

NSWEC ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

To administer **an impartial and fair electoral system** and ensure that opportunities for the community to participate in the **NSW electoral system** are based on **principles of equity and access**.

To deliver **high quality election services** which are **impartial, effective, efficient** and in **accordance with the law**.



*From the NSW  
Electoral Commissioner  
Colin Barry*

To the Premier  
The Hon Nathan Rees MP

The Hon Nathan Rees MP  
Premier, Minister for the Arts and Minister for the Central Coast  
Level 40 Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

30 October 2009

Dear Premier

I have pleasure in submitting for your presentation to both Houses of Parliament the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC).

The activities of the NSWEC for the year ended 30 June 2009 are reviewed in this report. The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Annual Report (Departments) Act 1985* and the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

Yours Sincerely



Colin Barry  
Electoral Commissioner

*This annual report summarises the key activities of the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC) for 2008/09*

## About this Report

This annual report summarises the key activities of the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC) for 2008/09 and reviews and reports on our performance against the objectives and targets set out in our 2008-2011 Corporate Plan and Results and Services Plan.

As such, the structure of this report is based around the NSWEC's four key results areas:

- Conduct of Elections;
- Electoral Roll Management;
- Communications and Public Awareness; and
- Organisational Development and Innovation.

A major focus is on the conduct of the NSW Local Government Elections held on 13 September 2008.

This report and other NSWEC publications are available on our website at [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au). Hard copies of this report can be obtained by contacting the NSWEC on (02) 9290 5999.



*"Voting – on Election Day"*

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*I am pleased to present the New South Wales Electoral Commission's Annual Report for 2008/09.*

*Colin Barry*

Colin Barry  
Electoral Commissioner  
30 October 2009



The focus this year has been on the planning and conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections, which saw for the first time a number of initiatives introduced across NSW. Despite some challenges, the NSWEC was successful in bringing election service delivery to the high standard experienced by our stakeholders in State elections.

In mid 2008 the Local Government (General) Amendments (Elections) Regulation 2008 came into effect and transferred certain key election responsibilities from Councils and Returning Officers to the NSWEC.

New services such as the Elector Inquiry Centre and Braille ballot papers were very well received as was the successful use of on-line recruitment for the large number of election officials required.

The most contentious issue identified concerned the full cost recovery model. While the cost of the 2008 Local Government Elections attracted considerable local media interest and concern from the Local Government and Shires Associations, the actual expenditure for the 2008 Local Government Elections was \$25.9 million with savings of \$5.2 million achieved. The costs for the 2008 Local Government Elections were reasonable at a cost of \$5.71 per elector.

The NSWEC established independent review mechanisms to assess arrangements for two key components of the 2008 Local Government Elections – the centralised vote counting centre and the costing model. I'm pleased to report that in both cases the findings were that the arrangements were considered appropriate. The centralised vote counting centre review reported that the count was "extremely well managed, open and transparent at all times with little opportunity for errors to occur".

Participation rates, generally seen as an indicator of the robustness of an electoral system, are traditionally less in Local Government elections than in Federal or State General elections. For the 2008 Local Government Elections, the participation rate was 83.4%, less than the NSWEC key result indicator target of 95%.

## Electoral Commissioner's Report

The NSWEC compared favourably with other jurisdictions on voter participation rates at Local Government elections, however comparisons can only be indicative due to the differing nature of Local Government voting systems across Australia.

While conducting elections is a central and important part of what the NSWEC does, we also work behind the scenes to address the major challenges facing our electoral system, such as providing electoral services to those in remote and regional areas at a reasonable cost, researching new technologies to increase participation in the elections, developing strategies to ensure people with disabilities are able to exercise their democratic right to vote and strategies to engage young voters.

As this report will show, we continued to make progress on these and other challenges affecting the delivery of impartial, accurate and cost effective electoral services.

The performance of the NSWEC needs to be measured and open to scrutiny. Following on from initiatives introduced in the previous reporting year, for the first time we will be reporting on performance measures set down in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan.

Also, contained within this report are the results of stakeholder surveys conducted over the reporting year to assess stakeholder satisfaction with our election services. I'm pleased to note that the overall views of stakeholders were positive and have provided us with constructive feedback.

Next year will see the NSWEC participate in the hearings of the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' consideration of the conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections. The NSWEC will finish its performance reporting on the 2008 Local Government Elections and begin the planning and implementation of many new and ongoing programmes in the lead up to the March 2011 State General Election.

Many lessons were learnt from the 2008 Local Government Elections and the NSWEC will use this knowledge for future elections. While the NSWEC is the mandated service provider for Local Government elections, it is our goal that if councils could choose, they would select the NSWEC to conduct their elections.

I would like to thank our experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated staff at the NSWEC for their outstanding contributions this year and I look forward to meeting the challenges of the coming year.



THE NEW SOUTH WALES

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The **New South Wales Electoral Commission** (NSWEC) is an independent statutory authority established under the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*.



# About the New South Wales Electoral Commission

The NSW Electoral Commissioner is appointed by the Governor of NSW and the NSWEC is the administrative agency by which the Electoral Commissioner exercises statutory functions.

The key responsibilities of the NSWEC are to:

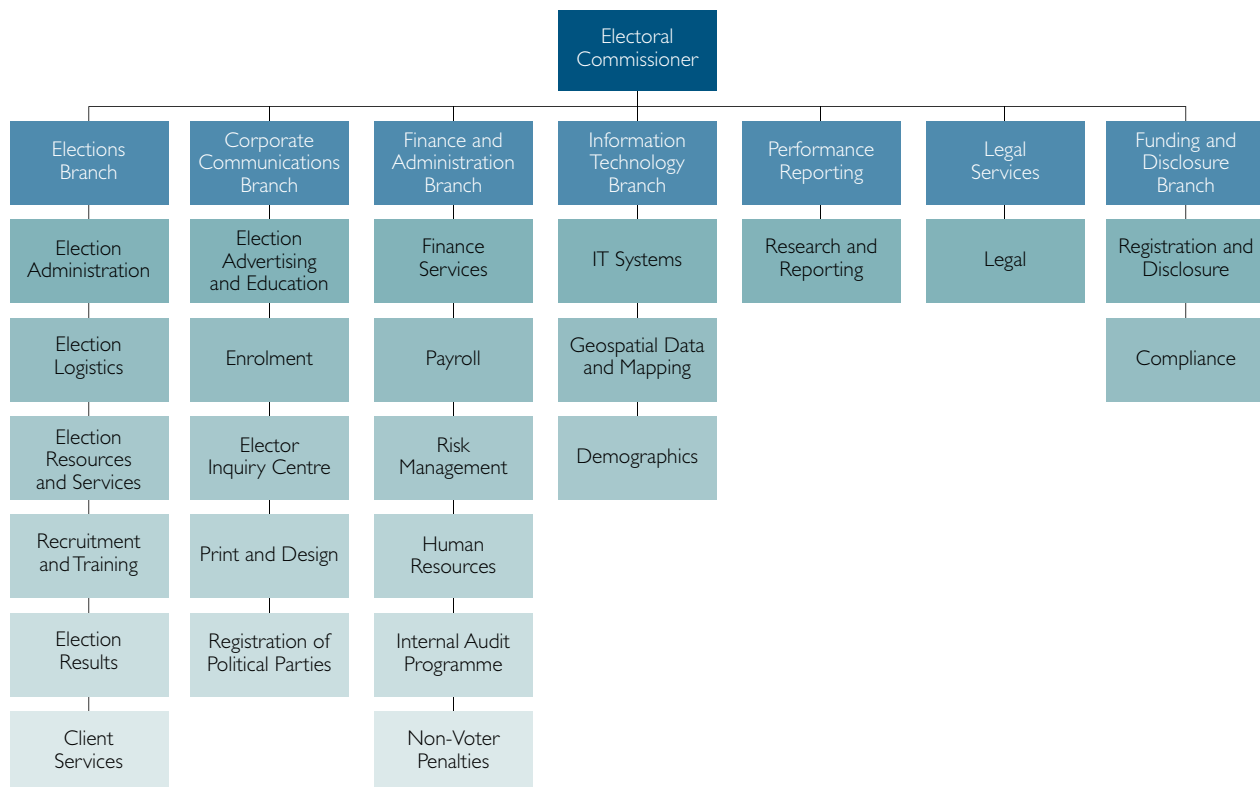
- conduct elections and by-elections for the Parliament of NSW;
- conduct elections for Local Government councils;
- conduct elections for registered clubs, statutory boards, the Aboriginal Land Council and state registered industrial organisations;
- prepare the NSW electoral roll in conjunction with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC);
- provide administrative support to the Election Funding Authority (EFA);

- provide advice to the Premier on issues affecting the conduct of State General elections, including administrative issues requiring legislative remedy;
- contribute to public understanding and awareness of elections and electoral matters; and
- report to the NSW Parliament on the NSWEC's activities.

