

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Platform engagement on AI-identification technology

**Asked by:** Richard Colbeck

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 1

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 21

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Senator COLBECK:** A particular landmine—I might go to another question. In the context of your conversations with the platforms and the identification or otherwise of AI, someone creating deepfake materials is unlikely to declare or label them—whatever. Are there any conversations about using their technologies, as a part of the platform, around the identification of those materials?

**Ms Gleeson:** I might take the specific question on notice, but I'm happy to say, as to the conversations with the platforms—notwithstanding changes in how platforms are governed and their policies over recent years, which make engaging slightly challenging in some situations—generally speaking, we've maintained quite healthy connections and open flows of communication. That includes understanding what capability they have to support us in meeting our regulatory obligations—for instance, the availability of advertisement libraries and those sorts of things. It's absolutely part of the discussion with platforms about how we can leverage their capability to help ensure a free and fair election.

**Answer:**

There is currently no legislation that requires AI created or altered communications to be declared or labelled. AI altered communications of electoral matter are subject to the same requirements under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) as other communications of electoral matter, that is:

- certain communications of electoral matter must be authorised (Part XXA of the Electoral Act), and
- it is an offence to communicate matter that is likely to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to the casting of a vote (s 329 of the Electoral Act).

AI altered communications has the capacity to spread mis or disinformation about the electoral process and to undermine electoral integrity. In addition to the lack of legislative requirements for AI altered communications, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) lacks the technical capabilities to identify and evaluate manipulated information.

To address this threat, the AEC maintains good working relationships with social media and tech companies – including those developing AI capabilities – to understand and respond to the potential impacts of AI. For the 2025 federal election, many of the most popular platforms had appropriate guardrails in place to direct users to trusted sources of electoral

information (e.g. the AEC website). However, due to the nature of this technology, this was not always observed to have been a consistent response. Recognising that generative AI tools are increasingly becoming a source of information for Australians, the AEC expanded its monitoring of electoral communications to encompass information produced by the most popular generative AI tools.

The AEC works with relevant agencies across the Federal Government as part of the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce (EIAT). EIAT member agencies continue to explore options to monitor, detect and respond as technology develops. This will ensure the taskforce is well placed to provide information and advice to the Electoral Commissioner on matters that may compromise the real or perceived integrity of federal electoral events – AI related or otherwise.

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission  
**Topic:** Letters regarding campaign behaviour  
**Asked by:** Rick Wilson  
**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025  
**Question number:** 2  
**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 24  
**Number of pages:** 27

**Question:**

**Ms Gleeson:** Just to tidy up: my colleagues have clarified the letter from the commissioner I mentioned. We did two media releases—one on 31 March around lawful and respectful campaigner behaviour, and one on 1 May specifically about behaviour in early-voting settings like prepoll voting centres. A number of individual letters were sent to candidates in electorates where we had, either through media reporting or complaints, seen there was a particular issue around campaigner behaviour that warranted dedicated correspondence outside those more general media releases.

**Mr RICK WILSON:** Are you going to make those particular letters available to the committee?

**Ms Gleeson:** Yes, I think that should be fine. We can take that on notice.

**Answer:**

The Australian Electoral Commission published two media releases related to campaign behaviour. The first proactive messaging was released on 31 March 2025, *AEC encourages lawful & respectful campaigning*, on 31 March 2025 ([www.aec.gov.au/media/2025/03-31.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/media/2025/03-31.htm)). The second media release was published on 1 May 2025, *Campaigning behaviour outside early voting centres* ([www.aec.gov.au/media/2025/05-01.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/media/2025/05-01.htm)).

On 1 May 2025, the Australian Electoral Officer for New South Wales sent letters regarding behaviour of campaign workers to all candidates of the Divisions of Bennelong and Wentworth. The two letters are attached.

Also on 1 May 2025, the Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria sent letters regarding behaviour of campaign workers to all candidates of the Divisions of Wills, Calwell, Jagajaga, Hotham, Isaacs, Goldstein, Scullin, Menzies, Kooyong, Gorton, and Hawke as well as the registered officers of all political parties. The 12 letters are attached.



