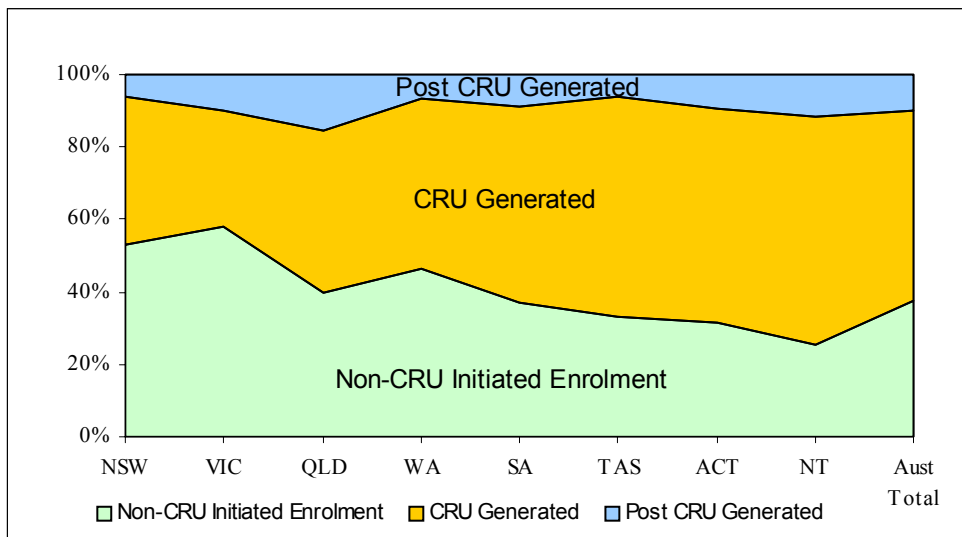
**Figure 8: Enrolment transactions compared to the notional CRU target**  
March 2003 to February 2004



In the figure above, the smaller the gap between transactions and the notional CRU target, the closer the AEC is to achieving full enrolment. However, it should be noted that the figures above do not take into account persons who are 19 or over and have not enrolled, and persons previously enrolled who need to re-enrol; only a percentage of these will be captured through their changing of address. Therefore, the notional CRU target for electors will actually be marginally higher than that shown above.

Under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, qualified persons have a responsibility to update their enrolment in their new electoral Division after one month's residence or, if newly qualified, within 21 days of becoming so qualified. A proportion of the electorate will complete enrolment forms without prompting from the AEC. However, there is a greater proportion of the population who will only update their enrolment after prompting, through activities such as the CRU program. The figure below illustrates the level of enrolments that were generated by CRU activities in the sample CCDs in the twelve months before the SAF.

Figure 9: Summary of enrolment sources



*Note: 'Post CRU generated' are enrolment forms received from an elector/address more than three months after a relevant CRU activity for that person/address. In such circumstances, the CRU activity might have generated the enrolment form, or it might have been the result of other factors. The AEC generally attributes returned enrolment forms to a CRU activity if they are received within six months of that activity.*

It is notable that Victoria has a higher proportion of non-CRU initiated enrolment compared to other States and Territories. This is attributable to the CRU-type activities conducted in that State by the VEC using data from State agencies including VicRoads, the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority, Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, State Revenue Office, power and water authorities and councils.

The following table lists the number of electors included in the SAF, where enrolment changes were required.

**Table 12: Electors at fieldwork with enrolment changes**

State	Electors at start (a)	Electors with CRU contact and change CCD Fieldwork (b)		Electors with no CRU contact change CCD Fieldwork (c)		Total electors with changes (d)	
	Number	Number	Percent of (a)	Number	Percent of (a)	Number	Percent of (a)
NSW	9,191	222	2.42%	280	3.05%	502	5.46%
VIC	4,186	118	2.82%	188	4.49%	306	7.31%
QLD	11,543	423	3.66%	266	2.30%	689	5.97%
WA	11,585	496	4.28%	629	5.43%	1,125	9.71%
SA	11,011	286	2.60%	281	2.55%	567	5.15%
TAS	9,376	216	2.30%	186	1.98%	402	4.29%
ACT	13,902	461	3.32%	670	4.82%	1,131	8.14%
NT	11,235	266	2.37%	221	1.97%	487	4.33%
Australia	82,029	2,488	3.03%	2,721	3.32%	5,209	6.35%

There were a total of 5,209 electors who required enrolment changes (not including objections) and these are fairly evenly split between addresses that had CRU contact in the previous twelve months and addresses that had not been contacted (3.03 and 3.32 per cent of addresses respectively). There is no clear pattern or obvious explanation for the results, which are reasonably consistent across States. However, there are some observations that can be made.

The ‘CRU-contact’ addresses (column (b) above) would include many (not necessarily all) of the CRU non-respondents. Therefore, to a large degree, these results demonstrate that addresses with potential enrolment changes are being identified, in that these addresses were contacted by CRU activities but nevertheless enrolments still needed changes to be made during the SAF.

In regard to the ‘no CRU-contact’ addresses (column (c) above), there will be a percentage of electors who have recently moved, where electors are in the process of updating their enrolment and there has been no opportunity for CRU contact. Based on the ABS annual movement rates, it is estimated that approximately 2.5 per cent of the population is in this seven-week period of grace.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, it is concluded that any result for column (c) close to 2.5 per cent is a satisfactory result. The NT, Tasmania, Queensland and SA all achieved results below or around this mark.

The NT result is noteworthy as the Territory recorded the lowest enrolment accuracy rate, yet achieved the lowest percentage of electors requiring enrolment action at the SAF. It is also noteworthy that the NT recorded 166 per cent more objections than persons needing to enrol. Therefore, assuming the SAF was effective in identifying potential enrolments and enrolment changes, it would appear that many electors are leaving the NT, and not returning or being replaced, while a high number of movers within the NT are being identified by CRU.