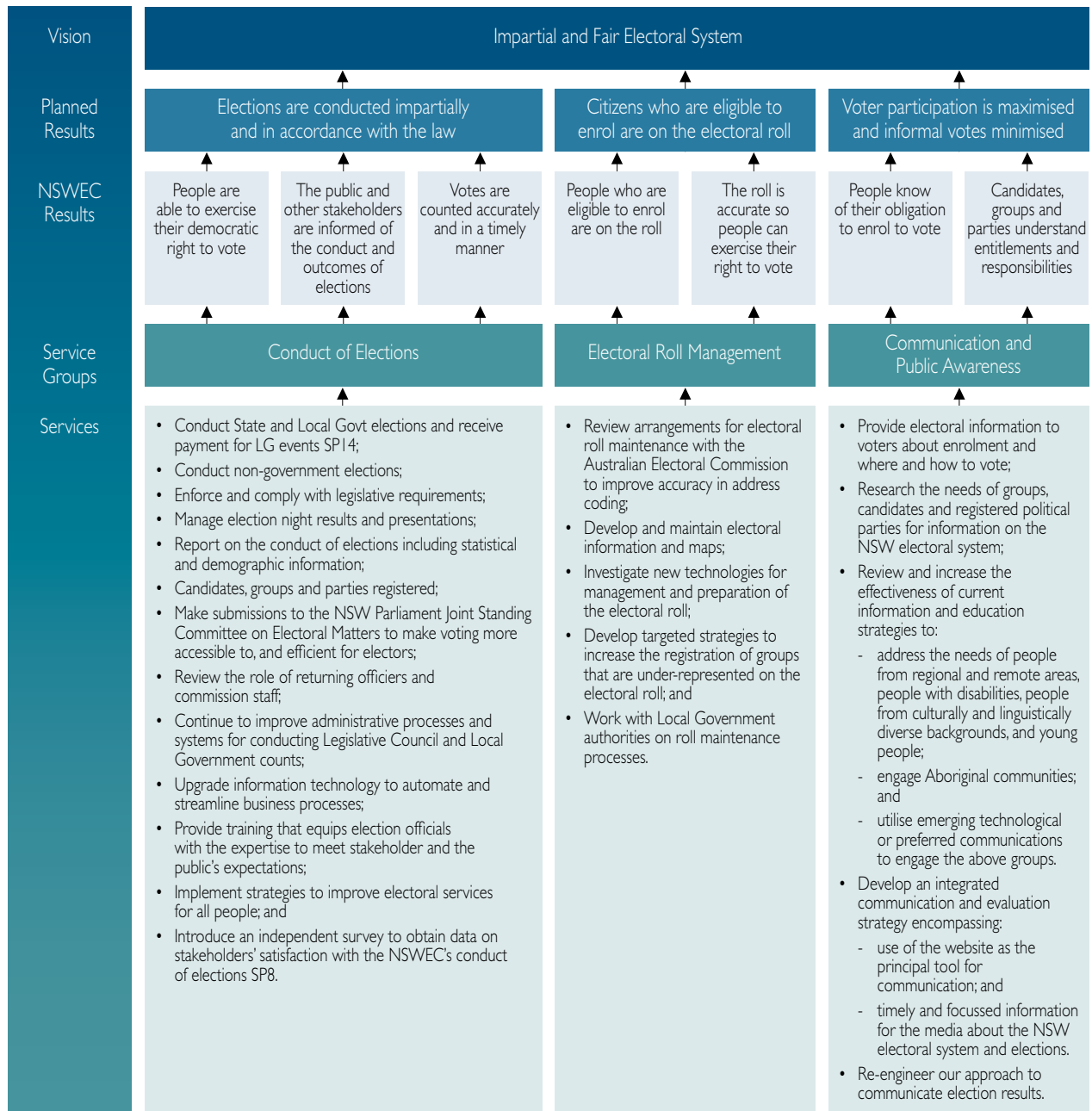
The NSWEC's head office is organised functionally into five branches: Elections, Corporate Communications, Finance and Administration, Information Technology and Funding and Disclosure.

An organisational chart showing the responsibilities of each branch appears below and details of our executive management appear on page 74.

## NSWEC Organisational Chart



# NSWEC Results and Services Plan





## NSWEC Mission

*To deliver high quality election services which are impartial, effective, efficient and in accordance with the law.*



## NSWEC Vision

*To administer an impartial and fair electoral system and ensure that opportunities for the community to participate in the NSW electoral system are based on principles of equity and access.*

## NSWEC Values

- **Integrity** in the way that we approach our work;
- **Impartiality** in the conduct of elections to gain and maintain the confidence of stakeholders and the community;
- **Respect** for the needs of all in our community to ensure equal access to democracy;
- **Professionalism** in providing election services; and
- **A learning culture** amongst our staff members to ensure that the NSWEC reflects on how it delivers its services and remains a modern, forward thinking organisation that can meet future challenges.



*"Voting at Antarctica – 2007 State Election"*



“Tally Room – 2007 State Election”

## NSWEC Stakeholders

The NSWEC stakeholders include:

- the people and electors of NSW;
- the Parliament of NSW;
- Local Government councils;
- the NSW Aboriginal Land Council;
- election candidates and participants;
- registered political parties;
- industrial organisations, registered clubs and statutory boards;
- the Election Funding Authority; and
- the media.

## Results and Services Plan

The NSWEC uses a set of performance priorities and service measures to map the expected outcomes and service delivery goals. The Results and Services Plan is a performance management tool compiled under NSW Treasury guidelines which links our strategic priorities to our operational outcomes.

The NSWEC’s Results and Services Plan contains a set of core results used for managing and reporting our service delivery to the NSW Parliament and the Government and are linked to three core outcomes. These are:

- elections are conducted impartially and in accordance with the law;
- citizens who are eligible to enrol are on the electoral roll; and
- voter participation is maximised and informal votes minimised.

The services that the NSWEC provides and the logic linking the services to results are set out in the diagram on page 7.

## NSWEC 2008–2011 Corporate Plan

The NSWEC’s 2008–2011 Corporate Plan provides the basis for the measures in the Results and Services Plan but also includes targets for performance.

This reporting year the NSWEC has used the Results Indicators and Key Result Areas in the plan to set benchmarks for performance reporting both for elections and standard business practices.

Results Indicators measure trends relevant to the health of the overall electoral system but for which the NSWEC cannot be held solely responsible. Many stakeholders contribute to the overall health and functioning of the NSW electoral system: the community at large, parties and candidates all have major roles to play in making the system impartial and fair. Nevertheless the NSWEC monitors these indicators and works with our stakeholders to provide the foundations for an impartial, trusted electoral system in NSW. A table outlining the Result Indicators and Outcomes for 2008/09 appears on page 12.

**Key Results Areas** set out the NSWEC’s operational service outcomes, service measures and strategies in:

- conduct of elections;
- electoral roll management;
- communication and public awareness; and
- organisational development and innovation.

The Key Results Area service measures and outcomes for 2008/09 appear on page 13.

The NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan is available on the website – [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au).

# 2

PERFORMANCE

REPORTING

This reporting year the **NSWEC** has used the **Results Indicators and Key Result Areas** in the *2008-2011 Corporate Plan* to set benchmarks or performance reporting both for elections and standard business practices.





# Performance Reporting

## Performance Summary

Table 1: Performance Summary of Selected Indicators for the NSWEC 2005 to 2009

Service Delivery	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Electors enrolled as at 30 June	4.3M	4.4M	4.5M	<b>4.5M</b>
State General Elections conducted	–	1	–	–
State by-elections conducted	4	–	–	<b>4</b>
Local Government elections conducted (including referenda and polls)	–	–	–	<b>332</b>
Local Government by-elections conducted	15	14	–	<b>11</b>
Registered club elections conducted	36	22	19	<b>15</b>
Statutory board and industrial ballots conducted and enterprise agreements managed	41	36	38	<b>30</b>
<b>Resources</b>				
Staff numbers as at 30 June (permanent)	33	33	38	<b>36</b>
Temporary election staff		19,089		<b>13,684</b>
<b>Finance</b>				
Total expenditure	\$12.8M	\$53.2M <sup>(a)</sup>	\$17.6M	<b>\$39.3M<sup>(b)</sup></b>
Cost of election per elector	–	–	–	<b>\$5.71<sup>(c)</sup></b>

### Notes:

- (a) 2006/07 financial year's budget included expenditure for the 2007 State General Election.  
 (b) 2008/09 financial year's budget included expenditure for the 2008 Local Government Elections.  
 (c) Cost of election per elector figure relates to the cost of the 2008 Local Government Elections.

## An Impartial and Fair Electoral System

Table 2: Results Indicators – Targets and 2008 Results

Results Indicators	Target	2008 LGE
<b>Elections are conducted impartially and in accordance with the law</b>		
Number of successful Court challenges to election results	0	<b>0</b>
Electoral Commissioner's discretion to require recounts	0	2 <sup>(a)</sup>
<b>Citizens who are eligible to enrol are on the electoral roll</b>		
% young eligible citizens (17-25 years) enrolled	98%	<b>79.8%<sup>(b)</sup></b>
% all eligible citizens (26+ years) enrolled	95%	<b>94%<sup>(b)</sup></b>
<b>Voter participation is maximised and informal votes minimised</b>		
% of eligible population enrolled who voted	95%	<b>83.4%<sup>(b)</sup></b>
% of informal votes	<3%	<b>7.1%</b>
<b>% penalties for failure to vote notices as a % of the roll</b>	<4%	<b>9.2%</b>

### Notes:

- (a) Both recounts resulted in no change to the election outcome.  
 (b) The following ABS data was used to calculate the numbers in this table: NSW population by age group as at July 2008 and NSW population (total) at July 2008 and September 2008. The number on Rolls in areas with contested elections was 4.321M.

