

A blurred photograph of a meeting room. In the background, several whiteboards are mounted on a wall. One whiteboard on the right has diagrams and text, including the number '2' and some illegible text. In the foreground, a person in a dark shirt and white sneakers is walking from left to right, and another person in a red and black plaid shirt is walking from right to left. The floor is light-colored wood.

Tasmanian
Electoral
Commission
Strategic Plan
2023-27

Who are we

The Tasmanian Electoral Commission (TEC) is responsible for the electoral infrastructure enabling democracy to function in Tasmania.

Due to increased complexities within the electoral environment, together with the constant cycle of known and unknown events, important work is being compromised or postponed. This, coupled with the impact of significant legislative change expected in 2023, has driven the need to develop a new strategic plan for the organisation.

This plan reviews the TEC's organisational structure, responsibilities and workload against current and future environmental impacts to produce high level goals and initiatives for the organisation across the next five years.

It is intended as a living document, to inform our annual work programs, the way we develop initiatives and projects and the way we structure our individual performance plans. It will sit at the centre of our leadership conversations and set the agenda for teams across the organisation.

Purpose

To provide independent, impartial and high-quality electoral services to the people of Tasmania.

Vision

To maintain confidence in the integrity of Tasmania's electoral processes and make it simple for people to understand and participate.

Aims

- » Provide compliant, effective, inclusive and secure electoral services.
- » Build a diverse, resilient and high performing organisation with a positive and values driven culture.
- » Build external relationships and electoral knowledge, understanding and engagement.
- » Maintain our credibility as independent, impartial and trustworthy in providing electoral expertise.

Our values

Respect

We will:

- » be actively inclusive
- » be broadly accessible
- » be accountable
- » be mindful and considerate
- » support diversity

We will not:

- » be biased

Adaptability

We will:

- » be responsive
- » be flexible
- » be prepared
- » commit to improvement
- » work to find a solution

We will not:

- » be stuck in our ways
- » take unnecessary risks

Integrity

We will:

- » be impartial
- » uphold our independence
- » be accurate
- » be transparent
- » comply with electoral law

We will not:

- » comment on political matters
- » hide errors

Collaboration

We will:

- » be supportive
- » be consultative
- » engage
- » empower
- » share knowledge

We will not:

- » set unrealistic expectations

Our core business

We conduct accurate, transparent and accessible electoral events

This involves:

- » Managing all election processes including:
 - Election preparation
 - Creating roll products
 - Short term staff recruitment
 - Hire of election premises
 - Candidate management
 - Roll out of election material
 - Provision of voting services
 - Counting votes
 - Conducting recounts
 - Processing candidate returns
 - Return of material and
 - Non-voter processes
- » Managing suppliers and contractors
- » Developing and maintaining appropriate and cyber secure IT infrastructure and systems
- » Secure management of electoral data and materials
- » Long-term storage, disposal and maintenance of election equipment and material
- » Filling all Parliamentary and local government casual vacancies
- » Undertaking other statutory and non-statutory elections
- » Conducting elector polls and referendums
- » Undertaking the review and determination of Legislative Council electoral boundaries.

Our core business

We provide expert electoral advice and ensure compliance with electoral legislation

This involves:

- » Ensuring electoral processes are compliant with legislation
- » Consulting and liaising with other organisations
- » Making public submissions and providing electoral advice
- » Responding to electoral complaints
- » Investigating possible breaches of legislation
- » Provision of electoral roll products.

We provide impartial electoral information that enhances understanding and participation

This involves:

- » Providing timely and accurate election information
- » Rolling out election awareness campaigns
- » Publishing Commission reports
- » Developing curriculum-based resources that support civics and citizenship education in Tasmanian classrooms
- » Engaging with key community groups to develop learning opportunities and resources
- » Providing real time responses to electoral misunderstanding within public discourse
- » Providing training and skills development across all areas of electoral administration.

We are an agile, creative and cyber-secure organisation

This involves:

- » Managing the expansion of the TEC workforce from 15 permanent employees in a central office up to approximately 2000 employees located across the state
- » Undertaking recruitment, training, payment and support for election casuals
- » Managing risks while providing a supportive, innovative and facilitative work environment
- » Developing the skills and knowledge of ongoing TEC staff
- » Maintaining and developing the physical and digital/ICT infrastructure for the organisation.

