



## Electoral Commissioner

Our Ref: 13/997

Ms Siobhan Leyne  
Inquiry Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Leyne,

**Re: Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters – Inquiry into and report on all aspects of the conduct of the 2013 Federal Election and matters related thereto**

Please find attached the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) primary submission relating to the conduct of the 2013 federal election.

The submission covers many aspects of the AEC's operations in relation to the 2013 federal election, including the:

1. particulars of the 2013 election of the Western Australian Senate,
2. increase in public awareness of the operation of the Senate electoral system and the discussion surrounding party registration, numbers of candidates and ballot paper size, and
3. demands placed on AEC staff and processes due to the ongoing growth of the electorate and the expectation of stakeholders to be able to interact with the AEC electronically.

The AEC will provide supplementary submissions to the Committee following a report on the evaluation of the 2014 Western Australian Senate Election, and in response to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report on its follow-up audit of the AEC's implementation of particular recommendations of the *Audit Report No.28 2009–10 The Australian Electoral Commission's Preparation for and Conduct of the 2007 Federal General Election*.

Although the WA Senate Election and the ANAO's follow-up audit are still in progress, it is likely that the AEC will recommend further technical amendments in those supplementary submissions as a result of those reports.

I would be pleased to discuss any matters raised in the submission at a future public hearing.

Yours sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_

Tom Rogers  
Acting Electoral Commissioner

11 April 2014

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# Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Inquiry into the conduct of the 2013 federal election  
and matters related thereto

11 April 2014



**AEC**

Australian Electoral Commission

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# Part I - Overview of key issues influencing the 2013 federal election

## 1 Summary

### Key points:

- Continued growth of the electorate and changing elector behaviour presents the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) with challenges and opportunities in meeting the Australian community's expectations during the election and intervening periods.
- The logistical complexities of a general election are driven by: the number of individual activities involved; the size of the eligible voting population and the manner in which electors and other stakeholders engage with the AEC; and the number of candidates and political parties seeking to participate.
- The legislative framework, organisational structure and business processes the AEC manages continue to reflect a labour-intensive service delivery model.
- Where enabled by legislation, the AEC has streamlined processes and leveraged technology to deliver electoral services to the community efficiently and through electors' preferred mediums.
- The loss of the 1370 ballot papers in WA has caused the AEC to have an increased focus on ballot paper security and other related measures.

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 On 5 December 2013, the Special Minister of State, Senator the Honourable Michael Ronaldson, requested that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) inquire into and report on all aspects of the conduct of the 2013 Federal Election ('2013 election') and matters related thereto. This submission is provided in support of that inquiry.
- 1.1.2 The conduct of the 2013 election was characterised by both significant achievements and a significant failure in the 2013 Western Australian Senate election, which led to the voiding of the election of six senators for Western Australia (WA) by the Court of Disputed Returns.

1.1.3 The submission is divided into two parts. Part I explores key issues from the 2013 election, and dedicates a chapter to review the events surrounding the loss of 1 370 ballot papers for the Western Australian Senate. Part II reports on the AEC's preparation for and conduct of the 2013 election.

1.1.4 The chapters are structured and summarised as follows:

Part I - Overview of key issues during the 2013 election

- Chapter 1 Summary
- Chapter 2 The election for the Western Australian Senate
- Chapter 3 The election for the Division of FairfaxThe election for the Division of Fairfax
- Chapter 4 Senate voting in 2013

Part II – Delivering the 2013 election

- Chapter 5 Strategy and planning
- Chapter 6 The 2013 election timetable
- Chapter 7 Serving electors
- Chapter 8 Working with political parties, groups and candidates
- Chapter 9 Working with the media
- Chapter 10 Election workforce
- Chapter 11 Cost of the 2013 election
- Chapter 12 Summary of recommendations

Appendices

## 1.2 The electoral context

1.2.1 The AEC strives to meet the expectations of electors and other stakeholders when discharging its responsibilities under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Electoral Act). Continued growth of the electorate and changing elector behaviour presents the AEC with challenges and opportunities in meeting community expectations during the conduct of an election and intervening periods.

1.2.2 Each successive election has challenged the AEC to examine the way it operates, and to identify opportunities through which it can adapt to a changing environment, while maintaining a high level of quality and integrity in its administration.

- 1.2.3 Key trends influence the way in which the AEC seeks to engage with the community and administer elections:
- Population growth increases the size of Australia's electorate and the corresponding logistical complexity of each electoral event. This continues to present challenges for the AEC in identifying opportunities to streamline processes within the legislative constraints of the Electoral Act. The AEC supports the development of processes that are less dependent on manual intervention and allow the organisation to scale its activities efficiently and with the highest levels of integrity.
  - Early voting continues to trend upwards, reflecting the Australian community's increasing mobility and desire for flexibility in how and where they cast their vote. Further, the public continues to demand electronic means of obtaining information and engaging with the electoral process.

### **A growing electorate**

- 1.2.4 Since 1999, the estimated population eligible to enrol and vote has increased by more than 2.5 million individuals. The 2013 election enrolment was the largest in Australian electoral history. By the close of rolls at 8pm on Monday 12 August 2013, 14 712 799 electors were enrolled to vote, an increase of 162 851 electors from the 2013 election announcement and an additional 624 539 electors from the close of roll period for the 2010 election.
- 1.2.5 At the close of nominations on Thursday 15 August 2013 the number of candidate nominations was at record levels, increasing 43 per cent from 2010. In total, 1 717 candidates nominated – 529 candidates for 40 Senate vacancies and 1 188 candidates for 150 House of Representatives seats.
- 1.2.6 For the 2013 election 43 million ballot papers were printed. Ballot papers were then distributed to and issued from one of:
- 7 697 polling places and 645 early voting centres,
  - 102 diplomatic missions for overseas voting, and
  - 504 mobile polling teams servicing 400 remote locations and more than 2 400 hospitals.
- 1.2.7 A record number of ballot papers were manually counted on election night after polling closed at 6pm. The count was conducted in the main by the same temporary election staff that operated the polling booths, and a large election night workforce to count the 1.98 million ordinary pre-poll votes.



- 1.2.8 In short, the AEC experiences increased volumes at almost all of the logistical and operational pressure points during the election delivery period. This is consistent with experience of increasing volumes over the last four federal elections, as illustrated in Table 1.1.

### **Operating environment**

- 1.2.9 The conduct of a federal election is an aggregation of a number of tasks and activities that are undertaken in accordance with the Electoral Act, within timeframes determined by the Electoral Act, and with due regard for stakeholders' expectations of reliable indicative results on election night.
- 1.2.10 The legislative framework, organisational structure and business processes the AEC manages to deliver electoral events continue to reflect a labour-intensive service delivery model. The AEC maintains that community involvement in the mechanics of the electoral process remains an important feature of Australia's electoral system. A culture of community participation is one of the pillars on which the community's trust in the Australian electoral system rests.
- 1.2.11 However, a service delivery model reliant on manual processes and human involvement at most points, is inevitably vulnerable to human error. This presents significant risks as the AEC scales itself from an organisation of less than 1 000 people to one of more than 70 000, within less than five weeks, becoming one of the larger organisations in Australia for a single day. The AEC anticipates that appropriate technology will increasingly be drawn upon to manage the work volumes associated with electoral events. A critical success factor remains the existence of efficient processes and policies, and monitoring of compliance.

**Table 1.2 Selected statistics 2004-2013 federal elections**

	2004	2007	2010	2013
Enrolment transactions processed during close of rolls	402 300	196 449	553 272	627 256
Total enrolled at close of rolls	13 021 230	13 645 073	14 088 260	14 712 799
Polling Places – Total	8 543	8 664	9 059	9 252
Polling Places – Static <sup>1</sup>	7 729	7 723	7 760	7 697
Polling Places – mobile teams	505	512	509	504
Polling Places – Pre-poll voting centres <sup>2</sup>	309	429	682	645
Polling Places – Overseas Posts			103	102
Polling Places – Overseas ADF teams			5	4
Temporary Staff			66 634	73 507
Total number of Nominations	1 421	1 421	1 198	1 717
Postal Votes	754 054	833 178	967 010	1 329 215
Postal Vote Packages (PVPs)	760 099	812 826	957 322	1 329 986
Postal Vote Certificates (PVCs) returned	660 330	749 566	854 726	1 173 884
Declaration votes issued	2 562 656	2 967 665	2 537 874 <sup>3</sup>	2 830 177
Declaration votes cast	2 448 748	2 591 120	2 135 681	2 430 270
<i>Pre-poll votes cast as ordinary vote<sup>4</sup></i>				
Senate	..	..	997 205	1 982 859
House of Representatives	..	..	996 875	1 982 660
<i>Issue and scrutiny of declaration votes</i>				
House of Representatives ballot papers counted	12 354 983	12 930 814	13 131 667	13 726 070
Senate ballot papers counted	12 420 019	12 987 814	13 217 393	13 822 161

<sup>1</sup> Including dual polling places, counted as one for each division issuing ordinary votes.

<sup>2</sup> Including dual PPVCs, counted as one for each division issuing ordinary votes.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the reason for the decrease in declaration votes between 2007 and 2010 is as a result of the passage of legislation allowing for the issuing of home division pre-poll votes as ordinary votes.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to the 2010 election, all pre-poll votes were issued as declaration votes.

## Responding to the operating environment

- 1.2.12 Where enabled by legislation, the AEC has streamlined processes and leveraged technology to deliver electoral services to the community efficiently and to meet electors' expectations to obtain information and interact with the government through electronic means.
- 1.2.13 The two most utilised innovations in the period leading up to the 2013 election have been the capacity for online completion of both enrolment forms and postal vote applications (PVAs). At the 2013 election, more than 85 per cent of all enrolment transactions lodged by electors between announcement of the 2013 election on 3 August 2013 and close of rolls on 12 August 2013 occurred online through the AEC Online Enrolment Form (OEF). Almost 400 000 applications were received through the AEC's online PVA system. This increased use of electronic forms by the Australian community has simplified processing of these transactions without diminishing the controls applied to ensure quality and accuracy.
- 1.2.14 Other initiatives implemented or refined for the 2013 election include:
- The pilot use of Electronic Certified Lists,
  - Access to improved arrangements for electronically-assisted voting for electors who are blind or have low vision,
  - Expanded communication and outreach activities, and
  - Enhancements to the AEC's system for online recruitment and training of polling staff.
- 1.2.15 The AEC will continue to seek opportunities to consolidate and build upon these initiatives.

## 2 The election for the Western Australian Senate

### Key points:

- The 2013 Western Australia (WA) Senate election was the first time under existing legislation that the Electoral Commissioner had ordered a re-count of Senate ballot papers.
- During the course of the re-count, 1 370 Senate ballot papers could not be located which affected the election of candidates to the fifth and sixth WA Senate vacancies.
- On 20 February 2014, the Court of Disputed Returns issued an order voiding the 2013 WA Senate election result. A fresh election was held on 5 April 2014.
- The inquiry and subsequent report by Mr Mick Keelty AO into the circumstances surrounding the lost ballots found there were significant failures in some of the processes and procedures for the secure handling, movement and storage of WA Senate ballot papers and made 32 recommendations to the AEC for process improvements.
- All of Mr Keelty's recommendations were accepted in full by the three-person Australian Electoral Commission<sup>5</sup> and are currently being implemented.

### 2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 At the close of polls on 7 September 2013, the first count of ordinary and pre-poll Senate ballot papers was undertaken by AEC election staff in polling booths and counting centres. The second count, or 'fresh scrutiny' of Senate ballot papers marked above-the-line commenced in the following days and was conducted in divisional offices and scrutiny centres located throughout WA. The fresh scrutiny of Senate ballot papers marked below-the-line was conducted concurrently at the

<sup>5</sup> The three person Electoral Commission is established under s.6 of the Electoral Act and consists of a Chairperson, who must be an active or retired judge of the Federal Court of Australia, the Electoral Commissioner, and a non-judicial member. On 5 November the Commission members were the Hon. Peter Heerey AM QC, Chairperson; Mr Ed Killesteyn (Electoral Commissioner), and; Mr Brian Pink (Australian Statistician), non-judicial member.

Central Senate Scrutiny centre.<sup>6</sup> During fresh scrutiny all declaration votes accepted for further scrutiny (postal votes, absent votes, provisional votes and pre-poll declaration votes) were incorporated into the count.

- 2.1.2 At the conclusion of the fresh scrutiny, the Australian Electoral Officer for WA (AEO) caused the preferences from the 2013 WA Senate election to be distributed on 2 October 2013 in order to determine the six elected candidates. As with all aspects of the count, the scrutiny and automated distribution of preferences was open to scrutineers appointed by the candidates. The six successful candidates were publicly notified from that distribution of preferences, with the formal declaration scheduled for 4 October 2013.
- 2.1.3 Section 278 of the Electoral Act states that at any time before the formal declaration of the result of a Senate election the AEO may, on the written request of any candidate setting forth the reasons for the request, or of the officer's own motion, direct or conduct a re-count of the ballot papers contained in any parcel or in any other category determined by the AEO.
- 2.1.4 On 2 October 2013 two unsuccessful candidates, Senator Ludlam and Mr Dropulich, each made a formal request for a re-count. This request was based on the close margin at one critical exclusion point where, had the position of the two lowest candidates been reversed and the candidate standing second lowest in the count been excluded instead of the lowest ranked candidate at that point, the result of the election for the fifth and the sixth seats would have been different. The margin at this critical exclusion point after the original distribution of preferences was 14 votes.
- 2.1.5 On 3 October 2013, the WA AEO declined the respective requests. Senator Ludlam and Mr Dropulich appealed to the Electoral Commissioner for a re-count.
- 2.1.6 On 4 October, the formal declaration of successful candidates was deferred.
- 2.1.7 On 10 October 2013, the Electoral Commissioner directed the AEO to conduct a re-count of all WA 'above-the-line' Senate ballot papers as follows:

*Having considered candidates' submissions and having further regard to the criticality of particular Senate candidate exclusion counts and the small margins involved in determining Senators' elect, I have decided that there should be a recount of all formal Western Australian above-the-line ballots and*

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<sup>6</sup> Below-the-line Senate ballot papers are transported to a central location within each respective state for the purposes of double data entry into the AEC's EasyCount system to assist with the Senate count.

*informal ballots - as determined by Divisional Returning Officers for the fifteen WA electoral divisions in accordance with section 273A of the Electoral Act...<sup>7</sup>*

2.1.8 The Electoral Commissioner provided the following reasons for his direction:

*While I have no direct evidence in my possession of any error or irregularity that may have materially affected the election results, the criticality of the particular Senate candidate exclusion together with the small margin leads me to conclude that it is prudent to confirm the result in the interests of the electorate's confidence in the outcome.<sup>8</sup>*

2.1.9 The AEO commenced the re-count on 17 October 2013. This involved the scrutiny of approximately 96 per cent of WA Senate votes cast and required the movement of approximately 1.3 million ballot papers from the AEC's storage facility in outer-metropolitan Perth, to a counting centre in the Perth suburb of Northbridge, where each ballot was scrutinised again. Given the number and volume of the ballot papers, scrutiny occurred progressively, with ballot papers being transported to and from the counting centre while ballot papers already at the facility were being re-counted. Candidate-appointed scrutineers were present during the re-count.

2.1.10 During the re-count a total of 1 370 ballot papers which had been cast in the Division of Forrest or the Division of Pearce respectively (consisting of 120 informal votes and 1 250 formal above-the-line votes) could not be located.

2.1.11 On 31 October 2013 the Electoral Commissioner announced that the ballot papers could not be located for the purposes of the re-count. The Electoral Commissioner further advised that the former Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Mr Keelty AO, had been engaged to investigate the matter; and that the Electoral Commissioner would closely examine the Senate outcome in WA and consider whether any petition to the Court of Disputed Returns was necessary.

2.1.12 Having exhausted all options for otherwise resolving the result of the election the distribution of preferences was re-run on 2 November 2013 without the missing ballot papers to determine the six elected candidates.

<sup>7</sup> AEC 2013, *Australian Electoral Commission statement: Senate recount in Western Australia*, aec.gov.au, viewed 6 March 2013, <<http://www.aec.gov.au/media/media-releases/2013/e10-10.htm>>.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Government 2013, *2013 Election Petition (Western Australia) 15 November 2013*, *Gazette – c2013G01703*, viewed 6 March 2014 <<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013G01703>>.

- 2.1.13 The result of the WA Senate election, based on the distribution of preferences on 2 November 2013, was declared on 4 November 2013.
- 2.1.14 The AEC published on its website the voting preference information recorded for the missing votes on 8 November 2013.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.1.15 Following consideration of petitions disputing the result, including from the AEC, the Court of Disputed Returns voided the 2013 WA Senate election on 20 February 2014.

## 2.2 Issues

### An independent inquiry

- 2.2.1 Mr Keelty AO was formally appointed by the full three-person Australian Electoral Commission on Tuesday 5 November 2013 to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the loss of ballot papers that was identified during the re-count of the 2013 WA Senate election.
- 2.2.2 The terms of Mr Keelty AO's appointment asked him to specifically:
- Make findings on what factors may have contributed to the misplacing of the ballot papers;
  - Recommend what changes could be made in future to reduce the risk of similar incidents occurring in future elections; and
  - Recommend any other actions that might be regarded as necessary or prudent.
- 2.2.3 Mr Keelty AO provided his report *Inquiry into the 2013 WA Senate Election*<sup>10</sup> (the Keelty Report) to the full three-person Electoral Commission, on 2 December 2013 and it was publicly released on 6 December 2013.
- 2.2.4 The Keelty Report found there were significant failures in some of the processes and procedures for the secure handling, movement and storage of WA Senate ballot papers. These failures were likely to have increased the risk of ballot papers being mislaid, as well as making it more difficult to detect or accurately determine the fate of the missing ballots. The Keelty Report observed that while

<sup>9</sup> AEC 2013, *AEC releases voting preference information recorded for WA missing votes*, aec.gov.au, viewed 19 March 2013, <<http://www.aec.gov.au/media/media-releases/2013/e11-08.htm>>.

<sup>10</sup> MJ Keelty, *Inquiry into the 2013 WA Senate Election* available at: December 2013, Report commissioned by the Australian Electoral Commission and produced by MJ Keelty AO. Available at: [http://www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/Reports\\_On\\_Federal\\_Electoral\\_Events/2013/files/inquiry-into-the-2013-wa-senate-election.pdf](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/Reports_On_Federal_Electoral_Events/2013/files/inquiry-into-the-2013-wa-senate-election.pdf).

there was no evidence of any deliberate action to destroy or remove ballot papers, the systems in place in WA made it difficult for him to reach a conclusive finding.

- 2.2.5 The full three-person Australian Electoral Commission considered the Keelty Report prior to its release and accepted all of its 32 recommendations.
- 2.2.6 The AEC has begun implementing all 32 recommendations in a staged approach across all states and territories. Measures that respond to most of the recommendations in the Keelty Report were in place for the 2014 Griffith by-election and WA Senate election.
- 2.2.7 Measures used at the 2014 Griffith by-election and 2014 WA Senate election will be reviewed to assess efficacy, practicability and whether these measures in their current form are appropriate for other divisions and larger scale elections. It is anticipated that implementation of some measures at a general federal election would involve significant cost and may necessitate supplementary funding.
- 2.2.8 The AEC has and will continue to keep JSCEM informed of its progress in responding to the recommendations of the Keelty Report.

### **The effect of the missing votes**

- 2.2.9 To be elected to the Senate a candidate must obtain a quota of votes. For a half-Senate election of six state Senators, the quota is equal to one seventh of all formal first preference votes, plus one vote.
- 2.2.10 To determine which candidates meet the quota first preferences are counted, with those receiving at least a quota being elected. Any surplus votes (ie. exceeding the number required for a quota) received by elected candidates are transferred to voters' second choice (at a reduced rate). This continues until there are no more surpluses to transfer, and positions remain unfilled.
- 2.2.11 Then, starting with the candidate who has the lowest number of votes, unelected candidates are excluded from the count. Their ballot papers are distributed to the remaining candidates to whom the voters have given their preferences. If any of the remaining candidates obtain a quota through this process of distribution, they are declared elected. Their surplus (if any) is transferred before any other candidates are excluded. This process continues until all Senate positions are filled.
- 2.2.12 In the 2013 WA Senate election, at the 50th exclusion point, Mr van Burgel and Mr Bow were the two continuing candidates with the lowest number of votes. The question of which of Mr van Burgel or Mr Bow was to be excluded at this point



was critical in determining who would be elected to fill the fifth and sixth vacancies.

2.2.13 The critical juncture of the 50th exclusion point yielded the following results:

- The initial distribution of preferences on 2 October showed a margin of difference between Mr van Burgel and Mr Bow of 14 votes in Mr Bow's favour, leading to the eventual success of Mr Wang and Senator Pratt candidates as the 5th and 6th elected Senators.
- The re-count distribution of preferences on 2 November showed a margin of difference between Mr van Burgel and Mr Bow of 12 votes in Mr van Burgel's favour, leading to the eventual success of Mr Dropulich and Senator Ludlam as the 5th and 6th elected Senators. The poll was declared on the basis of the re-count result.

## 2.3 Outcome

2.3.1 On 15 November 2013, the full three-person Australian Electoral Commission authorised the Electoral Commissioner to lodge a petition<sup>11</sup> with the Court of Disputed Returns in respect of the 2013 WA Senate election.

2.3.2 The petition sought an order from the Court of Disputed Returns that the 2013 WA Senate election of six senators be declared void.

2.3.3 On 20 February 2014, the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns issued an order to void the 2013 WA Senate election result. As a result of this decision a new election was required.

2.3.4 On 28 February 2014, the Governor of Western Australia, Mr Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, issued the writ for a fresh Western Australia Senate election. The key dates for the 2014 WA Senate election are as listed in Table 2.1.

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<sup>11</sup> Australian Government 2013, *2013 Election Petition (Western Australia) 15 November 2013*, *Gazette – c2013G01703*, [comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au), viewed 6 March 2014, <<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013G01703>>.

**Table 2.1 Key dates for the 2014 WA Senate election**

Action	Time, day and date
Announcement and issue of writ	Friday 28 February 2014
Nominations open	From 6pm, Friday 28 February 2014
Close of rolls	8pm, Friday, 7 March 2014
Close of nominations	12pm, Thursday 13 March 2014
Declaration of nominations	12pm, Friday 14 March 2014
Election day	8am to 6pm, Saturday 5 April 2014
Last day for the return of the writ	Sunday 8 June 2014

## 3 The election for the Division of Fairfax

### Key points:

- The Division of Fairfax in Queensland was the only House of Representatives re-count conducted following the 2013 election.
- The re-count was triggered by AEC policy which requires a re-count to occur automatically if the margin between the two remaining candidates at the completion of the distribution of preferences is fewer than 100 votes.
- An unprecedented number of challenges to the counting of ballot papers occurred during the fresh scrutiny and the re-count.

### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 House of Representatives ballot papers are subjected to three scrutines: ordinary votes are counted at polling places on election night and then re-examined and re-counted at the fresh scrutiny. The final scrutiny occurs during the full distribution of preferences where ballot papers of lower placed candidates are examined to determine which of the remaining candidates' ballot papers should be allocated the next available preference. The candidate with the least number of first preference votes is excluded first and all remaining lower ranked candidates are progressively excluded until one candidate has an absolute majority (50 per cent + one of all votes cast).
- 3.1.2 If at the completion of the distribution of preferences the margin of votes between the two leading candidates is fewer than 100, a re-count will be undertaken as a matter of AEC policy. A re-count may also be requested after the completion of all scrutines and before the result of the election is declared.
- 3.1.3 Candidates have the right to appoint scrutineers to represent them during the polling and throughout the various stages of the scrutiny, including at a re-count. Scrutineers may challenge the admission or rejection of any ballot paper. The officer conducting the scrutiny will then decide whether the vote is formal or informal and mark the ballot paper as required by legislation and policy. The ability of scrutineers to observe these processes and challenge decisions enables them to confirm the integrity of the election process on behalf of the candidate who has appointed them.

## Scrutiny of votes: timeline of events

- 3.1.4 The Two Candidate Preferred (TCP) count distributes House of Representative preferences to two predetermined candidates who are two most likely final candidates after the distribution of preferences. The AEO, in accordance with s.274(2A) of the Electoral Act, makes this determination prior to election day on the basis of available information such as historic voting patterns. If, on polling night, it is clear that the initial selections are not correct, then, after polling day, the candidates to be distributed for the purposes of the TCP count are revised. The TCP count is conducted because it typically provides a reliable indicator of the likely outcome of each seat and as a result, an indication of which party is likely to form government.
- 3.1.5 In the Division of Fairfax, the predetermined candidates for the TCP count were candidates for the Liberal National Party (LNP) and the Labor Party respectively. Following the counting of ordinary votes on election night it became apparent that the two leading candidates were the LNP and Palmer United Party (PUP) candidates. On Sunday 8 September 2013, the DRO for Fairfax commenced a fresh scrutiny of ordinary votes, including a revised TCP count. The fresh scrutiny of ordinary votes involved some 30 counting staff and was completed on Monday 9 September 2013.
- 3.1.6 Scrutiny of declaration votes for the Division of Fairfax commenced on Tuesday 10 September 2013 with the counting of pre-poll votes. During this process it was discovered that a total of 750 votes had been incorrectly attributed to the Buderim Pre-poll Voting Centre (PPVC), when they should have been recorded against the Coolum Beach PPVC, and that a compensating error had been made in attributing votes to the Coolum Beach PPVC that should have been recorded against the Buderim PPVC. This is discussed further in the section addressing polling management in Chapter 7.
- 3.1.7 The fresh scrutiny concluded on Saturday 21 September 2013.

## Distribution of preferences

- 3.1.8 The distribution of preferences for the Division of Fairfax commenced on Monday 23 September 2013. The distribution of preferences involves progressively excluding those candidates with the fewest first preference votes, and transferring each ballot paper held by that candidate to the next continuing candidate, according to the voter's next highest preference.
- 3.1.9 The number of challenges made by scrutineers to the formality of ballot papers increased markedly at this point.

- 3.1.10 In response to the large number of challenges, the AEC developed a revised challenge procedure which both upheld the scrutineers' right to inspect each ballot paper and minimised time delays being encountered as a direct result of the unprecedented number of challenges being made.
- 3.1.11 Challenges were categorised on the basis of 'authenticity' where preferences were unambiguous but:
- the ballot paper did not feature an issuing officer's initials, or
  - ballot papers were produced by photocopying or other means, or
  - a scrutineer challenged the ballot paper on additional, unspecified authenticity grounds.
- 3.1.12 'Other' challenges referred to those ballot papers where a scrutineer challenged the DRO's interpretation of a number or numbering sequence.
- 3.1.13 Following agreement with scrutineers, a process for reviewing the challenges by category was implemented, enabling the DRO Fairfax to significantly increase the number of rulings able to be made each day. By the time the distribution of preferences was completed on 1 October 2013, the final margin for Fairfax was seven votes in favour of the PUP candidate. At this point, some 8 500 (9.5 per cent) ballot papers had been challenged by scrutineers and ruled on by the DRO.

### **Automatic re-count of results**

- 3.1.14 As the final margin was fewer than 100 votes, on Thursday 3 October the DRO Fairfax commenced an automatic re-count in accordance with AEC policy.
- 3.1.15 During the re-count process, challenges continued to be made on the previously agreed basis of either 'authenticity' or 'other'.
- 3.1.16 The DRO Fairfax ruled on a total of 50 099 (56.2 per cent) ballot papers during the re-count process. Where the ruling was accepted by all scrutineers, the ballot papers were returned to the count. All other ballot papers were photocopied and the original ballot papers were parcelled and forwarded to the Australian Electoral Officer (AEO) Queensland for determination. A range of control measures were developed and used to track ballot paper movements and monitor count progress at the scrutiny centre for the DRO Fairfax and the AEO Queensland.
- 3.1.17 The AEO Queensland commenced the determination of ballot papers referred by the DRO Fairfax on Tuesday 8 October. This process continued until Wednesday 30 October and involved a total of 43 942 (49.3 per cent) ballot papers. Regular

updates of the number of ballot papers for each polling place being challenged, and ruled on were published to the AEC's website.<sup>12</sup>

- 3.1.18 The DRO Fairfax received the final parcel of ballot papers to be integrated back into the count on Thursday 31 October. The distribution of preferences was finalised later that same day and resulted in the election of the PUP candidate.
- 3.1.19 The formal declaration of the poll for the Division of Fairfax was made on Friday 1 November 2013.

## 3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The heightened intensity of the scrutiny process and the number of challenges experienced differed markedly from the most recent re-count for a House of Representatives election. At the 2007 election, a re-count was conducted in the Division of McEwen, with an estimated maximum of 2 000 ballot papers requiring DRO decision, of which 643 ballot papers were subsequently referred to the AEO Victoria for decision.

### Volumes and workload associated with challenges

- 3.2.2 The election for the Division of Fairfax saw an unprecedented number of challenges to ballot papers. As noted above:
- some 8 500 ballot papers were challenged by scrutineers during the distribution of preferences and ruled on by the DRO Fairfax following the fresh scrutiny,
  - 50 099 ballot papers were challenged and referred to the DRO for decision during the re-count, and
  - of the 50 099 ballot papers on which the DRO made a decision, 43 942 were subsequently reserved for the decision of the AEO.
- 3.2.3 As a result of a high number of challenges, over 102 000 ballot paper decisions were required to be made personally by the DRO and the AEO, a number far higher than the 89 173 ballot papers that were cast at the election.
- 3.2.4 Decisions of the DRO and AEO also need to be recorded on the ballot paper in accordance with legislation and AEC policy and procedure. For example:
- If a challenge to the formality/informality of a ballot paper is made at the fresh scrutiny or during the distribution of preferences, or re-count, the DRO is required

<sup>12</sup> AEC, 2013, *Media advisory – Fairfax recount*, aec.gov.au, viewed 19 March 2013, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/federal\\_elections/2013/fairfax.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/federal_elections/2013/fairfax.htm)>.

to mark the ballot paper 'rejected' or 'admitted' on the back of the ballot paper (s.267(1) of the Electoral Act refers).

- If a challenge as to the authenticity of the ballot paper is made, the DRO is required to mark the ballot paper with the words 'I am satisfied that this ballot paper is an authentic ballot paper on which a voter has marked a vote' (s.268(2) of the Electoral Act refers).
- Where ballot papers are referred to the AEO for decision, the DRO is required to further mark the back of the ballot paper with 'referred for AEO decision'.
- The AEO, after making a decision on whether any such ballot papers should be allowed and admitted to the re-count, or disallowed and rejected is required to mark the back of the ballot paper 'admitted' or 'rejected' according to the decision.

### 3.3 Recommendations

#### Separate House and Senate re-count processes

- 3.3.1 Following the scrutiny and re-count processes for the 2013 Senate election in WA, and for the Division of Fairfax, the AEC has identified a number of amendments to the Electoral Act that would improve the conduct of counts and re-counts.
- 3.3.2 Currently, many of the same provisions in the Electoral Act apply to the conduct of a re-count in the House of Representatives and Senate. It is apparent from the re-count in WA that, while similar in many ways, a Senate re-count involves complexities that do not arise in a House of Representatives re-count. For example, Section 278 of the Electoral Act provides that a Senate re-count may be conducted by the Australian Electoral Officer (AEO). However, ss.279A and 279B appear to contemplate, and refer to, the re-count being conducted by 'the DRO'.
- 3.3.3 The AEC proposes that ss.279A and 279B of the Electoral Act be amended to clarify the process for conducting a Senate re-count. This may involve separating the provisions into two parts – one dealing with the House of Representatives and the other dealing with the Senate.

**Recommendation 1:** That the Electoral Act be amended to create separate re-count procedures for House of Representatives and Senate elections, to clearly specify the officer in charge of the re-count and the management practices regarding the handling and transfer of ballot papers (including a recognition of Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS)).

## Delegation of DRO powers

- 3.3.4 The re-count in Fairfax clearly demonstrated the limitations of having a single individual (in this case the DRO) being the only individual able to exercise certain powers, which may, as in the case of the re-count in Fairfax, be needed to be exercised many thousands of times.
- 3.3.5 The provisions currently require that only persons appointed as an Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) or DRO under s.33 of the Electoral Act may exercise the respective functions and powers of an ARO or DRO under that Act. DROs are not given a power under the Electoral Act to delegate their functions and any such delegation would be invalid.
- 3.3.6 The AEC proposes to amend the initial scrutiny provisions so that Australian Public Service (APS) AEC employees acting under the direction of an ARO or DRO can also exercise the respective powers and duties of an ARO or DRO for the purposes of ss.273, 273A and 274 of the Electoral Act. Such an amendment would reduce the impact of bottlenecks associated with a non-delegable authority having to be exercised many thousands of times for the purposes of the scrutiny or re-count.

**Recommendation 2:** That the Electoral Act be amended to specifically allow officers or persons acting under the direction of the Electoral Commissioner to perform the functions of the ARO or the DRO when conducting the scrutiny (including recounts) for the Senate and House of Representatives.

## Aligning rules concerning scrutineers in counts and re-counts

- 3.3.7 The role of scrutineers at a re-count is another area where clarification of the role would enhance the re-count process. The Electoral Act clearly appears to contemplate that candidates may appoint scrutineers at the re-count, as it refers in s.279B(1) to 'the presence of any scrutineers who attend' the re-count. Section 280 of the Electoral Act also provides that the 'officer conducting the re-count shall have the same powers as if the re-count were the scrutiny', which suggests that scrutineers' rights to be present at the re-count may also be limited under s.265(2).
- 3.3.8 The AEC suggests that the Electoral Act be amended to make it clear that candidates may appoint scrutineers to be present at the re-count, and to expressly provide that rules to which scrutineers are subject to during the scrutiny also apply during the re-count.



**Recommendation 3:** That the Electoral Act be amended to harmonise the rules governing the role of scrutineers during both the scrutiny and the re-count of ballot papers during an election.

### Rules for challenging ballot papers

- 3.3.9 The Electoral Act presently provides at s.267 that a scrutineer may challenge the admission of a ballot paper on the grounds of informality. However the Act is silent on the extent to which candidates may make multiple challenges.
- 3.3.10 This has the possible effect that objections to ballot papers are raised during every stage of the each scrutiny. Scrutineers raising an objection to a ballot paper at each stage of a full distribution count conducted under s.274(7)(d) for example, can delay the scrutiny and subsequent delivery of the election result, while achieving no qualitative effect on the result. The unreasonable delay can also affect the return of the writ within the mandated timeframe.
- 3.3.11 The practical effect of Recommendation 4 would be that a candidate's scrutineer may only object to an individual ballot paper once to the ARO, once to the DRO and once to the AEO for determination at each stage as the scrutiny and recount progresses.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Electoral Act be amended to provide that the scrutineers for a candidate may only object to a ballot paper once during the original scrutiny, once during fresh scrutiny and once during a re-count.

### Scrutineers photographing ballot papers

- 3.3.12 Protection of the secrecy of the vote is a fundamental tenet of Australian democracy. For this reason part of the written undertaking signed by scrutineers under either s.202A(3) of the Electoral Act and s.16A of the *Referendum (Machine Provisions) Act 1984* (the Referendum Act) is the requirement not to image recording device (e.g., cameras, video recorders and mobile phones) to record images of ballot papers or declaration envelopes.
- 3.3.13 The AEC identified some issues with the photographing of ballot papers by scrutineers. The AEC will examine this issue following the WA Senate election, and raise it in a supplementary submission if required.

## 4 Senate voting in 2013

### Key points:

- The 2013 Senate election included public debate and controversy relating to election results. Many of the concerns raised were not new, but were made more prominent by the particular combination of circumstances surrounding the election.
- The primary criticism raised regarding the operation of the Senate electoral system at the 2013 election was that it produced some unanticipated outcomes. Two senators were elected with comparatively small proportions of first preference votes, while another was elected with higher numbers of first preference votes than was expected by some commentators.
- The 2013 election involved a record number of candidates contesting seats in the Senate resulting in record-sized ballot papers in multiple states.
- The size of the ballot paper presents challenges for voters in relation to handling, legibility and formal completion of the ballot paper; and logistical challenges for the AEC in relation to printing, movement and transportation, and scrutiny.

### 4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 The 2013 Senate elections generated unprecedented public debate and controversy relating to how the Senate system operated. Many of the concerns raised were not new, but were made more prominent by the particular combination of circumstances surrounding this election.
- 4.1.2 The primary criticism raised regarding the operation of the Senate electoral system at the 2013 election, was that it produced some unanticipated outcomes. Two senators were declared elected with comparatively small proportions of first preference votes, while another was elected with higher numbers of first preference votes than was expected by some commentators.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> On 20 February 2014 the 2013 WA Senate election result was declared void by the Court of Disputed Returns. One of the affected candidates was Mr Wayne Dropulich from the Australian Sports Party, who was declared elected as Senator for WA on 4 November 2013, after receiving

- 4.1.3 It must be stressed that while such results were not anticipated, they occurred through the application of current legislative requirements, were not unforeseeable and did not represent the first occasion that a candidate has been elected to the Senate with a low primary vote.
- 4.1.4 Some of the factors that may have led to these results were:
- a large number of new and minor parties registered, with a record number of groups appearing on Senate ballot papers,
  - preference-swapping deals, particularly between minor and new parties, resulted in Group Voting Tickets (GVTs) that had the effect of transferring and accumulating of votes in bulk, thereby increasing the chances of relatively unknown candidates being elected, and
  - reported concerns that some voters may have been confused or misled in casting their vote where names of new or minor parties were similar to those of more established parties.
- 4.1.5 The interplay of factors that may have led to the results of 2013 have been documented and canvassed publicly, including in submissions to this JSCEM inquiry and previous JSCEM inquiries. Given the timing of this submission in relation to the intended timing of a JSCEM report on Senate voting issues<sup>14</sup>, the implications of the many suggested proposals are not addressed. However, the AEC will provide the JSCEM with technical advice in relation to proposals, if requested.
- 4.1.6 This chapter outlines some of the features of the 2013 Senate elections and summarises recent AEC submissions to the JSCEM regarding the numbers of groups and candidates contesting Senate elections the resulting impact of large ballot papers on the ability of voters to understand and participate fully in a Senate election.

### Party registration

- 4.1.7 There were 77 parties registered for the 2013 election. This is the largest number of registered parties since the 1998 election, when 77 were also registered. Table 8.2 in Chapter 8 of this submission identifies the number of parties

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0.23 per cent of first preference votes. Mr Ricky Muir from the Motoring Enthusiast Party was declared elected as Senator for Victoria on 2 October 2013, after receiving 0.51 per cent of first preference votes. Mr David Leyonhjelm for the Liberal Democrats was declared elected as Senator for New South Wales on 2 October 2013, after receiving 9.5 per cent of first preference votes.