## Key Result Areas

Table 3: NSWEC Corporate Plan Measures and Outcomes<sup>(a)</sup>

Corporate Plan Measures	Target	2008/09
<b>Key Result Area 1: Conduct of elections</b>		
% polling places where provisional first preferences are counted for the Legislative Assembly and Local Government elections on election night.	100%	100%
Variance rates between count of votes and recount if any.	<10 votes	2 recounts; 1 variation – 6 votes.
Establish baseline measure of community members' satisfaction with the NSWEC's services in enabling them to vote.	n/a	74.4% surveyed electors very satisfied, satisfied or neutral on their overall experience of voting. <sup>(b)</sup>
Establish a baseline measure of the satisfaction of registered political parties with registration, continued registration and nomination services provided by the NSWEC.	n/a	78.5% very satisfied, satisfied or neutral with the current registration and ongoing registration process; 100% satisfied with information on requirements; 92.9% satisfied with the level of NSWEC service. <sup>(b)</sup>
Establish a baseline measure of the community's, the media's and registered political parties' satisfaction with the timeliness and accuracy of results.	n/a	94.1% General Managers have no concerns re accuracy of results; 51.9% General Managers, 80.8% media and 70.5% candidates very satisfied, satisfied or neutral with timeliness of results. <sup>(b)</sup>
<b>Key Result Area 2: Electoral roll management</b>		
% of voters' addresses correctly coded to electorates (target = 100%).	100%	99.99%
<b>Key Result Area 3: Communication and public awareness</b>		
Establish baseline measure of the % of surveyed community members who are enrolled to vote.	n/a	99.4% of electors surveyed were enrolled. <sup>(b)</sup>
% of electors aware of the NSWEC's information campaign.	75%	65.8% electors surveyed recalled seeing or hearing NSWEC advertisements. <sup>(b)</sup>
Report on conduct of elections to be completed.	6 months from election day	Report prepared to timeframe of NSW Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.
<b>Key Result Area 4: Organisational development and innovation</b>		
Average days training per staff member	3 days	3.7 days
% of variation from budget for State and Local Government elections.	+/- 2% from budget	2008 LGE Budget \$31.2M, actual \$25.9M, savings \$5.3M (-16.9% variance).
% costs recovered for Local Government elections (target: 95%).	95%	100% of planned operational costs recovered.
Establish NSWEC's costs per elector and commence comparison with other jurisdictions and previous years' performance.	n/a	Cost per elector = \$5.71.
IT business failures.	0	0
% of NSWEC expenditure on corporate overheads meets accepted range.	n/a	Yes
% annual growth in new business revenue.	5%	0.13%

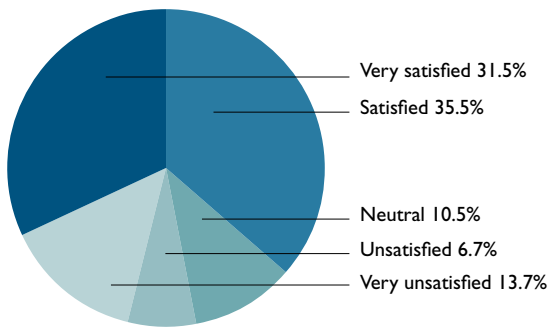
### Notes:

(a) All results refer to the 2008 Local Government Elections except for NSWEC's expenditure and annual growth in business revenue which takes year wide data into account.

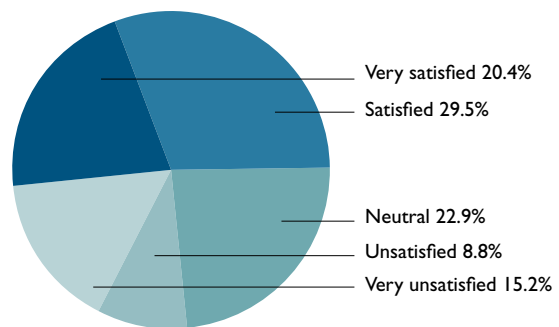
(b) The methodology used in the survey sample is more likely to produce a negative result than a random sample.

# Stakeholder Satisfaction and Trends

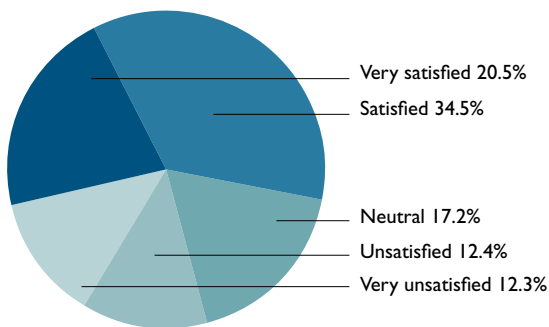
**Graph 1:**  
Electors' Overall Satisfaction with Ease of Voting at the 2008 Local Government Elections



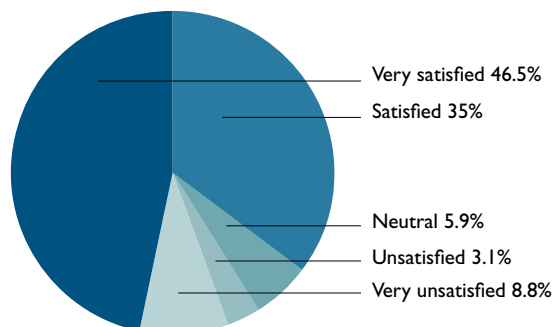
**Graph 2:**  
Electors' Overall Satisfaction with NSWEC Administration at the 2008 Local Government Elections



**Graph 3:**  
Electors' Overall Satisfaction with the Overall Process of Voting at the 2008 Local Government Elections



**Graph 4:**  
Electors' Overall Satisfaction with Location of Polling Places at the 2008 Local Government Elections <sup>(a)</sup>



Note: (a) percentages may not add to 100% in all cases as missing responses are not included.

The NSWEC reports on the conduct and outcomes of elections to the NSW Parliament, the Premier and in the case of Local Government Elections, to the Minister for Local Government and to each council.

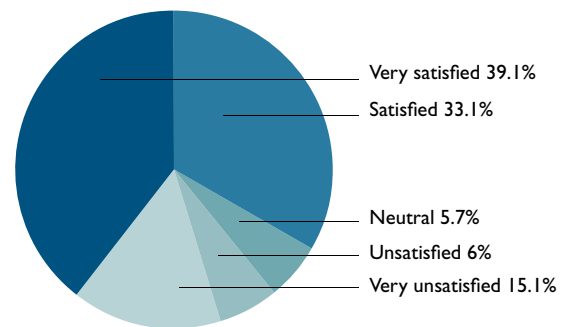


“Ballot Papers – At the count centre”

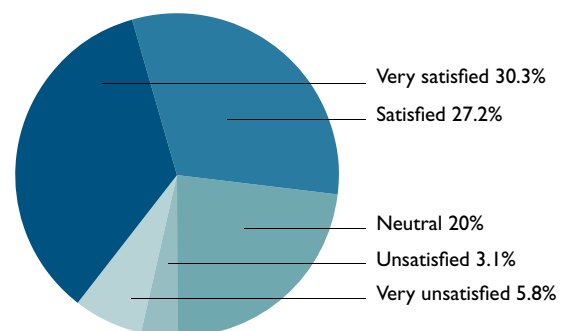
As part of the NSWEC’s commitment to provide high quality, value for money services for the 2008 Local Government Elections, the NSWEC measured its performance by surveying the satisfaction of key stakeholder groups such as electors, council General Managers, registered political parties, candidates and election staff. These initial surveys are intended to serve as benchmarks for future performance.

## Stakeholder Satisfaction and Trends

**Graph 5:**  
Electors’ Overall Satisfaction with the Time Required to Vote at Polling Places at the 2008 Local Government Elections %<sup>(a)</sup>



**Graph 6:**  
Electors’ Overall Satisfaction with Assistance Provided at Polling Places at the 2008 Local Government Elections %<sup>(a)</sup>

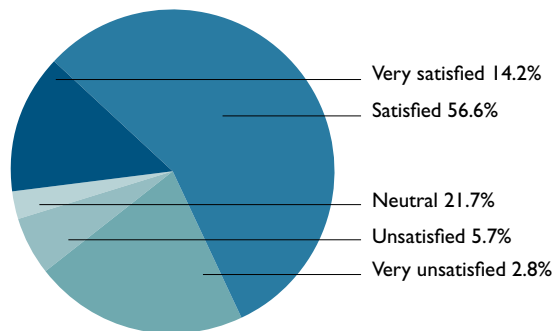


Note: (a) percentages may not add to 100% in all cases as missing responses are not included.

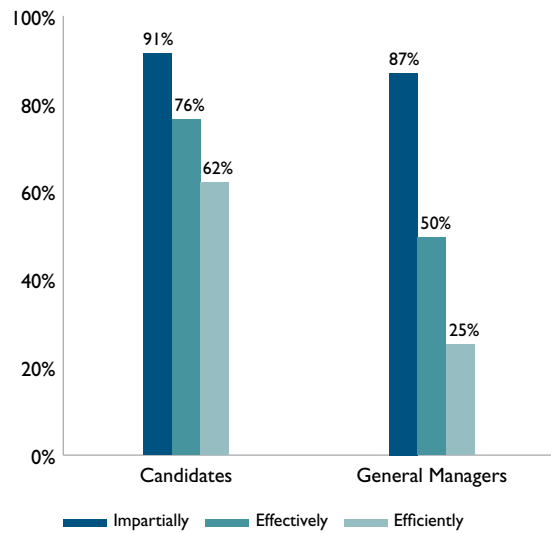


# Stakeholder Satisfaction and Trends

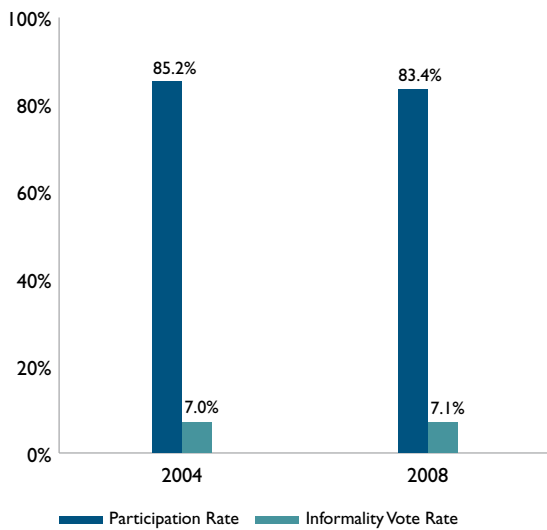
**Graph 7:**  
Council General Managers' Satisfaction with Advertising of 2008 Local Government Elections % <sup>(a)</sup>



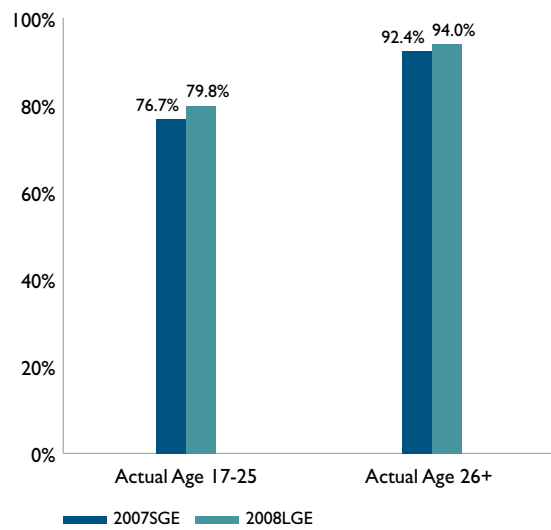
**Graph 8:**  
Candidates and Council General Managers on Conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections %



**Graph 9:**  
Participation and Informality Rates of Local Government Elections 2004 and 2008 %



**Graph 10:**  
Eligible Citizens Enrolled to Vote for the 2007 State Government Election and 2008 Local Government Elections %



Note: (a) percentages may not add to 100% in all cases as missing responses are not included.