<sup>23</sup> As stated earlier, the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* allows electors three weeks to advise the AEC of their new address after they have qualified to enrol by residing within the Division for one month.

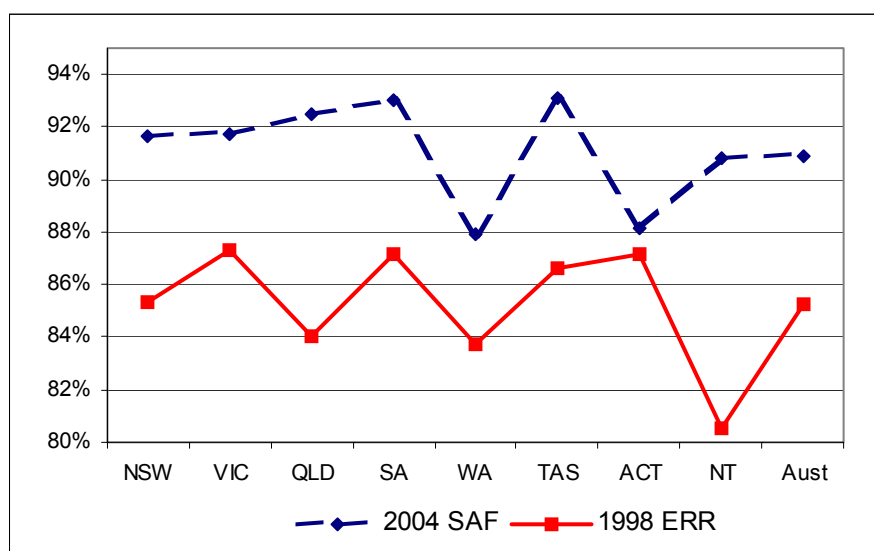
#### 6.4.4 Comparison of enrolment under CRU and Electoral Roll Reviews (ERRs)

The last ERR conducted before the implementation of CRU was completed in 1998, and a full analysis of the enrolment forms received at that event is now not possible. However, the AEC has been able to extract sufficient information to enable a comparison of the number of persons who needed to enrol or change their enrolment at the 1998 ERR to enable a comparison with the 2004 SAF. The following table shows the number of persons who either completed an enrolment form at the SAF, or who were recorded by Review Officers as needing to do so, as a percentage of total enrolment. Similarly, this information was extracted for the 1998 ERR and applied as a percentage of the estimated enrolment at that time.

**Table 13: Levels of incorrect enrolment (as a percentage of total enrolment)**

State	SAF	1998 ERR	Difference
NSW	8.33%	14.66%	6.33%
VIC	8.28%	12.71%	4.43%
QLD	7.50%	15.94%	8.44%
WA	12.05%	16.28%	4.23%
SA	6.95%	12.84%	5.89%
TAS	6.94%	13.39%	6.45%
ACT	11.85%	12.87%	1.02%
NT	9.18%	19.46%	10.28%
Australia	9.10%	14.77%	5.67%

**Figure 10: Percentage of persons enrolled correctly at the start of the 2004 SAF and 1998 ERR**



The table and figure above illustrate the level of under-enrolment and incorrect enrolment under CRU and under ERR, based on the number of enrolment forms completed at the two events. The gap in the two lines of the graph is an indication of the differences in under-enrolment levels under the two scenarios. Basically this is a comparison between the roll under CRU and the worst-case scenario under ERR (that is, just prior to the conduct of fieldwork). Taking Queensland as an example, the roll is roughly 8.4 per cent more accurate under CRU than it would be under ERRs in the period between ERRs. The ACT, on the other hand, is showing negligible difference, undoubtedly related to the lower level of CRU activity in the twelve months before the SAF and the lapse of time since an electoral event.

Under ERR, the roll will be far more accurate at the end of fieldwork than in the above scenario, but only for a short period of time. Notwithstanding this, after considering movement rates, newly eligible persons and non-CRU initiated enrolments, it is estimated that enrolment accuracy will deteriorate at a rate of between one per cent and 1.5 per cent per month without stimulation. Therefore, six months after the completion of an ERR enrolment accuracy would be expected to drop by at least six–nine per cent.

#### 6.4.5 Enrolments processed at Close of Rolls – 1998 and 2001 Federal Elections

The AEC’s prime objective in maintaining electoral rolls is to achieve as accurate a roll as possible for the conduct of elections. One indicator of enrolment participation and completeness worth examination is the number of enrolments lodged in the week between the announcement of the election and the close of rolls. The 1998 Federal Election was the last election held after an ERR and the 2001 Federal Election was the first federal election held since CRU commenced nationally in 1999. In terms of timing, the 1998 ERR could not have been conducted at a better time in regard to preparation for a federal election. The 1998 Federal Election was called shortly after most States and Territories had completed ERR fieldwork. It should be noted also that the Constitutional Convention Election was held in late 1997 and this was preceded by a mailout of in excess of 700,000 letters to vacant addresses and 200,000 letters to addresses with apparent changes of addresses. Research has shown that these mailouts generated approximately 200,000 enrolments forms in the first half of 1997. On the other hand, in 2001 CRU was still very much under development with data sources still being established.

The following table provides a summary of enrolment forms processed during the week between the Issue of Writs and the close of rolls for the 1998 and 2001 Federal Elections.