<sup>14</sup> On 27 March 2014 the Chair of JSCEM, the Honourable Tony Smith MP advised the House of Representatives of his intention to table a report on the issue of the voting system used to elect Senators prior to the 2014 Budget Sitings of Parliament, which commence in mid-May.

registered at recent elections. Paragraph 8.1.10 includes a discussion relating to the possible drivers for the growth in number of registered parties in the lead up to the 2013 election.

- 4.1.8 The number of registered separate parties which were not branches of a major party was 54; this was more than double the number of parties registered at the 2010 election.

### Numbers of candidates

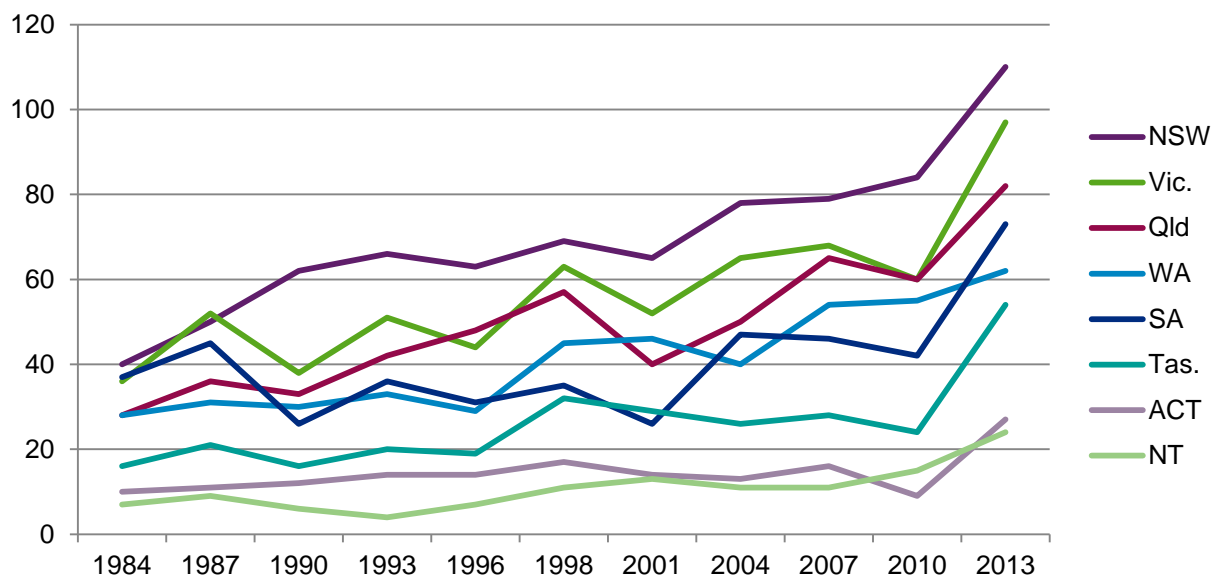
- 4.1.9 The overall number of candidates nominating to contest the 2013 election was the highest ever for a federal election. The number of nominations for the House of Representatives was at historically consistent levels, except in Victoria, where nominations increased from 242 in 2007 and 194 in 2010 to 344 in 2013. For more information, see Chapter 7.3.41.

- 4.1.10 In comparison, the number of Senate nominations increased substantially, up 60.3 per cent compared to 2004. There were 330 Senate nominations in 2004, 367 in 2007 and 349 in 2010, compared to 529 at the 2013 election. The average number of candidates per vacancy has increased from 8.25 per vacancy in 2004 to 13.23 per vacancy in 2013.

**Table 4.1 Senate nominations, 1984-2013**

Year	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld no.	WA no.	SA no.	Tas. no.	ACT no.	NT no.	Total no.
1984	40	36	28	28	37	16	10	7	202
1987	50	52	36	31	45	21	11	9	255
1990	62	38	33	30	26	16	12	6	223
1993	66	51	42	33	36	20	14	4	266
1996	63	44	48	29	31	19	14	7	255
1998	69	63	57	45	35	32	17	11	329
2001	65	52	40	46	26	29	14	13	285
2004	78	65	50	40	47	26	13	11	330
2007	79	68	65	54	46	28	16	11	367
2010	84	60	60	55	42	24	9	15	349
2013	110	97	82	62	73	54	27	24	529

**Figure 4.1 Senate nominations, 1984-2013**



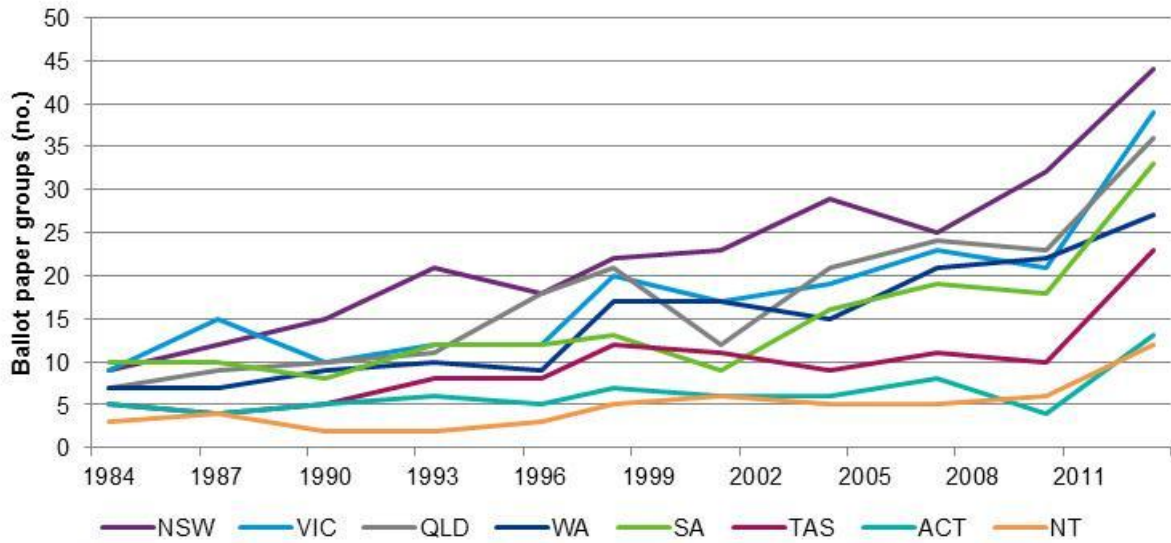
4.1.11 Candidates may choose to contest the election as a group, and lodge a GVT to obtain a preference square above-the-line. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 show that the number of groups contesting the 2013 Senate elections was at record levels for Senate elections since 1984.

**Table 4.2 Ballot paper groups<sup>15</sup>, 1984 to 2013 Senate elections**

	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld no.	WA no.	SA no.	Tas. no.	ACT no.	NT no.
1984	9	9	7	7	10	5	5	3
1987	12	15	9	7	10	4	4	4
1990	15	10	10	9	8	5	5	2
1993	21	12	11	10	12	8	6	2
1996	18	12	18	9	12	8	5	3
1998	22	20	21	17	13	12	7	5
2001	23	17	12	17	9	11	6	6
2004	29	19	21	15	16	9	6	5
2007	25	23	24	21	19	11	8	5
2010	32	21	23	22	18	10	4	6
2013	44	39	36	27	33	23	13	12

<sup>15</sup> Excludes ungrouped candidates.

**Figure 4.2 Ballot paper groups,<sup>16</sup> 1984 to 2013 Senate elections**



**Ballot paper size**

- 4.1.12 If a large number of groups and candidates nominate for a Senate election, the resulting ballot paper will also be large.
- 4.1.13 The Electoral Act requires that groups of Senate candidates are ordered in successive columns across the ballot paper. For technical reasons, the physical size of the ballot paper is limited to a maximum width of 1020mm, so beyond a certain point the only way of fitting more groups or more candidates onto a ballot paper is to make the font smaller.
- 4.1.14 As shown in Table 4.3, in 2010 only one state (NSW) required the widest possible Senate ballot paper. In 2013, the Senate ballot paper for five states (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and SA) were each produced to the maximum width of 1020mm.

<sup>16</sup> Excludes ungrouped candidates.

**Table 4.3 Ballot paper sizes, 2010 and 2013 Senate elections**

State/territory	2010 mm	2013 mm
NSW	1 020	1 020
Vic.	827	1 020
Qld	897	1 020
WA	828	998
SA	721	1 020
Tas.	444	900
ACT	269	547
NT	303	479

4.1.15 The most commonly used voting screen (the cardboard screen in which voters complete their ballot paper) is 580mm wide. In the case of states using the maximum ballot paper size, most voting screens are a little more than half (0.57 per cent) as wide as the ballot paper.

4.1.16 Font sizes were also reduced on Senate ballot papers in most states. In New South Wales the font size for the 110 candidate names was 7.65 point in 2013; in 2010 8.5 point was used for 84 candidate names. To address the difficulties small font size may have caused some voters in reading their ballot papers, magnifying sheets were available in polling places in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland and in pre-poll centres across all states and territories to assist electors in reading their ballot papers.

## Voting

### Above and Below the Line

4.1.17 The increasing trend of more than 95 per cent of voters voting above-the-line continued at the 2013 election. The size of the ballot paper, and the number of entries required to vote formally below-the-line is clearly a strong factor in the choice by voters to vote above-the-line.

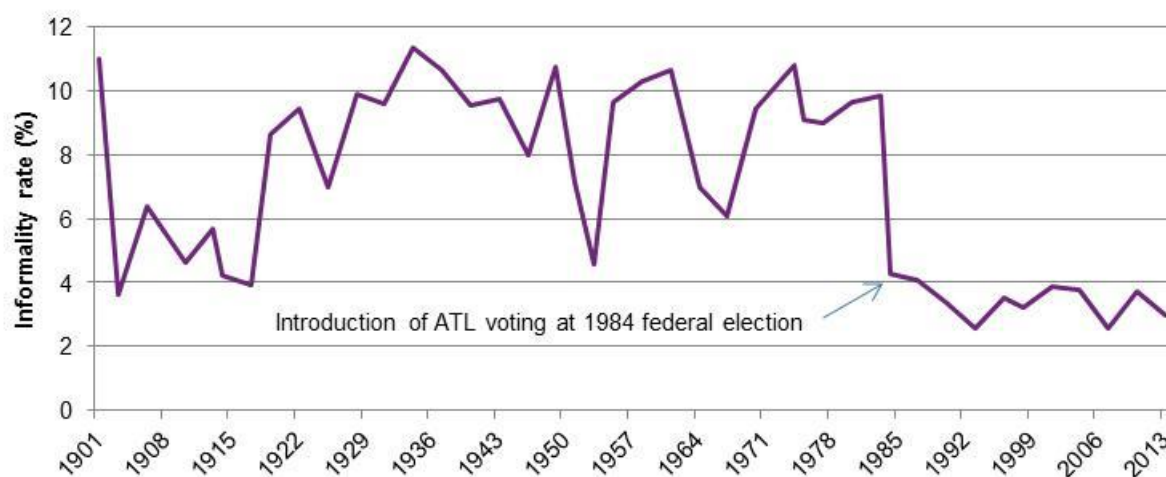
**Table 4.4 Above-the-line and below-the-line voting at Senate elections, 1984-2013**

	Above-the-line (ATL) votes	Below-the-line (BTL) votes	Total votes	
	no.	no.	no.	%
1984	85.27	14.73	8 894 100	100.00
1987	86.71	13.29	9 371 681	100.00
1990	91.42	8.58	9 929 765	100.00
1993	94.38	5.62	10 674 805	100.00
1996	94.35	5.65	10 899 037	100.00
1998	94.90	5.10	11 211 903	100.00
2001	95.24	4.76	11 627 529	100.00
2004	95.85	4.15	11 953 649	100.00
2007	96.78	3.22	12 656 805	100.00
2010	96.12	3.88	12 722 233	100.00
2013	96.49	3.51	13 413 019	100.00

### Formality

4.1.18 The percentage of voters voting informally did not markedly change at the 2013 election. This may be a function of the above-the-line voting process, which provides a simple option for voters to cast a formal vote.

**Figure 4.3 Informal voting at Senate elections, 1901-2013**





## 4.2 Issues

### Ballot paper

4.2.1 The size of the ballot paper presents challenges for voters in relation to legibility and formal completion of the ballot paper; and logistical challenges for the AEC in relation to printing, movement and transportation, and scrutiny.

4.2.2 At the 2013 Senate election, the large size of Senate ballot papers and their legibility was again the source of public comment<sup>17</sup> and consternation.<sup>18</sup>

4.2.3 The AEC has made submissions to JSCEM over a number of inquiries regarding the risks of the Senate ballot paper to effective participation. AEC proposals have included consideration of Senate ballot paper design, increases to the nomination deposit and increases to the number of nominators required by persons seeking to stand as candidates in Senate elections.

4.2.4 The AEC noted in its submission 169.6 to JSCEM's *Inquiry into the 2007 federal election*:

*The AEC has periodically raised with the JSCEM the concern that increases in the number of Senate nominations, particularly for groups, may provide difficulties in the design and production of the Senate ballot paper. The JSCEM in its Report of the Inquiry into the conduct of the 1998 Federal Election and matters related thereto recommended the CEA be amended to allow 'an alternate layout for the Senate ballot paper and that the AEC consult with the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on the design'.*

4.2.5 JSCEM's *Report on the conduct of the 2007 federal election and matters related thereto* contained no recommendations relating to the size of the Senate ballot paper.

4.2.6 The AEC noted in its submission 87.5 to JSCEM's *Inquiry into the 2010 Federal Election*:

*To fit all candidate names on the NSW Senate ballot paper at the 2010 election, the font was reduced to a size where legibility was marginal... A related concern*

<sup>17</sup> For example: Gary Kemble 2013, *Size matters, voters grapple with mammoth ballot papers*, ABC News, viewed 09/04/14, <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-22/size-matters3a-voters-grapple-with-mammoth-ballot-papers/4905092>>.

<sup>18</sup> For example: Tim Colebatch 2013, *Metre Long ballot paper means voters will need to read the fine print*, SMH, viewed 09/04/14, <<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/metre-long-ballot-paper-means-voters-will-need-to-read-the-fine-print-20130817-2s3yw.html>>.

*is the extent to which the existing size of the ballot paper in reflecting a large number of candidates contesting the Senate election, strikes an appropriate balance between providing voters with a choice of candidates and the countervailing need to ensure ballot papers are not so unwieldy and difficult to complete that, in effect, they operate to diminish the capacity of voters to exercise their franchise.*

- 4.2.7 Across this period, the JSCEM's consideration of this issue has generally focussed on recommendations to increase the nomination requirements of those seeking to stand for election to the Senate. For example, in its report *The 2010 Federal Election Report on the conduct of the election and related matters*, JSCEM concluded 'that in some states, such as New South Wales, ballot papers have become increasingly complex as the number of candidates has risen.' The Committee recommended an increase to the deposit required to nominate for the Senate to act as a deterrent to frivolous candidacy without unduly hampering participation.
- 4.2.8 Legislative reforms introduced in 2013<sup>19</sup> that were, in part, designed to address the increasing size of Senate ballot papers (such as increasing nomination deposits and the numbers of nominators required for unendorsed candidates) appear to have been ineffective.<sup>20</sup> It is also noted that political consensus on the previous increase of nomination deposits does not extend to all minor parties represented in the Parliament.

### 4.3 Recommendation

- 4.3.1 The AEC notes that the Chair of the JSCEM has advised that it is his intention to table an early report on specific issues relating to the voting system used to elect Senators. The AEC would welcome the opportunity to provide technical advice on options being considered by JSCEM.

**Recommendation 5:** The AEC recommends that it be requested to provide the JSCEM with technical options which may address concerns in relation to the size and legibility of Senate ballot papers.

<sup>19</sup> *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Procedure) Act 2013.*

<sup>20</sup> See section 8.1.6 for discussion of number of parties registered for the 2013 election.

## Part II - Delivering the 2013 election

### 5 Strategy and planning

#### Key points:

- Election planning is a continuous process that extends beyond a single election to election cycle. This planning is informed by evaluation following each electoral event.
- The AEC's 'Election Preparation Program', informed by the 'Toward the next election: priorities for action' document provides the over-arching framework to ensure visibility of election preparedness across the agency. The 'Election Ready Assurance' review is intended as a check into agency-wide election readiness. These processes are subject to ongoing review and enhancement.
- The AEC's planning approach for the 2013 election was shaped by a dynamic operating environment, influenced by external variables such as non-fixed Parliamentary terms, proposed referendums, legislative change and the unprecedented announcement of the election well in advance of the proposed date for the issue of the writ.
- The maintenance of election readiness in the lead-up to the 2013 election while enhancing processes required the AEC to maintain parallel policies, procedures, forms, systems and training.

#### 5.1 Planning and operating framework

##### Election planning

- 5.1.1 Election planning provides the AEC's framework for the activities that are undertaken each electoral cycle. Election planning, however, is a continuous process that extends beyond an election to election cycle.
- 5.1.2 A key input to election planning is the review and evaluation of the previous election. Immediately following the conduct of the 2010 election, a substantial evaluation and review process was undertaken. The evaluation and review process included state and territory election evaluation meetings, surveys, working parties, and evaluations of specific issues and activities taking into

account the views of stakeholders, including the community, media, candidates, and a significant proportion of AEC staff, including polling staff.

- 5.1.3 This review process informed the formation of the 'Towards the next election: priorities for action' document that was designed to provide a primary point of reference to describe the key priorities and activities necessary to improve the AEC's delivery of the subsequent federal election. Each of the priorities reflected a substantial body of work that required the commitment and collaboration of many different parts of the AEC.
- 5.1.4 The priorities included, but were not limited to:
- implementation of legislation which enabled:
    - online postal vote applications,
    - electronic certified lists, and
    - improved support for blind and low vision (BLV) electors,
  - improvements to capacity and effectiveness of election support systems functionality, and
  - implementation of the recommendations of the report into ballot box irregularities in Flynn and Boothby.
- 5.1.5 These actions, where appropriate, were then incorporated into business planning and formal election preparation activities; for example progress of these priorities was a standing agenda item for the AEC's Executive Management Group meetings.
- 5.1.6 The AEC complemented these planning priorities with trialling new training methodologies within the national learning and development framework, e.g. intensive residential training workshops in New South Wales. During 2012 and 2013, AEC NSW staff developed and piloted an intensive two week Election Ready Operational Capacity Development Program (EROCDP). This is a scenario-based election simulation exercise providing participants with the opportunity to role-play actual election activities, such as concurrent ballot paper scrutines, in a 'real-time' environment. Feedback from staff who attended the EROCDP was that it was extremely valuable in giving them a practical 'live' election experience and highlighting areas for further follow-up and planning.

## Monitoring

- 5.1.7 The AEC's monitoring and assurance arrangements are in the process of review following the 2013 federal election, and the findings of the Keely Report.

- 5.1.8 Over recent years the AEC has significantly enhanced its internal controls to monitor preparation for and conduct of elections. An 'Election Preparation Program' provides the framework to ensure visibility of election preparedness across the agency. A six-monthly review cycle of divisional-level preparations was introduced prior to the 2013 election to ensure ongoing readiness to conduct an election to a minimum, 33 day timetable – this has generally served the AEC well in preparing staff for the detailed steps required to deliver an election.
- 5.1.9 A series of internal 'Election Ready Assurance' reviews were undertaken in the lead up to the 2013 election. These reviews were a further check into the election readiness of each National Office Branch, state and territory offices and cover such things as the status of contracts and completion of training by AEC operational staff. The events in WA have demonstrated the need for this process to be reviewed and enhanced. It is intended that these assurance reviews will continue to support the Election Preparation Program over future planning cycles.

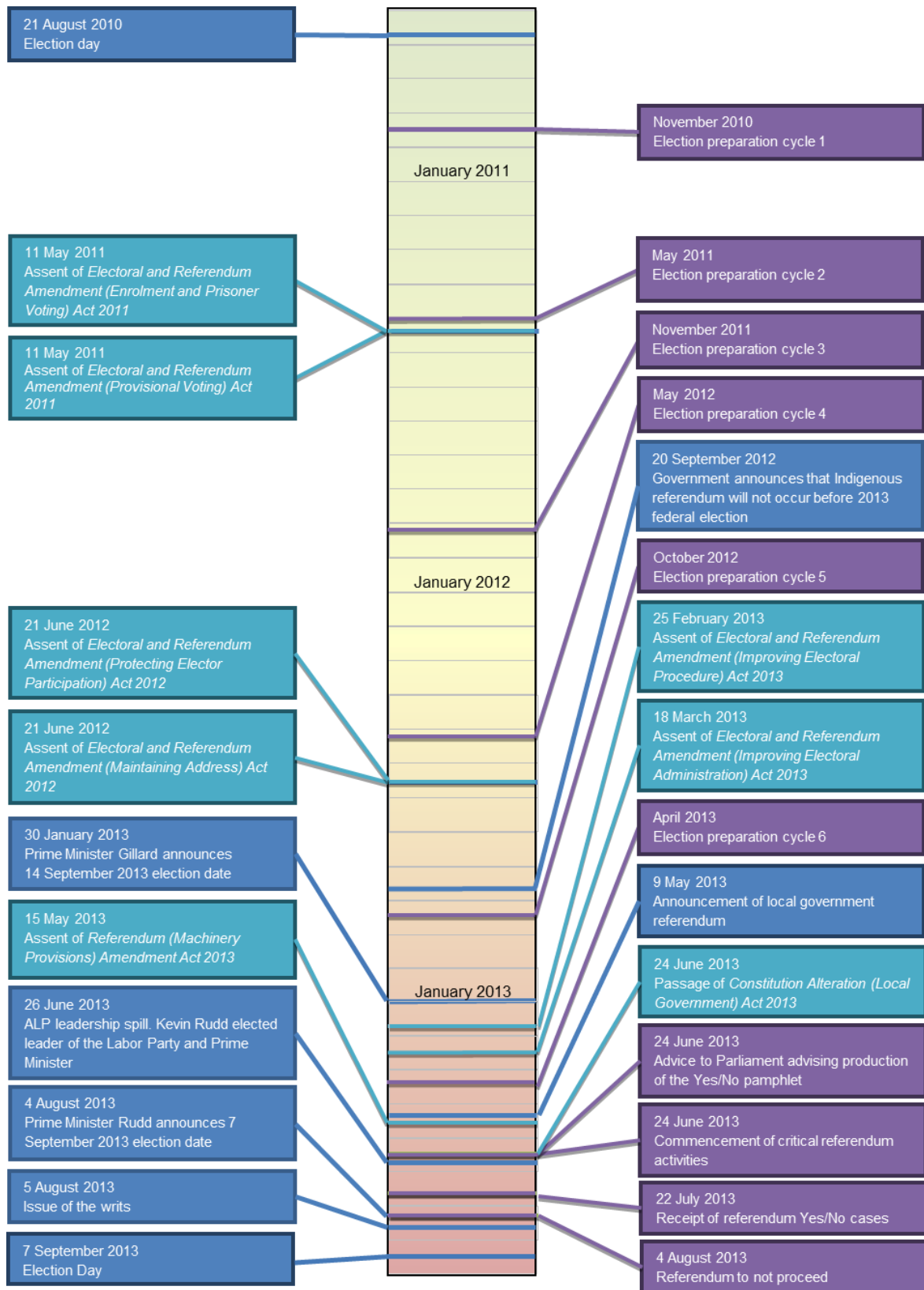
### **Risk management and business continuity planning**

- 5.1.10 Notwithstanding the loss of Senate ballot papers in Western Australia, a key element of the enhanced internal controls relate to the AEC's processes for systematic management of risk. These processes have matured considerably since the 2010 election. In particular, the 2013 election was supported by a formal election risk management plan and this was supplemented by formal risk management plans for programs, branches, states, territories and major projects.
- 5.1.11 The AEC's risk management plans identify critical operations required in the event of major disruptions. Business continuity plans were developed for the 2013 election in relation to the following critical operations of:
- ballot paper production
  - certified list production
  - postal vote issuing
  - election results
  - election contact centre
  - election employment
  - internal communication
  - information technology (IT) disaster recovery plans.

### **External environment**

- 5.1.12 The impact of political and legislative developments is a significant, but expected, variable that impacts on election planning and preparations. Some of the key developments are outlined below, and illustrated in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 Key developments in election planning cycle 2010-2013**



**Legend**

Blue - Political/parliamentary    Purple – AEC    Light Blue - Legislative

## Parliament

- 5.1.13 AEC election readiness for the 2010 to 2013 electoral cycle was characterised by planning and preparations for an unusually diverse array of possible electoral events. The 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament was Australia's first hung parliament since 1941. As a result, AEC election readiness activities commenced immediately after the 2010 election to prepare for the possibility of the Parliament continuing to less than a full term.
- 5.1.14 There was also the possibility that one or two referendums might be held during the term of the Parliament, either as stand-alone events or held in conjunction with the election. The potential for by-elections also required contingency planning. The AEC revised its policies and procedures, updated contracts and secured materials, to the extent required, to enable it to deliver election services for a range of scenarios in accordance with the minimum election and referendum timetable.
- 5.1.15 From early 2013, preparations were impacted by the following key events:
- the announcement on Wednesday 30 January 2013, by the then Prime Minister that she intended to seek the Governor-General's agreement to a general election on 14 September 2013,
  - the announcement on Friday 9 May 2013, by the then Government that a referendum would be held in conjunction with the election and the subsequent passage through Parliament of the referendum legislation, *Constitution Alteration (Local Government) 2013*, and
  - the effective renouncement of the then Government's proposed election date, following a change in leadership in late June 2013.
- 5.1.16 Whilst there was public speculation that the referendum may not proceed, legislation still enabled a referendum to be held and the AEC continued its preparations for the conduct of a referendum in conjunction with a general election. The point at which the AEC was certain that the referendum would not proceed was when the then Prime Minister announced on Sunday 4 August 2013 a general election for 7 September 2013, with the writs issuing the next day. A referendum writ was not issued.

## Legislative reforms

- 5.1.17 During the 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, seven bills relating to electoral matters were passed and subsequently implemented by the AEC, some of which introduced significant change to electoral processes. Notable changes included the introduction of

direct enrolment and direct update of enrolment in 2012, and changes to declaration vote scrutiny and postal voting.

### **Impacts of the environment**

- 5.1.18 The cumulative and practical effect of the varying and uncertain external environment, in the context of an election or referendum date that is only confirmed when the writs are issued, provides for a challenging environment in which the AEC practically embeds change.
- 5.1.19 As illustrated by the timing of the election announced on 4 August 2013, the AEC is often required to maintain parallel sets of policies, procedures, forms, systems and training. This approach is necessary to maintain a constant state of election readiness, whilst anticipating the changes to operating procedures that may eventuate depending on the timing of an election, the type of election/referendum to be conducted, and potential legislative change.



## 6 The 2013 election timetable

**Table 6.1 Timetable of key electoral events, election 2013**

Event	Date
Initial Announcement of intention to hold an election	Wednesday 30 January 2013
Subsequent Election Announcement	Sunday 4 August 2013
Issue of writs	Monday 5 August 2013
Close of rolls	8pm, Monday 12 August 2013
Close of bulk House Nominations	12 noon, Tuesday 13 August 2013
Close of Nominations	12 noon, Thursday 15 August 2013
Declaration of Nominations	12 noon, Friday 16 August 2013
Lodgement of GVTs	12 noon, Saturday 17 August 2013
Early voting commenced	Tuesday 20 August 2013
Mobile polling commenced	Monday 26 August 2013
Early preliminary scrutiny commenced	Monday 2 September 2013
Postal vote application deadline	6pm, Thursday 5 September 2013
<b>Election day</b>	<b>Saturday 7 September 2013</b>
Last day for receipt of declaration votes (13th day)	Friday 20 September 2013
Return of the Writs (Except for Queensland House of Representatives and WA Senate)	Tuesday 8 October 2013
Return of the Writ, Queensland House of Representatives	Friday 1 November 2013
Return of the writ, WA Senate	Wednesday 6 November 2013
Return of the writs (latest date)	Wednesday 13 November 2013

## 7 Serving electors

### Key points:

- Since the 2010 election, the total number of enrolled electors has increased by over 600 000 individuals to a total of 14.7 million. The 2013 election also witnessed the highest enrolment participation rate since the 2001 election.
- Internet enrolment services provided by the AEC were used by more than 85 per cent of electors transacting with the AEC during the 2013 close of rolls period.
- If electors are unable to cast a vote on election day, the AEC provides alternatives such as postal, pre-poll and mobile polling.
- An increased number of electors cast a vote before election day.
- The AEC has successfully implemented electronic means of applying for a postal vote, and (through implementation of an electronic certified list pilot), issuing votes and marking an elector's name off the roll.
- Further opportunities exist for the integration of technologies into existing manual processes, which would supplement or simplify them.
- Following on from the events in WA and the resulting Keelty Report, the AEC is placing renewed emphasis on quality and compliance.
- The AEC communicates and interacts with electors in an increasingly diverse way and across a range of platforms and social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

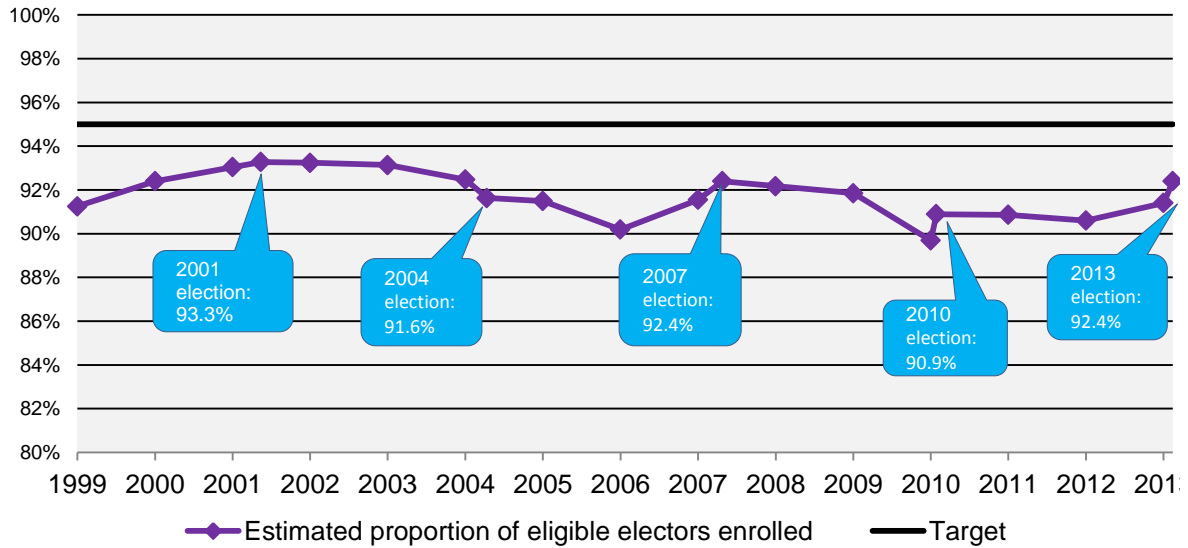
### 7.1 Enrolment

#### Introduction

- 7.1.1 A total of 14 712 799 people were enrolled to vote following the 12 August 2013 close of rolls. Between the close of rolls for the 2010 and 2013 elections the electoral roll increased in absolute terms by 624 539 persons. In comparison, the roll increased by 443 187 persons between the 2007 and 2010 elections. In the close of rolls period alone, the electoral roll increased by 162 851. The estimated percentage of eligible Australians enrolled, or enrolment participation rate, increased from 90.9 per cent to 92.4 per cent between the 2010 and 2013 elections. (Note that the AEC's target is for 95 per cent of the eligible population

to be enrolled to vote). Figure 7.1 below illustrates the estimated enrolment participation over time.

**Figure 7.1 Estimated percentage of enrolled electors, 1999-2013<sup>21</sup>**



7.1.2 In 2010 approximately 1.4 million individuals were eligible and not enrolled. By 2013, this decreased to 1.2 million individuals. Table 7.1 below outlines estimated enrolment participation rates and the estimated number of missing electors nationally and by State/Territory.

<sup>21</sup> Note that:

1. All dates are at 30 June each year.
2. Estimates of eligible population are based on ABS estimates with modifications. Prior to 2004 they are based on 2001 Census data, from 2004 to 2011 it is based on 2004 Census data, and from 2011 is based on 2011 Census data.
3. Estimated participation rates are based on electors on the certified list of voters.

**Table 7.1 Federal enrolment, enrolment participation rate, estimated eligible population and estimated missing electors, 2013<sup>22</sup>**

State/territory	Federal enrolment no.	Estimated eligible population no.	Enrolment participation rate %	Estimated missing electors no.
NSW	4 816 991	5 137 503	93.8	320 512
Vic.	3 715 925	3 965 935	93.7	250 010
Qld	2 840 091	3 195 299	88.9	355 208
WA	1 452 272	1 607 920	90.3	155 648
SA	1 130 388	1 204 240	93.9	73 852
Tas.	362 892	383 843	94.5	20 951
ACT	265 269	273 721	96.9	8 452
NT	128 971	156 953	82.2	27 982
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 712 799</b>	<b>15 925 415</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>1 212 616</b>

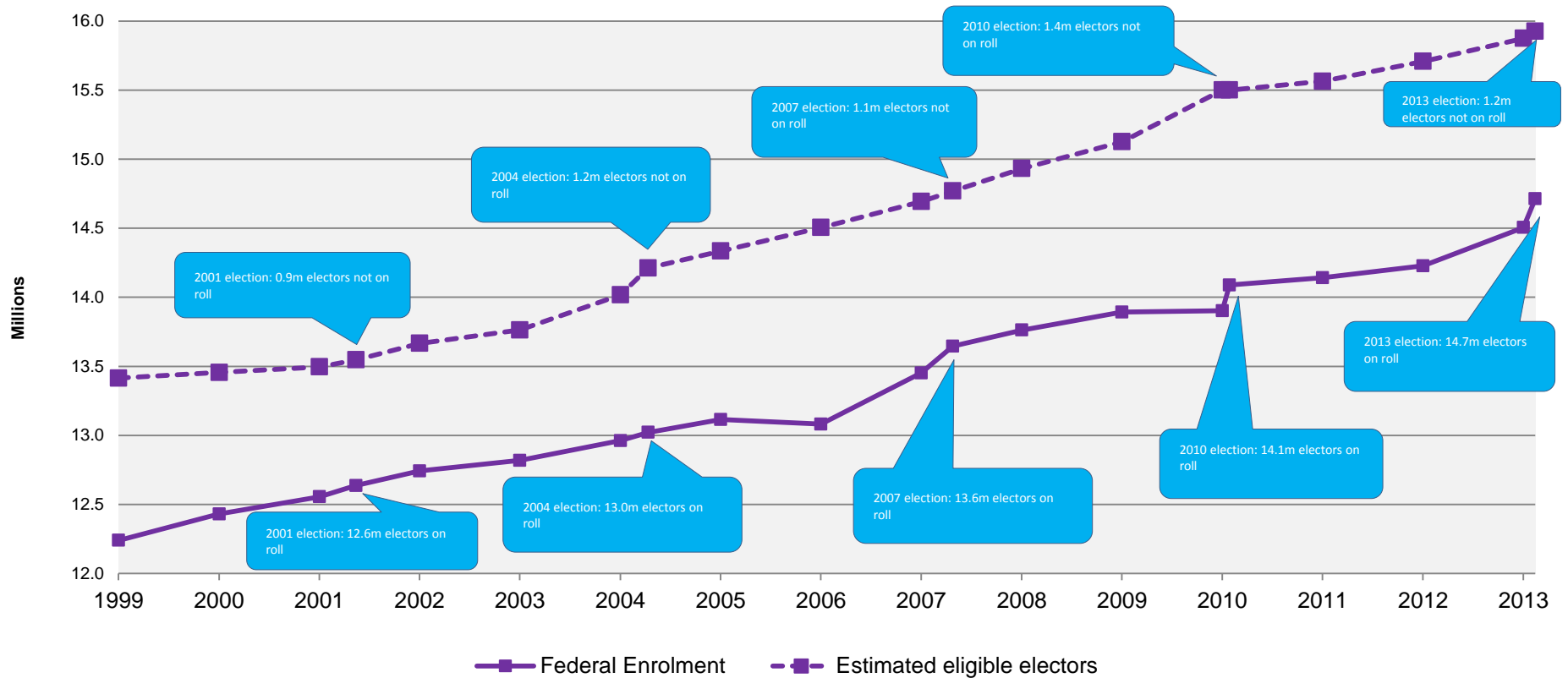
7.1.3 The enrolment participation rate differs considerably between age groups. At 30 June 2013 the enrolment participation rate for those groups aged 55 years and over were all greater than 95 per cent while all other age groups remain below the 95 per cent target. The lowest enrolment participation rates are observed in those under 40 years of age, and in particular people aged 18–19 years.

7.1.4 Figure 7.2 demonstrates two key challenges for the AEC:

- a continually growing eligible population, and
- a fluctuating level of enrolment.

<sup>22</sup> As at the close of rolls on 12 August 2013.