# 3

## 2008/09 AT A GLANCE

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During the reporting year the NSWEC conducted the **2008 Local Government Elections** across **148 council areas** and undertook **11 Local Government by-elections**, **four State Government by-elections** and **45 elections** for *clubs, statutory boards and industrial organisations*.





“Pre-poll Voting – McLeod House”

## Conduct of Elections

### Objectives:

- People are able to exercise their democratic right to vote; and
- Votes are counted accurately and in a timely manner.

### Highlights

- Conducted 2008 Local Government Elections across 148 council areas:
  - managed 2,597 polling places;
  - assisted electors to cast 3,529,220 votes; and
  - employed 13,684 election staff.
- Undertook 11 Local Government by-elections, four State Government by-elections and 45 elections for clubs, statutory boards and industrial organisations;
- Provided assistance for ten inter-jurisdictional electoral events;
- Newly created Elector Inquiry Centre took 106,955 telephone calls over eight weeks;
- Newly created Candidate and Council Helpdesks answered 3,483 calls.
- Newly created council pages on NSWEC websites had almost 11 million hits over three months; and
- Innovations for the 2008 Local Government Elections included:
  - Mobile pre-polling in remote areas;
  - Braille ballot papers for electors with vision impairment; and
  - Virtual Tally Room for easy monitoring of election results.

### Future Directions

- Advise the NSW Premier and the Minister for Local Government on recommendations for legislative reform;
- Meet the challenges arising from changing stakeholder expectations such as increasing demand for innovations in voting;
- Improve standards of electoral services and customer and stakeholder satisfaction with electoral processes;
- Better communicate the role of the NSWEC and educate the community about NSW electoral systems; and
- Contribute to national and inter-jurisdictional projects aimed at improving electoral understanding and service efficiency and effectiveness.



“Pre-poll – Voting”



*“Election Day – Marking the Roll”*

## Electoral Roll Management

### Objectives:

- People who are eligible to enrol are on the roll; and
- The electoral roll is accurate so people can exercise their right to vote.

### Highlights

- 99.99% of electors correctly coded for the 2008 Local Government Elections;
- Improved accuracy of the electoral roll by:
  - address coding;
  - investigating new technologies for management of the electoral roll; and
  - working with local councils on roll maintenance processes.
- Enacted strategies to increase the registration of groups under-represented on the electoral roll;
- 89.3% of General Managers were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied with the accuracy of the residential electoral roll for their council;
- 83.7% of General Managers' were neutral, satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance provided by the NSWEC to councils to manage their non-residential roll; and
- 96.5% of surveyed electors' personal details accurate.

### Future Directions

- Creation of an enrolment function at the NSWEC dedicated to maintaining the NSW electoral roll for the 2011 State General Election;
- Implementation of SmartRoll in preparation for the 2011 State General Election (subject to legislative support);
- Work with council General Managers to improve the non-residential electoral rolls; and
- Investigate the reasons for continued decline in the numbers on the non-residential roll for the Council of the City of Sydney and the development of a strategy to address this for the 2012 Local Government Elections.



*“iRoll – Sample of Elector Screen Information*





“Yabun Festival – At NSWEC Stall”



"Multilingual Advertising – Local Government Elections"

# Communication and Public Awareness

## Objectives:

- People know of their obligation to enrol and vote;
- Candidates and parties are informed of their entitlements and responsibilities; and
- The public and other stakeholders are informed of the conduct and outcomes of elections.

## Highlights

- Fully managed for the first time all advertising for the 2008 Local Government Elections;
- Electoral information strategies for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse electors rated highly successful;
- 940,806 election information brochures produced, with 86% of electors saying information contained answered all or most of their queries;
- Voter information created in 24 languages;
- 30 Candidate Information Seminars conducted throughout NSW;
- 163 press advertisements placed in a mix of general, multilingual and Aboriginal press throughout NSW, 3,244 radio advertisements, and 260 'live reads'. 217 different local newspapers used with at least one newspaper from each council area;
- Media strategy produced 64 media releases, more than 7,000 media mentions, 100 plus live radio interviews and more than 60 'letters to the editor'; and
- 81% of Council General Managers reported that the outcomes of the elections were available appropriately on the NSWEC website and other forms.

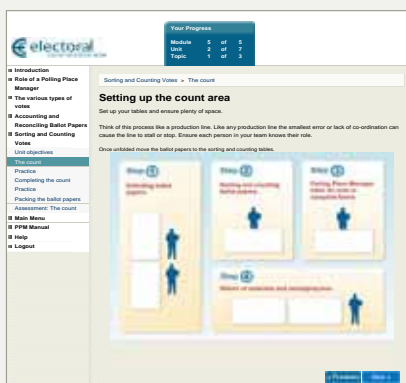
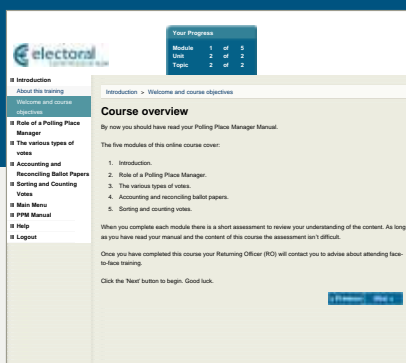
## Future Directions

- Consider more technological approaches better geared to younger and more electronically oriented electors;
- Use the results of the stakeholder surveys and other research in developing future election communication strategies suited to each stakeholder group and those needing greater support to participate in the electoral system; and
- Provide more targeted information on candidates, polling places and ward boundaries.



"Advertising – Local Government Elections"

The NSWEC restructured its website to allow Local Government elections content to serve as a key information resource for election stakeholders.



“Online Training – Polling Place Managers”

## Organisational Development and Innovation

### Objectives:

The NSWEC has the staff, systems and processes to provide value for money for the people of NSW in accordance with government policy; and

Income is generated from new business opportunities.

### Highlights

- Online recruitment of almost 14,000 election officials for the 2008 Local Government Elections;
- Online training of Polling Place Managers;
- Ten Returning Officer Support Officers assisted 90 Returning Officers in the field and answered 12,423 calls from July to September 2009;
- Restructured the NSWEC to create an Election Funding and Disclosure Branch for administrative support to the EFA;
- Implemented a full cost recovery model for 2008 Local Government Elections that was independently reviewed as appropriately capturing and apportioning costs across councils;
- Total cost of 2008 Local Government Elections 16.9% under budget; and
- Performance measurement reporting commenced which included surveying stakeholder satisfaction of election services and an independent review of centralised vote counting arrangements.

### Future Directions

- Develop new recruitment and assessment procedures for the 2011 State General Election;
- Trial of data matching of SmartRoll Project and other development of IT systems for 2011 State General Election; and
- Strategies to increase electoral services to clubs and statutory boards.

# 4

## REVIEW OF OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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The NSWEC is responsible for implementing the *democratic principles of an open and fair electoral system* in which **elections** are conducted **impartially** and in **accordance with the law**, and *voter participation is maximised* and *informal voting minimised*.

These principles underpin the activities that the public associates with the **electoral system** – *enrolling to vote, voting and the counting of votes*.

Related to these core functions are activities such as raising the public's awareness of coming elections, and advising candidates and registered political parties of their responsibilities.







*“Election Day – Voting”*

## Conduct of Elections

The reporting year saw the NSWEC conduct 332 Local Government elections across 148 council areas on Saturday, 13 September 2008. The 2008 Local Government Elections were a major event for the NSWEC involving many months of preparation and planning to provide councils, candidates and electors with high quality election services.

In addition to the Local Government elections the NSWEC undertook 11 Local Government by-elections, four State by-elections and conducted 45 elections for clubs, statutory boards and industrial organisations. The NSWEC provided assistance to ten inter-jurisdictional electoral authorities by providing voting services for electors in NSW during an interstate election.



*“Check Count – At Returning Officer’s Office”*

The conduct of elections is governed by the election timetable – a schedule for the conduct of certain electoral administrative functions. For the 2008 Local Government Elections, the regulated election period began on Monday 4 August and ended at 6pm on Saturday 13 September 2008. This was the first time that there was a regulated election period for Local Government elections.

*In 2008, legislative amendments modernised arrangements for the conduct of Local Government elections in NSW and transferred certain responsibilities from Returning Officers and councils to the Electoral Commissioner.*



“Election Day – Voting”

## 2008 NSW Local Government Elections

The 2008 Local Government Elections represented the first time that services provided for elections at the local government level have been brought to the standard experienced and expected by stakeholders at State and Federal elections.

In 2008, legislative amendments modernised arrangements for the conduct of Local Government elections in NSW and transferred certain responsibilities from Returning Officers and councils to the Electoral Commissioner.

In addition, changes to legislation also meant that the day of the election moved from 27 September to 13 September to ensure that the elections did not fall within NSW public school holidays.

The 2008 Local Government Elections also saw for the first time full cost recovery applied across NSW for the conduct of the elections by the NSWEC. Previously, the costs were not fully identified nor itemised although councils were required by law to pay for the cost of running their elections. The NSWEC is not provided with funding from the NSW Government to cover costs associated with Local Government elections other than receiving an advance to cover expenses incurred until recoupment of costs from councils enables repayment of the advance.

The NSWEC conducted the elections in accordance with the legislation and introduced new services to improve election processes and operations for all election stakeholders.