**Table 14: Comparison of Close of Rolls – 1998 and 2001 Federal Elections**

Federal Election	Close of Rolls Period	National Enrolment at Close of Rolls	Enrolment Cards Processed	Percent of Total Enrolment	Comments
1998	31-8-98 to 7-9-98	12,047,666	355,192	2.95%	Full ERR preceding election
2001	8-10-01 to 15-10-01	12,627,227	372,958	2.95%	Following CRU Program

The table illustrates that, as a percentage of total enrolments at the time, the level of enrolment forms processed at both events is identical. Therefore, if the close of rolls activity is any indicator, the quality of the rolls, insofar as levels of enrolment are concerned, was similar at

both events. As stated above, the 1998 Federal Election was held very shortly after the completion of a national ERR, so the above figures provide an optimal result for a close of rolls in an ERR environment. The volume of cards received in the 1998 close of rolls period, so soon after the completion of a national EER, is also an indication of how quickly the roll can deteriorate during and following an ERR. It would also appear to indicate that CRU is effective in maintaining continuously high levels of enrolment, at least equal to that achieved by ERR at the time of its completion, and regardless of the timing of elections.

That said, and notwithstanding the apparent advantages of CRU over ERRs, it needs to be acknowledged that electoral events (and close of rolls) probably will always be needed to act as a catalyst for prompting enrolments. Each year around half of the people that the AEC sends CRU letters to do not respond. Without some form of further intervention, these people remain unresolved unless they either update their enrolment without prompting later, or again change their information with a third party, thus recommencing the CRU process. Gaps in the CRU program amongst jurisdictions also mean that not all persons becoming eligible to enrol, or who need to update existing enrolments, will be identified and approached. As a result the number of unresolved or unidentified potential enrolment transactions will continue to rise each year, unless intervention by electoral events – or AEC follow-up activities – occurs.

It is reasonable to assume from the foregoing that the large influx of enrolments that occurs at each close of rolls will contain many of these unresolved or unidentified people. The results from the SAF mentioned in section 6.2.2, which showed that enrolment participation in WA, the ACT and the NT were below the national average, support such an assumption.<sup>24</sup> The foregoing might also explain why the early expectations that CRU would reduce the level of enrolments processed at close of rolls have not eventuated. However, a detailed analysis of this aspect of enrolment is yet to be done by the AEC.

#### **6.4.6 Enrolment transactions under ERR and CRU**

Under the previous ERR program the aim was to complete an ERR between federal elections wherever possible and practical. ERRs were held in 1992 (between the 1990 and 1993 elections), in 1994 (between the 1993 and 1996 elections) and in 1997-98 (between the 1996 and 1998 elections). The ERRs generated a high volume of enrolments during the period of the ERR (usually between three and six months) but the level of enrolments tapered off significantly in the periods before and after the ERRs. Under CRU, the aim is to achieve a continuously high level of enrolments, regardless of the timing of elections, whether they are federal, State/Territory or local government. The levels of enrolment are illustrated in the following table which compares enrolments in the final three-year period under ERR and the most recent three-year period under CRU.

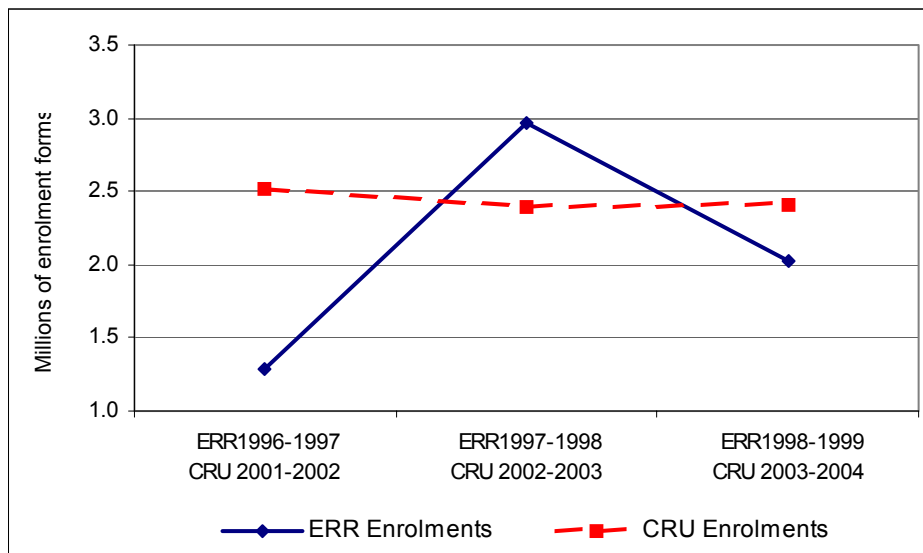
---

<sup>24</sup> The Address Register accuracy results obtained in WA, the ACT and the NT were close to or above the national average, those results do not relate to the apparent levels of inaccurate enrolment and under-enrolment in these jurisdictions. CRU response rates, gaps in the CRU program coverage across jurisdictions and unresolved non-respondents are the more likely cause of inaccuracies and under-enrolment.

Table 15: Comparison of ERR and CRU three-year enrolment cycle

Six-month periods	Enrolments	1-year total	3-year total	Comments
<b>ERR</b>				
1-7-96 to 31-12-96	444,715	1,282,285	6,273,910	Three-year period includes ERR in 1997-98, the Constitutional Convention election in November 1997, conducted by post and preceded by a large mailout, and one federal election in October 1998. State Elections (WA – Dec 96; NT – Aug 97; ACT – Feb 98; QLD – Jun 98; NSW – Mar 99)
1-1-97 to 30-6-97	837,570			
1-7-97 to 31-12-97	1,131,258	2,971,401		
1-1-98 to 30-6-98	1,840,143			
1-7-98 to 31-12-98	1,256,189	2,020,224		
1-1-99 to 30-6-99	764,035			
<b>CRU</b>				
1-7-01 to 31-12-01	1,617,819	2,512,322	7,310,478	Three-year period includes CRU (in lieu of ERR) and one federal election in November 2001. State Elections (NT – Aug 01; ACT – Oct 01; SA – Feb 02; TAS – Jul 02; Vic – Nov 02; NSW – Mar 03; QLD – Feb 04)
1-1-02 to 30-6-02	894,503			
1-7-02 to 31-12-02	1,240,563	2,397,014		
1-1-03 to 30-6-03	1,156,451			
1-7-03 to 31-12-03	948,875	2,401,142		
1-1-04 to 30-6-04	1,452,267			

Figure 11: Comparison of enrolments received ERR and CRU three-year electoral cycles



Note: For this analysis the period 1996 to 1999 was chosen as it was the period leading up to the last full ERR. CRU was not implemented in all States and Territories until 2001 and there was limited statistical information available for the small number of CRU activities that occurred before 2001. The period of 2001 to 2004 has been used as a more comprehensive national CRU program has been in place throughout that period.