Figure 7.2 Estimated eligible population and enrolled electors, 1999-2013<sup>23</sup>

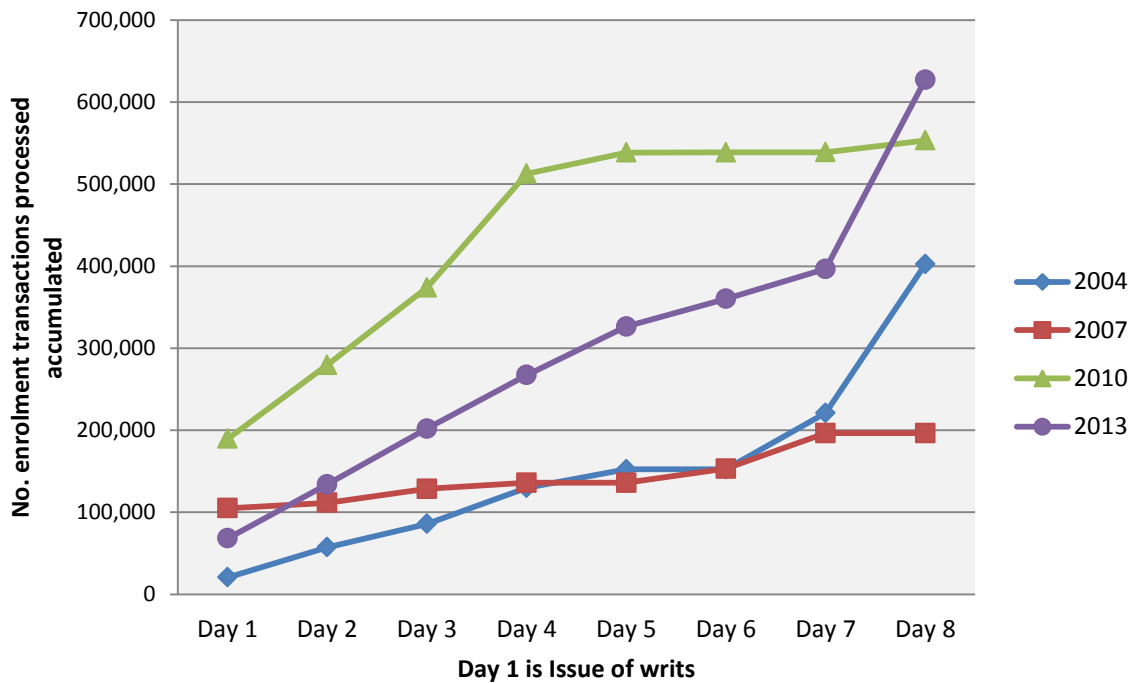


<sup>23</sup> Note that:

1. All dates are at 30 June each year.
2. Estimates of eligible population are based on ABS estimates with modifications. Prior to 2004 they are based on 2001 Census data, from 2004 to 2011 it is based on 2006 Census data, and from 2011 is based on 2011 Census data.
3. Election figures are based on the certified list of voters.

7.1.5 The most significant catalyst for members of the community enrolling to vote or updating their details remains an electoral event. Between the announcement of the 2013 election on Sunday 4 August and the close of rolls at 8pm on Monday 12 August 627 256 enrolment transactions were processed. This represents the largest close of rolls event of any electoral event in Australia to date.<sup>24</sup> Figure 7.3 and Table 7.2 below represent the pattern and differing levels of enrolment activity during the close of rolls period for each of the federal election events since 2004.

**Figure 7.3 Enrolment transactions processed from the issue of writs to the close of rolls, 2004-2013 elections<sup>25</sup>**



<sup>24</sup> The size of the close of rolls is measured by the volume of transactions that occur between the period of the announcement of the election and the close of rolls.

<sup>25</sup> Note that for 2007 there was a different date for the close of rolls for new enrolments and changes to enrolments for those already on the roll. In 2010 this was again the case, but the date for new enrolments was later extended.

**Table 7.2 Cumulative enrolment figures for close of rolls, 2004-2013 elections**

Election	Day 1 no.	Day 2 no.	Day 3 no.	Day 4 no.	Day 5 no.	Day 6 no.	Day 7 no.	Day 8 no.
2004	20 759	57 353	85 887	129 663	152 343	152 349	221 095	402 300
2007 <sup>26</sup>	104 875	111 604	128 537	135 964	135 967	153 209	196 449	196 449
2010 <sup>27</sup>	189 627	279486	373 862	512 720	538 415	538 699	538 835	553 272
2013	68 214	134 018	201 898	267 198	326 406	360 171	396 651	627 256

- 7.1.6 Despite significant improvement in the participation rate as a result of the implementation of a range of new enrolment measures and significant public awareness activities in the period leading up to the 2013 election (as discussed in paragraphs 7.1.11 through 7.1.29 below), there was still a significant volume of enrolment transactions associated with the close of rolls period.
- 7.1.7 Increasingly, eligible persons are choosing the internet to submit electronic rather than hard copy enrolment applications. This is a trend that has continued for a number of years. Because of this trend, the AEC has invested resources to ensure that this process is as inclusive and user-friendly as possible.
- 7.1.8 The most recent enhancement, enabling electors to render a signature online using a stylus, mouse or finger to sign those enrolment applications that require a signature, was implemented in June 2013. Between 6 June and the close of rolls, of those forms submitted online which required a signature, 80.5 per cent were signed online. This allowed a larger proportion of the population to complete enrolment transactions wholly online.
- 7.1.9 During the close of rolls period for the 2013 election over 85 per cent of enrolment and update transactions were completed online, clearly demonstrating that the majority of the community preferred to engage with the AEC using online methods thanks to the convenience and timeliness of this channel.
- 7.1.10 The practical effect of this increase in on-line engagement with the AEC is the productivity dividend during this period resulting from the significant reduction in the manual data entry processes required. Table C.2 in Appendix C provides a

<sup>26</sup> Note that the lower figure for 2007 is due to a number of factors including targeted enrolment stimulation fieldwork conducted by the AEC in the lead up to the election.

<sup>27</sup> Enrolments processed during the 2010 close of rolls period include 'state only' enrolments.

detailed breakdown by source for enrolment transactions processed during the 2013 election close of rolls period.

### **Activities to enrol eligible electors**

- 7.1.11 The estimated population eligible to enrol has increased by more than 2.5 million since 1999 as per Figure 7.2 above.
- 7.1.12 Tables C.3, C.4 and Figure C.1 in Appendix C provide statistics on enrolment transactions between the 2010 and 2013 elections.
- 7.1.13 The AEC employs a number of strategies, based on a philosophy of continuous roll update, throughout the electoral cycle to ensure that the ever increasing numbers of Australians that are eligible to vote are correctly enrolled. These include:
- enabling self-starting electors to initiate their own enrolment via numerous channels,
  - directly engaging with electors to commence enrolment action or to prompt electors to take action on their own behalf, and
  - supporting these activities with complementary advertising and public relations campaigns.
  - supporting these activities with complementary advertising and public relations campaigns.
- 7.1.14 The AEC provides various channels by which an elector can enrol, check and/or update their details, without prompting by the AEC. Many electors, mindful of their obligations under the Electoral Act to enrol and maintain up to date enrolment details, complete an enrolment application without any prompt from the AEC do this.
- 7.1.15 The AEC continues to provide paper enrolment forms to the community through AEC offices, Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, state and territory electoral commissions and other agencies, such as state road transport authorities, Centrelink, Medicare, the Australian Taxation Office and Australia Post. Electors may also request a paper enrolment form from a divisional office or from the AEC's website.
- 7.1.16 Since the 2010 election, the AEC has progressively enhanced the facilities available to electors to enable them to enrol, check and/or update their enrolment details online. In May 2012 the AEC introduced an improved online enrolment service with intuitive 'wizard' style navigation, a more modern design and layout and accessibility from a range of devices including smart phones.



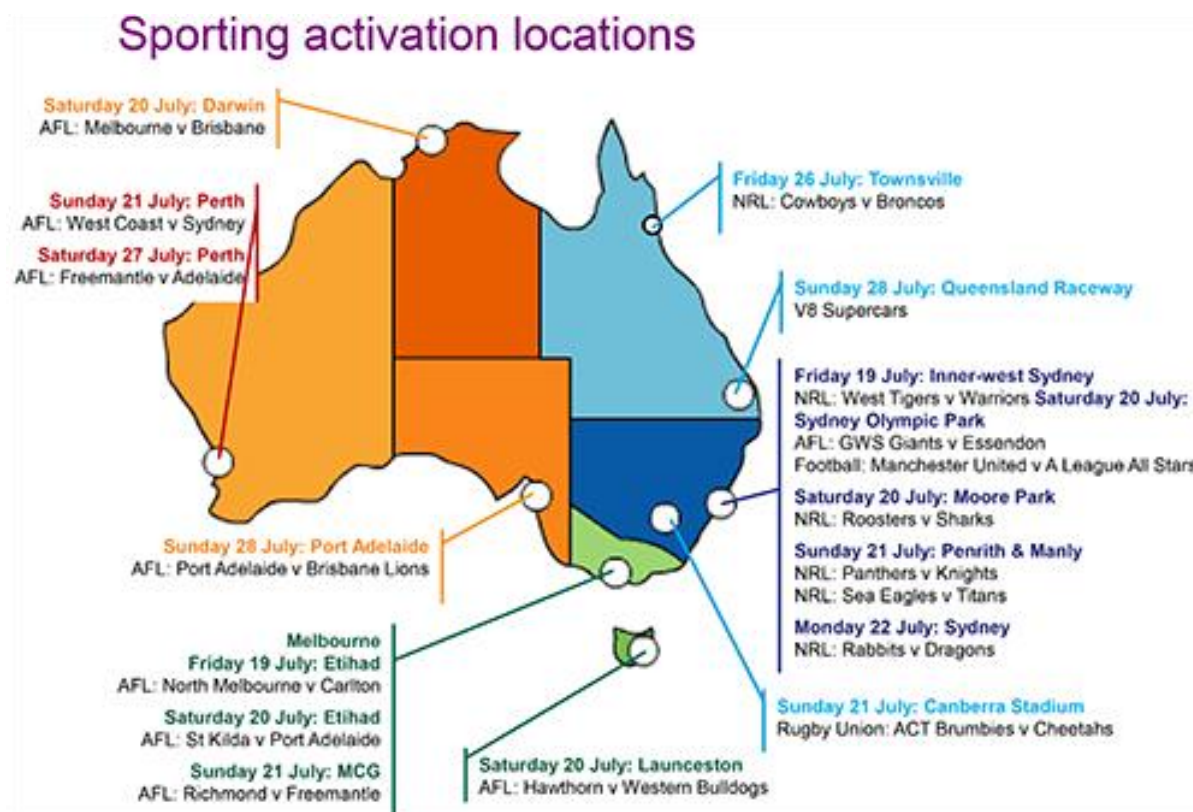
- 7.1.17 Directly engaging electors based on a combination of external agency data and data from within the AEC, either to give effect to a direct enrolment or update, or through the mail review program prompting electors to complete an enrolment action, remain the core activities in the AEC's enrolment program. A significant additional component is the AEC's ongoing attendance at Citizenship Ceremonies for the purpose of collecting completed enrolment forms from newly conferred citizens.
- 7.1.18 The implementation of legislative provisions allowing the AEC to directly enrol and update electors has changed the way some electors engage with the AEC. In place of receiving an invitation to take action, eligible electors now receive a letter indicating that they will be added to the electoral roll or have their address details updated after 28 days if they do not demonstrate why the enrolment/update should not occur.
- 7.1.19 Under this part of the program, up to 30 June 2013, 653 531 enrolment additions and updates were processed.
- 7.1.20 The AEC also worked with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to include a prompt to the AEC's website to update their enrolment details, as part of the ATO's e-tax application if address details are updated.
- 7.1.21 In the current electoral cycle, the AEC intends to investigate the feasibility of adding to the acceptable forms of evidence of identity (EOI) for enrolment purposes prescribed in the regulations, in order to decrease the barriers to enrolment by some parts of the community.

### **Making contact with eligible electors**

- 7.1.22 The AEC delivered a number of targeted campaigns between the 2010 and 2013 elections in order to encourage electors and provide information to the community. The messages in these campaigns were tailored to the specific periods in the electoral cycle: ongoing general enrolment stimulation, the pre-election phase, and the close of rolls period.
- 7.1.23 The AEC's pre-election phase for campaigning commenced in late May 2013 and ran until the 2013 election was announced. This phase was timed to provide voters with early reminders to enrol, update or check their enrolment. As part of the 'Don't leave it to the last minute' campaign the AEC undertook activities at the national level and state and territory level as part of a nationwide effort to motivate all eligible Australians to be ready to vote at the 2013 election. These activities included engagement with eligible Australians in their workplaces, in sporting clubs and associations, and in university and TAFE campuses.

7.1.24 The AEC's Sporting Activation Campaign was staged across two weekends of July 2013. The AEC attended 17 sporting events which included 15 NRL and AFL matches, a rugby union match and a V8 supercars event.

**Figure 7.4 Events included in the Sporting Activation Campaign, 2013 election**



## Youth enrolment

7.1.25 The lowest enrolment participation rates are observed in people under 40 years of age, and in particular people aged 18 and 19 years (approximately 70 per cent as at 31 December 2013). As a result, many of the AEC's enrolment campaigns and public relations activities specifically target youth enrolment.

7.1.26 The AEC partnered with radio station Triple J to reprise the successful 'Rock Enrol' youth enrolment stimulation campaign previously used to promote enrolment in the lead up to elections. Triple J aired enrolment promotions voiced by musicians and bands. A homepage banner was also included on Triple J's webpage which provided key enrolment information and links to the AEC's website. Triple J's dedicated 'Rock Enrol' website was also re-launched, and an enrolment message was included in Triple J's weekly e-newsletter *jmail*, which has over 130 000 subscribers. To complement this advertising campaign the

AEC targeted 18-24 year-old Australians at the July 2013 Splendour in the Grass music festival.

- 7.1.27 Of all age groups, 18 year olds experienced the largest growth in enrolment participation from June 2013 through to the federal election close of rolls with an increase of 20 per cent, noting that this includes enrolled 17 year olds who turned 18 on or before election day and were therefore eligible to vote on election day.

### **Indigenous enrolment**

- 7.1.28 Promoting Indigenous enrolment is a core objective of the AEC's Indigenous Electoral Participation Program (IEPP) with accelerated activity in the lead-up to the election. It included adapting mainstream communications and information materials to meet the needs of Indigenous electors. Targeted communication and promotional activities were also conducted. They included the creation of materials promoting recruitment, turn-out, and enrolment, incorporating a new suite of Indigenous voter photos, a new Indigenous visual identity and tag-line 'Our vote, our future' commissioned for the election. In-language materials were created for remote communities in the Northern Territory. Targeted advertisements were placed in the Indigenous media, both press and online. A dedicated Facebook page was launched on 9 August 2013 to target Indigenous youth. Indigenous Australians with whom field officers engaged, their representative bodies and the Indigenous media consistently provided positive feedback on the impact of activities and the quality and relevance of materials.
- 7.1.29 Partnerships were developed with government and non-government agencies to extend the IEPP's reach and increase the impact of its election-related activities. For example, government and non-government agencies included IEPP messages and materials on their internet and social media sites and in publications. The approach enabled a 'whole-of-government' approach encompassing groups which may, otherwise, have been beyond the AEC's reach.

### **Integrity of the electoral roll**

- 7.1.30 The AEC undertakes both ongoing and periodic activities directed at maximising the integrity of the electoral roll.
- 7.1.31 The 2002 Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Report on 'The Integrity of the Electoral Roll' outlines four elements of electoral roll integrity: accuracy, completeness, validity and security. The AEC accepts these elements and supplements them with processing correctness. As part of standard AEC processing procedures, all enrolment applications are checked to ensure they

have been completed in accordance with legislative requirements and the information on the enrolment form is checked for accuracy (for example, driver's licence numbers are checked against driver's licence data and residential addresses are checked against the AEC's address file).

7.1.32 The AEC's general enrolment, elections support and information system (known as GENESIS) has been in use nationally since September 2009 and supports staff by validating the completeness and correctness of enrolment applications. Where GENESIS indicates an application is incomplete or an enrolment qualification has not been met, AEC staff undertake a number of additional checks, not limited to but including:

- contacting the individual by phone, mail or email,
- checking with other government agencies, such as the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, local councils and Australia Post, and/or
- referring to previous enrolment applications.

### Removing no longer eligible electors from the roll

7.1.33 On an ongoing basis the AEC removes electors from the roll due to a variety of circumstances that cause a person to no longer be eligible for enrolment and voting in accordance with s.93 of the Electoral Act. The two major types of deletions are the result of death, or objections. Objections relate to a person no longer being eligible for enrolment and voting, or no longer being eligible for the address at which they are enrolled. Table 7.3 outlines the major reasons for deletions from the roll.

**Table 7.3 Number of Deletions from the roll, 2010-11 to 2012-13 financial years**

	2010-11 no.	2011-12 no.	2012-13 no.
Objections	150 494	125 929	139 926
Deaths	116 533	111 609	116 612
Duplications <sup>28</sup>	6 039	2 288	4 392
Cancellation <sup>29</sup>	1 862	1 582	419
<b>Total deletions processed</b>	<b>274 928</b>	<b>241 408</b>	<b>261 349</b>

<sup>28</sup> Duplication deletions are where an elector has been incorrectly added to the same roll twice, or to two different rolls.

<sup>29</sup> Cancellations occur when an elector must be removed from the roll, for example, overseas electors who do not vote in an election.

- 7.1.34 Death deletions are processed on a regular basis from data supplied by each state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages or a notification received from another elector.
- 7.1.35 Objections occur following a process of contacting the elector to inform the person that the AEC intends to remove them from the roll unless they provide additional information within 20 days to satisfy the AEC that they are still entitled for enrolment and provide us with updated information. This occurs following the provision of information from other government agencies, or in the case of a private objection, upon receiving notification from another elector. A small percentage of objections relate to those who are privately objected for the reason that they are incapable of understanding the nature and significance of enrolling and voting.

### **Sample Audit Fieldwork**

- 7.1.36 Sample Audit Fieldwork (SAF) is one process used by the AEC to measure and review the accuracy and completeness of a sample of the electoral roll.
- 7.1.37 SAF involves AEC officers checking the accuracy and completeness of elector and Address Register<sup>30</sup> information, by doorknocking a statistically significant sample of addresses throughout Australia.
- 7.1.38 SAF measures the following aspects of electors' enrolments:
- Enrolment participation – This is calculated by comparing the number of eligible electors currently enrolled to the total number of persons estimated in the sample 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 those rolls i.e. electors enrolled in the correct division even if not at the correct address. In measuring completeness, electors who were enrolled in the correct division, but not at the correct address within that division, were included in the calculations.
  - Enrolment accuracy – This is the percentage of current electors who are enrolled for the address at which they are living; that is, their enrolment details required no amendment following SAF.31

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<sup>30</sup> The Address Register is the sub-system within the AEC's roll management system that holds information about an address in relation to its suitability for enrolment purposes.

7.1.39 The results of SAF in 2013 were consistent with those from previous SAF activities, and reflect enrolment participation, completeness and accuracy consistent with the relevant enrolment Key Performance Indicators.

### Enrolment Quality Assurance Program

7.1.40 The Enrolment Quality Assurance Program (EQAP) is the AEC's mechanism by which the accuracy and timeliness of processing enrolment applications is monitored and measured.

7.1.41 The AEC aims to process 99.5 per cent of enrolment transactions correctly; that is, it aims to not make errors when entering those fields on an enrolment form that would affect the enrolment,<sup>32</sup> and to process 99 per cent of enrolment applications within three business days of their arrival in an AEC office.

**Table 7.4 EQAP results, enrolment forms processed, 2010-11 to 2012-13**

Year	Enrolment transactions processed correctly	Enrolment transactions processed within three business days
	%	%
2010-11	97.4	79.0
2011-12	99.5	88.5
2012-13	99.6	82.7

7.1.42 During 2012-13 the AEC exceeded the target of 99.5 per cent of transactions processed correctly; however it did not achieve the target of 99 per cent of transactions processed within three business days. The AEC continues to monitor timeliness of processing and will consider further business measures to achieve this target.

### Post close of rolls integrity checks

7.1.43 The AEC conducted analysis of enrolment patterns leading up to, and following, the close of rolls for the 2013 election for all divisions, and additional analysis in relation to close seats for the 2013 election to identify any patterns of enrolment that may be evidence of electoral fraud. The AEC conducted the same analysis

<sup>31</sup> These measures are calculated independently and should not be considered as a subset of each other. For example the percentage of electors currently enrolled at their correct address (accuracy) is not a subset of those enrolled for their correct division (completeness).

<sup>32</sup> These fields are: surname or family name, given name/s (where known), date of birth, gender, residential address, citizenship details, signature or mark, evidence of identity, signature of witness (where required), postal address.

following the previous two federal elections and has employed the same methodology.

7.1.44 The AEC compared and analysed enrolment patterns in the period prior to the close of rolls for the 2013 election with similar figures for the 2010 election.

**Table 7.5 Enrolment transactions in the period prior to and including close of rolls, 2007, 2010 and 2013 elections**

	2007 no.	2010 no.	2013 no.
Enrolment transactions <sup>33</sup> in the period prior to close of rolls	1 026 097	1 036 744	1 153 386 <sup>34</sup>

7.1.45 The volume of transactions for the period leading up to and including the 2013 close of rolls is comparable to the same period for the 2010 election. The increase of around 117 000 transactions is attributed to factors such as a higher eligible population, extensive media coverage of the upcoming election, and the ease of use for electors enrolling using the online enrolment service.

7.1.46 The volume and type of enrolment transactions for all divisions in these periods were compared and analysed to identify any significant variations between the two events. Inter- and intra-state enrolment transfers were included in the analysis. Based on this analysis no significant variations were identified.

### Close seat analysis

7.1.47 This analysis was to identify any instances where electors enrolled for a different division in the period leading up to and during the close of rolls and then transferred back to their 'old' address (and thus division) in the period following the close of rolls, in five seats with the smallest margin. In addition, for comparison, analysis was undertaken for close seats from the 2010 election, and for a group of control seats.

7.1.48 There were 109 instances identified across the 15 divisions where electors were enrolled for a different division in the period leading up to and during the close of rolls; who then transferred back to their 'old' address (and division) in the same period following the close of rolls. The results from this analysis show that the highest rate of instances where electors moved back to their original address

<sup>33</sup> Transactions include changes to elector details, new enrolments, re-enrolments and re-instatements processed.

<sup>34</sup> Excludes direct enrolment and update transactions.

were aged between 20-24 years (24.8 per cent), which is not anomalous behaviour for that age group.

7.1.49 The AEC contacted a proportion of these electors by phone and asked them to provide an explanation why they had moved to a new division just prior to the 2013 election and then within three months moved back to their original address.

7.1.50 All contacted electors offered up reasons for their movements that provided no evidence of systematic fraud rather instances of ordinary movement, including but not limited to:

- moving to undertake employment,
- moving to undertake study,
- carer duties,
- owning multiple properties, and
- moving between rental properties.

### **Public access to the electoral roll**

7.1.51 The Commonwealth electoral roll is a publicly accessible document which allows electors to not only check their own enrolment details but as part of an open and fair electoral process, to examine the roll to identify those who are incorrectly enrolled.

7.1.52 In accordance with s.90A of the Electoral Act, the AEC must make a copy of the roll available for public inspection at all divisional and state offices during normal office hours at no charge.

7.1.53 Section 90A of the Electoral Act provides no specific guidance as to appropriate use of the publicly accessible roll. The AEC has therefore based its' approach to public access on:

- the principle of facilitating transparency of the electoral process,
- allowing private individuals wishing to object to the presence of an elector on the roll on the basis they believe the elector has not lived at their enrolled address for at least one month to check the accuracy of their information against that on the roll prior to lodging the objection with the AEC,
- the permitted purposes for specified groups to access roll information, as contained in s.91A, being for any purpose in connection with an election or referendum or for monitoring the accuracy of the information on the roll, and
- sentiments expressed by JSCEM in the report on their inquiry into the 2001 election.



- 7.1.54 In the past, members of the public have viewed the electoral roll for many purposes, often entirely unrelated to the roll's purpose as an instrument of democracy. These are known to have included:
- adoption agencies assisting adoptees to track down their birth parents,
  - law courts requiring that addresses be checked on the electoral roll,
  - genealogists, both amateur and professional, who are constructing family histories,
  - debt collecting agencies seeking to track down individuals,
  - persons organising school reunions,
  - persons seeking to return lost war medals, and
  - persons finding estranged family members.
- 7.1.55 In a society which is increasingly concerned about personal privacy, a public roll available for inspection is of concern to some individuals, and may mean these persons are less willing to enrol or maintain the currency of their enrolment. While silent elector provisions are available for those electors who wish for their address to not be shown on the roll, many individuals will not meet the required criteria to become a silent elector.
- 7.1.56 Recommendation 1(a) of the ANAO's 2007 federal election performance audit recommended that the AEC engage with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to develop improved governance arrangements for the collection, processing, data-matching, distribution and management of the person information of electors and potential electors. Importantly, recommendation 1(b) of that report also recommended that the AEC assess the extent to which broad use of electoral-roll information by non-government entities may be adversely impacting on the willingness of Australians to enrol to vote.
- 7.1.57 Given the issues canvassed above, the AEC has adopted a stricter approach to members of the public accessing the publicly available electoral roll, informing all users that the roll is provided for public viewing for the purpose of checking an elector's own details or to enable an elector to confirm information when intending to object to the enrolment of another elector. The AEC has also increased the supervision of members of the public using the terminals which host the publicly accessible roll. AEC staff now approach all users and, if it is clear the terminal is being used for purposes which are not appropriate, request that usage stop. Consequently, the AEC has received a significant increase in queries and complaints from the public and organisations, primarily that these restrictions are unlawful and/or are limiting their capacity to undertake various functions.

- 7.1.58 In effect, until the current more stringent approach was adopted, it is clear that some members of the public, organisations and government bodies were treating the electoral roll as a government directory or a tool to locate people, rather than an element of integrity, and were using the electoral roll to perform functions for which it was not envisaged or suited.
- 7.1.59 The AEC acknowledges there is a balance to be struck between privacy and accessibility of the electoral roll.

### **Roll divergence**

- 7.1.60 Roll divergence, or differences for individual electors between their federal, and state and territory enrolments, is an issue for both the AEC, and state and territory election bodies.
- 7.1.61 Roll divergence occurs because of differences between Commonwealth, and state and territory electoral legislation and enrolment requirements. It causes confusion among electors, who are often unaware of these differences, despite communication efforts by the AEC and state and territory election bodies.
- 7.1.62 The timing of enactment of legislation in the Commonwealth and various state jurisdictions, and a movement by some states away from the previous Joint Roll Arrangements (NSW and Vic.) is resulting in variances in enrolment entitlements.
- 7.1.63 In 2012 in WA and in 2013 South Australia (SA) each passed legislation to minimise roll divergence through provisions that synchronise enrolment requirements, and/or recognise reciprocal enrolment information.
- 7.1.64 The AEC continues to make efforts to contact electors who have differing state and federal enrolments to minimise variances, maximise electoral enfranchisement, and strengthen the integrity of information on the electoral roll.

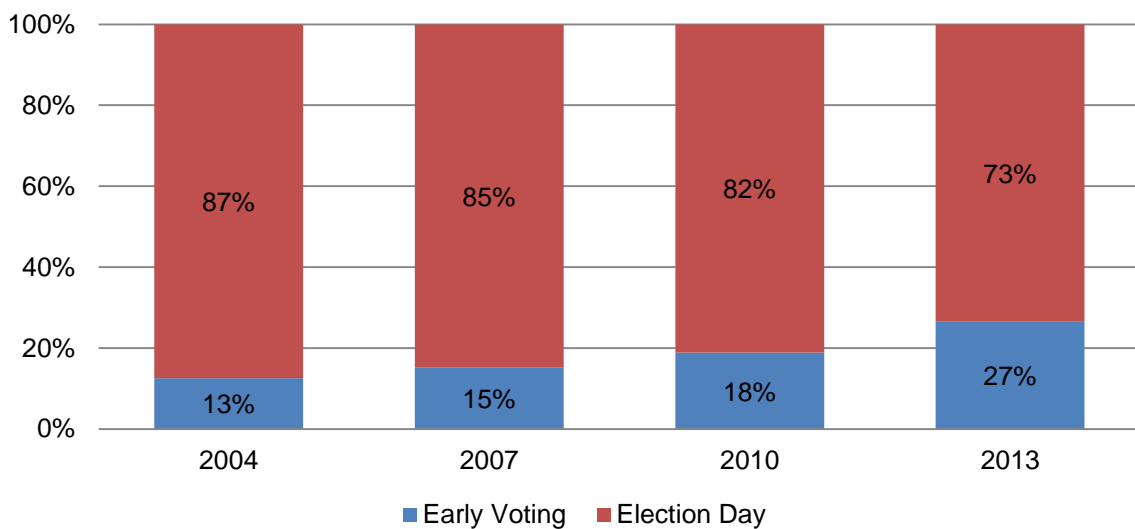
## 7.2 Voting

- 7.2.1 At the 2013 election, 13 726 070 ballot papers were counted for the House of Representatives and 13 822 161 for the Senate. Votes were cast at 7 697 ordinary polling places, 645 PPVCs and AEC divisional offices. Further options were available with electors able to cast early votes either by postal voting, mobile polling with 504 mobile polling teams, at 102 overseas posts and with four overseas Australian Defence Force (ADF) teams.
- 7.2.2 Electronic certified lists (ECLs) were introduced with a pilot deployment of 768 ECLs across all states and territories, and were used at mobile polling, pre-poll voting and at polling places. ECLs were also used to support the preliminary scrutiny of declaration votes after election day.
- 7.2.3 Further innovations introduced included providing an online submission form for postal vote applications and a telephone voting system which enabled BLV electors to cast their vote in secret and with a greater degree of independence than was possible at previous elections.

### Early voting

- 7.2.4 There were 3 741 984 early (pre-poll, mobile and postal) Senate votes counted at the 2013 election, representing 27.1 per cent of all votes counted (see Figure 7.5). This compares to 18 per cent of votes counted as early votes in 2010 and continues an increasing trend towards early voting across all states and territories.

**Figure 7.5 Early voting at Senate elections, 2004-2013**



## Pre-poll voting

- 7.2.5 Electors cast 2 507 373 Senate pre-poll votes in person representing 18.1 per cent of all votes cast (compared with 11.32 per cent in 2010).
- 7.2.6 Pre-poll votes cast as ordinary votes in Senate elections totalled 1 982 859, nearly double the number of ordinary votes cast at PPVCs in 2010. This represents 14.3 per cent of all votes counted, up from 997 205 (7.5 per cent) in 2010. The proportion of pre-poll declaration votes cast remained static at 3.8 per cent (524 514 votes in 2013.)

## Legislative change

- 7.2.7 The *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Administration) Act 2013* removed the requirement for a voter casting a pre-poll ordinary vote to complete and sign a declaration form. This amendment improved the efficiency of issuing votes. It also aligned the Commonwealth with a number of state and territory jurisdictions in only requiring a verbal declaration of entitlement.
- 7.2.8 This Act also provided that pre-poll voting cannot commence earlier than four days after the date fixed for the declaration of nominations. This allows the AEC essential time to prepare, proof, print and distribute ballot papers and Senate group voting ticket booklets to pre-poll centres across Australia and internationally before the commencement of early voting.

## Postal voting

- 7.2.9 The number of postal voters at the 2013 election increased from 2010. The total number of active Postal Vote Applications (PVAs) increased by 38 per cent to 1 329 215 from 966 360. Registered General Postal Voters (GPVs) increased to 230 926 from the 2010 total of 209 426.
- 7.2.10 A total of 1 329 949 Postal Vote Packages (PVPs) were issued, containing a Postal Vote Certificate (PVC) envelope, ballot papers and postal voting instructions. PVPs were not issued in a further 66 265 cases where the application was withdrawn, a duplicate application or defective – including those submitted too early or too late. A central production contractor issued 1 269 508 postal voting packages; while 59 671 were issued from AEC offices and 770 from overseas posts.

**Table 7.6 Postal votes issued by issuing point, 2007-2013 elections**

Year	PVPs issued by central production contractor no.	PVPs issued by divisional offices no.	PVPs issued by overseas posts no.	Total no.
2013	1 269 508	59 671	770	1 329 949

7.2.11 Electors returned 1 173 884 (88.3 per cent) PVCs, with the rate of return of PVCs comparable to the 88.4 per cent of PVCs returned in 2010.

### Legislative change

7.2.12 The *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Procedure) Act 2013* brought the deadline for the receipt of PVAs by the AEC forward by one day from the Thursday to the Wednesday before election day. This amendment came into effect in January 2014 and therefore was not in operation for the 2013 election. The amendment intends to ensure that PVPs will be received by electors, completed and returned in time to be included in the count. Additionally the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Procedure) Act 2013* allowed electors to apply for a postal vote online. The amendment provided a convenient option for electors and saved a significant amount of manual work in processing applications.

### Online Postal Vote Applications

7.2.13 The online PVA system was used for the first time at the 2013 election to supplement the existing, paper-based method by which an elector could apply for a postal vote. Legislative change which came into effect in January 2011 allowed the AEC to develop a system to accept PVAs online and process them in accordance with normal postal voting processes. The online system was implemented successfully via the AEC website for the 2013 election.

7.2.14 Like paper-based PVAs, the online PVA included a security question and answer to authenticate that the person who applied for the postal vote is the same person that completed the postal vote certificate. Electors selected one question from a list of five questions and provided an answer to the question they selected. The nominated question was printed on their PVC for completion at the time of voting. The answer they provided on their PVC was then compared at preliminary scrutiny, before the vote is admitted into the count.

7.2.15 Electors submitted 382 664 applications online, representing around a third of applications received. This was in-line with expectations for online take-up.

- 7.2.16 In addition to being more convenient for electors, the applications submitted online saved significant divisional office processing time by eliminating data entry and providing automated processes. However, in line with the general trend in early voting, postal voting increased in 2013 with a total of 1 329 178 applications processed, including 230 926 GPVs. The system also provided a particularly convenient alternative for overseas electors. Compared with a total of 9 252 paper applications that were processed by overseas posts in 2010, only 770 paper applications were processed overseas in 2013.
- 7.2.17 Candidates and parties were able to provide PVAs to electors under the same conditions as at the 2010 election. The AEC provided print-ready artwork of the approved PVA form to assist candidates and parties. PVAs that were submitted on political party or candidate application forms accounted for the majority of paper applications received:

**Table 7.7 Postal vote application source, 2013 federal election**

	Applications processed		Applications withdrawn, duplicate/rejected applications
	no.	%	no.
General Postal Voters	230 889	17.4	37
AEC Online	382 664	28.8	7 873
AEC Paper	154 494	11.6	10 996
Political Parties	561 131	42.2	48 977
Overseas	770	0.1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 329 949</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>66 265</b>

### Issuing of PVPs

- 7.2.18 PVPs are prepared using one of three methods. The majority of packages (95.5 per cent in 2013) are prepared, under AEC supervision, by the AEC's central production contractor which provides production efficiencies and generates capacity of locally engaged staff to attend to other election tasks. The remaining small proportion of PVPs are produced either by local print – where the PVP is produced and despatched from the office that has received the application, or hybrid print – where the PVP is produced in another AEC office to be lodged with the nearest post office to the delivery address or delivered to an elector by other means. Hybrid print is typically used later in the election period to maximise the chance that electors will receive their PVPs before election day.

- 7.2.19 All centrally printed PVPs were despatched within 48 hours of receipt at the central production site, with most despatched the same day. Local and hybrid PVPs were also despatched in a timely manner.

#### Political party and candidate issued postal vote applications

- 7.2.20 Section 184AA of the Electoral Act allows political parties and candidates to distribute PVAs with party material attached. The 2013 election again saw a large number of paper PVAs (561 131 or 42.2 per cent of all applications received) that were sourced from a political party or candidate application.
- 7.2.21 The potential of the OPVA system to reduce pressures on processing systems was offset by an increase in an already large number of paper based PVAs which are sourced from a political party or candidate and require manual data entry.
- 7.2.22 The ANAO also addressed the involvement of political parties in the PVA process in its Performance Audit Report No 28 2009-10 on the *Australian Electoral Commissioner's Preparation for and Conduct of the 2007 Federal General Election*. At paragraph 5.36 it stated '... the integrity of the postal-vote application process would be improved, and concerns about bias in their administration could be removed, by requiring all PVAs to be delivered directly to the AEC'.<sup>35</sup>

#### Privacy issues

- 7.2.23 Some complaints were received from electors concerned about their personal information being visible as postal vote certificates passed through the postal system. In the past the AEC has acted to protect the private information of postal voters as that information passed through the postal system, by providing a return outer envelope. This double enveloping of postal ballot papers was first introduced during the 1998 election. During that election and the 2001 election, a significant number of both Senate postal votes and House of Representatives postal votes were returned with the ballot papers inside the outer envelope but outside the declaration envelope, with the result that they could not be included in the count. This is because declaration vote ballot papers must remain inside their declaration envelope until they have successfully passed through the preliminary scrutiny.
- 7.2.24 As a consequence of that experience, and to avoid ballots being spoiled, the practice was discontinued from the 2004 election. From that election onwards, to

<sup>35</sup> Performance Audit Report No 28 2009-10 on the *Australian Electoral Commission's Preparation for and Conduct of the 2007 Federal General Election* available at <http://www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Audit-Reports/2009-2010/The-Australian-Electoral-Commissions-Preparation-for-and-Conduct-of-the-2007-Federal-General-Election>

assist voters who are concerned about their private details being visible within the postal system, the AEC provides the following information in its 'Guide to completing your postal vote'. The guide is included with every postal vote that is sent out in an election and states:

*If you are a silent elector or you are concerned about your privacy, you may return your postal vote envelope inside an outer envelope of your own. Address the outer envelope to the Divisional Returning Officer at the address printed on the postal vote envelope. It will not require a postage stamp.*

*Important: Your ballot paper(s) must still be inside the sealed postal vote envelope or your vote cannot be counted.*

- 7.2.25 The AEC is engaging with service providers to investigate the possibility of alternate designs for PVAs and PVCs that may alleviate community privacy concerns.

### **Overseas voting**

- 7.2.26 Overseas electors were able to vote at the 2013 election either by applying for a postal vote or by voting in person at an Australian diplomatic mission or consulate from 26 August 2013. The AEC had a presence in 79 countries via 102 early voting centres and supported four voting teams deployed by the ADF. Overseas posts issued 74 475 pre-poll votes, together with 770 postal votes. Table D.1 at Appendix D provides further detail about the votes issued from each overseas post.
- 7.2.27 The online PVA service implemented at the 2013 election was extensively used by overseas voters with 22 306 online applications lodged from outside Australia. This provided a more convenient means for overseas electors to apply for a postal vote and significantly lowered the postal vote processing workload of staff at overseas voting centres.
- 7.2.28 Overseas voting staff were trained at consular training sessions. Additional training and support was provided by two AEC staff who were deployed to London and Hong Kong, where large numbers of votes were processed. The officer deployed to Hong Kong also delivered additional training for staff in Singapore.
- 7.2.29 Materials were sent in two despatches. This was separated into non-ballot and ballot deliveries. Ballot paper images were available for printing on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)/Austrade secure intranet in



case additional stocks were required in some locations to meet unanticipated demands.

- 7.2.30 The primary source of information for overseas voters was the AEC website. Each individual post also had information specific to their posts such as opening times and locations. Smart travel advices were also posted on the australia.gov website. There was some targeted advertising limited to expat newspapers and English language newspapers generally read by Australians overseas. Some posts also utilised Facebook; however funding was not provided for this purpose.
- 7.2.31 The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade has explored electors voting electronically from overseas in its Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation. The AEC provided a submission to that Committee.