Our Ref: Objective: fA776767

To all Candidates  
Division of Bennelong  
Sent via email

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Bennelong.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police.

It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Main  
Australian Electoral Officer for NSW  
State Manager NSW/ACT

1 May 2025



Our Ref: Objective: fA776767

To all Candidates  
Division of Wentworth  
Sent via email

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Wentworth.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

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It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Main  
Australian Electoral Officer for NSW  
State Manager NSW/ACT

1 May 2025

**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 9:56:21 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Registered Party Officer

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations across Victoria.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police.

It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

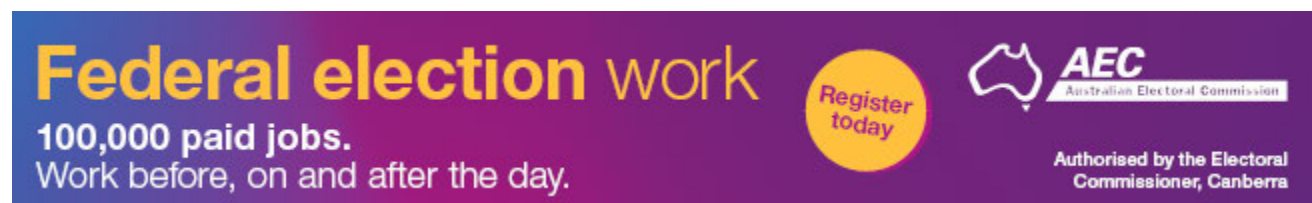
The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

This message will be sent to all candidates in particularly affected divisions.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:30:52 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Wills.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police. It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.



Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:31:35 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Calwell.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police.

It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



Dear Candidate

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:32:26 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Hotham.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police. It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:33:06 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Isaacs.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police.

It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely



**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**Federal election work**

Earn **extra money**, learn **new skills**  
and expand **your network**.

Register today

 **AEC**  
Australian Electoral Commission

Authorised by the Electoral  
Commissioner, Canberra

**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:33:21 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Goldstein.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

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It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:33:45 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Scullin.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

Please remember the people who staff AEC voting locations are everyday Australians - parents, grandparents, neighbours and work colleagues. They are giving their time to contribute to democracy. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the election.

When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police. It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:35:09 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Menzies.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

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The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission







Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 10:37:33 AM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Gorton.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

I am acutely aware that this heightened environment can be difficult for our staff working at voting locations. In previous elections, these situations have sometimes prompted our temporary staff to resign.

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When AEC staff observe poor behaviour, we will call for calm in the first instance. If the behaviour continues, and if it is considered necessary, we will call the police.

It is important that everyone who plays a part in a federal election feels safe while attending voting locations.

Accordingly, I urge you to remind all candidate representatives to be respectful and act in a professional manner with everyone they encounter at voting locations.

The AEC is also aware that some people may be new to campaigning. Please remember that the AEC website includes [dedicated information](#) for party and campaign workers.

Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**From:** "AEO VIC"  
**Sent:** 1/05/2025 3:47:06 PM  
**To:** "Undisclosed recipients:"  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Behaviour outside polling places

Dear Candidate

The AEC acknowledges party and campaign workers are a critical element of elections.

While most behave appropriately, we have unfortunately received several complaints about behaviour from candidate representatives at voting locations in Hawke.

The behaviour is variously described as unpleasant, negative and aggressive.

With the election mere days away, it is timely to remind everyone of Australia's proud history of fair, civil and peaceful elections.

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Thank you for giving this matter your immediate attention.

Sincerely

**Aneurin 'Nye' Coffey | State Manager & Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria**  
Australian Electoral Commission



**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Deputy Electoral Commissioner travel itinerary to Blair

**Asked by:** Shayne Neumann

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 3

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 25

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

**Mr NEUMANN:** Ms Gleeson, you said you came to my electorate. Did you come during the prepoll time?

**Ms Gleeson:** I would need to take that on notice and find the exact date that I was there. I spent most of my time with the staff when I visited your neck of the woods, Mr Neumann.