It should also be noted that ERR cycles occurred roughly over two years so it was possible for two ERRs to fall within a three-year electoral cycle. For example, Victoria and the ACT undertook ERRs in both 1992-93 and 1993-94. For the above analysis the AEC has reviewed the results over an electoral cycle whereas the following analysis of efficiency and cost looks at the results for the activity rather than the cycle.

The number of enrolment forms processed during the three-year CRU cycle is significantly higher than the three-year ERR cycle, even after taking into account growth in total enrolment of about 6.13 per cent from mid-term in the ERR cycle to mid-term in the CRU cycle. It should be noted that in the three years of CRU, the number of enrolments is consistent, rising slightly in 2001 when the federal election was held. The ERR cycle shows a drop of enrolment levels in the non-ERR year (1996-97), a peak in the ERR year (1997-98) and a less significant drop in the non-ERR but federal election year (1998-99).

#### 6.4.7 Comparison of the efficiency of ERR and CRU activities

In addition to the results described in the previous sections that suggest that CRU is more effective at maintaining complete and accurate electoral rolls than occurred under ERRs, further analysis by the AEC suggests that CRU is also more efficient than ERR. However, the AEC acknowledges that the measurement of efficiency is one area where detailed information from the last ERR is inadequate. Therefore, limitations in the analysis are identified at the relevant place in the text.

The following tables present the number of enrolment forms collected at, and the collection rates obtained by, the 1998 ERR and during 2003-04 for CRU.

**Table 16: Enrolment form collected and collection rates for the 1998 ERR**

State	Address Register - Close of Rolls 1998 Federal Election				Addresses doorknocked in 1998 ERR	Percent of ERR addresses / total active enrollables	Enrolment forms generated	Percent of enrolment forms /addresses
	Total active and inactive	Active occupied	Active vacant	Total active enrollables				
NSW	2,473,619	2,037,864	314,979	2,352,843	2,101,353	89.31%	379,829	18.08%
VIC	1,870,068	1,525,995	249,467	1,775,462	1,551,827	87.40%	245,439	15.82%
QLD	1,399,721	1,093,440	228,163	1,408,419	1,153,047	81.87%	206,361	17.90%
WA	779,027	591,862	114,002	705,864	629,869	89.23%	126,609	20.10%
SA (Note)	602,257	524,639	74,657	599,296	538,751	89.90%	71,032	13.18%
TAS	224,234	172,680	24,312	196,992	153,236	77.79%	26,020	16.98%
ACT	121,633	104,283	12,598	116,881	113,721	97.30%	18,616	16.37%
NT	59,775	43,941	14,039	57,980	43,154	74.43%	6,299	14.60%
Australia	7,530,334	6,094,704	1,032,217	7,126,921	6,284,958	88.19%	1,080,205	17.19%

*Note: In SA the majority of addresses reviewed (473,333 addresses) for that State were by way of a mail review, only 65,418 addresses were actually doorknocked during the 1998 ERR. The mail review generated 62,148 enrolment forms (13.13 per cent collection rate) while the doorknock generated 8,884 (13.58 per cent collection rate). For the purpose of this analysis the two results have been amalgamated. The national collection rate, without the SA mail review, was 81.54 per cent, which equalled 1,018,057 enrolment forms collected.*

During 1998 ERR 5,811,625 addresses were doorknocked – a national average of 81.54 per cent of all enrollable addresses. A total of 1,080,205 enrolment forms were collected (including 62,148 from a mailout in SA undertaken as part of the 1998 ERR), equating to an enrolment

form collection rate per address of at least 17.19 per cent. The ERR cost of \$18 million<sup>25</sup> so the indicative average cost per enrolment form collected was \$16.63.

It should be noted that these represent for the ERR the ‘worst case’ results, as some enrolment forms at the time would have been returned directly to the AEC, rather than being collected by Review Officers, and so would not have been attributed to the ERR.<sup>26</sup> Although it is now not possible for the AEC to quantify this undercount, the effect would be to understate the collection rate per address and overstate the cost per enrolment form.

**Table 17: Enrolment forms generated and collection rates by CRU activities in 2003-04**

State	Address Register 30 June 2004				CRU letters	Unique habitations mailed	Percent of CRU addresses / total active enrollables	Enrolment forms received	Percent of enrolment forms /addresses
	Total active and inactive addresses	Active occupied	Active vacant	Total active enrollables					
NSW	2 908,437	2,184,192	130,168	2,314,360	1,495,489	1,228,985	53.10%	364,987	29.70%
VIC	2,110,035	1,661,942	127,701	1,789,643	1,568,893	1,361,621	76.08%	233,996	17.19%
QLD	1,610,891	1,254,931	21,003	1,275,934	1,341,785	926,710	72.63%	311,319	33.59%
WA	887,357	641,398	26,126	667,524	451,041	333,023	49.89%	95,536	28.69%
SA	659,264	550,430	15,442	565,872	455,516	327,844	57.94%	73,890	22.54%
TAS	252,159	179,319	33,500	212,819	150,218	103,294	48.54%	36,871	35.70%
ACT	134,910	112,861	7,514	120,375	82,506	52,584	43.68%	26,188	49.80%
NT	63,328	46,194	102	46,296	45,194	28,960	62.55%	10,933	37.75%
AUST.	8,626,381	6,631,267	361,556	6,992,823	5,590,642	4,363,021	62.39%	1,153,720	26.44%

In contrast, the 2003-04 CRU program mailed to 4,363,021 unique addresses; this represents a national average of 62 per cent of enrollable addresses. These activities generated 1,153,720 enrolment forms for the period, with an enrolment form collection rate per address of 26.44 per cent. This means that under CRU the AEC reviewed less addresses in a given year than occurred under the ERR (4.36 million compared to 6.28 million) but nevertheless collected around the same number of enrolment forms (1.15 million to 1.08 million<sup>27</sup>). It should also be noted that the results for the ERR occurred in one year, with a drop in enrolment levels in non-ERR years, whereas CRU generates over a million enrolments every year.