### Antarctic elector voting

- 7.2.32 Electors working in Antarctica, or in transit on election day, are eligible to register and vote as Antarctic electors. In order to vote, prospective Antarctic electors must first be correctly enrolled at their residential address in Australia before the close of rolls and must register as an Antarctic voter before the close of nominations. It is not compulsory for Antarctic electors to vote because the current method of transmitting their votes back to their home electorate, involving Antarctic Returning Officers transmitting details of each elector's vote back to the AEC by telephone, does not maintain a fully secret vote.

**Table 7.8 Antarctic voters and votes cast, 2004-2013**

Election	Eligible voters no.	Votes cast no.
2004	-	60
2007	-	124
2010	49	43
2013	39	37

### Blind and low vision voting

- 7.2.33 At the 2013 election, BLV electors had the option to cast their vote by telephone from any location across Australia. A personal identification number (PIN) and registration number system ensured the voter's identity remained secret when they called to cast their vote. There were 3 066 registrations for this service with 2 834 votes were cast. This included at least one vote for every federal electoral division. This was nearly seven times the number of BLV votes cast at the 2010 election. BLV electors were able to register to use the system from

20 August 2013 until 12pm (AEST) on election day, 7 September 2013. Registered users could vote from 21 August 2013 until 6pm (AEST) on election day.

- 7.2.34 The 2013 service was developed in consultation with the BLV reference group. This group consisted of representatives from key BLV organisations including Vision Australia, Blind Citizens Australia, the Royal Society for the Blind South Australia, as well as the Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner and representatives of the AEC including the Electoral Commissioner.
- 7.2.35 The model adopted in 2013 differed from that used at the 2010 election. The process in 2010 was considered by stakeholders to be inconvenient; requiring electors to attend specific locations and not providing a guaranteed secret vote.
- 7.2.36 Improved processes implemented for the 2013 election delivered telephone voting more remotely, such that electors could call in to a central number from any phone in Australia or overseas, including from their own homes. This meant that electors did not need to travel to a designated polling station. It also enabled those electors with a dual disability to use their own telephones to speak to an operator to cast their vote.
- 7.2.37 The cost of providing the telephone voting service for BLV electors at the 2010 election was approximately \$502 per vote cast. In 2013, the cost per vote of this service was \$182.
- 7.2.38 This service received much positive feedback from stakeholders and users, including:
- 'I had an elector call Friday to specifically thank the AEC for the Low Vision and Blind voting option. She said that this election is the first election she has been able to vote by herself in the last 57 years. She wanted to let us know how wonderful it felt and what a great idea it was that blind people could vote by themselves' – BLV call centre operator.*
- 'Don't abolish the service in future. It's great' – BLV elector.*
- 'This is the first time I've been able to vote independently. Thank you!' – BLV elector.*
- 7.2.39 Despite many positive comments, further enhancements are required to provide a higher degree of independence for BLV electors in casting their vote. The AEC is continuing to explore options to ensure accessible voting services for BLV electors.

- 7.2.40 One of the strengths of the BLV voting model is its flexibility and potential to be extended to other groups that could benefit from such a service, in particular Antarctic electors and electors with a disability that prevents them from completing their own ballot paper. Currently, neither group has a secret vote. Antarctic electors can be individually identified because of their small number, while the person assisting the physically incapable person must by necessity know the content of the ballot. In both these circumstances, use of the BLV solution would allow a secret ballot.
- 7.2.41 The AEC has received criticism from its blind and low vision reference group, Disability Action Committee and a range of peak bodies and individuals about the lack of a BLV style voting option for voters who currently require an assisted vote.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Electoral Act be amended to extend the electronically assisted blind and low vision voting arrangements to Antarctic electors and those that currently require an assisted vote due to being incapable of completing a ballot paper. In the event that a broader trial of electronic voting is legislated, the AEC would want to maintain this option for these electors.

### Mobile polling

- 7.2.42 Legislative amendments that came into effect for the 2013 election have provided capacity to implement mobile polling services for any purpose, replacing the previous, more restrictive arrangements that only allowed mobile polling in remote areas, prisons, hospitals and convalescent homes. The visits to traditional venues continued and the AEC also established a small number of mobile teams to deliver voting services at locations catering for homeless and other marginalised elector groups.
- 7.2.43 The AEC established 504 mobile polling teams across Australia and counted 108 083 votes, representing 0.78 per cent of all votes cast.

### Case study 1 - Mobile polling for people experiencing homelessness

In Melbourne and Geelong polling was provided to people experiencing homelessness under the recently amended mobile polling provisions. Media attended the polling at St Mary's House of Welcome in Fitzroy, with media pieces appearing in The Age and on SBS and NITV. Over 180 votes were cast at this mobile polling place. Community interest meant that additional polling staff and equipment was deployed in the morning, and polling hours extended by two hours to meet the demand.

Further mobile polling targeting people experiencing homelessness was also conducted at

the St Kilda Crisis Centre and Sacred Heart mission in the Division of Melbourne Ports, over several visits to Christ Church and Outpost in the Division of Corio and the Wesley Mission Drop in Centre was serviced by the Ringwood Area Office.

## Case study 2 - Mobile polling in remote areas of the NT

Delivering polling to electors in remote areas of the NT is a particular challenge for the AEC. Indigenous communities are home to one in three electors in the Division of Lingiari. These communities are spread over 1.3 million square kilometres, many of the electors do not speak English as their first language, and many are unfamiliar with the electoral process. Significant changes were implemented in the delivery of mobile polling in remote areas of the NT for the 2013 election. These changes were designed to provide electors with a better opportunity to vote, a better understanding of how to cast a formal vote, and more professional, culturally appropriate polling services.

Schedules for mobile polling in remote areas were extended to provide a minimum one full day of polling at each community with more than 200 enrolled electors. The largest communities received up to five days of polling. Polling hours were also extended in some of the smaller communities. The election and polling hours in communities were publicised through local television, and by Australian Government agencies and other organisations working in the communities.

The AEC worked in partnership with the DHS to deliver mobile polling in the NT. Each team comprised two DHS staff experienced in delivering services to the remote communities of the NT, and an experienced AEC polling official. At least one member of most teams was Indigenous. Teams travelled to communities in DHS vehicles, supported by DHS logistical staff in Darwin and Alice Springs, and followed DHS remote travel safety and other protocols. DHS staff are known and well regarded in the communities, where they work regularly. The AEC remained in control of the mobile polling teams and decisions in relation to the polling, and the teams were identified as AEC staff.

Mobile polling teams were supported by a Voter Information Officer (VIO) in 44 communities with 200 or more enrolled electors. The VIOs were Indigenous, local members of the community, trained and resourced with videos, brochures and other tools explaining how to vote formally. The training provided to VIOs was very clear, that their role was to explain to electors how to cast a formal vote, not to influence who electors voted for.

Mobile polling teams in Lingiari used Electronic Certified Lists (ECLs). The elector search functions in the ECLs enabled polling staff to quickly and accurately locate the elector on the certified list, and this improved the flow of electors through the polling booth. The

ECLs were robust enough for remote travel, and were popular with polling staff and electors in communities.

The partnership with DHS was critical in delivering improved polling services to electors in remote communities of the NT. The AEC was also strongly supported by FAHCSIA, NT shires, the ABS, and other organisations who work regularly in the communities. Mobile polling teams took 27 per cent more votes than in 2010, the informality rate for these votes was 1 per cent less than in 2010.

### Fly-in fly-out initiatives

7.2.44 Additional services and options for fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workers, was a key initiative for the 2013 election. Voting by FIFO workers was the subject of a recommendation (number 16) by the Regional Australia Committee Inquiry into the use of 'fly-in, fly-out' workforce practices in regional Australia:

*The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government charge the Australian Electoral Commission to develop an electronic voting system for voters living or working in remote areas to facilitate easier access and ensure more accurate population figures are recorded.*

7.2.45 The expanded services covered a range of approaches, depending on the circumstances. This included polling places at airports, mobile polling, and promotion of postal voting. Case study 3 details some of these initiatives in WA.

#### Case study 3 – Fly-in fly-out initiatives in WA

For the 2013 election the AEC concentrated on expanding its services for FIFO workers, particularly in remote WA, where estimates place the number of FIFO workers at more than 50 000. The AEC has engaged with this voter group through a number of means, including through employers, industry specific media, relevant community groups, and the establishment of a presence in major transition points.

The AEC operated a comprehensive airports strategy to capture workers at transit points. Seven terminals at the Perth airport were utilised as early voting centres. These were the International Terminal (T1), the new FIFO terminal used by Tiger, Alliance and Virgin (T2), the Virgin Australia domestic terminal (T3), the Qantas domestic terminal (T4), and FIFO charter operator terminals for Cobham Aviation, Skipper Aviation, and Network Aviation.

Each terminal's early voting centre had different operating times dependent on flight schedules (see **Table 7.9**).

**Table 7.9** Pre-poll operations in WA airports, 2013 election

Terminal	Days of operation							Hours of operation	Static polling place on 7 September
	M	T	W	T	F	S	S		
<b>Terminal 1</b>								4am – 7pm	Yes
<b>Terminal 2</b>								5:00am – 8:00am and 4:00pm – 9:00pm	No
<b>Terminal 3</b>								4am – 7pm	Yes
<b>Terminal 4</b>								4am – 7pm	No
<b>Cobham</b>								4:30am – 8:00am and 11:00am – 3:00pm	No
<b>Network</b>								5:00am – 8:00am and 1:00pm – 3:00pm	No
<b>Skippers</b>								4:30am – 8:00am and 12:00pm <sup>1</sup> – 3:00pm	No

Remote area mobile polling teams (RAMP) were used in some instances for mining companies either large enough to warrant a RAMP team, or mining companies in close proximity to Aboriginal communities which were being visited by RAMP teams. In some cases, companies requested RAMP teams and if the size and location were within acceptable parameters, they were added to the RAMP team list. In other cases, AEC divisional offices suggested RAMP teams where shift lengths and large workforce sizes meant a large number of FIFO workers would not be able to get to a voting centre, for example Fortescue Metal Group’s Cloudbreak Mine. In some cases, such as the Gorgon Project, the AEC was unable to satisfy worker requests for visiting RAMP teams because of quarantine or work health and safety requirements and in these instances, arrangements were made for postal voting.

The AEC in WA also worked with mine focused media operators such as RedFM to ensure maximum coverage for AEC messages on voting options.

**Australian Defence Force voting**

7.2.46 At the 2013 election, the AEC trained four Australian Defence Force (ADF) teams to deliver mobile voting services to members deployed in the Middle Eastern Areas of Operation (MEAO). Australians located in the areas of operation were able to cast their vote with an ADF team.

- 7.2.47 The two-person ADF teams travelled to the MEAO to conduct polling. The total number of mobile votes taken for the 2013 election was 1 840, which was a small increase over the 1 778 votes taken in 2010. Election day
- 7.2.48 The trend towards increased early voting continued, with election day votes representing 73 per cent of all votes counted, down from 82 per cent in 2010. Tables 7.10 to 7.13 provide details of Senate votes counted in 2013 compared to Senate votes counted in 2010, and demonstrate the extent of the trend towards early voting.

**Table 7.10 Senate votes counted, 2013**

State/territory	Election day votes				Early votes					Total no.
	Ordinary no.	Absent no.	Provisional no.	Sub-total no.	Pre-poll ordinary no.	Pre-poll declaration no.	Mobile no.	Postal no.	Sub-total no.	
NSW	3 113 500	193 891	29 956	3 337 347	708 085	155 709	19 457	305 784	1 189 035	4 526 382
Vic.	2 219 164	171 556	25 013	2 415 733	547 130	153 173	26 595	356 807	1 083 705	3 499 438
Qld	1 731 521	136 883	17 118	1 885 522	422 689	95 964	22 691	250 542	791 886	2 677 408
WA	971 499	96 337	10 522	1 078 358	102 796	63 216	10 260	94 167	270 439	1 348 797
SA	792 553	65 625	9 419	867 597	84 481	28 318	8 471	77 792	199 062	1 066 659
Tas.	264 932	14 060	2 061	281 053	23 217	11 933	3 320	25 916	64 386	345 439
ACT	149 832	3 221	987	154 040	73 520	11 445	1 171	11 546	97 682	251 722
NT	57 948	2 036	543	60 527	20 941	4 756	16 118	3 974	45 789	106 316
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 300 949</b>	<b>683 609</b>	<b>95 619</b>	<b>10 080 177</b>	<b>1 982 859</b>	<b>524 514</b>	<b>108 083</b>	<b>1 126 528</b>	<b>3 741 984</b>	<b>13 822 161</b>



**Table 7.11 Percentage of Senate votes counted, 2013**

State/territory	Election day votes				Early votes					Total %
	Ordinary %	Absent %	Provisional %	Sub-total %	Pre-poll ordinary %	Pre-poll declaration %	Mobile %	Postal %	Sub-total %	
NSW	68.8	4.3	0.7	73.7	15.6	3.4	0.4	6.8	26.3	100.0
Vic.	63.4	4.9	0.7	69.0	15.6	4.4	0.8	10.2	31.0	100.0
Qld	64.7	5.1	0.6	70.4	15.8	3.6	0.8	9.4	29.6	100.0
WA	72.0	7.1	0.8	79.9	7.6	4.7	0.8	7.0	20.1	100.0
SA	74.3	6.2	0.9	81.3	7.9	2.7	0.8	7.3	18.7	100.0
Tas.	76.7	4.1	0.6	81.4	6.7	3.5	1.0	7.5	18.6	100.0
ACT	59.5	1.3	0.4	61.2	29.2	4.5	0.5	4.6	38.8	100.0
NT	54.5	1.9	0.5	56.9	19.7	4.5	15.2	3.7	43.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 7.12 Senate votes counted, 2010**

State/territory	Election day votes				Early votes					Total no.
	Ordinary no.	Absent no.	Provisional no.	Sub-total no.	Pre-poll ordinary no.	Pre-poll declaration no.	Mobile no.	Postal no.	Sub-total no.	
NSW	3 356 695	230 244	26 172	3 613 111	336 322	159 896	14 418	209 520	720 156	4 333 267
Vic.	2 449 714	184 670	17 870	2 652 254	299 468	140 782	14 410	243 756	698 416	3 350 670
Qld	1 910 369	154 440	13 084	2 077 893	182 249	84 814	11 329	182 987	461 379	2 539 272
WA	973 714	101 545	7 318	1 082 577	66 503	54 904	8 681	62 044	192 132	1 274 709
SA	819 207	67 265	5 289	891 761	41 180	30 455	6 885	71 790	150 310	1 042 071
Tas.	271 951	16 120	1 074	289 145	16 454	10 251	2 826	23 062	52 593	341 738
ACT	171 456	3 423	1 112	175 991	36 968	13 056	696	8 560	59 280	235 271
NT	59 274	1 745	446	61 465	18 061	4 733	12 882	3 254	38 930	100 395
<b>Total</b>	<b>10 012 380</b>	<b>759 452</b>	<b>72 365</b>	<b>10 844 197</b>	<b>997 205</b>	<b>498 891</b>	<b>72 127</b>	<b>804 973</b>	<b>2 373 196</b>	<b>13 217 393</b>

**Table 7.13 Percentage of Senate votes counted, 2010**

State/territory	Election day votes				Early votes					Total %
	Ordinary %	Absent %	Provisional %	Sub-total %	Pre-poll ordinary %	Pre-poll declaration %	Mobile %	Postal %	Sub-total %	
NSW	77.5	5.3	0.6	83.4	7.8	3.7	0.3	4.8	16.6	100.0
Vic.	73.1	5.5	0.5	79.2	8.9	4.2	0.4	7.3	20.8	100.0
Qld	75.2	6.1	0.5	81.8	7.2	3.3	0.4	7.2	18.2	100.0
WA	76.4	8.0	0.6	84.9	5.2	4.3	0.7	4.9	15.1	100.0
SA	78.6	6.5	0.5	85.6	4.0	2.9	0.7	6.9	14.4	100.0
Tas.	79.6	4.7	0.3	84.6	4.8	3.0	0.8	6.7	15.4	100.0
ACT	72.9	1.5	0.5	74.8	15.7	5.5	0.3	3.6	25.2	100.0
NT	59.0	1.7	0.4	61.2	18.0	4.7	12.8	3.2	38.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Provisional votes

7.2.49 New legislation that came into effect for the 2013 election removed the requirement for provisional voters to provide evidence of identity as a pre-condition to having their vote admitted to the count. There were 202 246 provisional votes issued for the 2013 election and 95 619 (47.28 per cent) of provisional Senate votes were counted, compared to 33.56 per cent in 2010. The AEC counted 48 299 provisional votes for the House of Representatives, with the difference due to electors who were issued votes for one division and subsequently found at the preliminary scrutiny to be enrolled for a different division in the same state or territory. In such cases the elector's Senate vote was admitted to the count but not the House of Representatives vote.

## Certified lists

7.2.50 The certified list is the official roll of electors entitled to vote at the election. The roll contains the names, addresses (except for silent electors), date of birth and gender of those electors enrolled in each division. These are produced by division in hard copy format and polling officials place a mark beside each voter's name before they are issued with ballot papers. At the completion of polling all lists are electronically scanned to identify potential non-voters and multiple voters. For the 2013 election, the AEC used high speed laser printers to print 32 955 certified lists on 16 million A4 sheets of paper. These were supplemented at the 2013 election by a pilot of ECLs.

### Electronic certified lists

7.2.51 The 2013 election featured a pilot deployment of ECLs in various polling places across Australia.

7.2.52 ECL devices used a mobile broadband network which allowed the AEC to more efficiently and accurately search for and mark names off the electoral roll, reducing electors' queuing times, among other benefits. Certified list data was loaded onto laptops and a range of features were trialed in various polling situations to determine how the technology could best be used on a wider scale. ECLs provide the ability to search for and mark an elector's name off the certified list, provide real-time update to a central copy of the certified list when network connectivity is available, print House of Representative ballot papers on-demand and record that a declaration vote has been issued.

7.2.53 As a contingency against equipment failure, a hard copy certified list was produced and provided with each ECL. The ECLs proved very reliable however and no hard copy backup lists were required at the election.

**Table 7.14 ECLs deployed, 2013 election**

State/ Territory	Delivery Sites no.	PPVC Ord no.	PPVC Dec no.	Mobile Polling no.	Static Ord no.	Declaration no.	Super- booth no.	Preliminary Scrutiny no.	Total no.
NSW	29	28	30	14	43	20	35	77	<b>247</b>
Vic.	31	32	15	9	36	20	0	60	<b>172</b>
Qld	17	22	20	14	30	13	0	28	<b>127</b>
WA	11	14	8	15	14	6	0	25	<b>82</b>
SA	3	9	5	7	8	6	8	2	<b>45</b>
Tas.	3	3	1	1	6	3	0	4	<b>18</b>
ACT	2	13	3	1	7	2	0	0	<b>26</b>
NT	2	7	5	39	0	0	0	0	<b>51</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>768</b>

**Table 7.15 Votes issued from ECLs, 2013 election**

State	Ordinary votes issued no.	Declaration votes recorded no.	Total votes no.
NSW	93 046	22 454	115 500
Vic.	70 617	9 913	80 530
Qld	79 543	12 734	92 277
WA	29 857	12 757	42 614
SA	14 924	4 465	19 389
Tas.	5 308	512	5 820
ACT	18 290	1 392	19 682
NT	22 945	7 070	30 015
<b>Total</b>	<b>334 530</b>	<b>71 297</b>	<b>405 827</b>

7.2.54 During the pilot, a sample of electors was surveyed to assist the AEC in identifying both the success of the ECLs and electors' confidence in the voting process. Eight polling places using ECLs were included in the research; seven on election day and one during pre-polling. The survey results showed that ECLs tended to improve voter satisfaction in terms of how easy and quick it was to find and mark electors' names off the list. Those casting a vote at an ECL location were much more likely to be 'very satisfied' with the length of time taken to vote than at non-ECL locations; 83 per cent in ECL locations, compared with

56 per cent. However, pre-poll voters surveyed were less confident that their personal information and privacy was kept safe and secure in ECL locations than those in non-ECL locations; only 66 per cent reported that they were very confident in this instance where there were ECLs, compared to 82 per cent in non-ECL locations.

7.2.55 Overall, the pilot introduced at the 2013 election demonstrated that ECLs can be utilised successfully for a federal election and can provide efficiencies in processing voters and in conducting preliminary scrutines. Any expansion will involve a proposal for additional election funding because the provision of ECLs is not currently built into the agreed base election funding amount.

### Electronic Voting

7.2.56 There has been a high degree of interest in electronic voting, both before and following the 2013 election. Electronic voting has been used at a number of elections, most notably:

- The ACT Electoral Commission's use of electronic voting at selected pre-poll and polling booths at each election since 2001.
- The implementation of internet voting, called iVote by the NSW Electoral Commission for its state election in 2011.
- Trials of electronically assisted voting for BLV electors and remote electronic voting by ADF personnel by the AEC in 2007.

7.2.57 The AEC notes that the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand has released a paper, *Internet Voting in Australian Election Systems*<sup>36</sup> which discusses some of the history of Australian electronic voting.

7.2.58 The AEC is neutral on whether electronic voting should be introduced for federal elections.

7.2.59 In order for electronic voting to be introduced specific legislative amendments would be required. The AEC's experience with electronic voting, and the information that could be gathered to assist in decision making on the adoption or form of electronic voting, would be of assistance to the committee.

**Recommendation 7:** That the JSCEM seek information and advice from the AEC on the merits of particular electronic voting solutions, if it decides that a form of electronic voting should be adopted.

<sup>36</sup> Available at <http://www.eca.gov.au/media/18-09-13.htm>.

## Count / Scrutiny

### Provisional results

- 7.2.60 On election night 11 233 142 ordinary House of Representatives and 9 699 781 ordinary Senate votes were counted and the results were made publicly available on the Virtual Tally Room (VTR). The election night count involved a count of House of Representatives first preferences, the subsequent TCP count and the Senate count.
- 7.2.61 The 1.53 million Senate votes that were not fully processed on election night were primarily those taken at PPVCs.
- 7.2.62 Workload estimates predicted that some 23 000 hours of work, translating to 4 900 staff would be required to process all pre-poll votes, however this level of staffing did not prove sufficient to complete the task. The Senate votes that were not finalised on election night were counted over the following days.
- 7.2.63 The election night counts of House of Representatives first preferences and TCP allowed the results in 141 of the 150 House of Representatives electorates to be predicted with some certainty. The majority were resolved within 7-10 days with only one division – Fairfax – proceeding to a re-count to confirm the result.

### Declaration votes

- 7.2.64 There were 2 830 177 declaration votes issued at the 2013 election (see Table 7.16).

**Table 7.16 Declaration votes issued and counted, 2010 and 2013**

Vote type	Declaration votes issued 2010	Declaration votes counted 2010		Declaration votes issued 2013	Declaration votes counted 2013	
	no.	no.	%	no.	no.	%
Provisional	203 488	72 365	35.6	202 246	95 619	47.3
Absent	832 950	759 452	91.2	737 997	683 609	92.6
Pre-poll	534 426	498 891	93.4	559 946	524 514	93.7
Postal	967 010	804 973	83.2	1 329 988	1 126 528	84.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 537 874</b>	<b>2 135 681</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>2 830 177</b>	<b>2 430 270</b>	<b>85.9</b>

- 7.2.65 The primary reason for declaration votes issued but not counted is that the elector is not correctly enrolled. Other reasons include that a postal vote has not been completed before the close of polling or is not returned, or that the

declaration has not been properly made (for example a signature was not provided).

### Scrutiny process

7.2.66 The initial scrutiny of all ordinary votes taken at polling places and pre-poll voting centres commenced immediately after the polls closed at 6pm on 7 September 2013. The order of scrutinies was:

1. House of Representatives first preferences
2. House of Representatives two candidate preferred
3. Senate first preferences.

7.2.67 Each result was phoned through to the relevant divisional office and entered into the AEC's Election Management System (ELMS). Progressive results were then automatically updated to the VTR on the AEC website. Results continued to be updated throughout the night until counting concluded at midnight WA time.

7.2.68 After election night, the results of the election night count were fully rechecked in the fresh scrutiny. At the same time, declaration votes were returned from across Australia and from overseas posts to the home divisional office for preliminary scrutiny. The preliminary scrutiny process involves checking an elector's entitlement to vote before the declaration envelope is opened and the ballot papers included in the count.

7.2.69 For House of Representatives votes the fresh scrutinies are followed by the full distribution of preferences, which determines the formal result of each election. All ballot paper rechecks and distributions were completed and polls were declared for 149 divisions by 4 October 2013. The remaining division – Fairfax – was subject to a re-count.

7.2.70 For Senate votes the fresh scrutinies of above-the-line and obviously informal votes were completed at divisional scrutiny centres and the results entered into ELMS. All other ballot papers were sent to a Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS) location in each state and territory. Ballot papers sent to CSS were data entered into the AEC's Senate count management system, called EasyCount Senate, which then completed the Senate distribution of preferences. All ballot paper rechecks and distributions were completed and polls were declared for the two territories and five states by 2 October 2013. The remaining state – WA – was subject to a re-count.



## Re-counts

7.2.71 Two re-counts were undertaken in 2013, one for the House of Representatives election in the Division of Fairfax and the other for the Senate election in WA. These are discussed in more detail at Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

## Opportunities for use of technology

7.2.72 The AEC is continuing to explore opportunities for increased use of technology to supplement and aid existing processes. For example, scanning and optical character recognition (OCR) could be utilised for:

- postal vote applications, in order to allow for more flexible processing and to assist in the matching of PVAs to Postal Vote Certificates,
- declaration votes, again to allow flexibility in processing,
- below-the-line Senate ballot papers, to reduce the volume of data entry required for these ballot papers,
- House of Representatives and above-the-line Senate ballot papers, to increase the speed of the initial count.

## Results

### Virtual Tally Room

7.2.73 Following the close of polling on election night, House of Representatives and Senate votes were counted and progressive results were published on the AEC's VTR website. Results were continuously updated as new counting data was entered into the AEC's election management system by the 150 electoral divisions. Each division entered information whenever an Officer in Charge (OIC) of a polling place phoned through first preferences and two candidate preferred counts for the House. Senate count information followed later.

7.2.74 The VTR incorporated a range of presentational improvements since the previous election including a changed home page providing a clearer party seat status and a consolidated view of close seats.

7.2.75 On election night, media organisations and interested third parties had access to a media feed system from the VTR, which delivered uninterrupted, real time election information and results and enabled media organisations to analyse and present election result information according to the desired format and production requirements.

7.2.76 The VTR was made available just prior to the close of poll at 6pm AEDT and received approximately 6.9 million page views by 200 000 visitors on election night. Approximately 25 per cent of the traffic was delivered by a cloud-hosted

VTR service. Overall, the figures were an increase on the approximately 6.3 million page views by 151 000 visitors at the 2010 election.

- 7.2.77 Accessing of the VTR and media feed continued throughout the post-election counting period as a prime source for updated information on results generally and in close seats in particular.
- 7.2.78 Continuing a practice followed at previous elections, the AEC again offered to provide support to the offices of the major party leaders – Labor, Liberal, National and Greens – by deploying staff members to answer questions and assist with interpreting results on election night. Each office declined which may indicate that the VTR is effective in providing useful and accessible election results information. It is unlikely that an AEC officer will be deployed to support future election nights unless a specific request is made.

## Polling management

- 7.2.79 Issues arose at individual polling places, as they have in previous elections. This section details issues that arose in the 2013 election and how they were addressed. Most notably, despite extensive changes to training and procedures following issues that arose in the Divisions of Boothby and Flynn at the 2010 election, a small number of ballot boxes were opened prematurely.

## Prematurely opened ballot boxes

### AEC response to 2010 premature ballot box openings

- 7.2.80 After ballot boxes were opened prematurely in two divisions at the 2010 election, the AEC commissioned Mr Bill Gray to investigate these incidences. The resulting *Report on irregularities relating to the opening of ballot boxes at certain Pre-poll Voting Offices in the Divisions of Boothby and Flynn* (the Gray report) contained three recommendations.
- 7.2.81 The JSCEM noted in its report into the conduct of the 2010 election that it was satisfied that the AEC acted appropriately in its dealing with the mishandling of votes and was satisfied that the AEC had taken action to implement the recommendations made in the Gray AM report.<sup>37</sup>
- 7.2.82 The JSCEM did not agree that a savings provision was necessary, but did recommend that the Electoral Act be amended to specially provide that a ballot

<sup>37</sup> Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, *The 2010 Federal Election: Report on the conduct of the election and related matters*, 2011, p. 49.

box may not be opened before the poll closes other than in accordance with the Electoral Act (recommendation 9).

7.2.83 The previous Parliament passed the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Administration) Act 2013* which, among other amendments, sought to set out the procedures to be followed when a ballot box is prematurely opened and the investigative process required to ensure that any ballot papers not tampered with could be included in the scrutiny. A new section, s.238B, was inserted into the Electoral Act to expressly clarify the process for dealing with prematurely opened ballot boxes.

7.2.84 As a result of Mr Gray's report and the corresponding legislative amendments, the following actions were implemented:

- training materials were released to all AEC staff explaining the issues that led to votes being excluded in 2010 and the correct handling procedures for safeguarding ballot boxes so as not to disenfranchise electors,
- training materials were updated for pre-poll voting staff highlighting the importance of only opening a ballot box when legally authorised,
- more robust ballot box seals were purchased and labels produced to go on pre-poll ballot boxes which state that ballot boxes cannot be opened early,
- Officer-In-Charge Returns were modified to allow the DRO to actively monitor how ballot box seals are being managed.

7.2.85 The following images are extracts from training materials for the 2013 election.

**Figure 7.6 Extract from *Election Procedures Handbook – Static polling place*, PPLO, OIC, 2IC, July 2013, p.23**

**Sealing of the ballot box**

At 8am (or just after), you must seal the ballot boxes. For each ballot box:

- show the empty ballot box to any scrutineers or staff present,
- close and seal the ballot box by threading numbered plastic security seals through the holes at each end,
- record details of the security seal numbers on the *Record of Ballot Boxes and Security Seals* in the OIC return (EF027),
- have a witness (scrutineer, party worker or polling official) sign your entry, and
- repeat this process during the day if additional ballot boxes are required.

A sealed ballot box must **NOT** be opened until after 6pm on polling day. If a ballot box is opened prior to 6pm there are strict procedures that must be followed by the OIC. See Trouble shooting on page 73 for more information.

**Figure 7.7** Extract from *Training Workbook - Pre-poll voting centre, OIC, July 2013, p.18*

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Conducting a Scrutiny</h2> <h3>Introduction</h3> <p>This training is required for voting centres that will conduct the scrutiny on polling night.</p> <p><b>NOTE: Unless under direct instructions from the DRO, you must not open ANY ballot box at any time during the pre-poll period. See the EPH for more information.</b></p> <p>Once polling has finished, the room must be prepared for the scrutiny and the voting equipment packed up.</p>
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- 7.2.86 A ballot box containing ordinary ballot papers is considered to have been opened prematurely if it is opened prior to the close of polling at 6pm on election day. A ballot box containing only declaration votes can only be opened if it is under the control of a DRO and only from the Monday prior to election day (to commence the preliminary scrutiny of declaration votes as authorised by s.266 of the Electoral Act).
- 7.2.87 Five ballot boxes were treated as having been opened prematurely during polling for the 2013 election:
- Katoomba PPVC (Division of Macquarie, NSW),
  - Surfers Paradise pre-poll voting centre (Division of Moncrieff, (Queensland))
  - Parmelia polling place (Division of Brand, WA),
  - Safety Bay polling place (Division of Brand, WA), and
  - Australian Embassy, Abu Dhabi.
- 7.2.88 In each case the AEO (AEO for NSW in the case of the overseas ballot box) determined that the votes had not been tampered with. All ballot papers contained within those boxes were admitted to the count and the votes of affected electors were saved.
- 7.2.89 Despite these incidents, there is evidence that the measures taken by the AEC were generally effective; a number of other incidents were reported on or before election day where small personal items were dropped into ballot boxes. Those ballot boxes remained sealed until after the close of polling, at which point the items were safely returned to their owners.
- 7.2.90 The AEC will continue to work on measures to prevent the premature opening of ballot boxes.

## Pre-poll voting at Wynnum

- 7.2.91 During the night of Thursday 22 August 2013 the PPVC at Wynnum in the Division of Bonner was vandalised. Police were immediately advised and attended the venue. Entry to the PPVC was gained via a hardened glass door which was smashed along with another external window. Two internal locked rooms had also been broken into; one of these contained the ballot boxes and a secure cupboard where unused ballot papers were stored. The ballot box seals were all still intact and the cupboard was undamaged. The police forensic specialist advised AEC staff that the votes had not been compromised or tampered with and that there had been multiple incidents of vandalism by youths in the area the previous night. The property owner arranged for the locks and windows to be replaced.
- 7.2.92 Voting was suspended from 8:30am to 9:30am, while police inspected the premises. Electors who arrived during this period were advised to attend Coorparoo PPVC. The six political parties fielding candidates for the Division of Bonner were informed by phone of the temporary suspension of polling, of the alternative arrangements that were available to voters and that police were undertaking investigations and had advised that the ballot boxes had not been tampered with.

## Ballot Paper Issues Reported

- 7.2.93 In the interest of transparency, the AEC self-reports incidents that occur during polling. The AEC reported on issues arising during polling at the 2010 election in its submission to the JSCEM's inquiry into the conduct of the 2010 federal election. Issues also arose during polling at the 2013 election and these are summarised below.
- 7.2.94 For a number of counts, particularly when scrutines for multiple pre-poll voting centres were conducted in a centralised counting centre, there was some cross-over of the Senate results, and some instances of official error in attributing results to the correct voting centre. For example the reporting of what was perceived to be 'lost' votes in the Division of Indi was caused by a labelling error which was subsequently corrected with no impact on the result. Similarly a labelling error arose at the Fairfax scrutiny centre when votes cast at two pre-poll centres were attributed to the wrong pre-poll centre. This error was also corrected with no impact on the result. Similar issues occurred in other states.
- 7.2.95 As separately reported in this submission, 1 370 ballot papers from the Divisions of Forrest and Pearce were unable to be found at the re-count of Senate ballot papers in WA.

- 7.2.96 Twenty-three formal ballot papers for the Division of New England in NSW were unable to be accounted for at the distribution of preferences. This did not affect the result; New England was won on an absolute majority of first preferences, with a TCP margin of 26 403 votes. Fifty ballot papers for the Division of Grey in SA were unable to be located at the fresh scrutiny. Again there was no impact on the outcome of the election. Grey was won on an absolute majority of first preferences and a TCP margin of 24 009 votes.
- 7.2.97 Errors in administrative reconciliations in the Division of Hughes resulted in a number of declaration envelopes not being returned to the home DRO in time for inclusion in the preliminary scrutiny. The highest number of envelopes for any division was 15 for the Division of Fraser (ACT); the TCP margin for the Division of Fraser was 31 693. There was no material impact on any result.
- 7.2.98 Other administrative errors led to incorrect Senate ballot papers being issued by the Divisions of Fairfax (one NSW Senate paper issued to a Queensland voter); Hinkler (three Queensland Senate papers issued to interstate postal voters); and Leichhardt (38 NSW Senate ballot papers were incorrectly issued to Queensland voters).
- 7.2.99 Fifty-nine pre-poll votes, one postal vote certificate and one postal vote application were despatched from the overseas declaration vote exchange site in Sydney and were not received by the Division of Durack. Extensive searches were conducted across the Australia Post network and AEC offices. There was no impact on the result; the TCP margin in Durack was 5 894.
- 7.2.100 An Australia Post van that was destroyed by fire near Mackay may have contained completed postal vote certificates being returned from voters to the AEC. The actual numbers cannot be quantified however, based on the number of postal vote packages despatched to the Mackay postcode area and not returned for the scrutiny the maximum potential impact is 246 envelopes for the Division of Capricornia and 258 envelopes for the Division of Dawson. The TCP margin for Capricornia was 1 305 and for Dawson was 13 279. For other divisions potentially affected the maximum number of envelopes was no higher than 14 as at the last day for receipt of declaration votes (20 September 2013). There was no impact on the final result.
- 7.2.101 Other issues, none of which impacted the outcome of the election, included:
- Division of Fisher – 12 Fairfax ballot papers were issued to Fisher electors. The Fisher TCP margin was 15 189.

- Kennedy – two Lyons House of Representatives ballot papers from the 2010 election were issued incorrectly to Lyons electors at a PPVC. The Lyons TCP margin was 1 631.
- South Australia – 331 Senate ballot papers that were issued as declaration votes, made up of 224 for the Division of Adelaide, 15 for the Division of Mayo and 92 for the Division of Wakefield, were put into an ordinary ballot box and counted as ordinary votes.
- Northern Territory – some entitled electors were correctly identified as eligible to vote and issued ballot papers but were not correctly marked off an electronic certified list. All ballot papers were correctly admitted to the count, however each elector was marked as a potential non-voter. Similar issues arose in Victoria (three electors), Queensland (six electors) and Western Australia (four electors).

## Return of writs

7.2.102 The writs for the 2013 election all specified a return on or before 13 November 2013, being 100 days after their issue on 5 August.

7.2.103 All writs with the exception of Queensland House of Representatives and Western Australia Senate were returned by 8 October 2013. Following the completion of re-counts, the Queensland House of Representatives writ was returned on 1 November 2013 and the Western Australia Senate writ was returned on 6 November 2013.

## Multiple voting and multiple marks

7.2.104 The Electoral Act provides that a person is guilty of an offence if the person votes more than once in the same election. Addressing multiple voting offences is an important electoral integrity measure. To this end, the AEC is now working in collaboration with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to determine what further action will be taken in relation to those electors where the multiple marks cannot be confirmed as caused by official error.

7.2.105 The AEC has sent enquiry letters to 18 770 electors who had multiple marks recorded beside their names at the 2013 election. Note, that these are marks only and may not be the result of multiple voting. Replies are being processed. Following the practice of previous elections the AEC will report more fully to the JSCEM when follow up enquiries are completed.

## Penalty notices – apparent failure to vote

7.2.106 Currently responsibility for dispatch of penalty notices rests with the relevant DRO, but in practice penalty notices are sent out centrally. Allowing the Electoral

Commissioner or his/her delegate to send penalty notices, would reflect the reality that there will be times and places where the DRO position is not currently filled.