**Answer:**

Yes. The Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner visited Blair on Wednesday 23 April 2025, which was the second day of the pre-poll period for the 2025 federal election.

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Data on AEC employment assistance program usage

**Asked by:** Shayne Neumann

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 4

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 26

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

**Mr NEUMANN:** Based on that final question, post the election, have you engaged in a review and spoken to those staff on the ground? And to what extent have you engaged in psychological or social work assistance for those particular staff who have gone through those types of terrible experiences that I and many people around this table observed during the campaign?

**Ms Gleeson:** I might take on notice numbers of staff who have accessed a service. But as an employer in the Commonwealth, we have mechanisms for people to get access to support promptly as needed, so I am happy to take on notice and provide some more detail, if that is useful. But there is absolutely direct engagement between divisional officers and staff on the ground, and access right through to our central human resources capability in national office that provides support and assistance as needed.

**Answer:**

For the 2025 federal election, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) introduced an enhanced election wellbeing program.

The enhanced wellbeing program included:

- dedicated clinicians for each state and territory
- triage hotline, for all staff and the Temporary Election Workforce from 9 April to 30 May 2025 providing a streamlined support service
- a wellbeing intranet page providing quick and easy access for staff to seek supports during the event period, including tips for managing workload, avoiding burnout and staying resilient, and
- Personal Wellbeing Plan - a tool designed specifically for the AEC operating context, to help staff self-assess and plan steps to maintain their wellbeing.

In addition, the AEC's standard free and confidential Employee Assistance Program support line continued to be available 24/7 to all staff and their immediate family.

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission  
**Topic:** Temporary Election Workforce survey results  
**Asked by:** Matt Burnell  
**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025  
**Question number:** 5  
**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 26  
**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

**Mr BURNELL:** On that 10 per cent of the workforce that expressed concern about re-engaging in the future, are those survey results geographically tracked? If so, are those results in clusters or are they sporadically spread across the country?

**Ms Gleeson:** I just want to clarify that I was being generic in the numbers. We can take it on notice and come back to you on the specifics around the survey, but I'm very confident it was over 90 per cent who said, 'Loved it—want to return.'

**Mr BURNELL:** The only reason I asked that is that if there are large numbers of people expressing a desire not to re-engage, and they are geographically grouped closely together, then you've got hotspot issues.

**Ms Gleeson:** Yes. I'm happy to take that on notice. We had a huge response to what we called our TEW—temporary election workforce—survey. I want to say it's over 30,000 responses, so it is very much statistically valid. There were really great results on many fronts, but there is some further analysis that's being done now to go to some of those questions. I will, after this, check about whether we've got some geographic analysis built into that, and I am happy to respond on notice.

**Answer:**

A total of 35,741 employees responded to the 2025 Federal Election Workforce Survey. This was a response rate of 42%. The survey found that 91% of the temporary election workforce (TEW) were satisfied with their experience on the 2025 federal election, with only 4% dissatisfied (the remainder were neutral about the question).

Similarly high proportions agreed that:

- they were proud to have been part of delivering the election (95%)
- given the opportunity, they would work at another federal election event (92%)
- they would recommend working at federal election events (90%).

All of these measures were broadly in line with the last three events.

Existing data is broken down by division (consisting of multiple polling places), and not by individual polling place. When considering the question “*Given the opportunity, I would work at another federal election event*” the lowest division was 83% (Wills) and the highest was 98% (La Trobe). Further analysis is being undertaken, however the AEC’s preliminary assessment is that there is no geographical clustering.