Environmental impacts on the TEC

Major expansion to responsibilities

Over the next five years, the breadth and diversity of responsibilities of the TEC will significantly expand. The known legislative changes that will impact on our workload and resourcing include:

- » The Electoral Disclosure and Funding Bill 2022 establishes the creation of a Disclosure and Funding Scheme for the Tasmanian Parliament, which will be fully administered by the TEC.
- » The Electoral Matters (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2022, amongst other things, extends the investigative powers of the TEC in relation to offences listed under the Electoral Act 2004.
- » The Expansion of House of Assembly Bill 2022 restores the House of Assembly to 35 Members for future State elections, which increases the complexity of Hare-Clark elections and number of casual vacancies.
- » The Local Government Amendment (Elections) Bill 2022 resulted in all local government elections and by-elections becoming compulsory for all electors on the State Roll.

The following State Government reviews are expected to lead to additional responsibilities:

- » The Office of Aboriginal Affairs has proposed changes to the enrolment process under the Aboriginal Land Council Act 1995 which will increase TEC involvement in a new more comprehensive enrolment assessment and support process.
- » The 2018 Local Government Review recommended the creation of separate elections legislation, the TEC administration of the General Managers Roll and the creation of a disclosure structure for all local government candidates.
- » The 2022 Local Government Review flags changes to the nature and size of local councils.

Environmental impacts on the TEC

National and international trends in electoral administration

The following trends and risks are impacting electoral administration in Australia:

- » Growing foreign interference and domestic misinformation and disinformation campaigns undermining electoral integrity.
- » The growing spread of “truth in advertising” legislation in Australia administered by electoral management bodies during elections.
- » The need to develop services that assist a broader range of electors.
- » An increasing reliance on technology and IT infrastructure and systems to deliver timely, inclusive and accessible electoral services.
- » Upward trend of co-ordinated physical disruption and intimidation during electoral events.
- » An increasing legislative requirement for the use of technology to deliver new services.
- » Real and present cyber security threats on systems and data.
- » The increase in the number of registered parties and candidates contesting elections.
- » Growing stakeholder expectations of electoral management bodies.
- » The inclusion of discrete indigenous involvement within Australian parliaments – such as the proposed, at the Federal level, Voice to Parliament and the recommendations of the House of Assembly Committee into the inclusion of separate aboriginal representation within the Tasmanian Parliament.

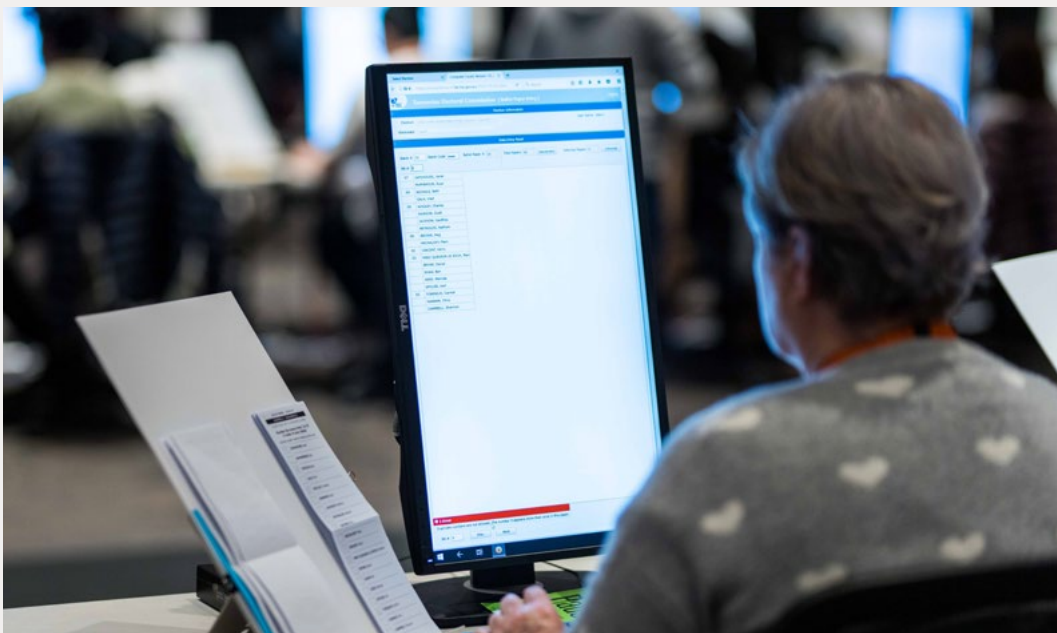
Other critical business issues

The following issues also impact our ability to conduct business:

- » Limited availability of suitably skilled short-term staff.
- » The need to ensure business continuity while working to immutable deadlines.
- » Growth in the Tasmanian population.
- » An aging and increasingly diverse population, for many of whom English is not their first language.
- » An increasingly challenging workplace that impacts staff resilience and sustainability while at the same time enhancing opportunities.

Internal risks

- » Important work is compromised or postponed due to critical electoral events dominating the Commission's workload.
- » Awareness and educational information does not cater for any language other than English.
- » Electoral services continue to present barriers to participation of some electors.
- » Past end of life IT election systems are not fit for purpose for current and future TEC responsibilities.
- » Current systems do not enable modern effective or efficiency measures.
- » Cyber security maturity levels require ongoing improvement.
- » The continuation of a limited staffing and organisational profile.



Organisational goals 2023-27

1. Expand TEC resourcing and processes to meet the additional workloads established under current, proposed and future legislation amendments.
2. Ensure TEC has the appropriate systems and infrastructure to deliver all its electoral services in a more complex and changing environment.
3. Bring TEC organisation structure in line with modern business organisational standards and processes – including reducing single point dependencies and clarity of staff member responsibilities.
4. Broaden elector inclusivity and partner with communities within the TEC's sphere of influence to equip and educate electoral stakeholders on the electoral environment and integrity issues.

Key initiatives	Alignment to goals
Establishment of a Disclosure & Funding Unit and associated processes.	1
Modernisation of business processes .	3
Modernisation of TEC election ICT systems.	1, 2 & 4
Establishment of processes and resources that enable more Tasmanians to learn about, understand and participate in electoral processes.	3 & 4
Establishment of a southern election operational centre and a relocation of the TEC.	2
Establishment of a new training structure and capability (an Election Lab).	1, 2 & 4

Initiative	End of 2023	End of 2024 In readiness for HoA '25 election	End of 2025	End of 2027
Establishment of a Disclosure & Funding Unit (subject to new legislation).	Establishment of Unit. Rrecruitment of two staff.	Unit is operational July 2024. Website established, and processes and educational information developed.	Expansion of staffing to support commencement of LC reporting requirements.	Unit is fully operational.
Organisational expansion and restructure.	Organisational review finalised and preferred new model endorsed.	Recruitment processes well underway. Additional roles filled.	New structure reviewed and monitored.	All roles filled and restructure fully applied.
Modernisation of election ICT (systems and data).	Agreement in place to adopt VEC IT systems.	Initial systems transfer and updates complete in readiness for HoA '25. Data entry established for HoA '25.	Further TEC specific adaption applied to prioritised systems.	Prioritised systems fully implemented.
Modernisation of election ICT (infrastructure).	Stocktake against the Essential Eight Maturity Model taken, with risks and priorities identified.	Key risks and priorities addressed to increase maturity.	IT maturity levels increasing towards "green" levels.	IT maturity improved to "green" levels.
Increase understanding and participation in electoral processes.	Commencement of an inclusion strategy. Commencement of an education and communication strategy.	Broad community engagement occurring. Implement pilot projects for parliamentary elections.	Continuation of community engagement. Continual review and expansion of strategies.	Processes and resources reviewed and adjusted for ongoing engagement.
Establishment of a southern election operational centre.	Business plan supported and approved. EOI process commenced.	Site identification confirmed, contract awarded. Commencement of fit-out/build.	Construction continuing and staff change processes addressed and supported.	Build complete and site fully operational.
Establishment of a new training structure and capability (an Election Lab)	Training management structure confirmed following organisational review process.	Training strategy developed and pilot model priorities confirmed. Election lab testing and feedback commenced.	Prioritised training resources ready for parliamentary elections. Model reviewed and any changes applied.	Full, broad structure fully implemented. Election lab structure and regularity fully functional.