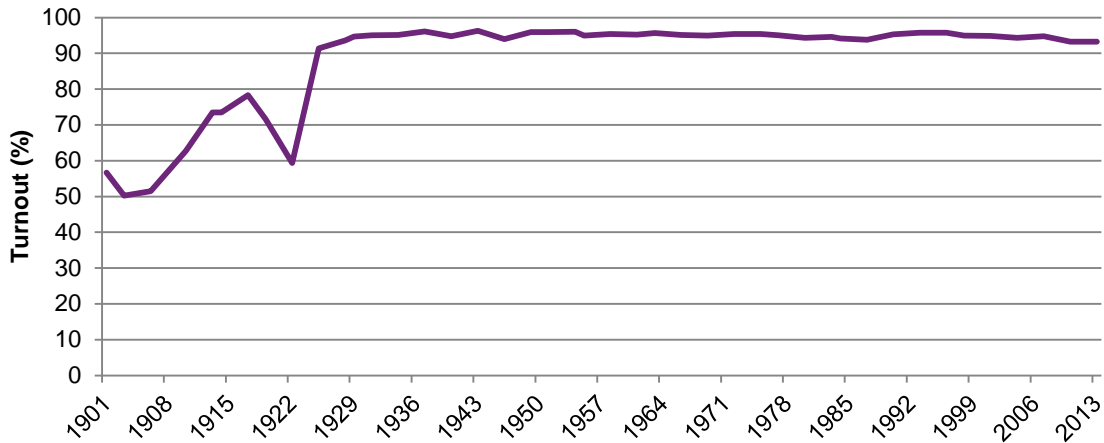
**Recommendation 8:** That the Electoral Act and the Referendum Act be amended to enable the Electoral Commissioner to issue penalty notices to electors who appear to have failed to vote at the last election or referendum.

## Key election indicators

### Turnout

- 7.2.107 The turnout rate for the 2013 election was 93.98 per cent of entitled electors for the Senate and 93.23 per cent for the House of Representatives. The turnout rate is calculated by dividing the sum of formal and informal votes cast at the election by the number of people entitled to vote in the election. The difference between the House and Senate turnout figure is primarily due to inclusion of the Senate votes of some declaration voters who were issued votes for their claimed enrolled address in a particular division in a state or territory but who are subsequently found to be enrolled in a different division in the same state or territory. The Senate votes for those electors are able to be counted because the Senate electorate is state-wide, however the votes issued for the incorrect House of Representatives division cannot be counted.
- 7.2.108 The turnout figures do not take into consideration those declaration votes which were issued but ultimately were deemed ineligible to be admitted to the count. There were 2 830 177 declaration votes were issued and 2 430 270 (85.87 per cent) Senate votes were counted, meaning 399 907 declaration votes were not admitted to the scrutiny, primarily for the reason that the individual was not enrolled.
- 7.2.109 Turnout increased by 0.01 per cent compared to the 2010 election (Figure 7.8). However, the 2013 result is still one of the lowest on record since the introduction of compulsory voting in 1924.



**Figure 7.8 Turnout, 1901-2013 House of Representatives elections**

7.2.110 Market research<sup>38</sup> commissioned by the AEC and conducted by Ipsos Social Research Institute, suggests that electors were feeling less positive towards voting in 2013, compared to 2010 and 2007.

- Agreement with the statement that 'I think my vote is important' decreased to 7.9 (on a scale of 10) compared to 2007 and 2010 when it was 8.3.
- Agreement with the statement 'I look forward to casting my vote in the upcoming federal election' declined to 6.7 (again out of 10), compared to 7.4 in 2010 and 7.5 in 2007.
- Agreement that 'voting is a waste of time' increased from 1.9 in 2010 to 2.2 in 2013.

7.2.111 A key issue identified from the research is that electors' motivation to engage with the political process has declined since 2010 and 2007. There was even decline for the most engaged electors. This is likely to have contributed to the turnout result for 2013.

### Turnout strategies

7.2.112 In a measure designed to increase turnout at the 2013 election, the AEC wrote to electors who had been recorded as non-voters at the 2007 and 2010 elections; and new electors enrolled through the direct enrolment program, reminding them of their voting obligations. The impact of these measures is being assessed.

<sup>38</sup> The Evaluation of the 2013 Federal Election Campaign research surveyed more than 1200 electors in each wave of five waves during the campaign. The results were weighted to reflect the demographic makeup of Australia. A similar exercise was conducted in 2010. The last wave of the research was immediately following election day.

## Formality

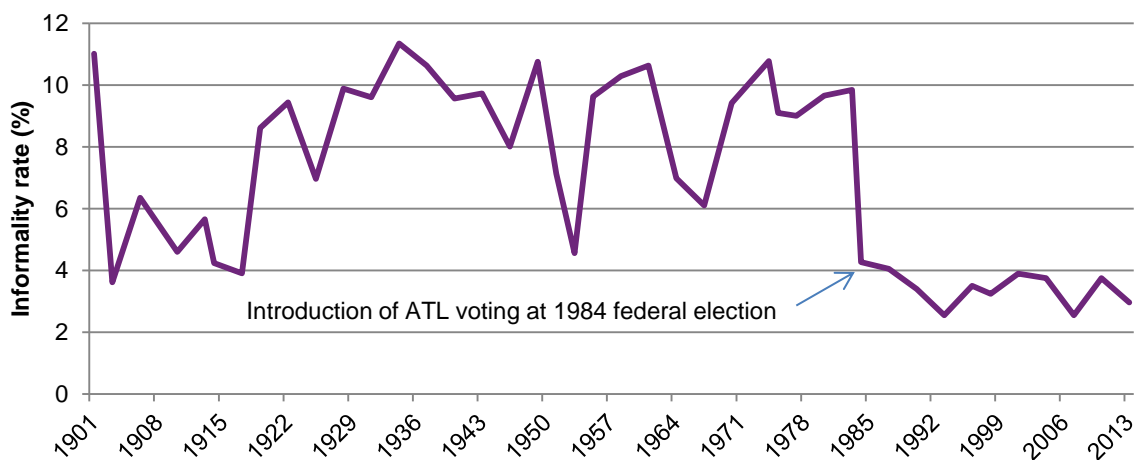
7.2.113 Formality refers to the percentage of voters who complete a ballot paper that can be counted as a valid vote.

7.2.114 Informal ballot papers generally fall into two categories - apparently deliberate (intentional) informality, where the elector does not express a preference, and apparently accidental (unintentional) informality, where the elector has expressed some preference/s but not sufficiently to render the ballot paper formal.

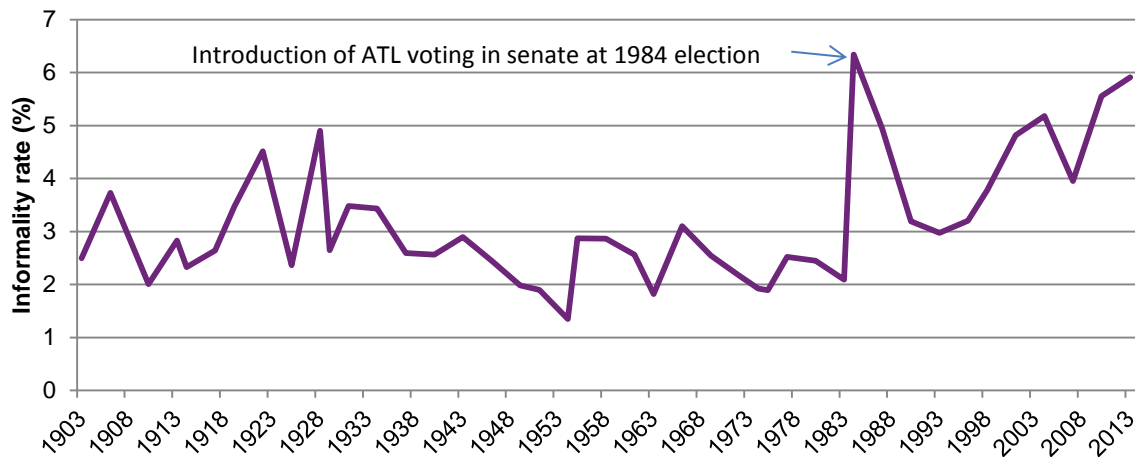
7.2.115 Following each federal election, the AEC undertakes a study of House of Representatives informal ballot papers to provide information about the categories of informal ballot papers that may inform voter education strategies. Examination of the types of informal ballot papers also allows inferences to be made about the potential intention of the voter.

7.2.116 At the 2013 election, Senate informality decreased from 3.7 per cent in 2010 to 3.0 per cent, remaining within the historical range of 2-4 per cent recorded since the introduction of above-the-line voting in 1984 (Figure 7.9).

**Figure 7.9 Informal voting, 1901-2013 Senate elections**



7.2.117 House of Representatives informality increased slightly from 5.6 per cent in 2010 to 5.9 per cent in 2013 (Figure 7.10).

**Figure 7.10 Informal voting, 1903-2013 House of Representatives elections**

7.2.118 However, the very nature of the secret ballot (and uniqueness of the election environment for each federal election) means that there are likely to be many factors that could influence a voter to intentionally or unintentionally cast an informal vote. In many cases, it is not possible to accurately quantify or even separately identify the impact these factors might have on levels or patterns of informality. Previous AEC analysis of informal voting at House of Representatives elections has indicated that the strongest predictors of informality rates (or changes in informality rates) appear to be English language proficiency and the number of candidates on the ballot paper, though differences between state/territory and federal electoral systems, and proximity to state based electoral events are also regarded as potentially significant factors.

### Voter Information Officers

7.2.119 The AEC is aware that a higher level of informal voting tends to occur in certain locations previously been identified as having lower English proficiency than in other parts of Australia. For the 2013 election, the AEC introduced a new category of polling staff called a Voter Information Officer (VIO) and ensured that VIOs were deployed in these locations to cater to the linguistic needs of lower English proficiency electors. In areas where there was both a significant Indigenous population identified and high informality rates, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander VIOs were deployed. The potential impact of the presence of VIOs on the rates of informality was another focus of a voter survey conducted in respect of the 2013 election.

7.2.120 Of those voters interviewed on election day, 29 per cent of the respondents who cast votes at the areas where VIOs were present received some form of

assistance from a VIO. The survey results found that almost all voters surveyed who received information from a VIO found it useful.

## International engagement

7.2.121 In addition to providing relevant electoral advice to the local community, the AEC engages with representatives from international electoral management bodies during the election period.

### Case Study 4 - Election Visitor Program

The Election Visitor Program (EVP) provides an opportunity for representatives of foreign electoral management bodies to observe an Australian election. The EVP has been held in Canberra at each election since 1996. The EVP has as one of its aims to encourage good governance in line with Australia's foreign policy objectives.

Fifty-two guests attended the EVP for the 2013 election. International delegates from 18 countries attended on behalf of their electoral management bodies; from Bhutan, Canada, Fiji, India, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tokelau. Also in attendance were representatives from two non-government organisations; the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, as well as embassy officials and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade staff.

In addition, for the first time four Election Study Programs (ESPs) were also held throughout the country in Brisbane, Darwin, Hobart and Perth. A total of 41 participants from Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia attended the ESPs.

The EVP and ESP offered participants a first-hand look at Australian election day activities, whereby attendees visited urban and rural polling places to observe set up processes, opening of the polling place, commencement of voting, close of the polling place and the commencement of scrutiny. In addition, the programs provided an overview of the AEC, its structures and functions, voter registration processes, elections management and operations, media and communication strategies, electoral education and a consideration of comparative electoral systems.

Post-election feedback for both the EVP and the ESP was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees of the programs were particularly grateful for the opportunity to attend polling centres and to view the Australian electoral process first-hand, and built collaborative relationships with other attendees. Program participants confirmed the overall value of program, reflecting on how ideas from the programs would be considered for implementation in their home countries.

## 7.3 Communicating with electors

### Delivering key messages

7.3.1 The AEC's campaign is implemented across three phases seeking to ensure that electors:

- understand how to enrol or change their details on the electoral roll,
- are aware of their voting options if they are unable to get to a polling place on election day, and
- understand how to cast their vote formally.

7.3.2 In 2013, the AEC took advantage of an announced election date to supplement the information campaign with a 'pre-election' phase. This phase reinforced the key enrolment message by inviting electors to enrol and not 'leave it to the last minute'. The 2013 election public information campaign was therefore delivered over four phases:

- pre-election
- close of rolls
- voter services
- formality.

7.3.3 The public information campaign for the 2013 election utilised channels that included both free to air and pay television, radio, press, magazines, online, social media, and outdoor advertising in places such as shopping centres and bus stops, and cinemas. It was also supported by state and territory non-campaign advertising and state and national public relations activities discussed further from 7.1.22.

7.3.4 The AEC utilised the Facebook and Twitter to respond to public enquiries, provide electoral information, distribute enrolment and election messages, and support the AEC's existing communication campaigns. The AEC also maintains a YouTube account for video hosting purposes.

### Communicating with electors

#### Advertising in print and media

7.3.5 Multiple sets of advertising were developed to cater for possible election dates and referendum scenarios.

7.3.6 The AEC used its 'Your vote is a valuable thing' creative for the campaign which was developed in 2006 and has been used during the previous two elections. As

indicated at paragraph 7.3.2 the AEC's public information campaign was delivered over the following four phases.

- 7.3.7 Pre election ('glow') phase: This phase commenced on 29 May 2013 with low-level advertising, including paid search advertising and advertising on Facebook, targeting 17 year olds turning 18. National mass media advertising began on 14 July 2013. The advertising materials used for the pre election phase as part of the 'Your vote is a valuable thing' creative are referred to collectively as 'glow'. 'Glow' advertising ran for approximately three weeks, aiming to generate awareness and intention to enrol ahead of the election period.
- 7.3.8 Close of rolls phase: This phase commenced on the day in which the election was announced, 4 August 2013, continuing until the 6pm close of rolls deadline on 12 August 2013. Both the pre election 'glow' phase and the close of rolls phase were intended to ensure that individuals:
- were aware of the enrolment deadline,
  - understood how to enrol or change their details on the electoral roll, and
  - enrolled or updated their enrolment details before the deadline.
- 7.3.9 Voter Services phase: This phase occurred from 21 August 2013 until 6 September 2013, the day before election day. This phase aimed to ensure that individuals were:
- Aware of and understood the range of voting options available for them if they were unable to vote on election day, and
  - Informed of how to access more detail on those options.
- 7.3.10 Formality phase: This phase commenced on 31 August 2013 and ran until election day, 7 September 2013. It aimed to ensure that individuals understood how to vote correctly for both the House of Representatives and Senate ballot papers.

**Table 7.17 Pre election phase communications activities, 2013 election**

Activity	Time period	Description
<b>Advertising</b>		
Low-level online advertising	Started on 29 May 2013	Low level advertising included paid search advertising and ads targeting 17 year olds turning 18 on Facebook.
'Glow' mass media advertising campaign – 'Your vote is a valuable thing'	14 July-3 August 2013	National advertising ran for approximately three weeks featuring the AEC's 'glow' advertisements via television, magazines, online, cinema, outdoor and advertising on Indigenous television and radio stations, radio stations in alternate languages and on radio for the print handicapped.
Election time mass media advertising campaign – 'Your vote is a valuable thing'		National advertising ran from the announcement of the election date on 4 August to election day, 7 September. This advertising covered close of rolls, voter services and formality messaging. It utilised TV, press, radio and online advertising.
<b>Partnerships</b>		
Facebook app 'Your Vote Matters'	24 June-12 August 2013	The AEC partnered with Facebook to develop a Facebook enrol to vote app to remind all Australians, particularly young people aged 18 to 24, to enrol or update their enrolment details so that they would be ready to vote in the upcoming election.
Rock Enrol	1 July-12 August 2013	The Rock Enrol brand was used in partnership with Triple J, including through sponsorship at the music festival 'Splendour in the Grass' held from 26 - 28 July 2013.
Student Edge	1-6 August 2013	The AEC partnered with Student Edge to directly target eligible students via email to encourage them to enrol and vote for the election.
<b>Public relations campaign</b>		
Don't leave it to the last minute engagement campaign	1 July-12 August 2013	Targeted workplaces, sporting organisations and tertiary institutions.
Sporting activations	19-22 July 2013 and 26-28 July 2013	Activities held at 17 sporting events nationally across two weekends.

7.3.11 The AEC acts in accordance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, and its accompanying Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies<sup>39</sup> for the delivery of its advertising service.

7.3.12 Principle 2 of the Guidelines requires that:

*15. Special attention should be paid to communicating with any disadvantaged individuals or groups identified as being within the target audience. Particular attention should be paid to the communication needs of young people, the rural community and those for whom English is not a convenient language in which to receive information.*

*16. Imagery used in campaign materials should reflect the diverse range of Australians. There should be recognition of the full participation of women, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities by realistically portraying their interests, lifestyles and contributions to Australian society.*

*17. Campaign materials should be tested with target audiences to indicate they are engaging and perform well against the objectives of the campaign.*

7.3.13 The AEC undertook a range of measures to better communicate with culturally and linguistically diverse groups, including the translation of a range of election materials into 26 different languages and the use of community press and radio.

7.3.14 Indigenous media outlets, including press, TV and radio were also utilised to promote topics including enrolment, early voting, and remote mobile polling. Advertising was also undertaken to inform eligible electors about the new telephone voting service available for BLV voting.

7.3.15 Targeted communications and promotional activities included the creation of recruitment, enrolment and turn-out posters and fact-sheets incorporating a new suite of Indigenous voter photos commissioned for the election. A range of promotional items was produced with Indigenous specific messaging and the AEC's new Indigenous visual identity and tag-line 'Our vote, our future'. In-language materials were created for remote communities in the NT.

7.3.16 Targeted advertisements were placed in a range of Indigenous media, both press and online and election-specific targeted messaging was broadcast as part of the

<sup>39</sup> Department of Finance 2013, *Short-term Interim Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies*, accessed November 2013, <[http://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/Short-term-Interim-Guidelines\\_0.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/Short-term-Interim-Guidelines_0.pdf)>.



AEC's sponsorship of the National Indigenous Radio Service broadcast of the AFL.

- 7.3.17 A dedicated Facebook page was launched on 9 August 2013 to target Indigenous youth.

### **Householder guide**

- 7.3.18 9.8 million copies of the 'Your official guide to the 2013 federal election' were produced and delivered to every household in Australia in the weeks leading up to the 2013 election. The guide was also available from the AEC in 26 languages and accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio and e-text.

### **Public relations**

- 7.3.19 Consistent with the AEC approach at the 2004, 2007 and 2010 elections, a national network of public relations agencies based in each capital city was established. State and territory public relations agencies primarily assisted AEC state and territory offices by tailoring and/or implementing local level public relations activities.
- 7.3.20 Media events included the promotion of early voting in the Melbourne CBD with Victorian-based cricketers and the first day of RAMP held at a polling place in Waruwi, NT. The RAMP event generated wide coverage in national news publications and internationally, with approximately 30 individual pieces of coverage generated as a result.

### **Website**

- 7.3.21 During the 2013 election period, the AEC website, [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au) had approximately 55.1 million page views and over seven million visitors, a significant increase to the 30 million page views and four million visitors over the same period in 2010. Online channels of communication continued to be an easy, user friendly option for eligible electors.
- 7.3.22 Since 2010, the AEC has received a significant increase in the number of visits to the AEC's website from desktop computers, tablet devices, and mobile phones. In 2010, desktop visits reached approximately 5 490 029, with mobile phones reaching 279 216.
- 7.3.23 For 2013 visits from desktop computers rose to 6 405 874, with visits from mobile phones rising substantially to 2 580 794. In addition, there were 1 272 442 visits from tablet devices. In line with national and worldwide trends, the AEC served the increase in the range of devices by applying responsive design techniques to

the AEC website. This ensured access to the full range of AEC content and services on the website.

7.3.24 The AEC's homepage was also updated to reflect key messages throughout the election period as demonstrated by Figures 7.11 and 7.12 below.

**Figure 7.11 AEC homepage during close of rolls period, 2013 election**

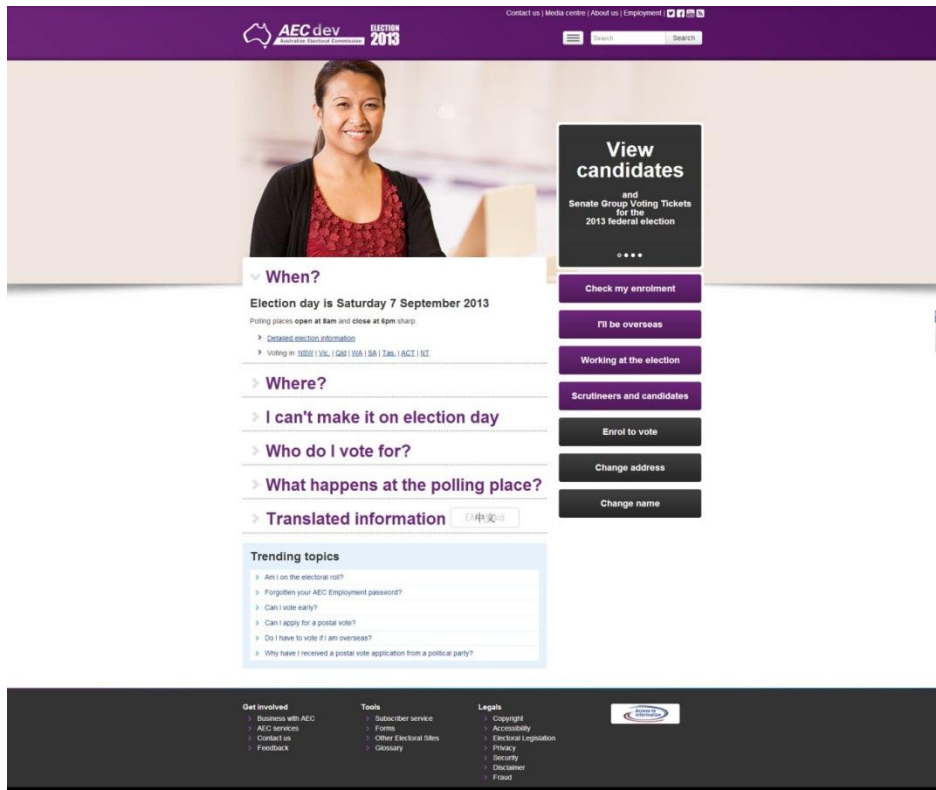
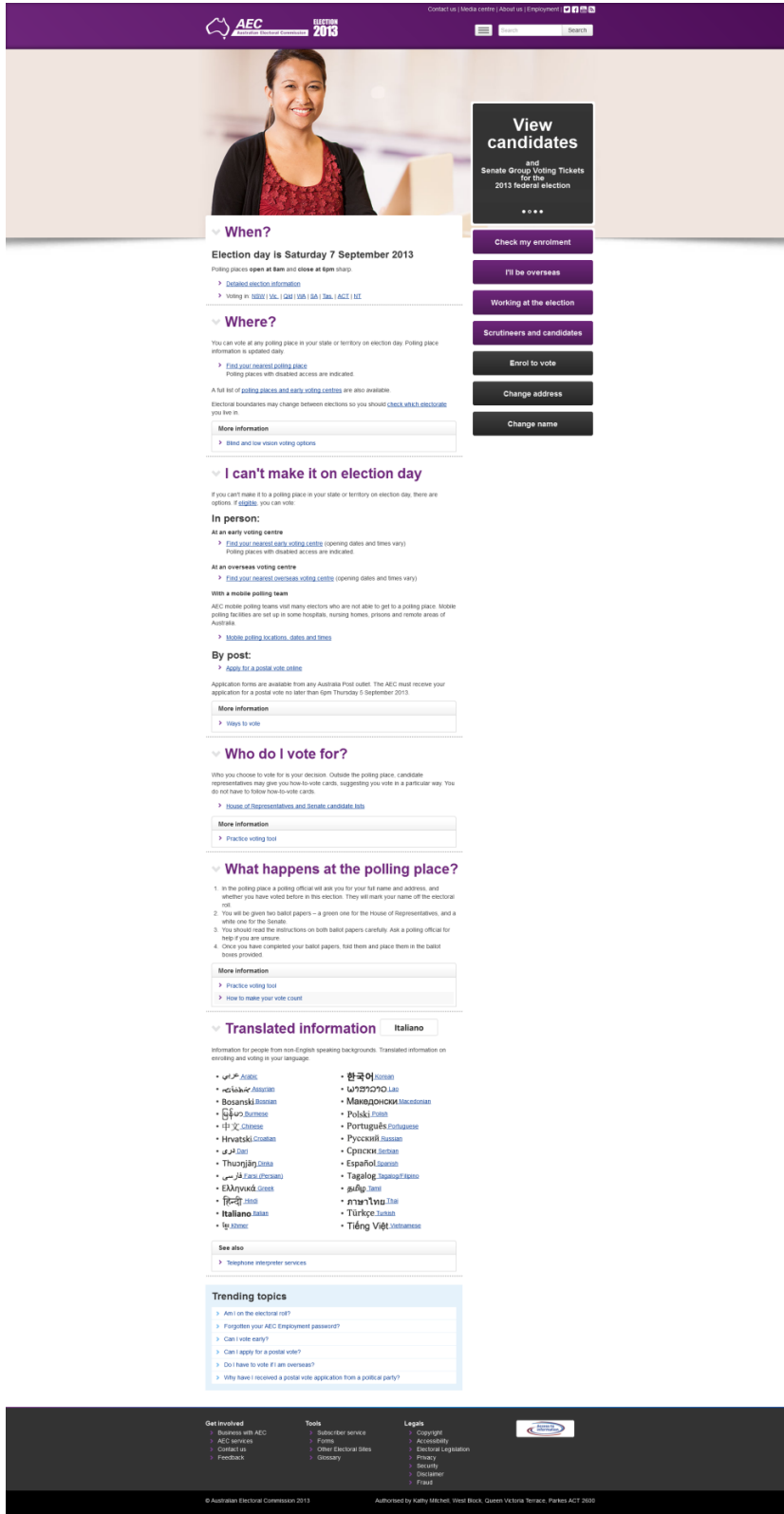


Figure 7.12 AEC homepage at the commencement of early voting, 20 August 2013



## Interacting with electors

### Call centre

- 7.3.25 The AEC has established a successful business partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS, formerly Centrelink) over 10 years to deliver high-quality, cost-effective contact centre and product fulfilment services.
- 7.3.26 A formal market review for contact centre services was conducted in 2011, and found that there was no other Australian-based service provider who could provide an appropriate level of service and meet the project requirements. The cost of this service to the AEC for the 2013 election was \$5.1 million, compared to \$5.3 million in 2010. The contact centre was operational for call centre and email services from Monday 5 August 2013 to Friday 20 September 2013, inclusive.
- 7.3.27 Contact centre services were provided from up to 20 DHS sites networked to operate as one virtual call centre. For the duration of the election period, the election contact centre was operational during all specified service hours for the pre-event, election event, and post-event phases in the agreed Service Schedule.
- 7.3.28 At the 2013 election there was a decrease in the total number of calls received, and an increase in the overall number of emails, suggesting a change over time in user preferences. A total of 553 547 calls were received during the 2013 election event period, a 25.7 per cent decrease on the 2010 election, where 745 256 calls were received. Use of emails increased by 16.2 per cent from 36 888 in 2010 to 42 879 in 2013.
- 7.3.29 A suite of enhanced Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) messages were developed for the 2013 election to service the high call volumes expected by the election contact centre.
- 7.3.30 Detailed after hours messaging was put in place to answer elector enquiries outside of contact centre operation, effectively extending the AEC's business hours to a 24/7 operation.
- 7.3.31 The AEC provided interpreter and translation services through its contractor, Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service LanguageLink (VITS). A total of 8 603 interpreter calls were received during the election period, a 34.4 per cent decrease on the 2010 election, where 13 114 were received.

7.3.32 Significant changes were made to VITS's in-language IVR messaging for this election, which reduced the cost of interpreter services and the volume of calls through VITS to the election contact centre, and lead to more efficient responses to caller enquiries.

7.3.33 The AEC also provided services for people who were deaf or hearing impaired, through the National Relay Service. Call centre services provided to enable electors who are blind or have low vision to cast a secret vote are discussed further in paragraphs 7.2.33 to 7.2.39.

## Facebook

7.3.34 Launched in May 2012, the AEC's Facebook page<sup>40</sup> supported the Count Me In campaign, the launch of Get Voting, and the new online enrolment service available to eligible Australian electors. The AEC also maintained a separate Facebook page for the AEC's IEPP.

7.3.35 The AEC's corporate Facebook page was managed between 8am and 10pm, seven days per week. This approach supported the Advertising Standards Board guidelines requiring the monitoring of proactive posts on social media for a minimum of two hours after posting.

**Table 7.18 Facebook uptake through 2013 election period**

Measure	Description	Unique users as at 04/08/13 no.	Unique users as at 20/09/13 no.
Lifetime – Total Likes	The total number of people who have liked the AEC page.	5 464	19 092
28 days - 'People Talking About'	The number of people who shared stories about the AEC page.	1 574	34 890
28 days - 'Engaged Users'	The number of people who engaged with the AEC Page.	4 043	330 222

7.3.36 A number of campaign ads were promoted on Facebook, encouraging enrolment and voter turnout to our target audience of Facebook users aged 18-24 years.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> AEC 2014, *Australian Electoral Commission Facebook page*, facebook.com, 9 March 2013, <[www.facebook.com/australianelectoralcommission](http://www.facebook.com/australianelectoralcommission)>.

<sup>41</sup> Advertisements were selectively presented directly onto the news feeds of target audiences' personal Facebook pages.

## Feedback and evaluation

### Voter survey findings

7.3.37 The AEC commissioned a voter survey for the 2013 election in order to gain insight into the experiences of electors. The broad objectives of the survey was to explore:

- awareness and opinions of the AEC,
- information sources about the 2013 election,
- perceptions of the AEC's delivery of electoral services for the election,
- perceptions of the early voting process,
- informality and formality activities,
- satisfaction with the voting process, and
- specific focus on evaluating the effectiveness of ECLs and VIOs.

7.3.38 The survey collected information from both voters who voted early and those who voted on election day. There were three distinct cohorts of interviewees:

- electors interviewed face-to-face at one of two pre-poll centres,
- voters surveyed face-to-face at one of 18 polling places across Australia on election day, and
- voters surveyed within four days following the election, with 1 000 electors participating in a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI).

7.3.39 The pre-poll and on-the-day interviewing included respondents from areas where there has previously been a high incidence of informal voting. Some interviews were conducted in languages other than English, with Arabic, Cantonese and Mandarin used. The CATI survey was conducted Australia wide with quotas used to achieve a sample reflecting the 2011 Census counts of state and territory populations by sex and age.

7.3.40 The key finding of the survey was that elector's overall satisfaction with the voting experience was high with 93 per cent of those surveyed indicating they were either very satisfied (63 per cent) or fairly satisfied (30 per cent) with the voting experience. This is extremely consistent with the result of the 2010 survey of 91 per cent.

7.3.41 The 2013 voter survey also reflected the increasing popularity of early voting, with 23 per cent of respondents casting an early vote either in person or by post. Of those who voted early, 77 per cent said they would have been able to vote on election day. Convenience was provided as a key factor in early voting with 31 per cent indicating that it was the reason for voting early.

## 8 Working with political parties, groups and candidates

### Key points:

- A record number of candidates and parties contested the 2013 election.
- There was some confusion amongst candidates and parties regarding the authorisation requirements of How-to-Vote cards.
- More than \$58 million in election funding was paid to candidates and political parties.

### 8.1 Party registration

#### Party registration requirements

- 8.1.1 Political parties may wish to register with the AEC as registration enables a party to, among other things:
- Nominate and endorse candidates for an election under the signature of the party's registered officer. Candidates not endorsed by a registered political party require the signatures of 100 electors, who must be qualified to vote in the particular election for which the candidate is nominating.
  - Have the party's registered name or abbreviation printed adjacent to the candidate's name on the ballot papers, and above-the-line for party groups on Senate ballot papers.
  - Receive applicable election funding to the party rather than individual candidates.
- 8.1.2 For the purposes of federal elections political parties are able to apply for registration under the Electoral Act if they:
- are an organisation established on the basis of a written constitution that sets out the aims of the party,
  - have an object or activity of promoting the election to the Senate or the House of Representatives of candidates endorsed by the party,
  - have at least 500 members who are enrolled on the Commonwealth electoral roll or at least one member who is a Senator or Member of the House of Representatives,

- lodge a completed application for registration, along with the necessary documents such as the constitution, membership details and appointments of office-bearers,
- lodge a \$500 application fee, and
- propose a name and/or abbreviation for their party that is not prohibited by the Act.

8.1.3 Each state and territory has a party registration scheme to establish, before an election, the party affiliations which may be printed on ballot papers. These schemes have varying prerequisites for registration including deadlines, fees and minimum numbers of enrolled electors. These prerequisites seek to ensure that a purported party has a measure of community support. Table 8.1 contains a brief summary of the eligibility criteria for various jurisdictions.

**Table 8.1 Eligibility criteria for party registration for non-parliamentary parties**

Jurisdiction	Enrolled members no.	Fees \$	Deadline for registration
Commonwealth	500	500	Before issue of writs
New South Wales	750	2000	Twelve months before close of nominations
Victoria	500	642 every 3 years	Must re-register during each Parliament
Queensland	500	nil	By day of issue of writ
Western Australia	500	nil	Before issue of writ
South Australia	200	500	Application must be received 6 months before election day
Tasmania	100	nil	Before issue of writ
Australian Capital Territory	100	nil	Must be registered at least 37 days before election day
Northern Territory	200 or registered with Commonwealth	500	Application must be received 6 months before election day

8.1.4 One minor change affecting party registration since the 2010 election was enacted in the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Procedure) Act 2013* in March 2013, requiring that party members being relied on for registration purposes must be on the Commonwealth electoral roll, rather than eligible for enrolment.



8.1.5 The AEC advises applicants that it is likely to take three months to process a complete application for party registration; longer if an incomplete application is lodged. Incomplete applications usually have:

- insufficient members readily identifiable on the electoral roll; or
- insufficient members who are prepared to confirm their party membership with the AEC.

8.1.6 In the lead up to the 2013 election 22 parties applied for registration in the three months prior to the issue of the writs; of these 10 of those parties were registered prior to the issue of the writs on 5 August 2013 and seven were refused registration because they did not meet the criteria. Five applications were still being processed at the issue of the writs.

8.1.7 There is scope to further improve the administrative processes associated with applications for party registration; including enabling party registration applications to be submitted online.

**Parties registered for the 2013 election**

8.1.8 There were 77 parties that were registered for the 2013 election. The parties are listed at Appendix E. This is the largest number of registered parties since the 1998 election, when 77 were also registered. Table 8.2 identifies the number of parties registered at recent elections.

**Table 8.2 Number of parties registered, 1998-2013 elections**

Election	Unrelated parties no.	Additional branches registered no.	Total parties registered no.
1998	41	36	77
2001	38	26	64
2004	35	27	62
2007	27	26	53
2010	25	24	49
2013	54	23	77

8.1.9 The announcement by the then Prime Minister in January 2013 of an intended election date of 14 September 2013 may have had an effect on the interest in party registration. The announcement provided an opportunity, for the first time since federal party registration commenced, for the AEC to publish the date by which party registration applications would need to be lodged to complete the

legislative steps in time for a 14 September election. On Monday 5 August 2013 the writs were issued for a Saturday 7 September 2013.

- 8.1.10 Table 8.3 shows the number of applications, to register new political parties, lodged prior to the previous three elections. The figures for the lead up to the 2010 election reflect an ordinary increase in applications prior to an election, while 2007 figures are larger than normal due to a spill of the Register of Political Parties.<sup>42</sup> Generally, applications in the year following an election are rare; a limited number are received during the second year of the electoral cycle and then there is increased activity in the final year leading up to an election. The number of applications between 2010 and 2013 represent an increased level of interest in the party registration process. Likely drivers for this increase are the announced cut-off date, enabled by the January announcement of a September election, and the increased difficulties for nomination of unendorsed groups (making registering a party more attractive).

**Table 8.3 Applications lodged to register new political parties, 2007-2013**

Criteria	During 2007 no.	2007–2010 no.	2010–2013 no.
Number of applications received since previous election	27	16	38
Number of applications in the two years prior to election	n/a	16	35
Number of applications in one year prior to election	27	10	31
Number of applications within three months prior to writs	6	7	22

### Issues with party registration in 2013

- 8.1.11 There was some publicity concerning the registration of political parties in the lead up to the 2013 election.

#### Application for registration of the ‘Uniting Australia Party’

- 8.1.12 On 25 March 2013, the AEC received an application to register the Uniting Australia Party as a political party under Part XI of the Electoral Act. On 15 April 2013, a delegate of the AEC assessed the application as meeting the requirements of the Act and approved its advertisement for public input.

<sup>42</sup> In 2006 there was a spill of the Register of Political Parties which retained only those parties which could demonstrate previous election of endorsed candidates to the Federal Parliament. Nineteen parties were consequently de-registered. The Register was re-opened for applications for new parties and re-registration of spilled parties in early 2007, causing the number of party registration applications lodged in 2007 to be larger than normal.

- 8.1.13 Three objections were received in response to the advertisement. The main reason raised in the objections was that the party's proposed name would be mistaken for and confused with the 'United Australia Party'. The United Australia Party had applied for registration under Queensland state legislation and was intending to apply for registration under the Electoral Act. Two objectors also raised the question of confusion with the historical United Australia Party which was a major federal party in the 1930s and 40s.
- 8.1.14 A delegate of the AEC found that as the Uniting Australia Party's application was lodged first, it had priority. While the United Australia Party had achieved Queensland state registration on the same day, the Queensland party would not become a recognised political party until the point at which a Queensland election is held and the Queensland party endorses a candidate. If the Queensland party had achieved recognised party status, only then could it have prevented the registration of the Uniting Australia Party.
- 8.1.15 After subsequently receiving an application for review of this decision, on 14 November 2014 the full three-person Electoral Commission affirmed the delegate's decision to register the Uniting Australia Party. Where the full three-person Electoral Commission affirm a prior decision of an AEC delegate concerning party registration, interested persons are advised that they can make an application to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for further review of the decision.

### **Application for registration of the '21st Century Australia' party**

- 8.1.16 On 6 May 2013, the AEC received an application for registration from the 21st Century Australia Party. The party's application was required to be resubmitted to the AEC on four separate occasions. The first application was not accepted because, after initial testing, the AEC could not find at least 500 members of the party that were on the electoral roll, as required under the Electoral Act. The AEC also advised the party of a deficiency in its constitution. On 5 June 2013, the party resubmitted its application but this was refused because the revised membership list had still failed to identify a sufficient number of members as being on the electoral roll.
- 8.1.17 A second application was received by the AEC on 19 June 2013. A series of tests were conducted as is usually undertaken as part of the initial consideration of an application. The application was refused as six electors out of a random sample of 30 from the membership list had denied that they were members of the party.