## Snapshot – As part of the 2008 Local Government Elections the NSWEC:

- assisted the Australian Electoral Commission in the management of the electoral roll for 4,544,395 electors;
- processed 4,620 candidates for 1,474 mayoral and councillor positions;
- conducted 332 individual elections;
- managed 2,597 polling places;
- assisted electors to cast 3,529,220 votes;
- managed 90 Returning Officers in the field;
- employed 13,684 election staff; and
- reported on its conduct of these elections to the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.



“Pre-poll Office – Polling Official Filling out Details”

## PRE POLL VOTING FOR

Albury City Council

**election hotline**  
**1300 135 736**

[www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au)



2008 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION

“Pre-poll Office – Signage at Front”

Table 4: Due, Contested and Uncontested Elections, 2008 Local Government Elections

	Due	Contested	Uncontested
Councillor elections – Divided councils	223	187	36
Councillor elections – Undivided councils	86	84	2
Councillor elections – Total	309	271	38
Mayoral elections	28	27	1

### Pre-polling Centres

197 pre-poll voting centres were available across NSW in the lead up to election day, of which 78.2% (154) were fully wheelchair accessible. Pre-poll voting centre hours of operation were the same as council hours. A total of 308,735 (8.7% of the total votes cast) pre-poll votes were cast across NSW.

### Mobile Pre-polling in Remote Areas

Providing voting services to electors in rural and remote NSW remains a challenge for the NSWEC with electors in isolated rural communities often experiencing difficulties in getting to a polling place because of the distance to be travelled. Legislative amendments enabled the NSWEC to implement pre-poll voting at mobile booths in remote Local Government areas for the 2008 Local Government Elections. Mobile polling was established in eight

locations in the far west and northern NSW from 1 September 2008.

An estimated number of 30 – 40 electors voted using the mobile polling booth service. As this was the first time mobile voting booths had been used, it is not possible to provide comparative data with either the 2004 Local Government Elections or the 2007 State General Election. Of those respondents who participated in the survey of the NSWEC's conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections, seven had voted using mobile polling booths. This figure is too small to draw meaningful and valid conclusions.

The NSWEC will review the appropriateness of the locations, days and times of operation and the effectiveness of advertising the service.



*“Vision Australia – At the Polling Place”*

### **Braille Ballot Papers for Electors with Vision Impairment**

The provisions for vision impaired electors were significantly altered when new legislation introduced the option for vision impaired voters to request Braille ballot papers. This was the largest change to the services provided for people with disabilities from not just the 2004 Local Government Elections but also the 2007 State General Election. The NSWEC worked closely with Vision Australia to make this initiative successful and the ballot paper developed with Vision Australia incorporated large print in addition to the Braille format.

Registration by vision impaired voters was necessary to use the Braille ballot paper option as the design and printing of the ballot papers required significant

lead times and special printing. Applications for Braille ballot papers were taken by the NSWEC between Monday 14 July and 5pm Wednesday 13 August, 2008. An application could be verbal or written and taken by phone, fax or email. Braille ballot papers were prepared for postal, pre-poll and ordinary voting and were both counted in the same way as other (non-Braille) ballot papers and available at the closest convenient location for the elector:

The total cost of Braille papers was \$24,862 with a cost per registered Braille paper applicant of \$478. This compares favourably with the average cost per vote of \$2,597 for the 2007 Federal Election trial of electronically assisted voting for blind and vision impaired electors.



## Case Study – Braille and large print ballot paper users

The NSWEC surveyed by phone the experiences and views of 53 electors who used Braille ballot papers for voting at the 2008 Local Government Elections. The NSWEC was able to gain the feedback from 73.1% of these voters. The overwhelming majority welcomed the initiative as Braille ballot papers improved the privacy of their vote (61.1%) and their independence when voting (71.4%). 80% said that, based on their experience at the 2008 Local Government Elections, they would cast their vote on Braille ballot papers at future elections. The detail of the responses is presented below.

Survey participants were asked to provide comments or suggestions that they thought would assist in improving services to electors with vision impairment in the future. While electors were supportive of the initiative and saw it as a positive start, there was a preference for online voting as used by the AEC at the 2007 Federal Election. Participants also commented that candidate information and other background election material in Braille would be useful at future elections. The Braille ballot papers were produced using Grade 1 (uncontracted) Braille, however, 71.9% of participants indicated a preference for the use of Grade 2 (contracted) Braille.



“Braille Ballot Paper – Printed for NSWEC by Vision Australia”

### Postal Voting

In the 2008 Local Government Elections electors could apply for a postal vote if they were unable to attend a polling place in their area/ward on election day. Statewide 134,802 votes were cast by electors who voted by post at the 2008 Local Government Elections. This represents 3.8% of the total votes cast at the 2008 elections.

### Declared Institutions

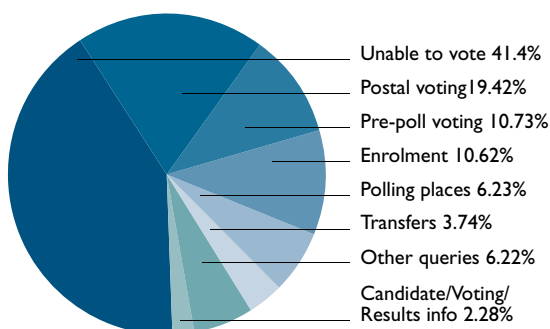
The Electoral Commissioner has the authority to appoint hospitals, nursing homes, retirement villages and like facilities as Declared Institutions to assist the residents and/or patients of these facilities who are unable to attend a polling place on election day. A total of 9,421 votes were cast in Declared Institutions across the State (0.3% of total votes cast).

### Elector Inquiry Centre

For the first time a dedicated call centre known as the 'Elector Inquiry Centre', was established for a Local Government election. The NSWEC established the Elector Inquiry Centre to ensure that relevant, timely and specific information was available to all electors and to decrease the number of telephone inquiries made to councils.

Of the call data which has been obtained, an estimated 106,955 calls were made to the Elector Inquiry Centre during its operating period from the 28 July to closure on 29 September 2008. The nature of the calls typically concerned inability to vote on polling day (41.1% of calls), postal voting (19.4%) followed by pre-poll voting (10.7%) and enrolment (10.6%).

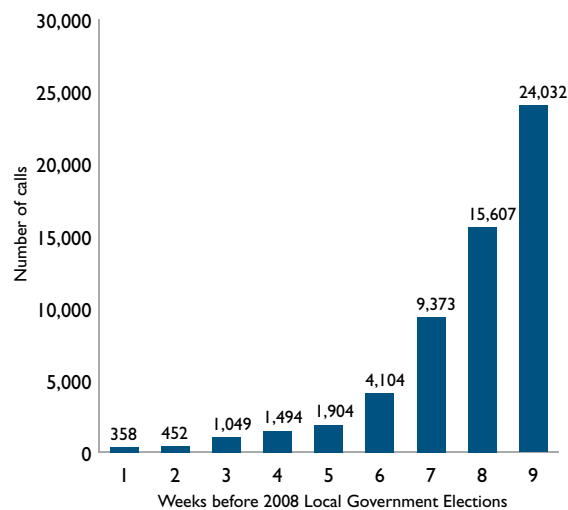
**Graph 11**  
2008 Local Government Elections Elector Inquiry Centre, Nature of Calls



### Candidate and Council Help Desks

The NSWEC established a help desk for the exclusive use of candidates and council representatives. Candidates and councils seeking advice on areas such as nominations, how-to-vote materials, election funding and election results were able to call the help desk throughout the election period. The introduction of the help desk led to a reduction in calls to Returning Officers and more consistent and accurate distribution of information to candidates and council representatives.

**Graph 12**  
2008 Local Government Elections Elector Inquiry Centre Call Volume



The Elector Inquiry Centre received 106,955 calls during its operating period from the 28 July to 29 September 2008.

## NSWEC Website

The NSWEC in its Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011 committed to developing an integrated communication and evaluation strategy using the NSWEC website as a principal tool of communication.

During the reporting year the NSWEC restructured its website and brought the online content for Local Government elections to a standard equivalent to that available for State elections.

The website was heavily utilised with almost 11 million hits over three months. The pages most visited were:

- Local Government elections overview;
- 2008 Local Government Elections results; and
- Council search facility.



“NSWEC – Website Pages”

## Ballot Paper Printing

Unlike practices in previous years where some councils arranged for the printing of their own ballot papers, for the 2008 Local Government Elections the NSWEC centrally arranged the printing of all ballot papers by a contracted printing company. This ensured greater quality control and consistency in the ballot paper formats and styles.

A total of 291 unique ballot papers were produced for the various election contests with 8.9 million ballot papers printed at a cost of \$0.16 per small ballot paper (generally single column and mayoral election ballot papers) and \$0.39 per large ballot paper (generally above the line voting ballot papers).



*“Printing of Ballot Papers – Local Government Elections”*



*90 Returning Officers were recruited, trained and deployed around NSW for the 2008 Local Government Elections.*

## Returning Officers and Regional Returning Officers

Returning Officers were central to the running of the Local Government elections. Duties included making arrangements for voting at polling places, dealing with enquiries and complaints from the public, processing candidate nominations and counting votes and declaring results. In total 90 Returning Officers were recruited, trained and deployed around NSW for the 2008 Local Government Elections.

These elections also saw the introduction of Regional Returning Officers, an innovation introduced to provide cost effective services to some regional and rural councils. 81 councils (54.7%) representing over 900,000 electors chose the regional model. 23 regions were formed with the smallest regions involving two councils; the biggest involving seven councils. The majority of regional groups consisted of three or less councils.

## Polling Places

The establishment of polling places for election day is a major component of the election preparation for the NSWEC.

On election day 2,597 polling places were leased for use by electors across NSW.

Statewide there were 65 principal polling places, 152 multi-ward polling places (for adjoining wards), 62 multi-council polling places (for two or more council areas) and six multi-ward and multi-council polling places (for two or more council areas and adjoining wards).

At the 2008 Local Government Elections, 60.5% (1,571) of polling places used by the NSWEC were NSW Department of Education and Training facilities. The remainder were sourced from private schools, community halls, community centres, church facilities and other facilities.