**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Engagement with Member for Kooyong regarding campaign volunteer allegations

**Asked by:** Monique Ryan

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 6

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 28-29

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Dr RYAN:** I'd like to go to the issue of foreign influence or interference in this election. On 28 April, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that people associated with the Chinese Community Party were directing people to work on my campaign in Kooyong. Members of the Liberal Party then commented publicly that, if these allegations were confirmed, they would constitute an act of foreign interference in our democracy and called for an investigation on the matter. I immediately referred that matter to the AEC and did not hear a word back from them, despite several requests for clarification on progress of the investigation, until 5 August. Could I ask the panel whether they feel that the potential for foreign interference, or allegations around that, could, as you've identified as your threshold for concern, compromise the integrity of an electoral process?

**Ms Gleeson:** Thanks for the question, Dr Ryan. It may assist if I talk through the sequencing of this particular issue. I'm happy to invite colleagues to chime in. Yes, the AEC was made aware of these allegations. There was media reporting, as you say. I note your comment about not hearing back from the AEC. I'd need to take that on notice. That wasn't my understanding, but I'm happy to look further into that.

The EIAT took this on as a referral, and I spoke to the referral processes earlier. Media outlets, at the time, were reporting on video of two people campaigning who've stated that they were directed to vote in a particular way. The media also reported that this was not just limited to Kooyong but also extended to the divisions of Hotham and Menzies. The referral of these suggestions to the EIAT was publicly reported. We had a media release that was put out to advise that the EIAT was looking at this. We make a judgement to do that. I mentioned earlier the fine balance that we're seeking to strike in reassuring the public but not unnecessarily amplifying matters. That decision to put out a media release was made in accordance with our communications protocol. And, yes, you're on the public record as saying that you did engage with the AEC and the Department of Parliamentary Services on this.

The first statement on the matter was released by the EIAT on Wednesday 30 April. It noted that the matter was referred to the EIAT and emphasised key messaging, including the secret ballot process, influence in elections, the difference between influence and interference and the stop-and-consider messaging. The statement was then updated on Thursday 1 May following the broadening of suggestions to several divisions, and then on 22 May the board formed the view that it had no information to indicate that the reported activities constituted foreign interference and the public statement was updated accordingly. To date, this advice remains unchanged.

The question of how the AEC interacts directly with candidates on those matters I would

need to take on notice, but I invite my Home Affairs colleague to chime in if there's anything additional.

**Answer:**

On 30 April 2025, the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce (EIAT) issued a public statement at [www.aec.gov.au/about\\_aec/eiat-statement.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/about_aec/eiat-statement.htm) following media reporting suggesting foreign interference in campaign activity. The statement was updated on 1 May 2025 following media reporting broadening suggestions of foreign interference in campaign activity to several divisions.

On 22 May 2025, the public statement was updated following the EIAT Board forming the view that it had no information to indicate that the reported activities constitute foreign interference. As at 31 October 2025, this advice remains unchanged.

On 2 July 2025, the public statement was updated to reference the EIAT Board's advice to the Acting Electoral Commissioner as at 1 July 2025.

On Friday 1 August 2025, the office of the Member for Kooyong sought an update from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) on the matter. On Tuesday 5 August 2025, the AEC responded, referring the Member for Kooyong's office to the EIAT's public statement as at 22 May 2025.

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Warnings on section 329

**Asked by:** Julie-Ann Campbell

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 7

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 31

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

**Ms CAMPBELL:** You said that in the past you had warned people that something might be misleading. Were the parties in such instances during the 2025 election warned, as you have in the past?

**Mr Johnson:** I'm trying to think of any conduct. I'm recalling conduct from previous elections when we specifically warned major parties when they had campaigners wearing different colours from their own colours.

**Ms CAMPBELL:** And did you warn people, as you have in the past, during the election in 2025?

**Mr Johnson:** I'd have to take that on notice, because we had significant engagement. As I said earlier, a lot of our engagement was when we encountered new people or new groups, new entities campaigning whom we hadn't met before. We always started with a warning—if you would call it that—or an educational letter, saying, 'Hey, be aware of your requirements under the legislation to authorise electoral communications and to declare certain donations and electoral expenditure.'