- 8.1.18 The party provided an amended application to the AEC with an updated list of members on 4 July 2013. The second application was assessed by a delegate of the AEC on 15 July 2013 and no reason was found to refuse it. The application was advertised as required by s.132 of the Electoral Act. No objection was made to the registration of the party.
- 8.1.19 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia could not be registered before the 2013 election because the legislative period in which people could object to the application expired after the issue of the writs. Section 127 of the Act prohibited the application being determined before the return of the last outstanding writ on 6 November 2013. The party was therefore registered on 7 November 2013.

### **Application for a change to the abbreviated form of the ‘Liberal Democratic Party’**

- 8.1.20 On 27 March 2013, the AEC received an application to amend the registered abbreviation of the Liberal Democratic Party under Part XI of the Electoral Act. The party applied to amend ‘Liberal Democrats (LDP)’ to ‘Liberal Democrats’. On 2 April 2013, an AEC delegate assessed the application as having met the requirements of the Electoral Act and approved its advertisement for public input.
- 8.1.21 Three objections were received in response to the advertisement. The main issue raised in the objections was that the proposed abbreviation would be likely to be mistaken for and confused with the registered abbreviation of the Liberal Party of Australia (‘Liberal’). The Liberal Party of Australia had also previously objected to and appealed against the registration of the full name ‘Liberal Democratic Party’ in 2008.
- 8.1.22 On 25 June 2013, a delegate of the AEC approved the Liberal Democratic Party’s application to amend its registered abbreviation on the basis that the proposed abbreviation ‘Liberal Democrats’ was sufficiently different from the registered abbreviation ‘Liberal’ so that it was not prohibited by s.129 of the Electoral Act. After subsequently receiving an application for review of this decision, the three person Electoral Commission affirmed the delegate’s decision to register the abbreviation.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Further background regarding the reasoning for the Commissioners’ decision is available at: AEC 2013, *Application for change to registration approved – Liberal Democrats Abbreviation*, aec.gov.au, Canberra, 09/04/13, <[http://www.aec.gov.au/Parties\\_and\\_Representatives/party\\_registration/Registration\\_Decisions/2013/5310.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/party_registration/Registration_Decisions/2013/5310.htm)>.

8.1.23 The Liberal Party of Australia applied to the AAT for further review of the decision. No action can be taken in relation to the matter by the AAT while any writ is outstanding for an election in accordance with s. 134(4) of the Electoral Act. This has included the writ for the Griffith by-election and the WA senate election.

## 8.2 Candidate nominations

### Nomination requirements

8.2.1 To be eligible to nominate for either the Senate or the House of Representatives, a person must, among other requirements:

- be an Australian citizen aged 18 years or older and an elector entitled to vote, or a person qualified to become such an elector,
- if a person meets all of the above requirements by the close of nominations, they must not be current member of a State Parliament or Territory Legislative Assembly, or disqualified by s.44 of the Constitution, by the close of nominations.

8.2.2 For the 2013 election, a person could not be elected for either the Senate or the House of Representatives unless a completed nomination form and deposit was received by the relevant AEC officer by 12pm 15 August 2013, at the close of nominations. Bulk nominations of endorsed House of Representatives candidates of a registered political party were required to be lodged no less than 48 hours before the close of nominations, by 12pm 13 August 2013.

8.2.3 The nomination deposit was \$1 000 for a House of Representatives candidate and \$2 000 for a Senate candidate. Nominations were publically declared 24 hours after the close of nominations at 12pm 16 August 2013.

8.2.4 Candidates, parties and the AEC may all benefit from providing an online facility for the lodgement of nominations and group voting tickets. Handwritten or faxed copies of nominations can be difficult to read and may increase the risk of details being entered incorrectly.

8.2.5 A number of issues would need to be overcome in order to accept nominations electronically, including the form of the nomination, and the payment of the deposit.

8.2.6 Nominations lodgement could form part of a larger online portal for parties and candidates. The portal could also allow GVT lodgement, party registration and candidate agent appointment electronically, streamlining in the administration of these tasks.

**Recommendation 9:** That the Electoral Act, and any other required Acts are amended to permit the AEC to accept nominations electronically in a suitable format.

## Legislative change

8.2.7 A range of legislative measures affecting nominations, from both the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Procedure) Act 2013* and the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Administration) Act 2013*, were implemented for the 2013 election. They included:

- an increase in the sum to be deposited by, or on behalf of, a person nominated as a Senator from \$1 000 to \$2 000,
- an increase in the sum to be deposited by, or on behalf of, a person nominated as a Member of the House of Representatives from \$500 to \$1 000,
- an increase in the number of nominators required by a candidate for the Senate or the House of Representatives who has not been nominated by a registered political party from 50 to 100 electors, and
- a requirement that unendorsed candidates for the Senate who have made a request to be grouped must be nominated by 100 unique electors each.

## Number of nominations

8.2.8 A record number of candidates nominated for the 2013 election with 1 717 candidates competing for a total of 190 vacancies; compared with only 1 198 candidates at the 2010 election and 1 421 candidates in 2007.

8.2.9 The number of candidates for the House of Representatives reached 1 188, compared with 849 in 2010 and 1 054 in 2007. Table 8.4 provides a breakdown of the 2013 election House of Representatives nominations by state and territory.

**Table 8.4 House of Representative nominations, 2013**

State/territory	Divisions no.	Nominations no.	Average nominations per division no.
NSW	48	352	7.3
Vic.	37	344	9.3
Qld	30	233	7.8
WA	15	128	8.5
SA	11	66	6.0
Tas.	5	35	7.0
ACT	2	13	6.5
NT	2	17	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1 188</b>	<b>7.9</b>

8.2.10 As provided at Table 8.5 below, there were a total of 529 candidates for the Senate at the 2013 election. This compares to 349 in 2010 and 367 in 2007.

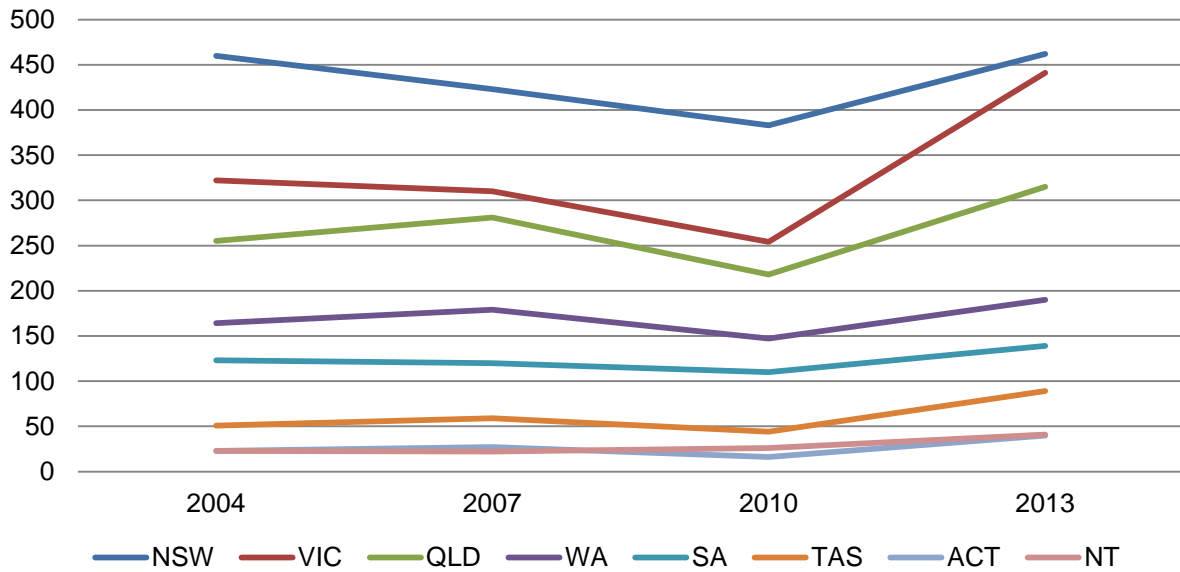
**Table 8.5 Senate nominations, 2013**

State/territory	Vacancies no.	Nominations no.	Average nominations per vacancy no.
NSW	6	110	18.3
Vic.	6	97	16.2
Qld	6	82	13.7
WA	6	62	10.3
SA	6	73	12.2
Tas.	6	54	9.0
ACT	2	27	13.5
NT	2	24	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>13.2</b>

### Comparative analysis of nominations

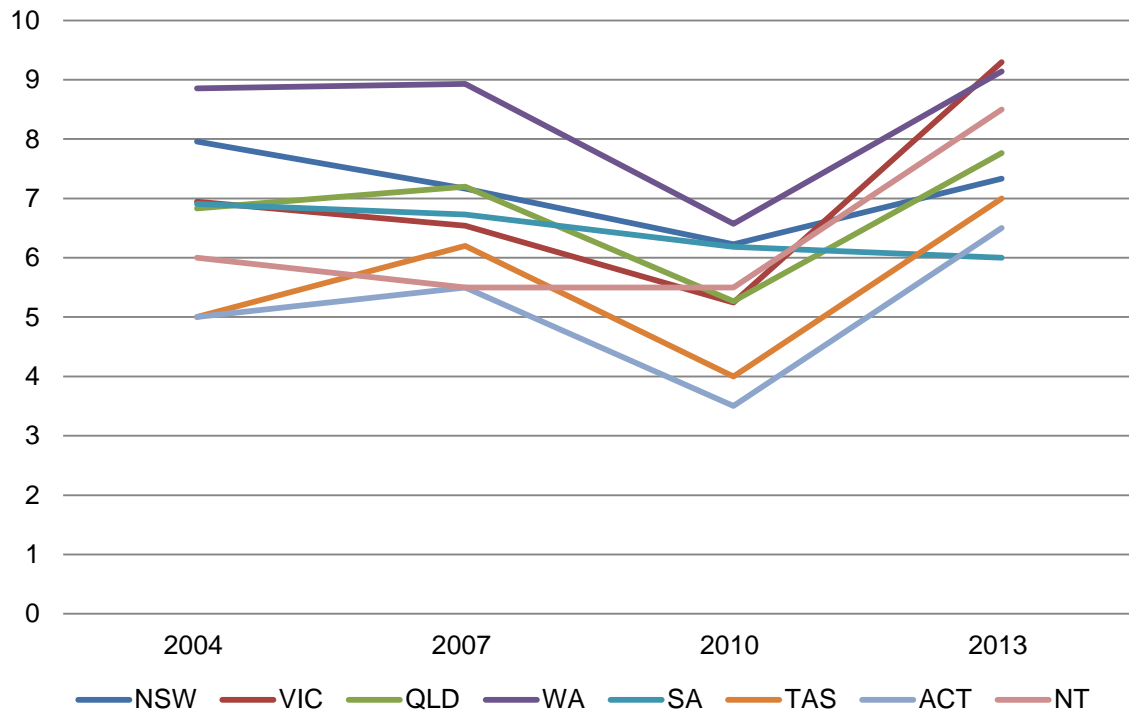
8.2.11 The number of nominations increased substantially over previous elections, particularly 2010.

**Figure 8.1 Total nominations, 2004-2013 federal elections**



8.2.12 Nominations for the House of Representatives in 2013 were similar compared to 2004 and 2007 and higher than in 2010. The two exceptions to this were Victoria, which had an increase of 77 nominations compared to 2004 levels, and South Australia, which declined by 10, from 76 to 66.

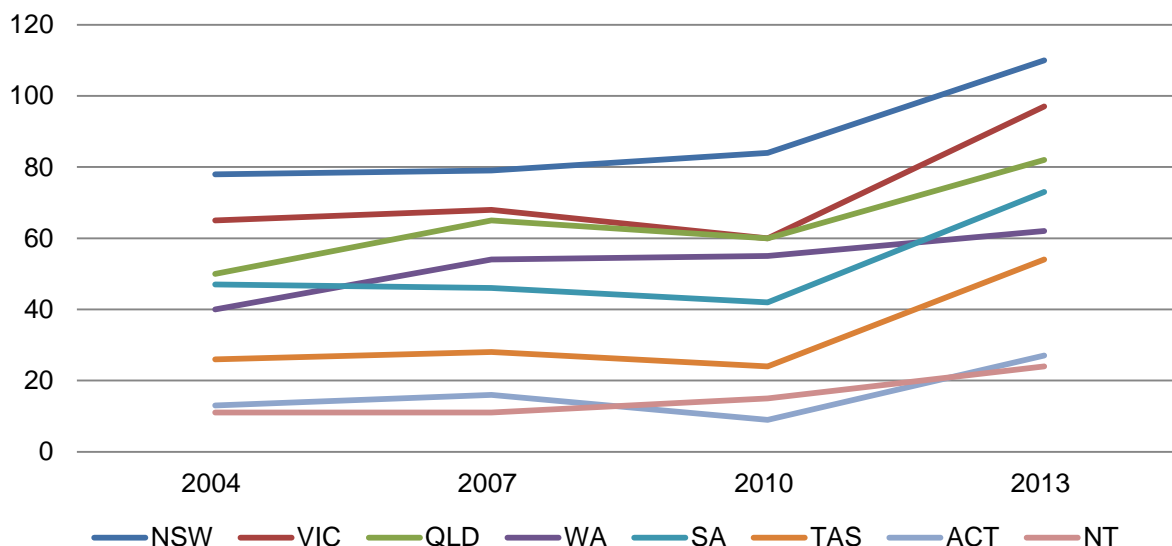
**Figure 8.2 House of Representative nominations per vacancy, 2004-2013**





8.2.13 Senate nominations increased substantially compared to previous elections. As outlined in Part I, and at Figure 8.3 below, the number of nominations per vacancy increased from 8.73 to 13.23 between the 2010 and 2013 elections.

**Figure 8.3 Senate nominations, 2004-2013**



## Rejected nominations

8.2.14 Electoral officers can reject a nomination if the provisions in the Electoral Act relating to any of the following have not been complied with:

- the mode of nomination,
- the person to whom the nomination is made,
- the requisites for nomination, or
- the form of consent to act.

8.2.15 At the 2013 election, nationally 6 nominations were rejected by the AEC, 2 failed to pay the required deposit and 4 failed to submit the required 100 nominators.

## Candidate withdrawals

8.2.16 A person can withdraw their consent to be nominated at any time until the hour of nomination by lodging a withdrawal notice with the AEC.

8.2.17 House of Representatives candidates must lodge their withdrawal notice with the DRO for the division in which they had nominated, even if their nomination was part of a bulk nomination. However, the registered officer may substitute a new candidate in a bulk nomination at any time before the close of nominations.

- 8.2.18 For Senate candidates, the withdrawal notice must be lodged with the AEO for the state or territory for which they had nominated. Once a withdrawal notice is in the hands of the relevant AEC officer for both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the nomination is cancelled and arrangements are initiated to refund the deposit.
- 8.2.19 However, once nominations are closed and the ballot paper order is drawn, the Electoral Act provides that no changes can be made and the candidate names will remain on the ballot paper. Consequently, for the 2013 election, three candidates remained on their respective ballot papers after support for their candidacy was withdrawn. In a statement issued late on 20 August 2013, the date in which early voting commenced, Liberal Party candidate Mr Kevin Baker announced that he would not actively campaign for the seat of Charlton. Ms Leslie Cannold, Wikileaks Party candidate for the Victorian Senate, withdrew her candidacy on 21 August 2013. Mr Buddy Rojek was disendorsed as the Palmer United Party candidate for the seat of Corangamite on 19 August 2013.

### Group Voting Tickets

- 8.2.20 A Senate group may lodge a written statement setting out a preference order of all candidates in an election, otherwise known as a GVT. Where a GVT has been provided, the AEC will allocate preferences in the predetermined order outlined by the particular party or group, if an elector marks their Senate ballot paper above the line.
- 8.2.21 Within 24 hours after the declaration of nominations for the Senate, parties and groups may lodge a GVT which shows the order in which they direct their preferences to be distributed. Each party or group can register up to three unique GVTs. GVTs are then lodged with the AEO either by email, fax, or in person.
- 8.2.22 The AEC ensures that parties and groups that wish to lodge a GVT are aware of their obligations in the lead up to the election event. Parties and groups are encouraged where possible, to plan prior to the announcement of nominations, how they will lodge a GVT. Where a party does not lodge a GVT, they will not have a box 'above-the-line' and all votes for candidates from that group must be cast below-the-line.
- 8.2.23 Seven groups in three states did not lodge a properly completed Group Voting Ticket by the deadline in 2013. They were:
- Liberal Democrats, Victoria
  - One Nation, Victoria
  - Smokers Rights, Victoria

- The Australian Republicans, Victoria
- Stop the Greens, Victoria
- Stop the Greens, South Australia.
- The Australian Republicans, Tasmania

8.2.24 Once a GVT is lodged, the AEC undertakes a number of processes to verify its validity. The data from each GVT is entered and converted into a common format, and prepared for publication. They are then published and made available on the AEC's website in accessible formats. Hard copy GVT booklets are provided at each voting centre.

8.2.25 The Electoral Act at s.211(6) establishes a hierarchy of who may lodge, amend, withdraw or replace a GVT, depending on the type of group. It also allows, for any kind of group, that a person authorised by all the members of the group can also lodge, amend withdraw and replace GVTs on behalf of the group. It is foreseeable that a circumstance could arise where competing GVTs apparently from the same party or group could be submitted by both a registered officer and a person authorised by the group. Such a situation would present challenges for the AEO in determining which is the 'valid' GVT.

**Recommendation 10:** That s.211(6) of the Electoral Act be amended to establish a hierarchy for who may lodge a GVT of behalf of a group, avoiding the possibility of conflicting GVT's being lodged by people capable of doing so.

### 8.3 Electoral advertising complaints

8.3.1 The AEC received 291 electoral advertising complaints between 30 January 2013 and 13 September 2013. 47 complaints were classified as breaching provisions of the Electoral Act or the *Privacy Act 1988*. 156 were classified as a non-breach and 88 complaints were beyond the scope of either the Electoral Act or the AEC's administration.

8.3.2 There were 89 complaints were received prior to the issue of the writs and 203 complaints within the election period.

8.3.3 Responses were made on the same day that they were received in 48.9 per cent of complaints of breaches.

**Table 8.6 Response time to complaints classified as a breach of the Electoral Act or *Privacy Act 1988*, January 30 2013-September 3 2013**

	Breaches	
	no.	%
Same day	23	48.9
1 day	11	23.4
2 days	2	4.3
3 days	4	8.5
4 days	2	4.2
5 days	1	2.1
6 days	3	6.4
7 days	1	2.1
More than 7 days	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>

8.3.4 Seventy six complaints corresponded to s.328 of the Electoral Act and 34 complaints to s.328B. Section 328 of the Electoral Act, in general terms, imposes various obligations relating to authorisation requirements for printed electoral advertisements, video recordings and newspaper advertisements.

8.3.5 In 2013, agreement was reached between the major parties to amend the requirements contained in s.328B of the Electoral Act to remove that part of the section which prescribed the font size of the authorisation details that were required to be printed on both sides of a How-to-Vote (HTV) card. These amendments were contained in the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Administration) Act 2013*.

8.3.6 The requirements of the new s.328B of the Electoral Act resulted in 34 escalated complaints and numerous other complaints that were dealt with by the AEOs, DROs and OICs of polling places. It became apparent that there was a great deal of confusion about the difference between the authorisation details required under s.328 (or other printed electoral advertising material) and those that applied to HTV cards under s.328B. The confusion included matters such as the inclusion of the candidate or registered political parties' names, the position of the authorisation on the printed material and the requirement that the authorisation details must appear on both sides of a HTV card.

**Recommendation 11:** That the Electoral Act be amended so that the authorisation requirements for How-to-vote cards under s.328B(1) be extended across other forms of published material where there is an existing requirement for authorisation.

- 8.3.7 In WA a How-to-Vote card that appeared to be supporting the Labor Party, but was in fact printed on behalf of a person who was a member of the campaign committee of another registered political party. This matter was referred to the Australian Federal Police for investigation.
- 8.3.8 Section 385A of the Electoral Act provides in broad terms that in proceedings for an offence against it, that an electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet that includes a statement that it was authorised by a specified person is admissible as evidence of that fact. HTV cards are not included in this provision. Providing for the equal treatment of the HTV cards would simplify prosecutions in relation to this offence.

**Recommendation 12:** That s.385A of the Electoral Act be amended to provide that the authorisation details contained on how-to-vote cards will be admissible as evidence of that fact.

## 8.4 Funding and disclosure

8.4.1 Part XX of the Electoral Act provides for:

- the public funding of candidates, political parties (registered parties and their state and territory branches) and Senate groups, and
- financial disclosures by candidates, Senate groups, political parties, associated entities, donors and persons who have incurred political expenditure.

### Election funding

- 8.4.2 Candidates and Senate groups become eligible for election funding where they receive at least four per cent of the formal first preference votes cast in a House of Representatives or Senate election. Election funding operates as an entitlement scheme with payments made automatically in accordance with a timetable set down in the Electoral Act.
- 8.4.3 The amount of entitlement to election funding is calculated by multiplying the total first preference votes cast for each eligible candidate and Senate group by the current election funding rate. The rate of election funding is indexed every six months to increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), standing at 248.80 cents per vote for the 2013 election.

- 8.4.4 Payments for endorsed candidates and Senate groups are made to the state branch of the endorsing political party in the state in which the candidate or Senate group stood or, by arrangement, to the national body of the party.
- 8.4.5 The Electoral Act stipulates that the AEC must pay at least 95 per cent of entitlements to election funding calculated on the progressive vote count as at the 20<sup>th</sup> day after election day.<sup>44</sup>
- 8.4.6 At the 2013 election, interim entitlements were calculated on the evening of Friday, 27 September 2013 with payments processed the following week. The AEC maximised the early release of funds by paying up to 99 per cent of these interim entitlements, withholding a minimum \$200. Payment of the balances of final election funding occurred on 15 November 2013.
- 8.4.7 A total of \$58 076 456 in election funding was paid in public funding at the 2013 election. This compares to \$52 411 291 paid in 2010, an increase of 10.8 per cent.
- 8.4.8 A breakdown of the interim and final payments of election funding is provided in Table 8.7.

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<sup>44</sup> A maximum 5 per cent of an entitlement is able to be withheld. This guards against the possibility of overpayments arising from final entitlements possibly being less than the interim calculations. This might occur, for instance where some votes are changed from formal to informal in the course of a re-count.

**Table 8.7 Election funding payment summary, 2013 election**

Parties	Interim payment \$	Final payment \$	Total payment \$
PARTIES			
Liberal Party of Australia	23 103 312.83	781 360.11	23 884 672.94
Australian Labor Party	20 195 147.98	579 542.57	20 774 690.55
Australian Greens	5 356 184.97	175 686.48	5 531 871.45
National Party of Australia	3 076 611.83	34 460.68	3 111 072.51
Palmer United Party	2 202 044.07	110 765.91	2 312 809.98
Liberal Democratic Party	1 033 845.36	12 649.74	1 046 495.10
Nick Xenophon Group	636 127.83	6 711.66	642 839.49
Country Liberals (Northern Territory)	207 512.94	2 098.57	209 611.51
Katter's Australian Party	166 711.35	1 664.05	168 375.40
Family First	103 724.45	1 042.74	104 767.19
Bullet Train for Australia	24 283.90	235.34	24 519.24
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	8 654.79	200.00	8 854.79
INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES			
Catherine McGOWAN	68 381.14	693.20	69 074.34
Andrew Damien WILKIE	60 802.12	621.62	61 423.74
Robert Edwin TABER	30 968.80	315.31	31 284.11
Lawrie McKINNA	19 136.74	177.60	19 314.34
Nathan Wade BRACKEN	17 439.92	200.00	17 639.92
Richard John SAGE	16 263.10	200.00	16 463.10
Stephen Gordon ATTKINS	16 123.77	200.00	16 323.77
Jamie Neville McINTYRE	14 884.74	190.05	15 074.79
Mark Marshall ALDRIDGE	9 077.75	200.00	9 277.75
<b>Total election funding paid</b>	<b>56 367 240.38</b>	<b>1 709 215.63</b>	<b>58 076 456.01</b>

### Disclosure arrangements/election returns

8.4.9 All candidates and those Senate groups which were not endorsed by a single political party in an election, are required to submit an election return to the AEC. Returns must be submitted within 15 weeks of election day for that election. Candidates and Senate groups are required to disclose the total amount of donations they received, the number of donors who provided these donations, and details for donations above the threshold and totals of electoral expenditure

in certain categories. Donors to candidates must lodge returns if they gave more than the threshold (\$12 400 for the 2013 federal election) to a candidate.

- 8.4.10 Candidates and Senate groups which have not been endorsed by a single party can appoint an agent responsible for fulfilling their disclosure return obligations. The deadline for appointing an agent is the same as lodging a nomination, and the appointment form must be received in the AEC's national office.
- 8.4.11 In practice, a number of candidates each election attempt to lodge agent appointment forms with their nomination at a divisional or state office or after the deadline. Extending this deadline by a short period would allow the AEC to contact candidates once they are known, and better inform less experienced candidates about the ability to appoint an agent. Similarly, allowing candidates to lodge agent appointment forms at any AEC office would reduce the incidence of candidates unsuccessfully attempting to appoint an agent.

**Recommendation 13:** That the Electoral Act be amended to allow candidates and senate groups to appoint agents up to the commencement of early voting (four days after the declaration of nominations) and to lodge the appointment form at any AEC office.

- 8.4.12 Election returns are published on the AEC's website 24 weeks after election day. The 2013 election returns were published on Monday 24 February 2014.
- 8.4.13 A breakdown of the election returns received is provided in Table 8.8.

**Table 8.8 Election returns received as at 24 February 2014**

Candidate returns		'Nil' returns		Senate group returns
no.		no.	%	no.
1 705		1 276	74.8	10

- 8.4.14 In addition to election returns, the AEC makes annual returns available on its website. Annual returns are submitted by registered political parties, their associated entities, donors and third parties who incur political expenditure over the threshold. The AEC made 2012–13 annual returns available on Monday 3 February 2014.
- 8.4.15 The 2013–14 annual returns, which will cover the period including the 2013 election, will be made available on Monday 2 February 2015.



## 9 Working with the media

### Key points:

- The AEC undertook a comprehensive media engagement strategy which included media briefings and targeted press releases throughout the election period.
- The AEC provided information to the media through media briefings, media releases, interviews and via social media.

### 9.1 Information provided to the media

#### Media engagement strategy

- 9.1.1 The AEC's National Office Media Unit constructed a media and public relations plan for the 2013 election. The purpose of the plan was to contribute towards maximising the electoral knowledge and effective participation of eligible Australian voters in the election through targeted media coverage.
- 9.1.2 Activities outlined in the plan were separated into the following five phases in order to increase awareness of the election, encourage enrolment, turnout and formal voting, and distribute election results.
- 9.1.3 The plan was also split into national, state and territory activities, designed to target national, major metropolitan and regional media.

#### Key channels

##### Media briefings

- 9.1.4 The AEC coordinated a series of media briefings in capital cities for senior editors and political journalists in July 2013. The purpose of these briefings was not to generate immediate news, but rather to:
- provide media outlets with a comprehensive briefing of the major issues throughout each phase of the 2013 election,
  - highlight key changes to the electoral process for the 2013 election,
  - brief media of soon-to-be launched enrolment activities, including promotional activities being conducted at professional sporting events across Australia,
  - provide media with a forum to ask questions and resolve queries, and
  - introduce media to key local personnel (state office media staff and state manager) and explain the different roles of various AEC personnel.

## **National and state and territory media releases**

9.1.5 National media releases were distributed throughout the election period highlighting key election messages to all states and territories. This included key messages surrounding the issue of writs, close of rolls, early voting options, formal voting, election results and declaration of nomination and results. All media releases are available at <http://www.aec.gov.au/media/media-releases/2013/index.htm>.

## **Media interviews**

9.1.6 More than one hundred media interviews were conducted by the AEC throughout the election period, including television, radio and press media outlets from metropolitan and regional areas of Australia. Pre-recorded audio messages were also picked up extensively by radio news bulletins. Radio interviews were conducted through either pro-active approaches to media or requests for interview.

## **Social Media**

9.1.7 The AEC Twitter account was used throughout the election period to complement other delivery channels.

9.1.8 The AEC also engaged prominent Twitter users to promote AEC messages. This included accounts such as the AFL, Triple J and Cricket Australia.

# 10 Election workforce

## Key points:

- The 2013 election was the second election where recruitment and training were able to be integrated and managed electronically in the AEC Employment System.
- The AEC is able to utilise the information contained within the AEC Employment System to maintain contact with its temporary workforce between elections. This system, combined with the Election Training System, enabled the AEC to improve the timeliness of recruitment of staff, deliver training and assessment online.
- Polling officials receiving home-based training are able to undertake the training and assessment online or in a workbook. Home-based training is complemented by face-to-face training, in which key messages are reinforced.
- The 2013 election temporary workforce of 73 507 people is reasonably stable in terms of age and gender. This may indicate the same mixes of people are available and/or attracted to this work over time. It also indicates that an aging workforce is an issue the AEC will need to address as part of future workforce planning.
- The number of hours worked by staff in order to meet legislated requirements is an ongoing concern to the AEC.

## 10.1 Recruitment

### The election workforce

- 10.1.1 For the purposes of conducting an election the AEC augments its existing workforce (employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*) with temporary staff in accordance with s.35 of the Electoral Act. The conduct of each election is not possible without this valued temporary workforce. To prepare and conduct the 2013 election the AEC employed 73 507 temporary staff; an increase of 9.9 per cent from the 66 874 employed for the 2010 election.
- 10.1.2 The announcement on 4 August 2013 for a 7 September 2013 election provided 33 days for the AEC to finalise recruitment and training of the temporary workforce. Of the 73 507 staff employed for the conduct of the election, 66 634 staff were employed to work on election day.

## Preparing for recruitment

- 10.1.3 The AEC maintains projected staffing estimates and reviews them periodically in anticipation of electoral events. In the absence of certainty the AEC had to be in a position to deliver a referendum concurrently with the 2013 election. The staffing estimates for the 2013 election were therefore based on the scenario that a referendum would be conducted at the same time.
- 10.1.4 Enhancements to the AEC's recruitment systems following the 2010 election enabled the AEC to maintain online contact with polling officials between electoral events. Previously the AEC, wrote to every applicant that provided a registration of interest form (ROIs) and only entered the ROIs for applicants who replied. The online system was primarily introduced to improve a process that was labour intensive, expensive and difficult to track.
- 10.1.5 From November 2011 the AEC commenced the first 'soft contact' mail-out where registered applicants were encouraged to update their ROI. A second mail-out was undertaken between February and April 2013. Applicants who were already registered were emailed and provided with information about how to log on to AEC Employment via the AEC's website. Applicants who were not registered for online access were contacted by mail or telephone and asked if they would like to be given online access to maintain their own details. If they wished they were still provided with the opportunity to update their information in hard copy. Key details updated through this process were contact details and periods when applicants would be unavailable. Currently 94.0 per cent of applicants are registered as on-line users.
- 10.1.6 Divisional and state office staff review ROIs, assess suitability and where possible match applicants to suitable roles. As part of the staffing plan, they are provisionally allocated to roles. This process identifies potential gaps in staffing to be addressed. This is an internal process only, used to support election planning and readiness. Applicants at this stage are given no assurance as to future work at this stage due to the polling date being unknown.

## Recruitment on election announcement

- 10.1.7 The 2013 election was announced on Sunday 4 August 2013 and the AEC commenced sending employment offers on Monday 5 August 2013.
- 10.1.8 During the 2013 election period the AEC sent 112 797 offers of employment. This indicates that the due to offers being declined or not responded to, the AEC offered the same positions more than once and approximately 36 per cent more activity was required. Some staff were still unable to work despite accepting a

role. On election day, 723 offers of employment were sent to fill vacant positions. Table 1 demonstrates the number of positions by type of role undertaken for the 2010 and 2013 elections.

**Table 1. Positions filled by type, 2010 and 2013 elections**

Type of role <sup>45</sup>	Positions filled at the 2010 election no.	Positions filled at the 2013 election no.	Difference no.
Declaration Vote Issuing Officer	13 046	13 087	+ 41
Electoral Visitor	534	594	+ 60
Electoral Visitor in Charge	456	458	+ 2
Inquiry Officer	1 978	1 819	- 159
Issuing Officer Interstate Voting Centre	884	1 039	+ 155
Issuing Officer PPVC (Pre election day)	1 581	2 344	+ 763
OIC 11+ issuing points	249	392	+ 143
OIC 1-3 issuing points	3 116	2 756	- 360
OIC 4-6 issuing points	2 546	2 420	- 126
OIC 7-10 issuing points	1 630	1 983	+ 353
OIC Interstate Voting Centre	330	352	+ 22
OIC PPVC (Pre election day)	373	351	- 22
Part Day Polling Assistant (5 hrs as directed)	182	1 898	+1 716
Part Day Polling Assistant (8 hrs as directed)	12	6	- 6
Polling Assistant (includes counting after 6pm)	31 405	34 094	+2 689
Polling Place Liaison Officer	797	838	+ 41
PPVC Scrutiny	0	1367	+1 367
Pre-poll 2IC	0	145	+ 145
Remote Area Mobile Polling Assistant	84	5	- 79
Remote Mobile Assistant Team Leader	11	11	+ 0
Remote Mobile Team Leader	29	43	+ 14
Remote Mobile Team Member	45	17	- 28
Scrutiny Assistant	2 397	1 709	- 688
Second in Charge	3 941	4 256	+ 315
Temporary Assistant Level 1	8 287	9 840	+1 553
Temporary Assistant Level 2	340	432	+ 92
Trainer Polling Staff (TOPS)	22	65	+ 43
Voter Information Officer	0	319	+ 319
<b>Total</b>	<b>74 275</b>	<b>82 640</b>	<b>+8 365</b>

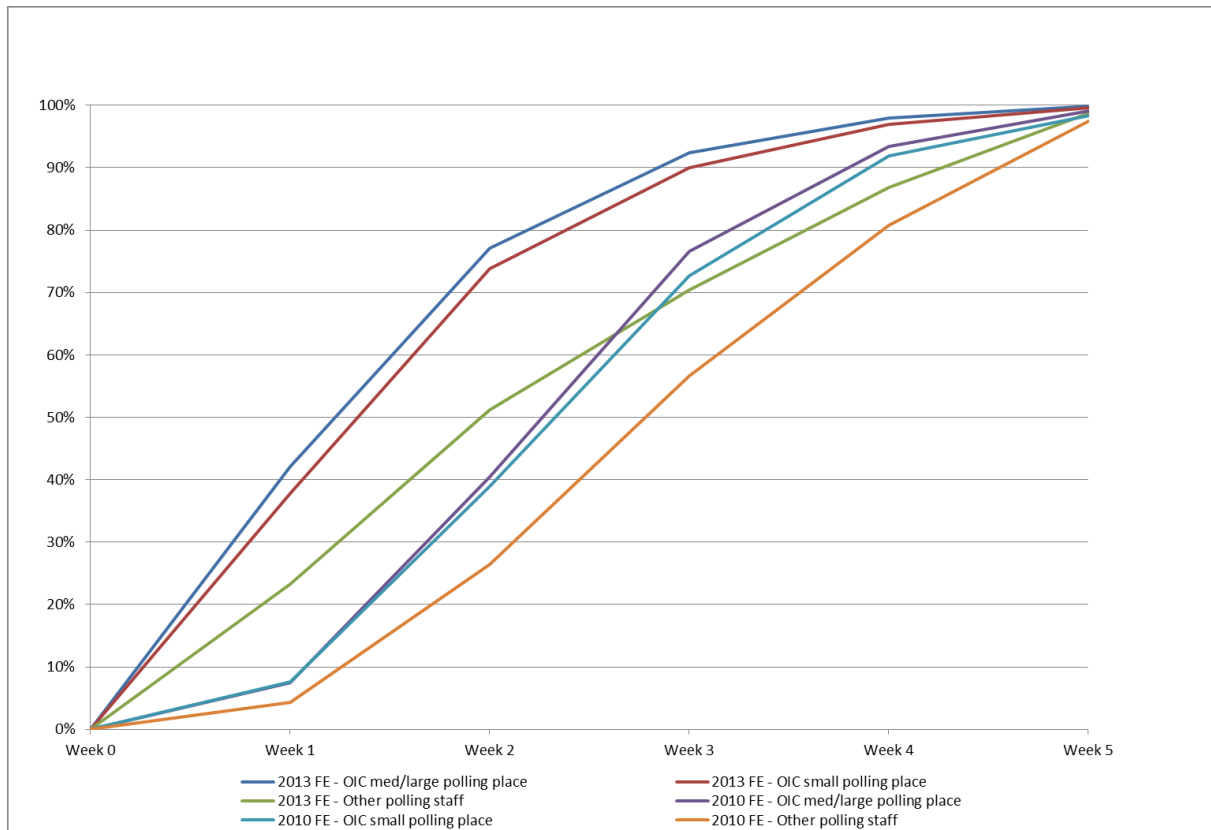
10.1.9 Divisional and state offices send employment offers as they are completed. This process is undertaken in order of priority, for example, temporary office staff and pre-poll staff are offered employment in the initial week or shortly thereafter.

<sup>45</sup> These figure does not include AEC permanent staff and other APS staff undertaking these roles.

When the applicant allocated to a role is no longer available a replacement is sought. Applicants who accept an offer then provide information to support payment of their entitlements. The offer is confirmed when all information is validated.

10.1.10 Figure 10.1 shows the progressive filling of vacancies in each week between election announcement and election day.

**Figure 10.1 Acceptance of polling official positions at the 2010 and 2013 federal elections<sup>46</sup>**



10.1.11 The data shows that OIC roles were filled faster than other officials; and that OICs for medium to large polling booths were appointed slightly faster than those for smaller booths demonstrating the AEC’s priority for staffing. It should be noted that as some staff prefer to transact in hard copy there is a short time lag in the acceptance and confirmation of those offers. Further analysis shows that in 2013 99.7 per cent of all OICs (compared to 98.7 per cent in 2010) and 98.4 per cent

<sup>46</sup> As the timeframe between the respective announcement of the 2013 and 2010 elections and election day was different for each, the graph compares data over two different time periods. As both datasets finish on election day, the data in Week 1 is not aligned to allow for the two different timeframes.

of other polling officials (compared to 97.2 per cent in 2010) had accepted up to election day.

10.1.12 For the 2013 election, 27.0 per cent of offers were accepted on the day they were sent (25.9 per cent in 2010), with a total of 74.5 per cent accepted within five days of being sent (65.6 per cent in 2010). The increased speed is likely due to greater familiarity of both AEC staff and applicants transacting online.