Where possible, the NSWEC leased wheelchair accessible venues as polling places. While the NSWEC does not own any of the venues used for voting it is committed to providing the best possible voting facilities for electors with a disability and understands the importance of providing accurate accessibility information to the public.

The NSWEC undertook an audit of the accessibility status of all polling places against information supplied by the AEC. Polling place accessibility information was provided to the Returning Officers for review at the local level along with a list of criteria used by the AEC in assessing accessibility from the car park to the voting area but not including items such as wheelchair accessible toilets. All criteria provided to the Returning Officer were required to be met for a polling place to be deemed fully accessible. Statewide 549 (21.1%) of polling places had full wheelchair access and 1,103 (42.5%) had partial wheelchair access.

## Local Government Counting Centre

The NSWEC established a Local Government Counting Centre (LGCC) at its Riverwood warehouse to conduct the count of ballot papers for councils using the Proportional Representation voting system. 400 data entry operators working over 2 x 8 hour shifts dealt with 1.3 million ballot papers. A total of 165 elections were counted at the LGCC. Counting for all elections finished on Wednesday 24 September 2008 three days ahead of schedule, with 1,474 councillors and 28 mayors elected to office for a four year term. All elections including 17 referenda and 15 polls were declared by Thursday 25 September. Two recounts were undertaken (one at the LGCC) and the outcomes were not changed in either case.



## Case Study – Observation Team

The NSWEC established an independent Observation Team to observe the operations of the LGCC. The Observation Team was established to give candidates, registered political parties and members of the public confidence in the integrity, effectiveness and efficiency of the centralised count of ballot papers. The Team comprised representatives from the Victorian Electoral Commission, the NSW Department of Local Government and the Local Government and Shires Associations.

The findings of the Observation Team were very positive about the central vote counting centre:

“The Observation Team have no overall concerns with the NSWEC count process in accordance with the terms of reference provided to the team. Clear, precise procedures were in place and seemed to be followed. Ballot paper management and reconciliation, considered to be of the utmost importance by all team members, was well executed and raised no concerns.”

The Observation Team’s report was available in early November 2008. It can be downloaded from the NSWEC’s website [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au).



“Check Count – Ballot Paper Counting Machine”

### Virtual Tally Room

The NSWEC introduced a Virtual Tally Room (VTR) to provide election stakeholders with regular updates of all election counts across NSW. The VTR was successfully introduced at the 2007 State General Election. Its introduction at the 2008 Local Government Elections brought council elections into line with State General elections by providing electronically first preference results for 148 councils on election night.

### Compulsory Voting Enforcement

The NSWEC has an obligation under the *Local Government Act 1993* to issue penalty notices to electors who fail to vote in Local Government elections and who do not have a valid reason for not voting. The process of identifying non-voters entails the NSWEC scanning the roll marked with the names of those electors who have voted to identify those who appear not to have been marked off the roll and not voted. Using this initial list, the NSWEC identifies those electors who are deceased, moved interstate or very elderly and those who provided an excuse for not voting. This process ensures that the issuing of penalty notices is targeted to those who appear not to have valid reasons as to why they did not vote.

The electoral legislation governs the enforcement of compulsory voting. The penalty for not voting in Local Government elections is \$55, higher than the \$25 penalty for failure to vote in a State General election.

Across NSW 672,794 electors failed to vote at the 2008 Local Government Elections. The revenue from non-voting fines is not provided to the NSWEC. The State Debt Recovery Office forwards these revenues to the NSW Government’s Consolidated Fund.

In the 2008 Local Government Elections, 398,489 penalty notices were issued, an increase of 6.9% compared to the 2004 Local Government Elections.

Graph 13

Non-voter Demographic – Penalty Notices sent after the 2007 State General Election and 2008 Local Government Elections

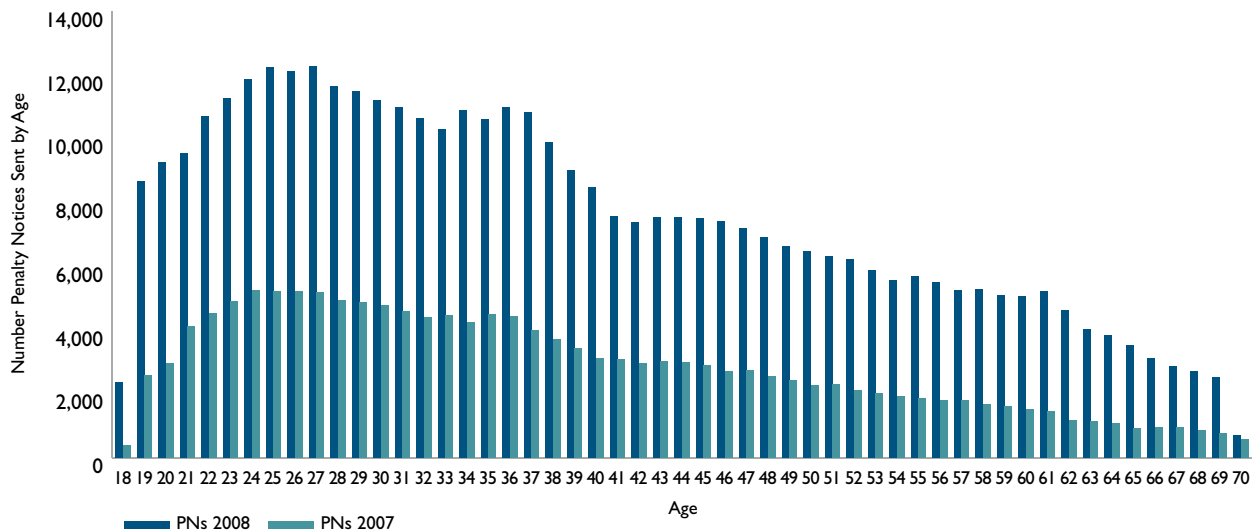


Table 5

Comparative Non-voting Data for Local Government Elections (2004, 2008) and State General Election (2007)

	2004 LGE	2007 SGE	2008 LGE
Roll	4.090m	4.374m	4.544m <sup>(a)</sup>
Non-voters	456,791	318,095	672,794
Excluded	83,857	166,004	274,345
Fine	\$55	\$25	\$55
Notices issued	372,934	152,091	398,489
Penalty notices as % of roll	9.1	3.5	8.8
Referrals to State Debt Recovery Office	102,769	57,842	130,697

Sources: State Electoral Office *Annual Report 2003/04*; NSWEC *Report on the 2007 State Election*.

(a) The number on rolls for the 2008 Local Government Elections in areas with contested elections was 4.321m.

## Case Study – Non Voters

After the 2008 Local Government Elections the NSWEC undertook an analysis of the non-voter demographics to identify any specific groups who were under-represented as voters and to be in a more informed position when developing its communication campaigns for future elections.

Unlike State and Federal elections, and as legislated in the Act, absent voting is not available at NSW Local Government elections for electors who are outside their council area or ward on election day. This presents some difficulties for the NSWEC as electors are often familiar with the use of absent voting at the State and Federal level and are unaware of the restrictions at the Local Government level. While the NSWEC statewide advertising campaign endeavoured to better inform electors of these arrangements, unfortunately some electors still attempted to absent vote outside their council area.

Numerically, more non-voters were located in metropolitan councils (68.0%) as would be expected given the distribution of the NSW population. In terms of proportional differences by either location or gender, rural electors were found to be more likely to vote. Overall there was not a great difference amongst non-voters across metropolitan or non-metropolitan locations according to gender.

Non-voting behaviour varies according to age group. Taking non-voters as a proportion of the total age cohort revealed that the lowest participation occurred in younger age groups particularly the 18-24 year old group. Older citizens actively participated in the 2008 Local Government Elections, with the age group 70-74 years having the lowest non-voting rate of all age groups. This active participation continued for electors over 80 years with the non-voting rate for ages 80-84 years being below the average for under 70 year old electors. Only after 90 years did the non-voting rate exceed that for the 18-24 year old group.

On a numerical basis, male electors are more represented amongst non-voters than female electors. This trend holds until the age group 80 years and over at which point the trend is reversed. For age groups above 80 years, the greater proportion of older women amongst the non-voters groups reflects the greater number of older women than men in the 80 years plus age range.

The most common reason provided by non-voters as to why they did not vote in the 2008 Local Government Elections was that the elector was out of the area.

Local Government by-elections were held in Bland, Warren, and Wellington Shire Councils.



“At the Polling Place – Filling out Ballot Paper”

## Local Government By-elections

During the reporting year the NSWEC conducted 11 Local Government by-elections. All of these were conducted after the 13 September Local Government Elections.

Three of the by-elections were held as a result of insufficient nominations being received for the available positions at the 2008 Local Government Elections. These by-elections were:

- Bland Shire Council (seven nominations received for nine positions);
- Warren Shire Council – A Ward (two nominations received for three positions); and
- Wellington Council (seven nominations received for nine positions).

Details of all Local Government by-elections conducted during the reporting year are available in the table 6.

Table 6: Local Government By-elections 2008/09

Council/Ward	Election Date	Positions Vacant	Enrolment	Participation %
Bland Shire Council	29 November 2008	2	4,337	81.2
Warren Shire Council A Ward	29 November 2008	1	443	74.3
Wellington Council	29 November 2008	2	5,618	83.9
Palerang Council	14 March 2009	1	9,513	79.1
Richmond Valley Council	14 March 2009	1	14,941	84.0
Wellington Council	14 March 2009	1	5,585	81.6
Upper Hunter Shire Council	4 April 2009	3	9,376	83.1
Willoughby City Council Sailors Bay Ward	2 May 2009	1	10,667	75.9
Murrumbidgee Shire Council West Ward	9 May 2009	1	775	79.1
Ku-ring-gai Council Wahroonga Ward	30 May 2009	1	15,322	75.0
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	20 June 2009	2	18,825	67.9

State by-elections were held in Cabramatta, Lakemba, Port Macquarie and Ryde Electoral Districts.