**Mr RICK WILSON:** Can those letters be made available to the committee?

**Mr Johnson:** Yes, we can definitely take that on notice—the reason I was just pausing then is I was wondering if we did that in relation to the last election.

**Answer:**

At the 2025 federal election, the AEC considered 18 potential contraventions of section 329(1) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) which makes it a criminal offence to print, publish or distribute, or cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed, any matter or thing during the relevant period that is likely to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to the casting of a vote. Section 329 applies to communications (made between the issue of writ and the close of polling) that are printed, broadcast on radio or television, on the internet or by telephone.

Following a review of these matters, the AEC concluded that 13 matters were not contraventions. The AEC sent warning letters to the individuals and entities responsible for the remaining 5 matters. Following the receipt of further information from those individuals and entities, it was determined these 5 matters did not breach section 329.

As reported in Appendix I of the AEC 2024-25 Annual Report, at the 2025 federal election no further action was taken in relation to non-compliance with section 329.

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Letters to parties

**Asked by:** Rick Wilson

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 8

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 31

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

**Mr RICK WILSON:** Can those letters be made available to the committee?

**Mr Johnson:** Yes, we can definitely take that on notice—the reason I was just pausing then is I was wondering if we did that in relation to the last election.

**Answer:**

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) writes to people or entities suspected of contravening section 329 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* to alert them to the requirements including, where necessary, the requirement to rectify or remove a communication. Consistent with this broader regulatory approach and as described in the response to Question 7 asked by Ms Julie-Anne Campbell MP, at the 2025 federal election, the AEC sent warning letters to five individuals or entities about potential contraventions of section 329 and identified no contraventions.

**Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Inquiry into the 2025 federal election**

**Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Topic:** Ballot Builder

**Asked by:** Matt Burnell

**Hearing date:** 31 October 2025

**Question number:** 9

**Type of question:** Proof Hansard, page 36

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Mr BURNELL:** A perfect example is the ballot builder, the program, which was designed to help people establish their voting intention based on their policy preferences. My experience in my electorate was that, regardless of what policy position you put in, it would skew one way every single time. That, in my view, influences the outcome of voting intention for individuals. I'm interested to know whether or not it does get pressure tested as a matter of course from the committee. If not, why not?

**Ms Gleeson:** Thank you for clarifying. I'm more than happy for colleagues to chime in here; I'll start. Earlier, I mentioned our Defending Democracy Unit at the AEC. Part of the work that that unit is charged with throughout the electoral cycle, especially in the lead-in, is giving the senior executive information, and also then sharing information with the EIAT as appropriate, on—I'll say this generally—technology platforms that could have an impact on the integrity of an election. If I can give you one example, we had the team putting search questions and image searches into AI chatbots to see what sort of information voters would be getting out. That's a really important monitoring exercise to understand whether we see any platforms that are providing what we would consider false or misleading information about the electoral process. So, again, I bring it back to—

**CHAIR:** Those words again.

**Ms Gleeson:** Yes, those words again—the commissioner will be very pleased! That is the focus, and the work of the Defending Democracy Unit is really critical in that regard. I would have to take on notice about Ballot Builder specifically. It is absolutely ringing a bell, but, as you can imagine, there are many tech platforms and so there will be many that the team will have explored. Because we're engaging so regularly with the EIAT, we would be discussing the findings routinely anyway, but if it's at a particular threshold then, yes, it would be absolutely something that the EIAT would be potentially concerned about and interested in. I might invite any colleagues to chime in.

**Answer:**

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) does not regulate the content of political communications directed at influencing the choice of preferred candidates or parties by electors.

Ballot builder websites are assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the site contains electoral matter that requires authorisation to assist electors know the source.

Electoral matter is defined by section 4AA of the Electoral Act to be “matter communicated or intended to be communicated for the dominant purpose of influencing the way electors vote in an election (a federal election) of a Member of the House of Representatives or of Senators for a State or Territory”. Section 4AA prescribes further criteria to assist determine if matter is electoral matter. For electoral matter to require an authorisation it must then be communicated one of the ways specified in section 321D(1).