The 2003-04 CRU program cost approximately \$9 million, and so equates to an average of \$7.80 per enrolment form, or as much as 53 per cent less than the average cost per enrolment

<sup>25</sup> This amount was spent roughly every two years, giving an average cost over the ERR cycle of \$9 million per year. However, in the ‘off’ year between ERRs very little enrolment prompting activity occurred, with enrolments in this period likely to have resulted from State/Territory electoral events or be self-initiated by electors. Therefore, the AEC considers it reasonable for the purposes of this analysis to use the full cost of the ERR against the results obtained (as identified).

<sup>26</sup> A similar problem exists in attributing enrolment forms to the CRU program. The AEC currently is addressing this issue by adding a code to enrolment forms so that more precise figures on the source of enrolments can be collected.

<sup>27</sup> As stated this is less than the actual total number of enrolment forms generated as a result of the ERR as forms returned directly to the AEC, rather than being collected by Review Officers, would not have been counted.

form under ERR. Even allowing that the actual 1998 ERR results are understated, the AEC believes that CRU would still show significantly better results on both measures than any amended figures likely for the ERR.<sup>28</sup>

## 6.5 Costs

The following table summarises the costs for the SAF.

**Table 18: Summary of SAF expenditure**

	Casuals	Postage	Car Hire and Freight	Printing and Programmers	Travel	Total Direct	Permanent Staff	Other Indirect Costs	Total
NSW	\$19,973	\$1,376	\$2,007			\$23,356	\$16,099		\$39,455
VIC	\$8,025	\$517	\$40			\$8,583	\$6,239		\$14,821
QLD	\$20,556	\$2,847				\$23,403	\$17,829		\$41,231
WA	\$22,543	\$1,687				\$24,230	\$12,731		\$36,961
SA	\$18,627	\$1,978	\$330			\$20,935	\$11,159		\$32,093
TAS	\$28,245	\$1,223	\$65	\$869	\$736	\$31,138	\$7,456		\$38,594
ACT	\$28,947	\$2,721				\$31,668	\$12,833		\$44,501
NT	\$18,003	\$3,312	\$2,117		\$595	\$24,027	\$30,560		\$54,587
Total States	\$164,919	\$15,661	\$4,559	\$869	\$1,331	\$187,339	\$114,904	\$17,735	\$319,978
CO				\$15,622	\$8,480	\$24,102	\$62,891	\$37,302	\$124,295
Total	\$164,919	\$15,661	\$4,559	\$16,491	\$9,811	\$211,441	\$177,795	\$55,037	\$444,273

*Note: 'Other Indirect Cost's include workers' compensation and AEC internal service and administration charges. The column total might not equal the sum of the components because of rounding.*

The total direct costs for the SAF amounted to \$211,441 and represent costs of \$931 per CCD. The direct costs include all casual staff (including Review Officers and Divisional assistance), travel, freight, printing, stationery, programming and other costs directly attributable to the SAF. The indirect costs assigned to the SAF include cost of permanent hours at the Divisional Offices and Central Office, workers' compensation expenses and associated AEC internal service and administration charges. The total costs including indirect costs amounted to \$444,273 and represents \$1,957 per CCD reviewed.

Future SAFs might have slightly higher Divisional costs as a result of the evaluation of the feedback from Divisions and the future strategies that might be required in order to survey more difficult CCDs. For safety and security reasons, two Review Officers might need to travel together in certain security problematic areas, and rates of pay and/or the methodology of payment of Review Officers in areas where there are accessibility issues will be reviewed, if necessary. However, this increase in costs will be offset to some extent by the expected lower programming and permanent staff resources than were required for the development of the 2004 SAF.

<sup>28</sup> This is based on the fact that the undercount for the 1998 ERR was not likely to have been anywhere near the 1.2 million enrolments needed, in addition to those actually collected at the ERR, to reduce the cost per enrolment form to around that achieved under CRU.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 Enrolment

#### 7.1.1 Enrolment participation

The SAF produced a satisfactory national result for enrolment participation of 97.69 per cent, with State and Territory results varying from a low 96.10 per cent to a high 98.02 per cent. This compares very well with the AEC's performance target of 95 per cent of eligible persons being enrolled.

However, one also needs to bear in mind that the SAF was essentially a survey of the mainstream population. It did not cover certain groups such as indigenous communities, aged person institutions or the homeless, where there would be a higher non-participation rate for reasons such as level of education, illiteracy, rate of dementia in the aged, and transience. Many of these people, especially those with dementia (who are more than likely ineligible) and those who are homeless, are unlikely to enrol (or re-enrol). There does not appear to be reliable information on the number of persons in these categories.

Further, the SAF did not include rural and remote areas that are not covered by the CRU program (because of postal delivery and addressing issues). These areas traditionally have higher participation and enrolment accuracy levels than urban areas where there is greater transience. However, the effect on the SAF result would be marginal, as only 1,630 CCDs from 36,581 CCDs nationally (4.5 per cent) were excluded from selection in the sample.

