Strategy 2027

Victorian Electoral Commission

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The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this nation, as the traditional custodians of the lands on which the VEC works and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present, and emerging. The VEC is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.
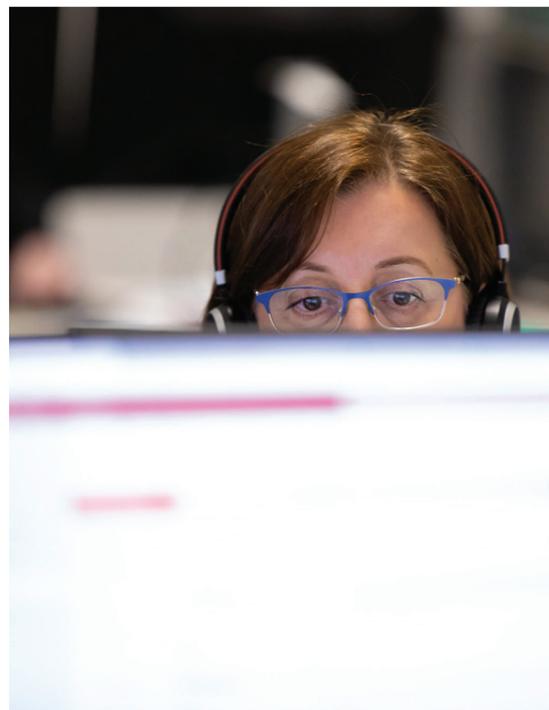
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Introduction

This is a strategic plan to support our organisational objectives and priorities from 2023 to 2027.

The environment in which we operate has changed since our last strategy was developed, becoming more dynamic and complex.

We face a number of key challenges:

- Legislation, policies and community expectations on how we run elections have changed.

- Geopolitical instability is increasing and political opinions are becoming more polarised. This is fuelled by misinformation, which is becoming more prevalent on social media.

- Faith in democratic systems is decreasing. The Australian Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in 2020 identified 'a wealth of evidence showing a worrying decline in the level of public trust'.

- Cybersecurity is becoming more important as criminals and state actors are more prepared to disrupt systems and applications.

- Political parties and the community expect us to use smarter technology to support elections.

To meet these challenges, our new strategic plan refines our desired organisational outcomes and success measures. It will allow us to better align team and individual performance plans to those outcomes and track our progress.

VEC Head office

Our strengths

Our people

We have a highly capable and engaged workforce who are strongly committed to democracy. Our staff are dedicated and experienced electoral practitioners.

Our culture and purpose

We have a passionate and collaborative work culture, underpinned by a shared purpose of delivering elections with integrity.

Our reputation

We are trusted and respected by electoral participants to deliver high quality, accessible elections and reliable results.

Our independence

We can focus on the needs of our organisation and the people we serve, free from political perspectives.

Our openness to change

We are open to new ways of working to continuously improve the experience of electoral participants.

VEC staff members, secondees and respected elders Deborah and Dawn at the Frankston early voting centre.

Our challenges

Our staffing profile changes dramatically during elections

This is both one of our key requirements and one of our greatest challenges. This cyclical need has made it difficult for us to manage long-term process improvement, as election delivery calls for intense focus above all other activities.

Our workforce is changing

We can no longer rely on individuals with experience of multiple elections and detailed knowledge of our processes. This means we need to evolve so we don't depend on a particular person to perform a particular duty.

Election events are having an impact on staff wellbeing

There is significant pressure on us to deliver high quality elections within short timeframes, which can impact on the wellbeing of our staff. This is a challenge we need to manage skilfully in a hybrid working world.

Competition for talent is increasing

We have a highly committed and energised workforce who have a strong passion for their work. Our challenge is to develop our existing workforce and increase it, as we compete for talent amid skills shortages.

All hands on deck at the centralised activities site.

Electoral participants have high expectations

Electoral participant expectations of automation and customer service are higher than ever and will continue to rise. We need to better plan and evaluate our work so we can share our learnings across the organisation and mature our internal processes and systems to deliver an excellent service.