10.1.13 As discussed above the staffing plan was developed assuming a referendum may be conducted, it was initially anticipated that not all positions would be filled. As the election progressed and there were higher than anticipated work volumes in some areas, plans were revised and many of those positions were offered. For example, contemporaneous feedback indicated that even where staffing models had been based on higher pre-poll voting volumes, the actual volumes were greater than anticipated and changes in staffing levels were required.

10.1.14 Staffing and filling of vacancies continues after election day to meet the needs of post-polling work, for example counting and scrutiny centres and declaration vote exchange. The number of staff used can vary depending on work volumes and the progress of counting processes.

### **Challenges and targeted recruitment**

10.1.15 Uncertainty relating to the election dates renders attempts at advance recruitment ineffective. Having a sufficient number of skilled and knowledgeable staff, particularly on election day, in the right locations is a key element in the successful running of any election. Just over half of all staff, as outlined below, have previous election experience but there is still a need to refresh their skills and train new recruits.

10.1.16 There are some processes for which the AEC uses labour hire agencies to source and supply staff. For example in data processing centres where a required standard of speed and accuracy of data entry is required and the agencies undertake the necessary testing prior to putting staff forward.

10.1.17 Where specialised cultural and language skills are required the AEC has tried a range of approaches to recruitment, including:

- field staff utilising existing networks,
- calling on community and employer organisations in target regions, and
- promotions at information days and community events.

10.1.18 These strategies were utilised to implement the new voter information officers program in some locations (see paragraphs 7.2.119 and 7.2.120). For example,



in the Northern Territory a new partnership with the DHS was established to match AEC temporary staff in teams with DHS field staff. This assisted the AEC to fully staff remote teams and include staff with language skills and/or community contacts in local areas.

10.1.19 IEPP efforts were able to almost double the Indigenous proportion of the casual election workforce in 2013 compared with 2010.

10.1.20 AEC offices report difficulty recruiting staff for specific roles, periods or locations, for example, counting on election night. Feedback suggests that this can be due to unavailability, lack of continued interest in this work, perceived attractiveness of the work or terms and conditions and competition in individual labour markets.

10.1.21 With respect to the terms and conditions, in particular the pay rates set for the 2013 election, the AEC is mindful of the:

- minimum employment standards,
- comparative rates paid by state electoral authorities, taking into account jurisdictional differences (AEC rates are usually in the median of this group),
- pay rates and pay rises in the Australian Public Service generally, and
- affordability of any changes.

### Continuously improving our employment processes

10.1.22 Following the 2010 election substantial work was undertaken to review the first operation of the employment and training systems and develop changes to address issues identified. Further releases of functionality were made to the employment systems in readiness for the 2013 event.

10.1.23 The AEC incorporated improvements and in April 2013 conducted a full end to end test of the employment systems, incorporating recruitment, training and payment functions. This test involved around 350 potential polling officials working from home to participate in relevant test stages and provide their feedback. The AEC continues to introduce enhancements to its employment systems and processes.

## 10.2 Election workforce composition and distribution

### Composition

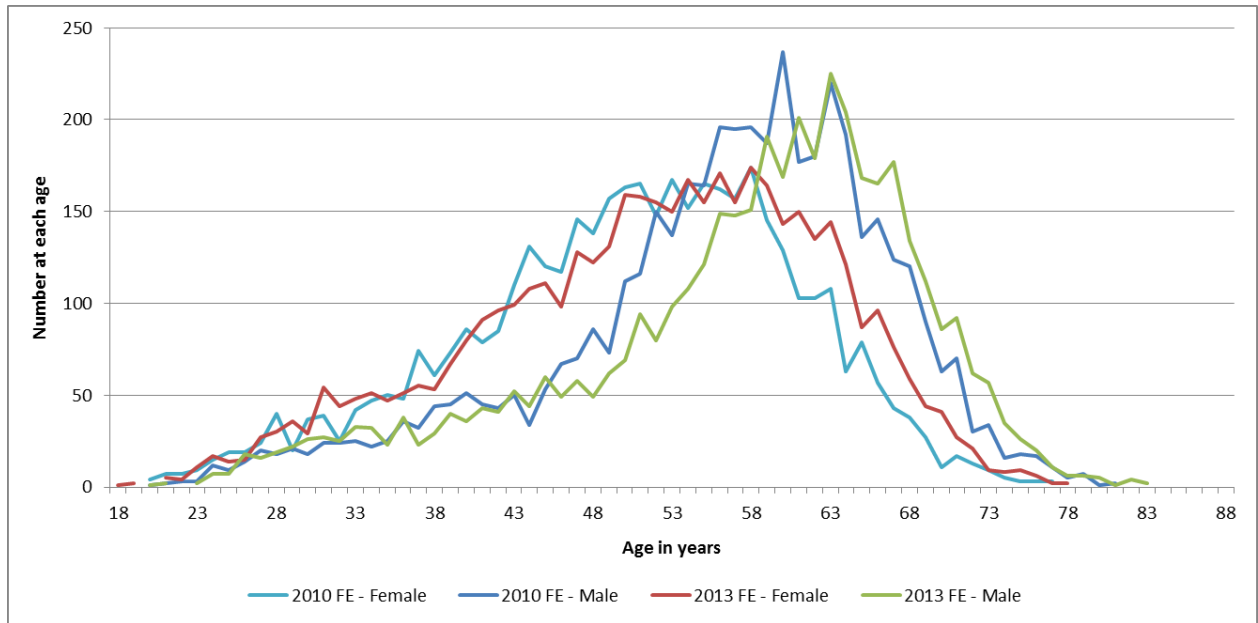
10.2.1 Of the temporary workforce employed for the 2013 election:

- 52.9 per cent of polling staff recruited indicated they had had previous election experience, with 47.2 per cent employed by the AEC at the 2010 election,

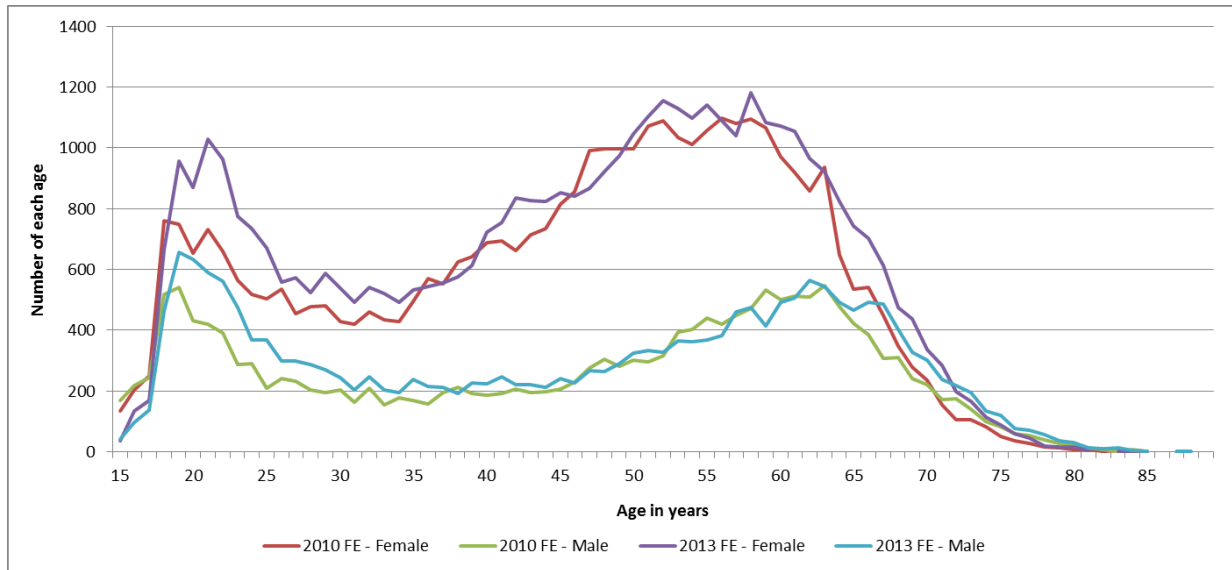
- 32.8 per cent were under the age of 40 years, whilst 13.6 per cent were 65 years of age or older (10.7 per cent in 2010),
- 64.9 per cent of polling officials (including pre-poll staff) and other election staff were female and 35.1 per cent were male,
- Of the OICs employed 51.6 per cent were female and 48.4 per cent were male.

10.2.2 Figures 10.2 and 10.3 provide more detail on age by role type.

**Figure 10.2 OICs by gender and age at the 2013 and 2010 elections**



**Figure 10.3 Polling assistants by gender and age at the 2010 and 2013 elections<sup>47</sup>**



10.2.3 Table 10.1 below indicates the proportion of staff (including pre-poll) employed for the 2013 and 2010 elections who indicated they could speak a language(s) other than English.

**Table 10.1 Proportion of staff who indicated proficiency in a language other than English, 2010 and 2013 elections**

Staffing classification	2010 federal election		2013 federal election	
	Second language spoken %	Third language spoken %	Second language spoken %	Third language spoken %
OIC med/large polling place	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.1
OIC small polling place	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0
Other polling staff	8.1	1.5	10.5	2.5
Temporary assistants and trainers	0.8	0.2	1.5	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>

10.2.4 As indicated earlier Figures 10.2 and 10.3 suggest that the composition of the workforce in terms of age and gender is fairly stable, with a slight increase in age of some polling official groups over election events. This seems to indicate that the same mix of people are available and/or attracted to this work over time and

<sup>47</sup> Polling assistants are all polling officials excluding OICs.

also indicates that an aging workforce is an issue the AEC may need to address in coming years as part of workforce planning. The change in the mix of roles undertaken indicates responsiveness to factors such as voting patterns, number and location of voters.

## Distribution

10.2.5 Table 10.2 provides a snapshot of total positions by state, comparing 2010 and 2013 events.

**Table 10.2 Positions filled by state/territory, 2010 and 2013 elections**

State/territory	2010 no)	2013 no.	Change 2010–2013 %
NSW	24 984	28 625	14.6
Vic.	18 012	19 306	7.2
Qld	13 999	15 782	12.7
WA	7 559	8 308	9.9
SA	5 866	6 387	8.9
Tas.	2161	2 283	5.6
ACT	1 028	1 207	17.4
NT	666	742	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>74 275</b>	<b>82 640</b>	<b>11.3</b>

## 10.3 Training

### Delivering training and instructions for polling staff

10.3.1 Upon confirmation of employment AEC election staff are provided with training materials relevant to their role and further support materials that included:

- The Election Procedures Handbook, containing all required information relevant to each staff member's role to conduct polling and undertake counting, sent to each polling official. It also incorporates administrative, emergency and workplace health and safety guidance. Copies are also available in each polling place.
- The DVD sent to each polling official. This was developed in 2012 to provide information about what a polling place looks like, how it operates, team work and procedures. A shortened version was also available on YouTube.
- Role badges and quick reference guide on polling official lanyards.

- Place cards with quick reference guide for all issuing officers and officers in charge in static and pre-poll polling places.
- 10.3.2 The AEC requires senior polling officials to undertake training prior to polling day and the commencement of their duties. This training is designed to provide polling officials with the skills and knowledge to competently perform their role. Junior polling officials such as polling assistants, ballot box guards and queue controllers are provided with other tools and training materials to ensure they are aware of their duties. This is complemented by further on-site training on election day morning and they can refer to guides during election day as needed.
- 10.3.3 In preparation for the 2013 election the AEC implemented the recommendations from the Gray Report by increasing the training to be provided to pre-poll officers and ensuring that all pre-poll staff received training. The AEC also incorporated some changes to the delivery of training and improved the support materials based on feedback and suggestions from employees at the 2010 election. This included a greater focus on practical and effective training of senior polling officials who received enhanced training packages. Furthermore, based on feedback delivery of training to polling assistants, ballot box guards and queue controllers were delivered on-site on election day morning so as to maximise the retention of information for what are generally less complex tasks.
- 10.3.4 Within 24 hours of confirmation of offers of employment the employee is enrolled in the curriculum and invited to commence their training. For the 2013 election senior polling officials were required to complete a two stage training program:
- initial home-based training, and
  - further face-to-face learning.
- 10.3.5 Options for the method of undertaking home-based training coupled with the delivery of face-to-face training are provided in recognition of differences in individual learning preferences.
- 10.3.6 Home-based training in may be completed online or staff may opt to receive a workbook that is completed and returned to the divisional office. The content remains the same for both methods of delivery, and incorporates assessments to be completed and reviewed. The online delivery integrates assessments and results that are provided to the participant during the course. The assessments contained within the workbooks returned to the divisional office are reviewed by staff to ensure competency. Upon completion of the home-based training employees attend the face-to-face training component.

10.3.7 DROs deliver face-to-face sessions allowing them to provide any local information, meet their polling staff and allow them to ask questions relating to the home based training. This also enables the reinforcement of any key messages, legislative changes or conduct practical exercises. Divisional staff are supported with a resources to guide these sessions. The logistics of delivering face-to-face training presents challenges for divisions, with delivery required in a very short period prior to the commencement of polling.

### **Timing of delivery of training for polling staff**

10.3.8 In 2013 there were 32 184 senior polling officials who were required to undertake training.

10.3.9 26 025, or 80.9 per cent, of senior polling officials completed the required home-based training on-line. The remaining 6 159, or 19.1 per cent, completed manual workbooks with divisional staff monitoring and confirming completion.

10.3.10 Over 80 per cent of staff had completed their on-line courses by the second last week before the election day and 100 per cent in the last week before the election.

### **Continuously improving our training systems**

10.3.11 The Election Training System was included in the end to end test program, which included interaction with potential polling officials. With respect to training, the potential polling officials were assigned a curriculum, asked to complete the program within the expected timeframe and provide detailed feedback. This provided valuable input to 'fine tune' the system. The election training system was tested for capacity and disaster recovery in conjunction with the external provider hosting the system.

10.3.12 For future events the AEC will institute additional reporting requirements for the completion of training to ensure that there is clear statistical evidence of training completion rates. This largely due to the current inability to determine in real time the completion rate of training undertaken offline without significant manual intervention during peak workload periods.

10.3.13 The AEC commenced an evaluation of polling official training in November 2013 which is yet to be finalised. This process involves direct engagement with polling officials. It focusses on the effectiveness of the online, home based and face-to-face training and ease of use of the Election Training System. Results from this evaluation will inform the AEC's training strategy for future events.

## 10.4 Work health and safety

### Work Health and Safety Act 2011

- 10.4.1 The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* requires more importance to be placed on work health and safety matters including greater personal responsibility on managers for the health and wellbeing of staff, and the premises under their control. These responsibilities extend to OICs at their respective polling places. The AEC took measures to ensure all staff understood their responsibilities arising under the Work Health and Safety Act. New guidance and factsheets were prepared and distributed and improved content was incorporated in training and employment materials. Key messages included minimum rest break and overnight break requirements.
- 10.4.2 Prior to any electoral event the AEC inspects all polling places to ensure that each:
- meets the AEC's legislative and operational requirements, and
  - satisfies the requirements of the Work Health and Safety Act.
- 10.4.3 In tight property markets and with the uncertainty of polling dates this can be difficult for some divisions to manage. Despite the potential risks that could occur in polling (including mobile polling) and the large size of the temporary workforce, the number of incidents reported is low and of those the severity is generally low.
- 10.4.4 The AEC captures:
- incidents (resulting in injury), and
  - near hits and hazards (identified events or issues with potential to harm but not yet resulting in injury).
- 10.4.5 For the 2013 election 205 issues were reported, an increase of 15 per cent from the 2010 election (where there were 174 issues reported). Of the issues in 2013, 74.1 per cent were incidents, compared to 97.7 per cent in 2010. Only five incidents in 2013 involved serious injury, compared to seven in 2010.
- 10.4.6 The reported number of near hits and hazards has increased, reflecting earlier alerts for issues so that remediation action may be taken. At the 2013 election, 51.7 per cent of incidents related to slips, trips and falls in or around AEC venues, compared to 61.5 per cent at the 2010 election.

## Managing workflow and rostering in polling places

- 10.4.7 Polling staff typically commence from 7am and work until the initial count is complete. This allows the AEC to provide an indicative election result on election night.
- 10.4.8 There is pressure associated with counting the increasing volumes of ballot papers within limited timeframes. Increasing numbers of candidates have a multiplying effect on the counts required for the two candidate preferred count. The time taken to complete this task is impacted by the number of candidates, the number of votes cast and the number of staff allocated for the scrutiny.
- 10.4.9 To alleviate this, and other workflow related pressures, there is provision to utilise part-day staff in polling places; staff may be offered either a 5 or 8 hour role. In busy polling places these part-day resources may be used to alleviate peak periods or allow other staff to take meal breaks. At the 2013 election 1 898 - 5 hour (182 in 2010) and 6 - 8 hour roles (12 in 2010) were utilised.

## 10.5 Staff feedback

- 10.5.1 All AEC staff are provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on their own work experiences during the election period, or on behalf of temporary staff that they have supervised or recruited. The AEC conducts an Election Evaluation process which forms a key part of engagement with ongoing staff. Suggestions and comments are received directly by relevant business areas for consideration and further exploration. The content of this chapter reflects the major issues with temporary staffing that were raised after the 2013 election. A number of operational issues have been noted for future work, primarily relating to:
- continuous improvement of our systems,
  - improving guidance for staff in the administration of employment, training and payment processes, and
  - streamlining processing for entitlements.
- 10.5.2 In relation to polling official training the AEC is currently evaluating the effectiveness of this process as identified at paragraph 10.3.4. While analysis is not yet complete, one result from a survey of polling officials found that 78.6 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the face-to-face workshop training they received focused on relevant skills required to perform their core role. In addition, 89.2 per cent of respondents stated that they referred to the Election Procedures handbook during the course of their employment with the AEC.



10.5.3 To support our staff in the employment, training and payment of staff there was a help desk in National Office. In the 13 weeks of the 2013 election period the help desk took 11 355 calls and 7 612 emails from divisional office staff or from temporary staff themselves. Many of these were easily answered queries, requests for information or minor issues. A very small number, approximately 50, were more complex requiring escalation and a more formal response from the AEC. These items covered a variety of topics including terms and conditions, working conditions, access to systems and training and pay related matters (including taxation and superannuation).

# 11 Cost of the 2013 election

## Key points:

- The total cost of the 2013 election was \$190 982 759, including \$58 076 456 of public funding.

11.1.1 Table 11.1 below sets out the cost of conducting the 2013 election.

**Table 11.1 Cost of conducting the 2007, 2010 and 2013 elections**

	2007 federal election expenses (as at 30 June 2008) \$	2010 federal election expenses (as at 30 June 2011) <sup>48</sup> \$	2013 federal election expenses (as at 31 January 2014) \$
Employee expenses	42 466 087	51 400 125	65 144 793
Property, Office Supplies and Services (inc. Venue/Equip Hire, Security, Stationery)	6 186 750	8 009 783	11 566 251
Election Cardboard and Supplies (inc. Electoral Forms, Envelopes, Ballot Paper, Screens)	4 560 189	3 197 037	4 077 358
Contractors	1 930 722	5 606 260	5 018 444
Consultancy	1 244 097	902 471	502 668
Travel	2 747 900	2 964 308	3 158 392
Advertising, Promotion and Media Services	29 544 339	10 139 100	13 563 555
ICT Services	10 682 556	8 991 740	9 590 527
Mailing and Freight Services	8 215 186	6 553 798	10 468 028
Printing and Publications	4 610 041	9 488 995	7 170 551
Legal Services	342 148	411 869	2 326 873
Other Expenses	632 844	662 574	318 863
<i>Sub total</i>	<i>113 162 860</i>	<i>108 328 060</i>	<i>132 906 303</i>
Public funding	49 002 639	53 163 385	58 076 456
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>162 165 498</b>	<b>161 491445</b>	<b>190 982 759</b>

<sup>48</sup> An amount of \$3.234 million has been reclassified from Inventory to Printing costs to reflect changes in categorisation of expenses in relation to the 2013 election.

11.1.2 Excluding the election readiness activities, election costs increased from \$104.24 million for the 2010 election to \$124.88<sup>49</sup> million for the 2013 election. This increase relates predominately to the following:

- CPI and salary increases for temporary staff over the three year period equating to approximately \$9.50 million.
- The rate of enrolment has been estimated to have increased by 4.4 per cent which equates to approximately \$5.00 million.
- The introduction and development of the Electronic Certified List resulted in a cost of \$1.5 million to the AEC in relation to the 2013 election. These expenses were not incurred in relation to the 2010 election.
- The cost of the re-count for the WA Senate election and associated legal costs in relation to the application to the High Court are approximately \$2.75 million.

11.1.3 Other movements impacting the overall position includes:

- Increased costs of advertising due to a greater fragmentation in voter communication consumption habits.
- Increased property and venue hire costs due to additional premises requirements for pre-polling.
- Decrease in the cost of production of householder guides, due to a reduction in the size of the guide in 2013.
- The staffing requirements for polling place officials to be hired were based on an estimate required to conduct a combined House of Representatives, Senate and referendum poll. It was only at the time that the election was called that the AEC had confirmation that the referendum would not go ahead. At this time the impact of reconfiguring support systems and staffing plans to reflect only a House of Representatives and Senate poll was considered to be a high risk action in terms of its impact on election delivery requirements. As a result a higher staffing level than normal was recruited for the election.
- The cost of the automatic re-count in the Division of Fairfax of some \$180 000.

11.1.4 The total cost of the 2013 election includes \$8.0 million of costs incurred in relation election readiness, compared to \$4.085 million in relation to the 2010 election. The AEC was not funded for election readiness activities, including the conduct of a simulated election, in relation to the 2013 election.

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<sup>49</sup> This figure does not include costs of \$8.030 million incurred in relation election readiness. Election readiness at the 2010 cost \$4.085 million. The AEC was not funded for election readiness activities in relation to the 2013 election.

## 12 Summary of recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of recommendations that have been made throughout the text of the document. Note that a number of recommendations of a technical nature are also made at Appendix G.

### The election for the Division of Fairfax

**Recommendation 1:** That the Electoral Act be amended to create separate re-count procedures for House of Representatives and Senate elections, to clearly specify the officer in charge of the re-count and the management practices regarding the handling and transfer of ballot papers (including a recognition of Central Senate Scrutiny (CSS)).

**Recommendation 2:** That the Electoral Act be amended to specifically allow officers or persons acting under the direction of the Electoral Commissioner to perform the functions of the ARO or the DRO when conducting the scrutiny (including recounts) for the Senate and House of Representatives.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Electoral Act be amended to harmonise the rules governing the role of scrutineers during both the scrutiny and the re-count of ballot papers during an election.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Electoral Act be amended to provide that the scrutineers for a candidate may only object to a ballot paper once during the original scrutiny, once during fresh scrutiny and once during a re-count.

### Senate Voting in 2013

**Recommendation 5:** The AEC recommends that it be requested to provide the JSCEM with technical options which may address concerns in relation to the size and legibility of Senate ballot papers.

### Serving electors

**Recommendation 6:** That the Electoral Act be amended to extend the electronically assisted blind and low vision voting arrangements to Antarctic electors and those that currently require an assisted vote due to being incapable of completing a ballot paper. In the event that a broader trial of electronic voting is legislated, the AEC would want to maintain this option for these electors.

**Recommendation 7:** In order for electronic voting to be introduced specific legislative amendments would be required. The AEC's experience with electronic voting, and the

information that could be gathered to assist in decision making on the adoption or form of electronic voting, would be of assistance to the committee.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Electoral Act and the Referendum Act be amended to enable the Electoral Commissioner to issue penalty notices to electors who appear to have failed to vote at the last election or referendum.

### **Working with political parties, groups and candidates**

**Recommendation 9:** That the Electoral Act, and any other required Acts are amended to permit the AEC to accept nominations electronically in a suitable format

**Recommendation 10:** That s.211(6) of the Electoral Act be amended to establish a hierarchy for who may lodge a GVT of behalf of a group, avoiding the possibility of conflicting GVT's being lodged by people capable of doing so.

**Recommendation 11:** That the Electoral Act be amended so that the authorisation requirements for How-to-vote cards under s.328B(1) be extended across other forms of published material where there is an existing requirement for authorisation.

**Recommendation 12:** That s.385A of the Electoral Act be amended to provide that the authorisation details contained on how-to-vote cards will be admissible as evidence of that fact.

**Recommendation 13:** That the Electoral Act be amended to allow candidates and senate groups to appoint agents up to the commencement of early voting (four days after the declaration of nominations) and to lodge the appointment form at any AEC office.

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## Appendix C Enrolment statistics

**Table C.1 Enrolments of electors entitled to vote on 2013 election day (7 September 2013), by state/territory and division<sup>50</sup>**

Division	Enrolment no.	Division	Enrolment no.
<b>NSW</b>			
Banks	101 500	Lyne	97 127
Barton	98 688	Macarthur	97 962
Bennelong	102 542	Mackellar	102 842
Berowra	97 021	Macquarie	100 689
Blaxland	100 284	McMahon	99 286
Bradfield	100 493	Mitchell	97 663
Calare	102 044	New England	102 132
Charlton	98 534	Newcastle	97 385
Chifley	102 385	North Sydney	101 321
Cook	104 184	Page	95 710
Cowper	97 156	Parkes	101 903
Cunningham	104 084	Parramatta	98 565
Dobell	99 265	Paterson	97 107
Eden-Monaro	100 030	Reid	103 731
Farrer	94 528	Richmond	97 379
Fowler	99 128	Riverina	100 116
Gilmore	101 447	Robertson	100 820
Grayndler	104 808	Shortland	96 932
Greenway	101 842	Sydney	106 402
Hughes	101 490	Throsby	98 415
Hume	102 321	Warringah	102 673
Hunter	97 292	Watson	101 329
Kingsford Smith	102 418	Wentworth	109 347

<sup>50</sup> Note that this data includes electors added to and deleted from the roll through the notebook roll.

Division	Enrolment no.	Division	Enrolment no.
Lindsay	101 241	Werriwa	96 054
<b>Total NSW</b>			<b>4 610 795</b>
<b>VICTORIA</b>			
Aston	94 291	Hotham	97 615
Ballarat	103 480	Indi	98 582
Batman	103 245	Isaacs	97 930
Bruce	94 817	Kooyong	97 125
Calwell	102 685	La Trobe	98 007
Casey	97 707	Lalor	107 399
Chisholm	96 259	Mallee	97 371
Corangamite	101 728	Maribyrnong	104 909
Corio	101 158	McEwen	111 962
Deakin	97 327	McMillan	105 743
Dunkley	99 008	Melbourne	99 013
Flinders	105 376	Melbourne Ports	93 518
Gellibrand	102 141	Menzies	98 580
Gippsland	99 528	Murray	100 134
Goldstein	100 554	Scullin	103 695
Gorton	102 262	Wannon	96 011
Higgins	98 452	Wills	105 501
Holt	102 589	<b>Total Vic.</b>	<b>3 719 798</b>
<b>QUEENSLAND</b>			
Blair	88 634	Hinkler	94 449
Bonner	95 477	Kennedy	96 394
Bowman	95 874	Leichhardt	99 402
Brisbane	97 374	Lilley	100 164
Capricornia	94 409	Longman	94 050
Dawson	98 171	Maranoa	99 614
Dickson	94 376	McPherson	94 467
Fadden	91 763	Moncrieff	92 679
Fairfax	95 467	Moreton	94 288
Fisher	88 388	Oxley	86 815
Flynn	95 362	Petrie	92 973
Forde	88 346	Rankin	96 498

Division	Enrolment no.	Division	Enrolment no.
Griffith	97 415	Ryan	100 652
Groom	96 916	Wide Bay	95 132
Herbert	97 236	Wright	90 316
		<b>Total Qld</b>	<b>2 843 101</b>
<b>WA</b>			
Brand	99 832	Moore	97 202
Canning	101 752	O'Connor	95 121
Cowan	95 525	Pearce	101 324
Curtin	94 388	Perth	95 226
Durack	90 867	Stirling	96 289
Forrest	96 906	Swan	95 287
Fremantle	100 833	Tangney	94 848
Hasluck	98 466	<b>Total WA</b>	<b>1 453 866</b>
<b>SA</b>			
Adelaide	102 978	Makin	102 820
Barker	103 335	Mayo	100 521
Boothby	104 032	Port Adelaide	105 257
Grey	100 749	Sturt	101 845
Hindmarsh	106 794	Wakefield	103 458
Kingston	98 776	<b>Total SA</b>	<b>1 130 565</b>
<b>TASMANIA</b>			
Bass	72 195	Franklin	73 594
Braddon	71 677	Lyons	73 909
Denison	71 761	<b>Total Tas.</b>	<b>363 136</b>
<b>ACT</b>			
Canberra	127 422	Fraser	138 047
		<b>ACT total</b>	<b>265 469</b>
<b>NT</b>			
Lingiari	65 937	Solomon	63 267
		<b>NT total</b>	<b>129 204</b>
		<b>NATIONAL TOTAL</b>	<b>14 722 754</b>

**Table C.2 Enrolment transactions processed during the 2013 close of rolls period (5-12 August 2013), by source of enrolment and state/territory**

State/ territory	Online enrolment service no.	Division issued no.	Post office no.	Internet – other <sup>51</sup> no.	Direct enrolment and update no.	State electoral no.	Mail review no.	Citizenship ceremonies no.	Transport authorities no.	COAN – Aust. Post <sup>52</sup> no.	Other <sup>53</sup> no.	Total no.
NSW	164 201	5 096	6 602	4 913	2 591	517	1 367	823	1	192	1 172	<b>187 475</b>
Vic.	139 495	7 538	5 615	2 845	5 736	3 626	1 364	1 286	1	114	873	<b>168 493</b>
Qld	115 187	4 588	5 050	2 238	667	736	1 126	442	901	117	814	<b>131 866</b>
WA	42 523	2 529	1 539	932	498	459	525	597	396	70	1 234	<b>51 302</b>
SA	44 614	2 378	3 202	1 500	381	887	640	246	66	29	536	<b>54 479</b>
Tas.	10 523	755	576	184	58	269	111	73	11	9	248	<b>12 817</b>
ACT	12 587	149	214	424	59	14	121	205	-	18	252	<b>14 043</b>
NT	5 321	119	117	78	47	219	33	8	4	1	834	<b>6 781</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>534 451</b>	<b>23 152</b>	<b>22 915</b>	<b>13 114</b>	<b>10 037</b>	<b>6 727</b>	<b>5 287</b>	<b>3 680</b>	<b>1 380</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>5 963</b>	<b>627 256</b>

<sup>51</sup> Includes static pdf forms and SmartForms.

<sup>52</sup> The AEC stopped the Change of Address Notification (COAN) service with Australia Post on 12 August 2013.

<sup>53</sup> Includes, for example, Department of Human Services, Federal Polling Place and SAF.

**Table C.3 Enrolments received between the 2010 close of rolls period and 2013 election announcement (27 July 2010-4 August 2013), by type and source of enrolment**

Enrolment source	New enrolment no.	Reenrolment no.	Reinstatement no.	Changes no.	Total no.
Online Enrolment Service	72 767	30 070	0	998 190	1 101 027
Direct Enrolment and Update	39 909	50 029	0	699 804	789 742
Internet – Smartform	30 567	19 937	12	696 780	747 296
Mail Review	198 708	74 072	126	406 250	679 156
State Electoral Office Sourced	83 394	38 587	36	414 305	536 322
Post Office	42 030	17 415	10	374 982	434 437
Divisional office Issued	18 574	20 357	6 711	268 494	314 136
Transport Authorities	6 226	7 419	6	256 444	270 095
Citizenship Ceremonies	230 659	813	6	7 818	239 296
Internet-Static	11 404	7 380	57	136 987	155 828
Polling Place(Federal)	6 834	25 006	34	123 787	155 661
Declaration Envelope State Election	8 838	14 820	0	59 820	83 478
EOI Ack EFs <sup>54</sup>	63	20	0	74 635	74 718
Birthday Cards	46 325	71	0	1 462	47 858
State Elections	2 402	13 295	0	21 122	36 819
Resident Tenancies	904	851	0	26 004	27 759
School Visits	18 573	114	2	2 028	20 717
Change of address notification - Aust. Post	15	89	0	18 438	18 542
MPs and Parties	1 913	845	0	14 058	16 816
Medicare	2 008	883	0	13 394	16 285
Other Non-Government Agencies	512	423	0	14 737	15 672
Voter Advice	1 291	9 853	29	2 999	14 172
Divisional Office Enrol Initiatives	2 221	667	0	8 756	11 644
State office Initiatives	188	167	3	7 471	7 829

<sup>54</sup> Forms issued with acknowledgement letters to electors who do not meet both the federal and state requirements in regard to EOI legislative requirements.

Enrolment source	New enrolment no.	Reenrolment no.	Reinstatement no.	Changes no.	Total no.
Indigenous Electoral Participation Program	2 723	794	2	4 144	7 663
Fieldwork(Non-SAF)	865	584	4	5 998	7 451
Divisional office other	399	428	6	6 409	7 242
Local Council	344	239	0	6 631	7 214
Other Government Agencies	817	289	0	5 400	6 506
Local Government Elections	217	232	1	5 215	5 665
Sample Audit Fieldwork	785	454	16	4 333	5 588
O Week (Universities)	2 513	111	1	1 940	4 565
Direct Elector	128	274	12	3 873	4 287
State MPs	864	171	0	3 105	4 140
Enrol to Vote Week	3 142	31	5	683	3 861
Attributed to Mail Review	618	403	16	2 594	3 631
Divisional office displays	398	275	0	2 581	3 254
Community Visit	1 112	122	0	1 187	2 421
Citizenship Ceremony Divisional Follow-up	1 872	15	0	236	2 123
State office displays	1 150	76	0	849	2 075
Centrelink	278	150	0	1 451	1 879
State office Ad hoc Mail outs	621	123	1	951	1 696
Other Initiatives	182	102	0	1 194	1 478
Electoral Education Centre	1 131	28	0	210	1 369
Local Government Offices	94	44	0	920	1 058
State office issued	134	54	0	869	1 057
National Office issued	52	92	0	599	743
State Electoral Commission other initiative	533	8	0	191	732
Elector Initiated	60	29	9	547	645
Rural Transaction centres	28	23	0	319	370
State Electoral	40	15	0	249	304

Enrolment source	New enrolment no.	Reenrolment no.	Reinstatement no.	Changes no.	Total no.
Commission issued					
Indigenous Initiatives	109	14	0	69	192
Bounty/Exit Schemes	37	7	0	63	107
Declaration Envelope Federal	5	4	0	76	85
NBR Addition	18	5	6	55	84
Non Attendance Card (Fieldwork)	20	3	0	59	82
Rock Enrol	2	4	1	58	65
Acknowledgment letter amendment	1	3	1	48	53
State Direct Enrol	0	1	0	24	25
Attributed to Fieldwork	1	2	0	12	15
SMS Requests	1	0	0	9	10
State Electoral Commission internet	2	2	0	4	8
Internet SCC	1	0	0	0	1
Unknown/not supplied	1 638	1 282	240	10 662	13 822
<b>Total</b>	<b>849 260</b>	<b>339 676</b>	<b>7 353</b>	<b>4 722 582</b>	<b>5 918 871</b>



**Table C.4 Additions to the roll<sup>55</sup> between the 2010 close of rolls and 2013 election announcement (27 July 2010-4 August 2013), by age group and jurisdiction of enrolment**

Age group at enrolment	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld no.	WA no.	SA no.	Tas. no.	ACT no.	NT no.	Total no.
16	13 678	10 139	10 552	4 570	3 681	4 402	876	259	<b>48 157</b>
17	33 493	65 746	40 580	19 902	18 754	6 621	4 524	1 159	<b>190 779</b>
18	86 305	66 724	55 274	30 492	18 379	7 268	5 507	2 846	<b>272 795</b>
19	19 762	13 785	17 865	10 619	5 096	1 243	2 206	1 223	<b>71 799</b>
20-24	29 646	28 061	28 071	18 160	8 418	2 241	2 552	3 315	<b>120 464</b>
25-29	36 670	32 740	24 549	15 405	6 776	1 866	2 631	2 420	<b>123 057</b>
30-34	42 641	34 254	24 618	15 612	7 251	1 708	2 449	2 271	<b>130 804</b>
35-39	34 581	26 826	20 888	13 594	5 783	1 459	1 867	1 794	<b>106 792</b>
40-44	25 383	20 927	18 243	12 006	4 906	1 228	1 314	1 481	<b>85 488</b>
45-49	18 184	14 801	13 674	8 956	3 511	977	877	1 103	<b>62 083</b>
50-54	13 276	10 338	9 889	5 729	2 399	740	602	801	<b>43 774</b>
55-59	8 948	6 795	6 807	3 608	1 513	573	393	686	<b>29 323</b>
60-64	6 986	5 182	5 199	2 547	1 113	432	279	464	<b>22 202</b>
65-69	4 282	2 949	3 038	1 508	600	264	162	210	<b>13 013</b>
70-74	2 237	1 503	1 486	709	287	114	87	107	<b>6 530</b>
75-79	1 275	902	693	398	149	46	39	50	<b>3 552</b>
80-84	749	607	461	223	111	39	27	26	<b>2 243</b>

<sup>55</sup> Refers to new enrolments, re-enrolments and reinstatements.