The results show that there was a non-participation rate of 2.31 per cent in the mainstream population, and as described in the analysis of enrolment transactions in 6.2.1, the SAF indicated that there are an estimated 185,000 eligible persons nationally who are not enrolled, with approximately 80 per cent of these people in the 18 to 25 year age groups. It should be also noted that, whilst the SAF included some residences where young people were contacted, it did not include establishments such as university residential colleges. In addition, by aging 1996 Census data, to determine how many people would be becoming eligible by age to enrol, there appears a less than expected number of 18-25 year olds enrolled. This could be caused by an increasing number of young people are travelling and going overseas. Therefore, it is anticipated that the number of young people who are not enrolling will be somewhat higher than the number identified through the SAF. Improving youth participation is a difficult area as enrolment is unlikely to be a high priority for young people. Nevertheless, it is clear that additional strategies are needed to encourage a greater number of young people to enrol. The findings of the Youth Enrolment Study currently being conducted might assist the development of such strategies.

The SAF also revealed that an estimated 165,000 of non-participants nationally were people who had previously been enrolled and had not since re-enrolled. It is also highly probable that they are people who will not change their enrolment without a great deal of prompting; some will probably re-surface at the close of rolls for elections or as provisional voters.

The SAF revealed that approximately half of the addresses where enrolments needed updating had been contacted through the CRU program. Taking into account the recent movers at the addresses that had not been contacted, it is concluded that in excess of half, and up to two-thirds, of the group who had not re-enrolled had been identified through CRU but had not

responded. Although the AEC is reviewing its CRU correspondence to improve response rates, it is likely that there will remain many of people who, for whatever reasons, never respond and some of these can be reduced through increased and regular Non-Response Fieldwork. However, this component of CRU is costly and additional funding will be required.

Participation rates in WA and the ACT (96.10 per cent and 96.55 per cent respectively) were noticeably below the national participation rate weighted average of 97.69 per cent. As explained in the report, the results are partly attributable to the fact there has been no major electoral events in those jurisdictions since the federal election in 2001. Nevertheless, it is evident that additional CRU activities and resources as necessary need to be put in place in these jurisdictions to boost participation.

### 7.1.2 Enrolment completeness and accuracy

The national completeness rate weighted average of 95.18 per cent is considered a satisfactory result. Two States, Tasmania and SA, have achieved a completeness result of 96 per cent or better. However WA, the ACT and the NT are showing a completeness result at below the national level at 92.55 per cent, 93.94 per cent and 92.92 per cent respectively.

In regard to enrolment accuracy, the national result of 89.51 per cent (after ABS weighting) is fractionally below the AEC's performance target of 90 per cent. Victoria (90.99 per cent) achieved the performance target while NSW (89.84 per cent), Queensland (89.65 per cent) and Tasmania (89.15 per cent) were only marginally below the target, and SA (87.86 per cent), the ACT (87.15 per cent) and WA (86.11 per cent) were between two and four per cent below the target.

The NT (80.08 per cent) was well below the performance target and this was largely due to a high number of objections identified during the SAF. It was noted also that the NT required the least number of enrolment changes at the SAF, indicating that new electors and electors moving into addresses are being identified but many of the electors moving out of addresses are not. This would appear to indicate that electors are moving out of the NT and are not returning or being replaced. It is noteworthy also that the NT has the highest ABS movement rate at 26.39 per cent. Special attention will be needed in the NT to bring the accuracy levels above the performance target. This might include tracking objections from the SAF to determine causes of the high number of objections and whether people objected from the rolls eventually re-enrol. Further research into the cause and long-term effect of objections in the NT might enable the AEC to enhance current strategies for encouraging enrolment in that jurisdiction.

While recognising that the national result is only marginally below the AEC performance target, the number of people who move address and do not update their enrolment in a timely manner without a great deal of prompting (estimated at 480,000 – see 6.2.1), remains a concern. Further refinement of data and CRU processes, and maintaining a full CRU program (with relevant funding), will be necessary to further reduce what are essentially 'hard core' cases. As it is apparent, from the analysis of CRU activities, that a high number of movements are being identified but many are still not responding, greater and regular follow-up of non-responses will be an essential strategy in achieving higher targets.

## 7.2 Address Register

As explained earlier in this report, unenrollable addresses were not included in the evaluation of the Address Register for the 2004 SAF. This was due to the staff in some Divisions and States not consistently applying the procedures for identifying and recording unenrollable addresses, and so making any calculations that included unenrollable addresses unreliable.

In regard to the enrollable addresses, the completeness rate of 96.40 per cent (weighted average) is considered satisfactory, after analysis of the factors relating to the shortfall of 3.60 per cent. Most of this shortfall is attributable to newly completed housing and unit developments that were identified during the fieldwork, many of which are still to be occupied. While some DROs do receive advance information of new developments, more often than not new houses and units are identified when persons attempt to enrol for an address that is not on the Address Register. These addresses are then verified with relevant councils, or by physical inspection where necessary, and added to the Address Register. Nevertheless, it is highly desirable that new developments are identified in advance so that the addresses can be validated and recorded on the Address Register, and CRU activity commenced to generate enrolments at those addresses as applicable.

The SAF results have identified the need, in some Divisions and States/Territories, to seek additional sources for advance information on new housing developments. Four States in particular – Queensland, SA, WA and NSW had comparatively high numbers of new additions affecting the completeness results.

The accuracy rate of 92.93 per cent is lower than expected but again needs to be put into context. Inaccuracies were largely caused by staff incorrectly describing addresses or applying incorrect land use codes to addresses (the latter does not impact on the integrity of the Address Register). This was particularly relevant in Queensland, SA, NSW, WA and the ACT. Victoria's lower result was largely due to 169 addresses being allocated to an incorrect CCD; investigations showed that this is not representative of all CCDs in Victoria.

The SAF did reveal that there is misunderstanding with some Divisional staff regarding correct application of procedures relating to certain aspects of Address Register processing and agreed standards – these issues are under closer examination and will be incorporated into training, procedures and quality assurance programs.