“At the Polling Place – Filling out Ballot paper”

## State By-elections

On Saturday, 18 October 2008 by-elections were held in four State electoral districts following the resignation of the elected Member. The districts included:

- Cabramatta following the resignation of the Hon Reba Meagher MP on 17 September 2008;
- Lakemba following the resignation of the Hon Morris Iemma MP on 19 September 2008;
- Port Macquarie following the resignation of the Hon Mr Rob Oakeshott MP on 13 August 2008; and
- Ryde following the resignation of the Hon John Watkins MP on 12 September 2008.

The Writ for Port Macquarie was issued on Friday, 29 August 2008 with the Writs for the remaining by-elections issued on 22 September 2008. The electoral rolls for each district closed at 6pm on the day of the issue of the Writs. Pre-polling for Port Macquarie commenced on Monday, 22 September and for all other districts on Monday, 29 September and closed at 6pm, Friday, 17 October 2008.

Postal voting was available to electors unable to attend a polling place. Applications were required to be received by 6pm, Monday, 13 October with postal vote ballot papers due back with the Returning Officer by 6pm, Wednesday, 22 October 2008 in order to be included in the count.

Table 7: Enrolment and Voting Statistics for 2008 State By-elections

	Cabramatta	Lakemba	Port Macquarie	Ryde
Enrolment	50,383	51,288	48,198	48,002
Formal Votes	42,036	39,540	41,749	39,329
Informal Votes	1,321	1,696	765	820
Total Votes	43,357	41,236	42,514	40,149
Participation %	86.1	80.4	88.2	83.6



# Annual Operational Election Procedures



“Election Results – Local Government Elections”

## 4

### Registration of Political Parties

The NSWEC is responsible for the registration of political parties, according to the requirements of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* and the *Local Government Act 1993*. The entitlements of registration include:

- party affiliation printed below the endorsed candidate's name on ballot papers;
- nomination of candidates through a party's registered officer or deputy registered officer;
- registration of election material (including how-to-vote cards) for distribution on election day;
- State registered party access to a copy of the electoral roll to be used for electoral purposes only;
- Local Government registered party access to the electoral roll available to the candidate they have nominated for an area; and
- State registered parties are eligible for election funding.

Under the legislation the NSWEC is required to maintain public registers that contain key information relating to each registered political party.

During the reporting year no new political parties were registered under these Acts.

State registered political parties as at 30 June 2009 are set out in Appendix 1. Local Government

political parties registered with the NSWEC as at 30 June 2009 are set out in Appendix 2.

Once registered, political parties are required to provide an annual return to the NSWEC demonstrating their continued eligibility for registration. Returns must be completed by 30 June each year, with parties demonstrating that they still have sufficient members to satisfy legislative requirements.

### Cancellation of Parties' Registration

During the year one political party had their registration cancelled under the provisions of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*, while four parties had their registration cancelled under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Parties de-registered are set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

### New Online Registration System

The current paper based and manual business processes associated with the registration of new political parties and the annual continued registration of existing parties are very labour intensive for both parties and the NSWEC.

The NSWEC has developed an online registration system that will speed up the process of registration and continued registration.

### Elections for Clubs and Statutory Boards and Industrial Ballots

During the reporting year the NSWEC conducted 57 elections for clubs, statutory boards and industrial organisations.

Details of the elections conducted are available at Appendix 3.

### Voting Services for Interstate Electors

The NSWEC provides a pre-poll service for interstate electors who are in NSW at the time of their election.

During the reporting year the NSWEC provided voting services for the following inter-jurisdictional elections:

**Table 8: Inter-jurisdictional Elections 2008/09**

State/Territory	Election	Election Day
Queensland	2009 State General Election	Saturday 21 March 2009
Australian Capital Territory	2008 Legislative Assembly Election	Saturday 18 October 2008
Tasmania	2009 Legislative Council Elections for Derwent, Mersey and Windemere Divisions	Saturday 2 May 2009
South Australia	By-election State House of Assembly District of Frome	Saturday 17 January 2009
Northern Territory	2008 Legislative Assembly Election	Saturday 9 August 2008
Western Australia	2008 State General Election	Saturday 6 September 2008
	2009 Daylight Saving Referendum	Saturday 16 May 2009
	2009 State District By-election Fremantle	Saturday 16 May 2009
New Zealand	2008 General Election	Saturday 8 November 2008
	By-election Mt Albert District	Saturday 13 June 2009

For these interstate elections, the NSWEC provided a dedicated voting facility at its office at 201 Kent Street, Sydney.

These services are provided on a reciprocal basis with other electoral authorities.



*“Pre-poll Voting – Voter Placing Ballot Paper in Envelope”*



## Performance

The NSWEC has two objectives in its work on the conduct of elections set out in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan, namely, that as a result of our services:

- people are able to exercise their democratic right to vote; and
- votes are counted accurately and in a timely manner.

In the reporting period and for the 2008 Local Government Elections we exceeded targets set in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan based on conduct of elections. 100% of polling places had counted their provisional first preferences (target 100%) and the variance rates between count of votes and recounts if any was less than ten (Manly Council with a variance of six and no change to election outcome).

Results Indicators set out in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan to measure whether elections are conducted impartially and in accordance with the law also demonstrated a robust democratic system with no court challenges to election results (target 0) and only two recounts required with no change to election results (target 0).

### Satisfaction of Stakeholders with the 2008 Local Government Elections

After the 2008 Local Government Elections, the NSWEC conducted surveys of stakeholders to establish key baseline measures of satisfaction for various election services.

Overall, all stakeholders were positive about the conduct of the elections. These responses have set service benchmarks for the NSWEC to exceed at future elections. For a variety of reasons, but predominately cost, the survey samples were not drawn randomly from the pool of eligible electors. This needs to be taken into account when drawing definitive conclusions from the results of the surveys.

74.4% of surveyed electors were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral on their overall experience of voting.

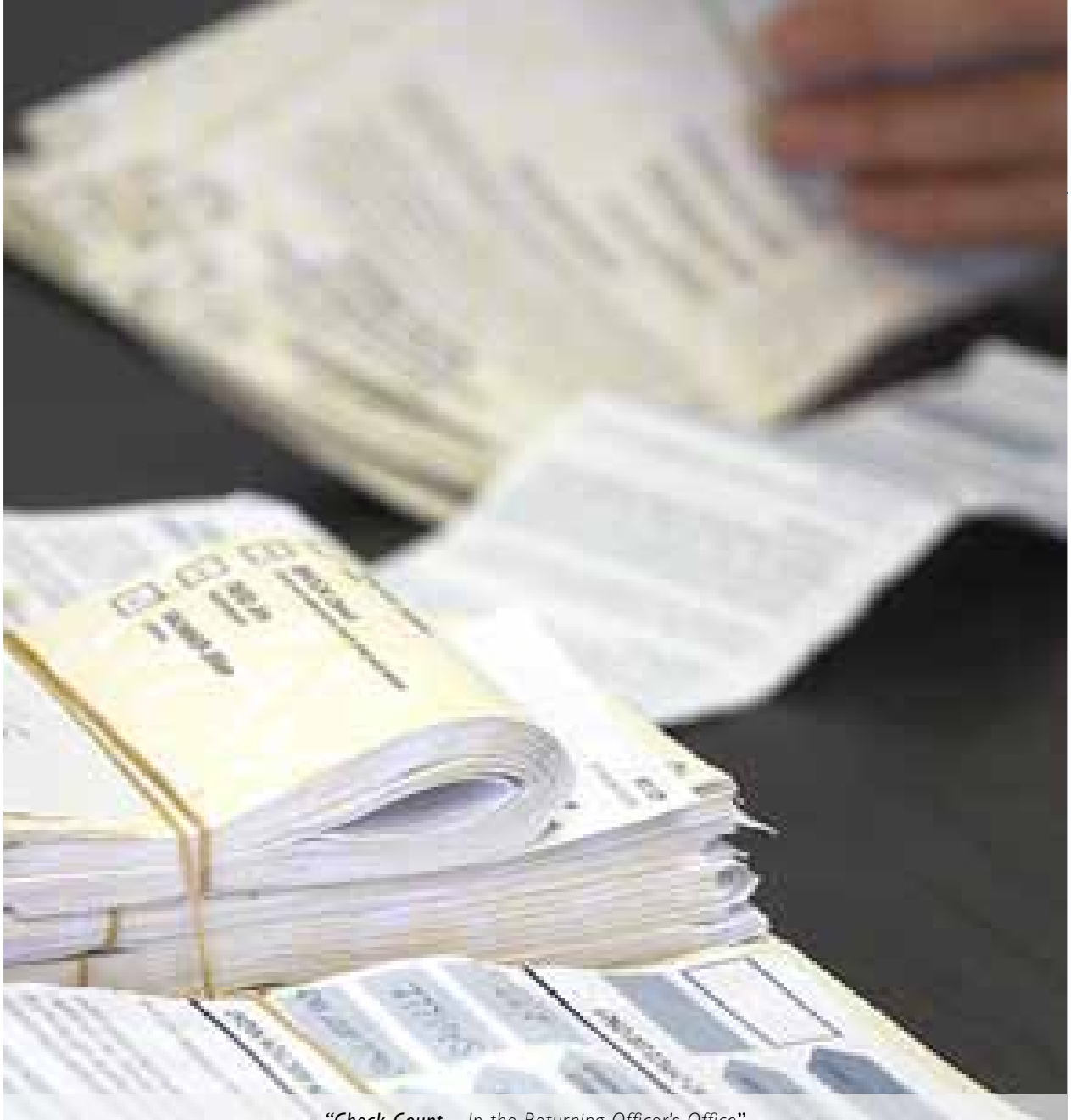
Electors reported that voting locations were convenient (82%) and that the manner of staff was either satisfactory or very satisfactory (80.7%). Other aspects also found to be satisfactory or better were the amount of time spent at the polling place (72%), the information available to locate the polling place (62%), polling place layout (72%), polling place accessibility (73%), accuracy of polling place accessibility information (61%), and assistance provided by staff (if required) (58%).

In terms of satisfaction with the process of voting at polling places electors provided positive feedback about convenience of polling places, time taken to vote and the information provided about polling places.

