

Opening Statement | A/g Electoral Commissioner

Supplementary Estimates

Tuesday 7 October 2025

Chair and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to make a brief opening statement.

Since the Australian Electoral Commission last appeared at Senate Estimates, we have successfully delivered the 2025 federal election. This was the largest and most complex election that the AEC has ever delivered. We had the highest enrolment rate in Australia's history, with 98.2% of eligible Australians enrolled to vote. The youth enrolment rate was 92.0% and the indigenous enrolment rate was 92.9%. This is one of, if not, the most complete electoral rolls in the world and something Australia should be very proud of.

After the election was announced, we recruited over 89,000 temporary election workers that filled about 100,000 positions to help us deliver the event. This was the first election using the new AEC EmployMe system to facilitate temporary election workforce employment, training and pay. You often hear of failures or glitches with new IT systems, however the new AEC EmployMe system ran very smoothly with there being no room or tolerance for any system failures when delivering such a public event to an immutable legislated deadline.

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The 2025 federal election saw our largest ever service offering with:

- 7,000 polling places,
- Nearly 600 early voting centres,
- 111 overseas voting centres in 81 countries,
- 598 mobile polling teams that visited just over 2,700 facilities such as aged care, hospitals, mental health residential facilities and homeless shelters,
- 77 mobile polling teams that travelled over 162,000 kilometers in 10 days to deliver polling to 469 remote communities across 6 jurisdictions,
- Approximately 11.8 million Official Guides sent to households, more than 720 million social media impressions from our advertising campaign and over 44 million hits on our website including 6.4 million just on polling day,
- And we delivered over 1,000 education sessions in 35 languages to indigenous and multicultural communities around Australia,
- On election night, we counted the most votes ever, including for the first time over 419,000 postal votes. The weeks that followed produced the most complex count in our history with 88 seats requiring a full distribution of preferences. We also captured over 111 million preferences in 4 weeks for the Senate,
- Pleasingly turnout defied international trends with a slight increase from 2022.

This election was delivered in very challenging circumstances with a deteriorating information environment, an increase in third parties and issue-motivated groups advocating their cause, a challenging threat environment and the unknown impacts of artificial intelligence. We also had the onset of a late wet season in northern Australia, floods in parts of northern NSW and a number of public holidays to pivot our service delivery around. The AEC navigated these challenges very well.

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We feel that our election services are pretty much hitting the high-water mark of election service delivery, not just in Australia but also internationally. But when offering a voting service to every adult Australian in a two-week period, there will always be some areas for further refinement. As a learning organisation we are committed to continuous improvement and striving for service excellence. We also look forward to beginning discussions with the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters next week.

I am immensely grateful and proud of our highly capable and committed staff at the AEC and the great work they do. I would also like to sincerely thank and acknowledge our temporary election workforce and contracted service providers for their outstanding contribution to the delivery of such a successful and trusted election – we couldn't do it without them.

Survey data indicates that Australians continue to have very high levels of confidence, trust and satisfaction in the AEC delivering elections.

All Australians should be immensely proud of our elections and democracy. But to remain world-leading we must not be complacent. We must all continue to passionately embrace, nurture and defend our democracy and continue to complement that with sustained investment to best position Australia to successfully navigate the current and emerging threats to elections and democracy more broadly.

Thank you, I am happy to take your questions.