Our role as a regulator is expanding

Our role as a regulator came to the fore in the 2022 State election. This crucial integrity function must be managed effectively because it can have reputational implications. As this role expands, we need to develop processes and capabilities to meet our obligations.

The landscape in which we operate is more complex

The context in which we deliver elections changes rapidly. Our legislative and operational responsibilities, and the requirements of our field delivery teams continue to grow and become more complex.

We face constantly emerging risks

Emerging risks, such as misinformation and disinformation have the potential to erode trust in electoral institutions and processes. All participants have higher expectations for service excellence, cyber security and physical safety. Taken together, these are a risk to the perception of election integrity, and the wellbeing of our people and electoral participants.

A drive-through voting site in Melton for voters who tested positive to COVID-19.

Strategic outcomes and measures

	Trust	**Voters**	**Processes and systems**	**Wellbeing**
Outcomes	We are trusted to deliver electoral services with integrity and high quality.	We deliver a great voter experience.	Our processes and systems respond to a complex environment.	Our people are capable, engaged and satisfied.
Success measures	• Our electoral performance measures indicate we deliver high quality services. • Our reputation, media impact and confidence scores indicate that the public and stakeholders trust us. • We implement a framework where electoral integrity is at the centre of everything we do.	• Take up and satisfaction with accessible options indicate we minimise barriers to vote. • Our education and outreach activities make a positive impact on under-represented communities' participation and knowledge of voting. • Voter satisfaction with our services improves. • We clearly articulate a reform agenda that allows us to make meaningful recommendations for regulatory and legislative change.	• Our projects are delivered as planned. • Our processes are continuously improving. • Voter, candidate and party satisfaction with our digital services shows the online user experience is improving. • We deliver a strong governance framework for regulatory activities.	• We have a sustainable workforce that allows us to deliver our services and manage workloads. • Our people are engaged, satisfied, have high levels of wellbeing and they reflect the diversity of Victoria. • Our people are capable, have access to training and can advance their careers.

Enablers

These commitments will enable us to deliver our strategy

Alignment	Enablers	Focus
Overarching	Organisational design review	Re-align functions to enable us to deliver our electoral services, legislative obligations and strategic objectives.
	Accountability framework	Implement a performance and accountability framework to measure and assess our success across the 4 strategic areas.
Trust	Service quality improvements	Separate election planning and election delivery, to enable a greater focus on continuous improvement.
	Reputation management strategy	Refresh and implement our reputation management strategy to respond to the dynamic electoral landscape leading into future election events.
	Electoral integrity framework	Incorporate electoral integrity standards into election program planning, delivery and evaluation.
Voters	Voter accessibility enhancements	Implement new evidence-based approaches to improve the accessibility of our electoral services.
	Diversity and inclusion plans	Review and refresh our existing diversity and inclusion action plans for under-represented communities and develop an Aboriginal Engagement Plan.
	Legislative advocacy	Develop an approach to advocate for legislative reforms that enable us to modernise our services and address risks.
Processes and systems modernisation	Major projects pipeline	Invest in user-centred, modern, secure and accessible technical solutions to enhance service delivery and user experience.
	Continuous improvement pipeline	Embed continuous improvement into branch planning and reporting.
	Website content review	Audit and review website content to improve accessibility and user experience.
	Compliance	Implement our corporate compliance framework across the organisation.
Wellbeing	Staff wellbeing framework	Implement a holistic framework to help us maintain and improve staff wellbeing and engagement.
	Diversity and inclusion plan	Create a workplace diversity and inclusion plan that supports all staff to feel welcome, heard, respected and appreciated.
	Talent management program	Implement tailored personal development programs for our staff to broaden experience across our functions, support leaders and help our people meet their personal aspirations.
	Role clarity review	Introduce specific role-based outcomes and measures to allow our people to clearly understand what success looks like in their role
	Recruitment practices review	Improve our candidate attraction strategy and recruitment methodology to enable us to hire people with skills and backgrounds suited to our work environment.