Nevertheless, it is concluded that, insofar as enrollable addresses are concerned, the Address Register is one of high integrity.

## 7.3 Continuous Roll Update

An examination of the CRU activity at addresses included in the SAF has shown that the contacts being made at addresses where people have moved or are not enrolled are well in excess of the ABS movement rate plus newly qualified 18 year olds. This demonstrates that a high percentage of those people who need to enrol or update their enrolment are being identified through the CRU processes.

Additional analysis of enrolment transactions, outside the SAF (refer to 6.4.6) demonstrated clearly that the CRU program is generating a more consistent and overall higher level of enrolments than was being achieved under ERR. Taking into account the growth factor, in

excess of 10 per cent more enrolments are being received in a three-year cycle under CRU than under ERR. In addition, the rolls prepared under CRU are in a more consistent state of preparedness compared to what occurred during the ERR era.

A comparison of the number of enrolments processed during the close of rolls period for the 1998 Federal Election (conducted shortly after the 1998 ERR) to the close of rolls for the 2001 Federal Election (following CRU activities) revealed negligible difference (refer to 6.4.6) between the two events. In terms of election preparedness of the rolls, if close of rolls activity is used as an indicator, CRU fares very well compared to ERRs, particularly when bearing in mind that the 1998 ERR was held at the optimum time in relation to the federal election and was preceded in 1997 by the Constitutional Convention Election.

An analysis of the number of enrolment forms received at the SAF and during the 1998 ERR showed a difference between results for incorrect or under enrolment (as a percentage of total enrolment) of 5.63 per cent, and as high as 8.4 per cent in Queensland and 10.58 per cent in the NT. This demonstrates the difference in completeness and accuracy of the rolls under CRU and before the conduct of an ERR. Any election held before the conduct of an ERR (or some time after) would have a significantly less accurate and complete roll in the lead up to the close of rolls than that which is maintained under CRU.

It is concluded from the SAF results that the rolls are more complete and accurate and on a continuous basis under the CRU program than they were under ERR.

However, this does not mean that the AEC is entirely satisfied with enrolment levels under CRU. The SAF has shown (refer to paragraph 6.2.1) that, in the mainstream population, there are approximately 185,000 qualified persons nationally who have not enrolled (80 per cent of who are in the 18 to 25 year age group), and a further 165,000 people nationally who have been removed from the roll and have not re-enrolled. In addition, approximately 3.73 per cent (or around 480,000 nationally) of electors are not changing their enrolled address in a timely manner. In regard to electors needing to change their address, this needs to be put into the context that around 2.3 million electors move at least once annually and there are an unknown number of multiple movements.

CRU is, to a large degree, still in the process of development and implementation. Data sources are still being evaluated in terms of currency, relevance and accuracy. Work is well progressed on the development of a single data interface, whereby data from all sources will be brought together and analysed, to maximise the use and quality of data sources. The Youth Enrolment Study, the object of which is to identify reasons for under enrolment of young people, is currently in progress. Regardless of these planned improvements, CRU activity needs to be maintained at a high level to be effective. The capacity to do so, to a large degree, depends on available funds and commitment to following the National Standards for CRU Activities.

Identifying new enrolments and electors that might need to update their existing enrolment information is a considerable task. However, the results of the analyses presented in this report suggest that AEC programs are effective in identifying these people. That said, the challenge for all Australian electoral authorities is getting people who might not place a high priority on being correctly enrolled to respond to CRU correspondence or other enrolment-related activities. It is reiterated that the follow-up of non-responses through regular and higher volume Non-Response Fieldwork is essential, and sufficient funding is necessary for this to happen on a consistent basis.

#### 7.4 Recommendations from the Roll Integrity Unit

The Roll Integrity Unit *recommends* that, in conformance with the AEC's National Standard for CRU Activities, Non-Response Fieldwork be undertaken in all States and Territories at least once in every twelve months.

**Responsibility: Enrolment Section**

The Roll Integrity Unit *recommends* that, to assist the process of encouraging conformance with the AEC's National Standard for CRU Activities, at the earliest opportunity, the AEC approach the Electoral Council of Australia with the aim of having the National Standards for CRU Activities discussed and endorsed by that body.

**Responsibility: Roll Integrity Unit**

The Roll Integrity Unit *recommends* that a review be undertaken of RMANS Address Register procedures and training activities to address misunderstandings in some Divisions regarding the correct application of procedures and agreed standards. The Roll Integrity Unit further *recommends* that the AEC ensure that a national standard on the information to be maintained on the RMANS Address Register, particularly in regards, but not limited to, unenrollable addresses, is developed and applied consistently in all States and Territories.

**Responsibility: Enrolment Section**

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – Details of sample selected by Division**  
**(Page 1 of 2)**

State	Division	Number of CCDs	Number of Addresses	Number of Electors	
<b>ACT</b>	CANBERRA	13	3,077	5,285	
	FRASER	18	5,676	8,940	
		<b>31</b>	<b>8,753</b>	<b>14,225</b>	
<b>NT</b>	NORTHERN TERRITORY	31	5,640	9,238	
		<b>31</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>9,238</b>	
<b>NSW</b>	BENNELONG	1	273	266	
	CALARE	4	1,131	1,760	
	CUNNINGHAM	1	377	394	
	GILMORE	2	476	770	
	GREENWAY	1	319	305	
	GWYDIR	1	80	158	
	HUGHES	1	458	725	
	KINGSFORD SMITH	1	170	311	
	LYNE	1	304	539	
	MACARTHUR	1	675	1,127	
	PAGE	1	111	188	
	PARRAMATTA	1	263	583	
	PATERSON	2	299	400	
	REID	1	325	567	
	RICHMOND	1	132	231	
	RIVERINA	1	237	507	
	ROBERTSON	1	168	257	
	WENTWORTH	1	212	260	
			<b>23</b>	<b>6,010</b>	<b>9,348</b>
	<b>QLD</b>	BLAIR	1	322	541
		BONNER	1	187	287
		BOWMAN	2	813	1,122
		BRISBANE	2	359	396
CAPRICORNIA		1	27	61	
FADDEN		2	524	925	
FAIRFAX		1	351	234	
FORDE		1	379	624	
GRIFFITH		4	905	1,348	
HERBERT		2	431	518	
HINKLER		1	322	490	
KENNEDY		1	198	432	
LEICHHARDT		1	285	409	
LILLEY		1	248	383	
LONGMAN		4	593	1,062	
MARANOA		1	179	276	
MCPHERSON		2	453	851	
OXLEY		1	217	304	
RANKIN		2	437	755	
RYAN		1	89	138	
WIDE BAY		1	201	371	
			<b>33</b>	<b>7,520</b>	<b>11,527</b>