Age group at enrolment	NSW no.	Vic. no.	Qld no.	WA no.	SA no.	Tas. no.	ACT no.	NT no.	Total no.
85-89	563	465	308	139	102	30	15	8	<b>1 630</b>
90-94	265	257	130	73	59	16	10	4	<b>814</b>
95-99	51	66	38	19	11	3	3	3	<b>194</b>
100-104	4	12	4	3	2				<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>378 979</b>	<b>343 079</b>	<b>282 367</b>	<b>164 272</b>	<b>88 901</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>26 420</b>	<b>20 230</b>	<b>1 335 518</b>

**Table C.5 Federal enrolment at announcement (4 August 2013), electors aged 18 and over**

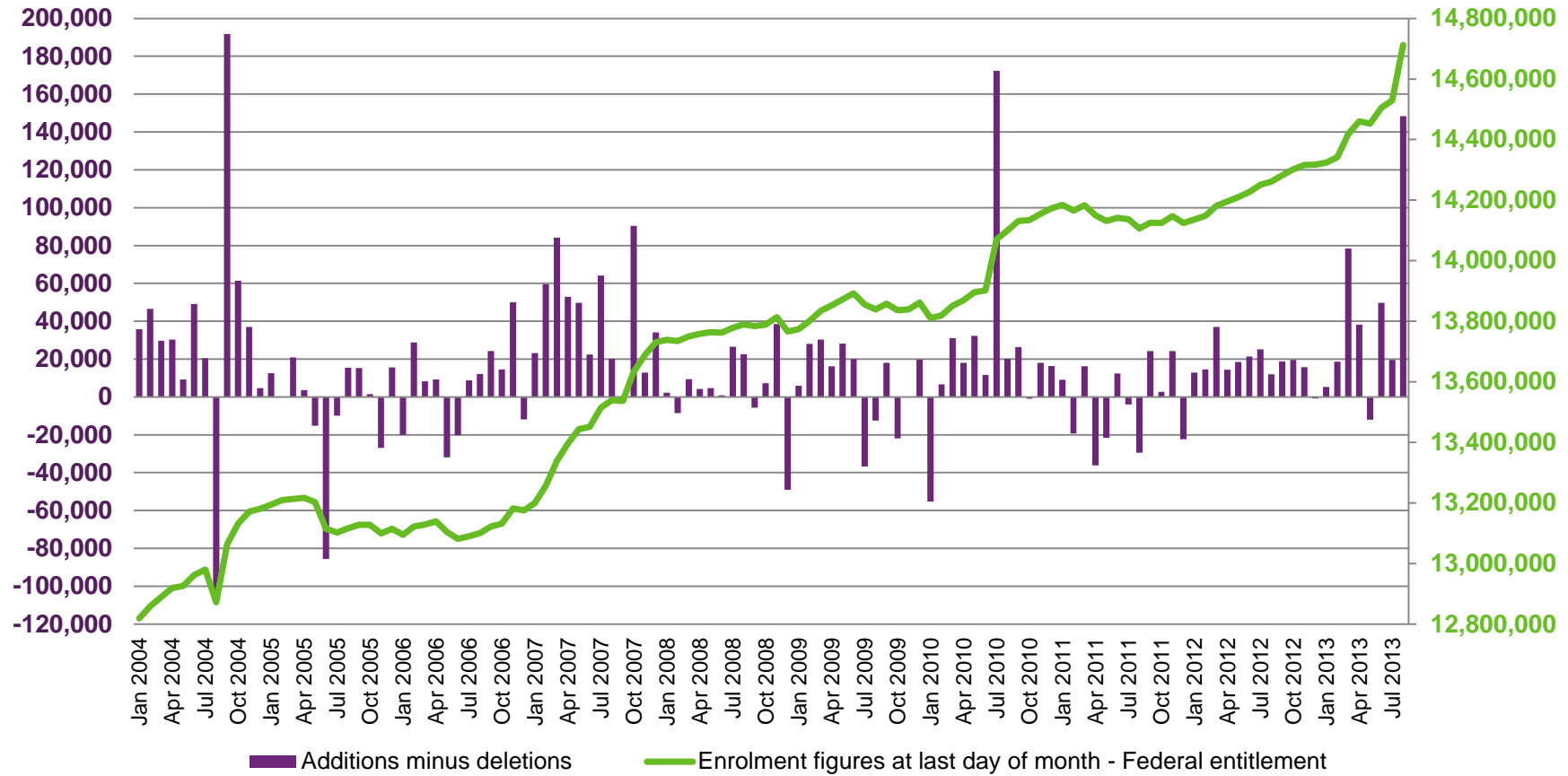
Jurisdiction	Federal enrolment at announcement (4 August 2013) no.
NSW	4 766 245
Vic.	3 672 602
Qld	2 802 795
WA	1 437 659
SA	1 120 185
Tas.	360 573
ACT	262 420
NT	127 469
<b>National</b>	<b>14 549 948</b>

**Table C.6 Electors enrolled as at 2013 close of rolls (12 August 2013), by age group**

Age group	Electors enrolled	
	no.	%
18 <sup>56*</sup>	198 354	1.3
19	211 026	1.4
20–24	1 139 039	7.7
25–29	1 168 069	7.9
30–34	1 190 079	8.1
35–39	1 217 368	8.3
40–44	1 368 523	9.3
45–49	1 299 862	8.8
50–54	1 372 666	9.3
55–59	1 263 565	8.6
60–64	1 165 536	7.9
65–69	1 024 329	7.0
70+	2 094 383	14.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 712 799</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>56</sup> Includes 11 088 provisionally enrolled 17 year olds turning 18 by election day who were be able to vote.

Figure C.1 Additions minus deletions and impact on enrolment, January 2004-August 2013



## Appendix D Voting statistics

**Table D.1 Overseas polling places and votes issued, 2013 federal election**

Post	Pre-poll votes issued no.	PVAs received no.	Postal votes received no.	Total votes received no.
Abu Dhabi	333	0	3	336
Abuja	12	0	0	12
Accra	108	0	0	108
Addis Ababa	41	0	2	43
ADF Team 1	553	0	19	572
ADF Team 2	327	0	15	342
ADF Team 3	750	0	10	760
ADF Team 4	166	0	0	166
Amman	168	0	0	168
Ankara	124	5	3	127
Apia	197	0	0	197
Athens	636	1	6	642
Auckland	819	12	29	848
Baghdad	27	0	0	27
Bali	1 013	2	8	1 021
Bandar Seri Begawan	93	0	0	93
Bangkok	1 615	10	28	1 643
Beijing	1 467	0	5	1 472
Beirut	283	0	0	283
Belgrade	447	2	1	448
Berlin	1 515	4	30	1 545
Bogota	70	0	0	70
Brasilia	38	4	2	40
Brussels	320	0	7	327
Buenos Aires	151	0	0	151
Cairo	95	0	0	95
Canakkale	71	0	0	71
Chennai	160	15	19	179
Chicago	295	6	12	307
Colombo	654	6	27	681
Copenhagen	501	22	3	504
Dhaka	349	0	0	349
Dili	450	0	0	450

Post	Pre-poll votes issued no.	PVAs received no.	Postal votes received no.	Total votes received no.
Dubai	729	2	10	739
Dublin	926	1	10	936
Frankfurt	227	35	1	228
Fukuoka	42	1	2	44
Geneva	340	19	18	358
Guangzhou	1 109	8	8	1 117
Hanoi	325	0	5	330
Harare	86	0	0	86
Ho Chi Minh City	1 303	2	12	1 315
Hong Kong	7 647	4	136	7 783
Honiara	319	0	0	319
Honolulu	261	2	67	328
Islamabad	82	3	2	84
Istanbul	383	0	0	383
Jakarta	974	5	12	986
Kathmandu	137	0	0	137
Kuala Lumpur	959	5	97	1 056
Kuwait	39	0	0	39
Lima	181	0	0	181
Lisbon	289	0	3	292
London	14 756	344	247	15 003
Los Angeles	753	3	1	754
Madrid	472	4	7	479
Malta	711	1	2	713
Manila	1 099	0	17	1 116
Mexico City	154	4	0	154
Milan	337	3	7	344
Moscow	177	1	30	207
Mumbai	169	4	11	180
Nairobi	251	1	1	252
Nauru	190	0	0	190
New Delhi	376	31	31	407
New York	3 110	0	16	3 126
Nicosia	170	0	3	173
Noumea	79	0	0	79
Nuku'alofa	96	0	0	96
Osaka	133	3	5	138

Post	Pre-poll votes issued no.	PVAs received no.	Postal votes received no.	Total votes received no.
Ottawa	275	5	11	286
Paris	2 104	8	30	2 134
Phnom Penh	890	0	3	893
Pohnpei	25	0	0	25
Port Louis	146	0	2	148
Port Moresby	824	20	14	838
Port of Spain	15	0	0	15
Port Vila	274	6	2	276
Pretoria	260	33	30	290
Riyadh	104	0	0	104
Rome	680	0	8	688
San Francisco	789	0	6	795
Santiago	316	0	0	316
Sao Paulo	59	1	0	59
Sapporo	11	3	5	16
Seoul	343	1	0	343
Shanghai	2 060	3	23	2 083
Singapore	3 385	0	15	3 400
Stockholm	478	0	20	498
Suva	401	0	0	401
Taipei	943	17	29	972
Tarawa	39	0	7	46
Tehran	135	0	0	135
Tel Aviv	299	0	0	299
The Hague	528	14	9	537
Tokyo	645	0	13	658
Toronto	799	2	5	804
Ulaanbaatar	121	0	0	121
Vancouver	1 376	21	48	1 424
Vienna	515	14	10	525
Vientiane	239	0	4	243
Warsaw	406	0	2	408
Washington	816	37	43	859
Wellington	469	0	4	473
Yangon	201	0	1	202
Zagreb	266	10	7	273
<b>Total</b>	<b>74 475</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>1 341</b>	<b>75 816</b>

## Appendix E Nomination statistics and registered parties

**Table E.1 Nominations, 2004-2013 elections**

State/territory	2004 no.	2007 no.	2010 no.	2013 no.
NSW	460	423	383	462
Vic.	322	310	254	441
Qld	255	281	218	315
WA	164	179	147	190
SA	123	120	110	139
Tas.	51	59	44	89
ACT	23	27	16	40
NT	23	22	26	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>1421</b>	<b>1421</b>	<b>1198</b>	<b>1717</b>

**Table E.2 House of Representative nominations, 2004-2013**

State/territory	2004 no.	2007 no.	2010 no.	2013 no.
NSW	382	344	299	352
Vic.	257	242	194	344
Qld	205	216	158	233
WA	124	125	92	128
SA	76	74	68	66
Tas.	25	31	20	35
ACT	10	11	7	13
NT	12	11	11	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>1091</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>1188</b>

**Table E.3 Senate nominations, 2004-2013**

State/territory	2004 no)	2007 no.	2010 no.	2013 no.
NSW	78	79	84	110
Vic	65	68	60	97
Qld	50	65	60	82
WA	40	54	55	62
SA	47	46	42	73
Tas.	26	28	24	54
ACT	13	16	9	27
NT	11	11	15	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>529</b>



**Table E.4 Party registration, 2013 federal election**

Registered party name	Registered abbreviation
Animal Justice Party	AJP
Australia First Party (NSW) Incorporated	Australia First Party
Australian Christians	–
Australian Democrats	Democrats
Australian First Nations Political Party	A.F.N.P.P.
Australian Fishing and Lifestyle Party	AFLP
Australian Greens	The Greens
The Greens NSW	The Greens
Queensland Greens	The Greens
The Greens (WA) Inc	The Greens (WA)
Australian Independents	–
Australian Labor Party (ALP)	A.L.P.
Australian Labor Party (N.S.W. Branch)	Labor
Country Labor Party	Country Labor
Australian Labor Party (Victorian Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Labor Party (State of Queensland)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Labor Party (Western Australian Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Labor Party (South Australian Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Labor Party (Tasmanian Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Labor Party (ACT Branch)	Australian Labor Party
Australian Labor Party (Northern Territory) Branch	A.L.P.
Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party	AMEP
Australian Protectionist Party	–
Australian Sex Party	Sex Party
Australian Sovereignty Party	–
Australian Sports Party	Sports
Australian Stable Population Party	Stable Population Party
Australian Voice Party	Australian Voice
Bank Reform Party	BRP
Building Australia Party	Building Australia
Bullet Train For Australia	–
Carers Alliance	–
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	Christian Democratic Party
Citizens Electoral Council of Australia	Citizens Electoral Council

Registered party name	Registered abbreviation
Coke in the Bubblers Party	–
Country Alliance	–
Country Liberals (Northern Territory)	Country Liberals (NT)
Democratic Labour Party (DLP)	DLP Democratic Labour
Drug Law Reform Australia	Drug Law Reform
Family First Party	Family First
Future Party	FP
Help End Marijuana Prohibition (HEMP) Party	HEMP
Katter's Australian Party	–
Liberal Democratic Party	Liberal Democrats
Liberal Party of Australia	Liberal
Liberal Party of Australia, NSW Division	Liberal
Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division)	Liberal
Liberal National Party of Queensland	LNP
Liberal Party (W.A. Division) Inc.	Liberal
Liberal Party of Australia (S.A. Division)	Liberal
Liberal Party of Australia – Tasmanian Division	Liberal
Liberal Party of Australia – ACT Division	Liberal
National Party of Australia	The Nationals
National Party of Australia – N.S.W.	The Nationals
National Party of Australia – Victoria	The Nationals
National Party of Australia (WA) Inc	The Nationals
National Party of Australia (S.A.) Inc.	National Party
Nick Xenophon Group	–
No Carbon Tax Climate Sceptics	NCTCS
Non-Custodial Parents Party (Equal Parenting)	–
One Nation	ON
Outdoor Recreation Party (Stop The Greens)	Stop The Greens
Palmer United Party	–
Pirate Party Australia	Pirate Party
Republican Party of Australia	The Australian Republicans
Rise Up Australia Party	RUA
Secular Party of Australia	–
Senator Online (Internet Voting Bills/Issues)	SOL
Shooters and Fishers Party	Shooters and Fishers

Registered party name	Registered abbreviation
Smokers Rights Party	Smokers Rights
Socialist Alliance	–
Socialist Equality Party	–
Stop CSG Party	Stop CSG
The 23 Million	–
The Wikileaks Party	–
Uniting Australia Party	–
Voluntary Euthanasia Party	VEP

## Appendix F Election staffing statistics

**Table F.1 Acceptance of polling official positions, 2010 and 2013 elections**

Offer accepted date	2010 federal election			2013 federal election		
	OIC med/large polling place	OIC small polling place	Other polling staff	OIC med/large polling place	OIC small polling place	Other polling staff
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Week 0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Week 1	7.5	7.6	4.4	42.0	37.8	23.3
Week 2	40.5	39.0	26.5	77.1	73.8	51.2
Week 3	76.6	72.7	56.6	92.4	90.0	70.4
Week 4	93.4	91.9	80.8	98.0	97.0	86.9
Week 5	99.1	98.4	97.5	99.8	99.6	98.7

**Table F.2 Officers in Charge by gender and age group, 2010 and 2013 federal elections**

Age group (years)	2010 federal election			2013 federal election		
	Males no.	Females no.	Persons no.	Males no.	Females no.	Persons no.
18–19	1	0	1	0	3	3
20–24	21	42	63	12	37	49
25–29	82	122	204	82	122	204
30–34	113	190	303	143	226	369
35–39	182	306	488	153	273	426
40–44	223	491	714	216	474	690
45–49	349	678	1 027	278	590	868
50–54	680	795	1 475	449	789	1 238
55–59	938	803	1 741	760	819	1 579
60–64	1 006	506	1 512	978	693	1 671
65–69	616	244	860	756	362	1 118
70–74	213	55	268	332	106	438
75–79	58	10	68	69	19	88
80–84	4	1	5	12	1	13
85–89	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 486</b>	<b>4243</b>	<b>8 729</b>	<b>4 241</b>	<b>4 514</b>	<b>8 755</b>

**Table F.3 Polling assistants by gender and age group, 2010 and 2013 elections**

Age group (years)	2010 federal election			2013 federal election		
	Males no.	Females no.	Persons no.	Males no.	Females no.	Persons no.
15–19	1 687	2 098	<b>3 785</b>	1 395	1 962	<b>3 357</b>
20–24	1 820	3 125	<b>4 945</b>	2 626	4 368	<b>6 994</b>
25–29	1 082	2 457	<b>3 539</b>	1 525	2 911	<b>4 436</b>
30–34	909	2 175	<b>3 084</b>	1 095	2 582	<b>3 677</b>
35–39	928	2 888	<b>3 816</b>	1 084	2 819	<b>3 903</b>
40–44	979	3 490	<b>4 469</b>	1 125	3 966	<b>5 091</b>
45–49	1 298	4 656	<b>5 954</b>	1 289	4 456	<b>5 745</b>
50–54	1 708	5 204	<b>6 912</b>	1 712	5 532	<b>7 244</b>
55–59	2 315	5 393	<b>7 708</b>	2 104	5 534	<b>7 638</b>
60–64	2 548	4 332	<b>6 880</b>	2 598	4 840	<b>7 438</b>
65–69	1 666	2 153	<b>3 819</b>	2 173	2 970	<b>5 143</b>
70–74	806	686	<b>1 492</b>	1 086	1 098	<b>2 184</b>
75–79	265	145	<b>410</b>	362	230	<b>592</b>
80–84	51	27	<b>78</b>	75	25	<b>100</b>
85–89	5	1	<b>6</b>	6	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 067</b>	<b>38 830</b>	<b>56 897</b>	<b>20 255</b>	<b>43 293</b>	<b>63 548</b>

**Table F.4 Polling training undertaken by course and status, 2013 election**

Curriculum name	Courses	Assigned	In progress	Completed	
	no.	no.	no.	no.	%
2013 Declaration Vote Issuing Officer/inquiry Officer	3	15 240	3 158	12 082	79.3
2013 Mobile Team Leader	5	424	94	330	77.8
2013 Mobile Team Member	4	551	142	409	74.2
2013 OIC <sup>57</sup>	6	12 585	1 877	10 708	85.1
2013 Pre-poll issuing officer	4	2 684	689	1 995	74.3
2013 Pre-poll OIC	6	632	175	457	72.3
2013 Remote mobile team leader	5	34	12	22	64.7
2013 Remote mobile team member	4	34	12	22	64.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>32 184</b>	<b>6 159</b>	<b>26 025</b>	<b>80.9</b>

<sup>57</sup> Includes 2ICs and PPLOs.

**Table F.5 Polling training undertaken by course and status, 2010 election**

Curriculum name	Courses	Assigned	In progress	Completed	
	no.	no.	no.	no.	%
2010 Declaration Vote Issuing Officer/inquiry Officer	7	15 716	6 834	8 882	56.5
2010 Mobile Team Leader	11	451	283	168	37.3
2010 Mobile Team Member	8	543	340	203	37.4
2010 OIC <sup>58</sup>	12	11 717	5 211	6 506	55.5
2010 Ordinary Issuing Officer/Ballot Box Guard/Queue Controller	7	32 856	12 573	20 283	61.7
2010 Polling Place Liaison Officer	13	811	434	375	46.2
2010 Pre-poll issuing officer	8	19 40	1 046	894	46.1
2010 Pre-poll OIC	12	570	310	260	45.6
2010 Remote mobile team leader	12	42	36	6	14.3
2010 Remote mobile team member	9	42	35	7	16.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>64 688</b>	<b>27 102</b>	<b>37 584</b>	<b>58.1</b>

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<sup>58</sup> Includes 2ICs/

## Appendix G List of recommended technical amendments

### Technical amendments

Act Reference (Electoral Act unless otherwise noted)	Comment
<b>Enrolment</b>	
96A	Amend s.96A of the Electoral Act to include 'must comply with section 98AA (evidence of identity) where it applies to the claim' and a reference to 's.96A' be added to s.98AA (1) (b). This will extend the requirement for Evidence of Identity to prisoners.
95AA	Amend s.95AA to provide that Norfolk Island electors may not elect to enrol in a one Subdivision of a one-Territory Division, where they have previously held enrolment in another Subdivision of a one Territory Division, in order to prevent electors moving between divisions once selected.
115	Remove the requirement in the Electoral Act for \$2 to be paid to lodge a private objection. The fee is disproportionately intensive to administer. The AEC will monitor the number and validity of objections lodged to see if the fee was a contributor to discouraging private objections.
391	Provide the Electoral Commissioner the power to approve the destruction of enrolment forms, in place of the Australian Electoral Officer.
76, 76A & 90B(10)(e)	The Australian Bureau of Statistics has ceased using demography terms that are listed in the Electoral Act. The references to 'Population census collection districts' (CCDs) or equivalent should be updated to reflect the Australian Statistical Geography Standard 2011.
93(10)	Amend s.93(10) of the Electoral Act to allow individuals who have been convicted of treason or treachery against the Australian Capital Territory to be ineligible for enrolment.
<b>Voting</b>	
208(1)	The Electoral Commissioner currently has to approve each 150 certified lists individually. An amendment should allow the Electoral Commissioner to

	approve the process by which the lists are made, rather than certify the list.
59 RMPA Part IV RPMA	<p>Technical Amendment 1: Amend the RMPA and Electoral Act to enable a postal vote application lodged in respect of a referendum, to apply to an election held on the same day even where it is announced at a different point in time.</p> <p>Technical Amendment 2: Amend Part IV of the RMPA to provide that where an election or by-election is scheduled on a day following a referendum, the application for postal vote in the referendum shall also have the effect as an application for postal vote in an election.</p>
58 RMPA	Amend the RMPA to enable the AEC to dispatch postal voting papers to general postal voters for both a referendum and general election held on the same day as soon as ballot papers for the House of Representatives and Senate are available.
250	Allow the production of a single list of all Antarctic electors to be used at all Antarctic polling stations
	Amend the Electoral Act to specify that the time for receipt of postal vote certificates (along with other declaration envelopes) is set to 6pm, 13 days after election day.
276	Amend s.276(2) of the Electoral Act to allow an AEO to order a full distribution of preferences, even when there is an absolute majority to allow additional data about the count to be provided.
393A.	Replace the ability of DRO's to access electoral materials, with the Electoral Commissioner or their delegate, in compliance with the instruction of the Electoral Commissioner.
393A	Amend s.393A (9) of the Electoral Act to provide that any document removed from a parcel includes electoral documents. Unlike other provisions, in the section, the subsection does not use the defined term electoral document.
Working with parties, candidates, groups	



132(7)(a)	Replace 'Electoral Commission' with 'Electoral Commissioner' where referring to the acting authority registering political parties.
297	Amend s.297 of the Electoral Act to provide that election funding will not be payable where a registered political party has elected not to receive election funding, under Division 3 of Part XX of the Act.
305A	Amend s.305A so that the obligation to provide a return under those provisions also applies to by-elections.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
177, 188	References to 'fax' in the Electoral Act should be replaced with 'facsimile' for consistency. Amendment would need to distinguish between 'facsimile' as a copy and 'facsimile' as a type of electronic communication method.
387	Delete reference in s.387 of the Electoral Act to post being sent free of charge and the <i>Postal Services Act 1975</i> . The regulations under the <i>Postal Services Act</i> ceased in 1989.
That consistent provisions be applied to both the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> and the <i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i> where appropriate for any amending legislation resulting from the recommendations listed above.	

### ANAO suggestions for review of administrative provisions

The ANAO, in their Performance Audit Report No 28 2009-10 on the *Australian Electoral Commissioner's Preparation for and Conduct of the 2007 Federal General Election* note a number of areas for legislative review in the Electoral Act.

Electoral Act reference	Comment ( <i>report reference in italics</i> )
90A, 189(1), 200D(1), 200DD(1)(c), 200G(3), 226(7), 266(2)	Remove the phrase 'office of a DRO' so that the concept of co-located offices under LWUs is acknowledged. <i>Paragraph 2.7</i>
	For consistency replace the references to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a 'presiding officer' with 'officer in charge'; and</li> <li>- a 'deputy presiding officer' with 'second in command'.</li> </ul>

*Paragraph 4.41*

208

That the Electoral Act be amended to specifically provide for the enrolment address to be included as part of the certified list of voters for consistency with the implied requirement of s.229(1)(b).

*Paragraph 5.17-5.18*

## Appendix H List of abbreviations and acronyms

**Table H.1 List of abbreviations and acronyms**

Abbreviation/ acronym	Meaning
2IC	Second in charge
AAT	Administrative Appeals Tribunal
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AEDT	Australian Eastern Daylight Time
AEO	Australian Electoral Officer
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ATL	Above-the-line
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
BLV	Blind and Low Vision
BTL	Below-the-line
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSA	Customer Service Agent
CSS	Central Senate Scrutiny
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DHS	Department of Human Services
DRO	Divisional Returning Officer
ECCA	Election Call Centre Application
ECL	Electronic Certified List
ELMS	Election Management System
EQAP	Enrolment Quality Assurance Program
ESPs	Election Study Program
EVP	Election Visitor Program
DEU	Direct Enrolment and Update
FIFO	Fly-in, fly-Out
GENESIS	General Enrolment, Elections Support and Information System
GPV	General Postal Voter
GVT	Group Voting Ticket
HoR	House of Representatives
IEPP	Indigenous Electoral Participation Program

Abbreviation/ acronym	Meaning
Improving Electoral Administration Act	The Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Administration) Act 2013
Improving Electoral Procedure Act	The Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Improving Electoral Procedure) Act 2010
IVR	Interactive Voice Recognition
JSCEM	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
MEAO	Middle Eastern Areas of Operation
M&PR	Media and Public Relations
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OEVF	Online Enrolment Verification Facility
OIC	Officer in Charge
PPLO	Polling Place Liaison Officer
PPVC	Pre-poll Voting Centre
PVA	Postal Vote Application
PVC	Postal Vote Certificate
PVP	Postal Vote Package
Qld	Queensland
RAMP	Remote Area Mobile Polling
RMANS	Roll Management System
ROI	Registration of Interest
SA	South Australia
SAF	Sample Audit Fieldwork
SM	State Manager
SO	State office
Tas.	Tasmania
TCP	Two-candidate-preferred
TOPS	Training of polling staff
Vic.	Victoria
VIO	Voter Information Officer
VITS	Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service
VTR	Virtual Tally Room
WA	Western Australia

## Appendix I Glossary

Concept	Meaning
<b>Absent vote</b>	A declaration vote cast at a polling place located outside the division, but within the state or territory, for which the voter is enrolled.
<b>AECPAY</b>	The staffing management and payroll processing application used in the employment and payment of temporary staff employed under the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> .
<b>Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)</b>	The independent statutory agency established in 1984 to maintain and update the Commonwealth electoral roll, raise public awareness and conduct federal elections and referendums.
<b>Australian Electoral Officer (AEO)</b>	The AEC's chief manager in each state and the Northern Territory. An Australian Electoral Officer for the Australian Capital Territory is only appointed for each election period. The Australian Electoral Officer is the returning officer for the Senate election in their state or territory.
<b>Ballot</b>	A method of voting, normally in a written form.
<b>Ballot box</b>	The sealed container into which an elector places a completed ballot paper.
<b>Ballot paper</b>	<p>A paper that shows the names of the candidates who are standing for election.</p> <p>The voter numbers the boxes beside each candidate's name to show his or her preferences.</p>
<b>Candidate</b>	A person standing for election to the Senate or House of Representatives.
<b>Certified list</b>	The official electoral roll used to mark off electors' names. Polling officials place a mark against an elector's name when the elector is issued with a ballot paper at a polling place (or where appropriate during early voting) to indicate that the elector has voted.
<b>Change in enrolment details</b> (also <b>Change enrolment</b> )	An alteration to an individual's enrolment details as a result of intrastate, interstate or intra-division amendment or movement.
<b>Close of nominations</b>	<p>The date for the close of nominations for candidates at a federal election. It must be at least ten days but not more than 27 days after the date of issue of the writs. Nominations close at 12 noon on this day.</p> <p>Candidate nominations cannot be lodged until the writs have been issued.</p>
<b>Close seat</b>	A term used while counting votes to describe a seat where the results are tight. On polling night, this is where the two-candidate-preferred result is between 47 per cent and 53 per cent and more than five per cent of the vote has been counted. After polling night and until counting is completed, this is where the two-candidate-preferred result is between 49.5 per cent

Concept	Meaning
	and 50.5 per cent and more than five per cent of the vote has been counted.
<b>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</b>	The legislation governing the Commonwealth electoral process, referred to as 'the Electoral Act' in this Submission.
<b>Continuous Roll Update (CRU)</b>	The process by which the electoral roll is continuously reviewed and updated through the use of targeted mail-outs and fieldwork.
<b>Court of Disputed Returns (CDR)</b>	A candidate, an elector or the AEC may dispute the validity of an election by a petition to the High Court sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns. The court has wide powers to resolve the matter.
<b>Death</b>	An enrolment transaction which removes the name of a person from the electoral roll who has died.
<b>Declaration vote</b>	<p>A vote that is sealed in an envelope bearing a voter's particulars (with the exception of pre-poll ordinary votes) where the elector has declared their entitlement to vote. Absent, pre-poll, (with the exception of pre-poll ordinary votes) postal and provisional votes are cast as declaration votes.</p> <p>These votes are counted after election day if the voter's entitlement to vote is verified using the information provided on the declaration envelope.</p>
<b>Distribution of preferences</b>	The process used to determine the elected candidate when no candidate obtains an absolute majority (that is, 50 per cent plus one) of the formal first preference votes.
<b>Division (or electorate)</b>	<p>For representation in the House of Representatives, Australia is divided into voting areas known as divisions or electorates. One member is elected from each division.</p> <p>For representation in the Senate, each state and territory is one electorate. All states are multi-member electorates and have the same number of Senators. Territory representation is determined by the federal parliament.</p>
<b>Divisional office</b>	An office that supports the Divisional Returning Officer, generally located within the division, but in the case of larger work units, co-located and amalgamated offices, may be outside the division.
<b>Divisional Returning Officer (DRO)</b>	<p>The AEC officer responsible for conducting the election in each division.</p> <p>Divisional Returning Officers are the returning officers for the House of Representatives in their divisions.</p>
<b>Dual Polling Place</b>	A Dual Polling Place provides ordinary votes to electors from more than one division.
<b>Duplication</b>	An enrolment transaction which deletes enrolment details from the

Concept	Meaning
	electoral roll where an individual is enrolled more than once (due to administrative errors in the most part).
<b>Early vote</b>	A postal vote or a vote cast at an early voting centre, an AEC divisional office or via a mobile polling team appointed for the purposes of early voting in the lead-up to election day. They are cast by electors who will not be able to get to a polling place on election day.
<b>Electoral Act</b>	The <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> .
<b>Electoral and Referendum Regulations 1940</b>	Regulations which support the operation of the Electoral Act.
<b>Electoral Commission</b>	The AEC is managed by a three-person Australian Electoral Commission, headed by a Chairperson, who must be an active or retired judge of the Federal Court of Australia, the Electoral Commissioner, and a non-judicial member.
<b>Electoral Commissioner</b>	The officer who performs the functions of the Chief Executive Officer of the AEC.
<b>Electoral roll</b>	A list of the names of all the people who are entitled to vote in an election.
<b>Elector</b>	A person entitled to vote at an election and whose name appears on a roll.
<b>Enrolment form</b>	An application form to enrol to vote or to change a person's own address for the purpose of federal or state/territory elections.
<b>Federal election</b>	Refers to a general election of the House of Representatives and the election of the Senate.
<b>Financial disclosure return</b>	A document detailing information on the receipts and expenditure of participants in the political process. There are specific return forms for candidates, their donors and political parties. Financial disclosure return forms for candidates are made public 24 weeks after election day.
<b>Formal vote</b>	A vote cast in an election or a referendum that has been marked according to the rules for that election. A vote not marked correctly is an informal vote.
<b>Fresh scrutiny</b>	A re-check of votes cast, conducted by the Divisional Returning Officer, in the days following election day.
<b>General Postal Voter (GPV)</b>	Electors who have difficulty getting to a polling place on election day may qualify to register as a General Postal Voter. GPVs are automatically sent postal ballot papers as soon as they become available. GPVs may include people with a disability, silent electors, those in remote communities or overseas, and people who have religious objections to attending a polling place on election day.

Concept	Meaning
<b>Group Voting Ticket (GVT)</b>	Shows the order in which groups of Senate candidates have decided to have their preferences distributed.
<b>Home division</b>	The division for which an eligible elector is enrolled.
<b>Informal vote</b>	A ballot paper is generally considered informal if it is not filled out correctly in accordance with the Electoral Act and the instructions on the ballot paper. It cannot therefore be included in the scrutiny.
<b>Issue of writs</b>	The issue of a document commanding an electoral officer to hold an election. Writs are deemed to be issued at 6 pm on the day of issue.
<b>Mail Review</b>	Part of the Continuous Roll Update process.
<b>Mobile Polling</b>	Mobile polling teams visit voters who are unable to reach static polling places, for example, patients in hospitals, electors in remote areas, or where there is insufficient population to justify a static polling place.
<b>Mobile polling team</b>	A team of polling officials who bring the polling to the elector to enable them to vote.
<b>Multiple-voter</b>	An elector who votes more than once in an election.
<b>New enrolment</b>	An enrolment transaction which results in the addition to the electoral roll of individual who has become eligible to enrol and who have not previously been on the electoral roll.
<b>No change enrolment</b>	An enrolment transaction where an individual returned an enrolment form but their enrolment details did not need to be altered.
<b>Nomination</b>	A candidate must be nominated before they can be elected to the Senate or the House of Representatives.
<b>Nomination form</b>	The approved form which must be used by a candidate nominating for election. There are five versions of the nomination form for the Senate, and three versions of the nomination form for the House of Representatives, one of which is the bulk nomination form.
<b>Non-voter</b>	An elector who fails to vote at an election.
<b>Notebook roll</b>	A consolidated list of electors entitled to vote for an election. It includes those electors whose names were added to (primarily as a result of processing of enrolment forms that were received prior to the close of rolls but not processed due to time constraints) and deleted from (primarily the removal of deceased electors) the electoral roll between close of rolls and election day. The notebook roll also includes a number of electors 'reinstated' to the roll as a result of preliminary scrutiny of declaration votes.



Concept	Meaning
<b>Objection</b>	<p>The process by which a person's name may be removed from the roll on the basis that they do not live at their enrolled address or no longer have an entitlement to be enrolled. The types of objections are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ official – an objection raised by a Divisional Returning Officer; and</li> <li>▪ private – an objection raised by an elector.</li> </ul>
<b>Officer in Charge (OIC)</b>	<p>This is the officer who is in charge at a polling place. An officer in charge is called a 'presiding officer' during polling (8am to 6pm) and from 6pm, during the scrutiny, they are called the assistant returning officer.</p>
<b>Open ballot paper</b>	<p>An open ballot paper is a blank ballot paper that can be used if a polling place runs short of House of Representatives ballot papers and photocopying is not an option. The candidates are added to the ballot paper before being given to the elector.</p>
<b>Ordinary vote</b>	<p>A vote cast by a voter on election day at a polling place in the voter's enrolled division.</p>
<b>Political party</b>	<p>A group of people with similar ideas or aims, some of whose members nominate as candidates at elections in the hope that they will be elected to parliament. A political party can register with the AEC for federal elections. Registered political parties have financial disclosure obligations, can receive election funding and are entitled to have their party name placed on the ballot paper.</p>
<b>Poll</b>	<p>Another word for an election.</p>
<b>Electionday</b>	<p>The day on which the election will be held. It must be a Saturday and at least 33 days, but not more than 58 days, after the issue of the writs.</p>
<b>Polling official</b>	<p>There are two categories of polling officials engaged for federal elections – those who are required to work in the period immediately before polling day to assist with mobile and early voting and those who are required to work in a polling place on election day only.</p> <p>The DRO determines the hours of duty of mobile and early voting. Polling officials employed on election day are advised of the hours of duty where an offer of employment is made. Duty can commence as early as 7am and staff are required to remain on duty after 6pm until all work at the polling place is completed.</p>
<b>Polling place</b>	<p>A place appointed to take the votes of electors from that state or territory on election day.</p>
<b>Postal vote</b>	<p>A declaration vote recorded by electors who, for various reasons, cannot attend a polling place in the state or territory for which they are enrolled. Postal votes are issued and generally returned to the AEC through the postal system.</p>

Concept	Meaning
<b>Postal vote certificate</b>	The AEC uses this term to describe the declaration vote envelope specific to postal voting on which the elector declares their entitlement to vote.
<b>Pre-poll declaration vote</b>	A declaration vote recorded by a voter eligible to do so, at a divisional office or pre-poll voting centre in the lead up to, or on (in the case of interstate voters) election day. These may also be cast by voters attempting to cast a pre-poll vote in their home division prior to election day, but whose name cannot be found on the certified list.
<b>Pre-poll ordinary vote</b>	A vote cast by a voter, prior to election day, in the home division or a pre-poll voting centre belonging to the elector's home division. The elector is required to sign a certificate; they are then marked off the certified list and issued with ballot papers that, once completed, are placed directly into a ballot box, rather than in a declaration vote envelope.
<b>Provisional vote</b>	<p>A declaration vote cast by a person at a polling place when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ his or her name cannot be found on the certified list,</li> <li>▪ his or her name is marked on the certified list to indicate that he or she has already voted,</li> <li>▪ the relevant polling official has doubts regarding the voter's identity, or</li> <li>▪ the voter is registered as a 'silent elector' whose address does not appear on the certified list.</li> </ul> <p>Provisional voters are required to provide evidence of identity</p>
<b>Re-enrolment</b>	An enrolment transaction which results in the addition to the electoral roll of individuals who has previously been removed from the roll.
<b><i>Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984</i></b>	The legislation governing the Commonwealth referendum process, referred to as 'the Referendum Act' in this Submission.
<b>Registered officer</b>	A person nominated by a registered political party to be the registered officer for the purposes of the Electoral Act.
<b>Registered political party</b>	A party registered with the AEC under Part XI of the Electoral Act. (See also political party).
<b>Reinstatement</b>	An enrolment transaction which is an addition to the roll of an individual who was deleted from the roll in error while still entitled to be on the roll.
<b>Return of Writs</b>	The writs are returned after all candidates have been declared and the results of an election have been determined, advising the names of elected candidates.
<b>Scrutiny</b>	The counting of votes, which leads to the election result.
<b>Seat</b>	Another term for 'division'.

Concept	Meaning
<b>Silent elector</b>	An elector who has applied to have their address not appear on the roll for reasons of personal safety or safety of their family members.
<b>Special Hospital</b>	Any hospital or similar institution (such as a nursing home) that is deemed to be a polling place only during the conduct of mobile polling.
<b>Turnout</b>	The percentage of enrolled electors who cast a formal or informal vote.
<b>Two-candidate-preferred (TCP)</b>	The relative support of the leading two candidates for an electoral division after all preferences of lower ranked candidates has been distributed.
<b>Two-candidate-preferred (TCP) count</b>	The figures show where preferences have been distributed to the likely final two candidates in a House of Representatives election. In most cases, but not all, these will be from the two major sides of politics – the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal and National Party Coalition.
<b>Two-party-preferred (TPP)</b>	The relative support of the Australian Labor Party and Liberal/National Party Coalition candidates for an electoral division after all preferences of other candidates have been distributed.
<b>Two-party-preferred (TPP) count</b>	The figures indicate results where preferences have been distributed to the major sides of politics – the Australian Labor Party and the Coalition. In most cases two-candidate-preferred and two-party-preferred are the same because the final two candidates are ALP and Liberal and National Party Coalition. In an electorate held by an independent or a minor party, the counts will differ.
<b>Vote</b>	The formal act of an elector in an election to choose the candidate the elector most prefers to be the representative for that division.
<b>Writ</b>	In an election context, the writ is the document which commands an electoral officer to hold an election and contains dates for the close of rolls, the close of nominations, the day of the election and the return of the writs. The issue of the writs triggers the election process.