Appendix 1 – Details of Sample CCDs by Division  
(Page 2 of 2)

State	Division	Number of CCDs	Number of Addresses	Number of Electors	
<b>SA</b>	ADELAIDE	3	699	831	
	BARKER	3	835	1,302	
	BOOTHBY	3	798	1,364	
	GREY	3	495	718	
	HINDMARSH	3	693	1,126	
	MAKIN	2	335	524	
	MAYO	2	295	377	
	PORT ADELAIDE	3	586	920	
	STURT	9	2,066	3,218	
	WAKEFIELD	2	491	869	
			<b>33</b>	<b>7,293</b>	<b>11,249</b>
<b>TAS</b>	BASS	8	1,723	2,056	
	BRADDON	5	1,212	1,904	
	DENISON	3	983	1,324	
	FRANKLIN	9	1,925	3,233	
	LYONS	7	1,153	1,111	
			<b>32</b>	<b>6,996</b>	<b>9,628</b>
<b>VIC</b>	ASTON	1	271	482	
	CALWELL	1	279	525	
	CORANGAMITE	1	286	315	
	DEAKIN	1	267	421	
	GELLIBRAND	1	193	211	
	GORTON	1	264	608	
	HIGGINS	1	291	189	
	KOOYONG	1	281	453	
	MALLEE	1	164	331	
	MCMILLAN	1	82	116	
	MENZIES	1	211	363	
			<b>11</b>	<b>2,589</b>	<b>4,014</b>
	<b>WA</b>	BRAND	2	603	729
		CANNING	2	279	531
COWAN		1	369	597	
CURTIN		3	734	1,189	
FREMANTLE		1	16	14	
HASLUCK		5	914	1,630	
KALGOORLIE		4	887	1,331	
MOORE		3	744	1,328	
O'CONNOR		2	636	1,015	
PERTH		4	960	1,338	
STIRLING		1	241	339	
SWAN		4	1,101	1,335	
TANGNEY		1	172	351	
			<b>33</b>	<b>7,656</b>	<b>11,727</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>227</b>	<b>52,457</b>	<b>80,956</b>	

**Appendix 2 – Response rates to various CRU activities 2002-03 and 2003-04**

Percent Card Rate												
	Melimit		Vacants		Mail Review		Residents		Change of Address		Non-Response	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
NSW	24.95	17.00	40.31	25.00	27.21	18.00	33.55	14.00	46.73	29.00	56.63	23.00
VIC	27.53	16.00	20.30	23.00	24.79	7.00	38.12	30.00	42.80	34.00	29.54	-
QLD	17.09	17.00	27.26	31.00	18.96	5.50	30.34	31.00	27.00	29.00	50.53	54.00
WA	11.90	14.00	20.92	22.00	-	18.30	32.28	24.00	35.29	30.00	48.16	-
SA	11.90	11.00	23.92	16.00	15.94	7.00	19.60	30.00	19.38	23.00	-	-
TAS	18.84	17.00	25.50	29.00	-	7.00	30.56	31.50	26.75	26.00	40.06	-
ACT	12.67	13.00	36.94	33.00	26.27	13.00	28.46	34.00	34.08	40.00	59.83	51.00
NT	22.34	19.00	4.21	35.00	24.15	24.00	-	30.00	19.48	32.00	-	51.00
Australia	18.40	15.50	24.92	26.75	22.89	12.48	30.42	28.06	31.44	30.38	47.46	44.75

Description of the CRU activities mentioned above:

Melimit	Multiple Surname and Enrolment Limit System – a CRU data mining process that lists addresses where multiple surnames are enrolled or the number of enrolments exceeds the normal limits for the type of address.
Vacants	The Vacant Address mailing is targeted at addresses valid for enrolment but with no one currently enrolled.
Mail Review	Mail Review involves sending a letter to the oldest enrolled elector listing all persons with the same family name enrolled at the address requesting the addressee check the details and advise of any changes necessary.
Residents	These are letters sent to un-enrolled persons who have not changed their address. This group includes newly eligible young people and new citizens or persons who appear for the first time in external data without a matching enrolment.
Change of Address	The AEC uses information provided by a range of external agencies to check the accuracy of the roll. The external data is used to contact electors who have moved address without transferring their enrolment.
Non-Response Fieldwork	Doorknocking undertaken at addresses at which there has been no response to previous attempts at mail contact.

**Appendix 3 – National Standards for CRU Activities**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Background Review	Annually
2	Residents: potential elector system	11 months/year
3	Bounty for Enrolment Forms	Ongoing
4	Change of Address	11 months/year
5	Citizenship Ceremonies	Ongoing
6	Objection/Determination	Quarterly
7	Vacant Addresses	Quarterly
8	Multiple Enrolment Limits	Quarterly
9	Fieldwork (generally non-response)	Bi-annually or annually
10	Supplementary	At least every two years
11	Rural and remote	Applicable States and Territories to have a Rural and Remote Strategy that defines standard
12	Sample Audit Fieldwork	Annually

---