Satisfaction with the accuracy of the count and the impartiality of the process was evident from the feedback of all stakeholders. Confidence in the accuracy of the count was very high amongst council General Managers with 94.1% reporting that they had no concerns with the accuracy of the results for their council. Of those that did have some concerns (six General Managers) these related to different matters including experience of the Returning Officer or the behaviour of scrutineers.

The areas where the NSWEC was seen to have performed overall less satisfactorily were timeliness of results and the cost of the elections. Specifically, 43% of the General Managers did not feel that the results had been available in a timely manner.

Council General Managers did not report any issues in terms of errors on the ballot papers but 9.6% raised issues relating to the quantity of ballot papers at polling places.



*“Check Count – In the Returning Officer’s Office”*

In terms of candidates who had concerns about the NSWEC’s performance, concerns related mainly to polling places including the ability to adequately cover all entrances so as to provide ‘how to vote’ material, queuing and the perceived delay in getting results. A number of candidates commented on the cost compared to when elections were run by the local council.

On the important area of results information, candidates reported no problems with local counts (87.5%). Considerable comment on how counting was undertaken both locally and at the centralised LGCC however, ranged from concerns about the time taken for counting to the experience of staff, perceptions of scrutineers’ conduct and concerns about the value of having two different forms of voting.

For the first time the NSWEC sought elector feedback on its services and information provided for the 18 October 2008 by-elections. An online survey, available on the NSWEC website until 7 November 2008, asked electors who voted to comment on topics including the usefulness of the NSWEC advertising, the conduct of the election and the timeliness of results. Although there was only a limited response (44 voters: 11 from Cabramatta, 4 from Lakemba, 14 from Port Macquarie and 15 from Ryde), those who did complete the survey indicated high levels of overall satisfaction with the services provided by the NSWEC.

## Challenges and Future Directions

Continuous improvement is one of the NSWEC's key objectives. As part of this process, the NSWEC looks at ways to provide smarter and more efficient electoral services to all election stakeholders.

A review of the 2008 Local Government Elections, including stakeholder survey results, complaint registers and managerial reviews, allowed an assessment of areas requiring improvement. The following challenges and future directions were noted for the conduct of the 2011 State General Election and 2012 Local Government Elections.

### Timeliness of Results

The NSWEC will further review ways to develop the election counts and results information to provide the results in a timely manner without compromising the accuracy of the results information. Also under review will be the communication of results information to the media, councils, candidates and other interested stakeholders. This will include the management and communication of counting schedules and actual results data.

### Cost Estimates and Cost Recovery

To ensure that councils are better equipped to budget for the costs of their election, the NSWEC will endeavour to provide budget estimates earlier and with a higher level of accuracy.

As a result of the NSWEC capturing all costs at the 2008 Local Government Elections, councils will be in a better position to budget for their elections in 2012.

### Regional Returning Officers

The Regional Returning Officer initiative introduced at the 2008 Local Government Elections was well received and successfully implemented. As with most new programmes, areas for improvement have been identified and will be considered for future elections.

The NSWEC will review the possibility of expanding the Regional Returning Officer initiative in consultation with councils.

### Council Visits Programme

The NSWEC acknowledges the importance of relationship management with its stakeholders. Council visits were useful for both the NSWEC and councils to work through the electoral process and discuss any matters for consultation. The NSWEC will continue to provide election information to councils including visits prior to finalising administrative arrangements for the 2012 elections.

### Location of Voting Venues and Staffing Levels

The NSWEC will undertake a review of all polling places with a view to identifying possible new venues, with a particular focus on larger polling places. An analysis of the staffing level compared with the number of votes taken will be undertaken to determine areas where staffing levels need to be amended. In addition there will be a focus on multilingual staff in areas with large culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

*Continuous improvement is one of the NSWEC's key objectives. As part of this process, the NSWEC looks at ways to provide smarter and more efficient electoral services to all election stakeholders.*



*"Vision Australia – CCTV Monitor to Aid Voting for Vision Impaired"*

### **Electors with Vision Impairment**

The NSWEC has noted that many of those electors who used the Braille ballot papers at the 2008 Local Government Elections have expressed a desire for the NSWEC to incorporate electronically assisted voting into future Local Government elections.

The NSWEC will continue to examine research into electronic voting to assist electors with vision impairment to cast a private and independent vote. The implementation of electronic voting, either at an electronic voting kiosk or over the internet, is not possible without legislative changes.

### **Legislative Amendments**

Based on the experience of the 2008 Local Government Elections, the NSWEC has made recommendations to the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters relating to a number of issues identified by stakeholder feedback.

### **Preparation for the 2011 State General Election**

NSWEC will use internationally recognised and proven project methodologies and standards for the planning and implementation of the 2011 State General Election.

Key success criteria for the conduct of the 2011 State General Election will be established. The main quality outcomes will be the assessment of stakeholder expectations and satisfaction with the NSWEC's conduct and the identification of areas for future improvement.

# Electoral Roll Management



*“Election Day – Putting Ballot Paper into the Ballot Box”*

An accurate electoral roll is essential for maintaining a healthy democratic system and for ensuring that those who are eligible to vote are able to do so. The NSWEC has a range of programmes and initiatives to ensure an accurate enrolment register and to encourage citizens to enrol.

## Joint Roll Arrangement with the Australian Electoral Commission

The NSWEC has a joint roll arrangement with the AEC for the purposes of preparing, updating and revising rolls of electors for Federal and State elections. The electoral roll for Local Government elections is a composite of the residential roll provided by the AEC and the non-residential rolls provided by NSW councils (except for the Council of the City of Sydney where the NSWEC is responsible for the non-residential roll).

Forms for electors to register for enrolment on the residential roll or update their details are available on the NSWEC website, at AEC offices and Australia Post outlets and can be submitted by post, fax, email or hand-delivery to an AEC office.

## SmartRoll Project

During the reporting year the NSWEC continued to research ways to increase enrolment in NSW including further significant developments to SmartRoll.

The electoral rolls used by the NSWEC are managed by the AEC under the auspices of the NSW and Commonwealth Joint Roll Agreement. The SmartRoll (previously SEER) project was established to use modern data analysis, data collection and communication techniques to increase enrolment in NSW. Funding for SmartRoll began in early February 2009 and the project team established to specify the details and negotiate the various data access agreements, within the allowable legislated constraints, with NSW and Federal agencies.

The NSWEC, in partnership with the AEC, is investigating new methods for two enrolment processes: the update of address details for electors who did enrol themselves initially but have (most commonly) moved address within NSW; and the enrolment of non-enrolled individuals. The NSWEC aims to have SmartRoll operational in time for the 2011 State General Election (subject to legislative support).

## Advertising

At the time of an election, including at the 2008 Local Government Elections, the NSWEC undertakes targeted advertising to engage people who are not enrolled and people whose enrolment details are not up to date. More information on advertising is available on page 50 of this report.

## Residential Roll

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the roll of electors for a Local Government election is a composite roll comprised of the residential roll, the roll of non-resident owners of ratable land and the roll of occupiers and rate paying lessees.

All electors enrolled on the Commonwealth/State electoral roll as at 6pm Monday 4 August 2008 appeared on the appropriate council roll for the 2008 Local Government Elections.

The NSWEC worked with the AEC at the close of roll to finalise the production of roll products which

included certified lists for polling places, reference rolls and data for 'iRoll' – a product used at polling places to identify electors' correct enrolment data.

In the month before the close of roll for the 2008 Local Government Elections, 10,179 new enrolments were processed with 14% of those from people aged between 18 and 25, and 86% from those aged 26 or over.

At close of rolls for the 2008 Local Government Elections the NSW population of eligible voters was 4,538,309, compared with 4,371,341 at close of roll for the 2007 State General Election.

**Table 9: Eligible Population on the NSW Electoral Roll 2007 and 2008 %**

	Electors on the Roll	NSW Eligible Population <sup>(a)</sup>	% of Eligible Population on the Roll
At 6 March 2007 (roll close for the 2007 SGE)	4,371,341	4,848,423	90.16
At 4 August 2008 (roll close for the 2008 LGE)	4,538,309	4,932,251	92.01

### Notes

(a) ABS data was used to calculate the numbers in this table: NSW population (total) at July 2007, July 2008 and September 2008.

## Non-Residential Rolls

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* a person entitled to vote at Federal or State General election is entitled to be enrolled as an elector for Local Government elections if they are an owner of ratable land in the council/ward or rate paying lessee.

The non-residential roll lapses after each election. Therefore any person who appeared on a non-

residential roll at a previous election had to re-apply for the 2008 Local Government Elections. The Electoral Commissioner is required to confirm all non-residential rolls after councils prepare them.

The NSWEC confirmed 1,833 electors on the non-residential rolls for all councils at the close of rolls 6pm Monday 4 August 2008.



*Electoral rolls are not available for sale and it is illegal to copy an electoral roll.*

### Council of the City of Sydney Non-Residential Roll

Current legislation (*City of Sydney Act 1988*) requires that the Electoral Commissioner both prepares and confirms the non-residential rolls for all elections for the Council of the City of Sydney.

The NSWEC engaged potential non-residential electors within the Council of the City of Sydney area with a targeted marketing campaign, including two mail-outs to those previously enrolled and those with likely eligibility and specific non-residential roll advertisements in the national and local press.

At the close of non-residential roll the Council of the City of Sydney had 396 electors or 21.6% of the total NSW non-residential roll enrolled.

### Mapping Services

Mapping services provide an important function for maintaining an accurate electoral roll. Section 211 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to keep ward boundaries under review. If a council becomes aware that the number of electors in a ward differs by more than 10% from the number of electors in another ward, and the difference remains at the end of the first year of the next term of office, the council must modify its ward boundaries to correct the discrepancy in the number of electors in each ward. Councils were required to submit to the NSWEC finalised ward boundaries by 31 December 2007. Thirty four councils submitted ward changes.

### Objection to Enrolment

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* a person may lodge an objection to inclusion in the roll of their name, specified particulars entered against their name, the name of another person or specified particulars entered against the name of another person. Objections regarding all residential rolls and the City of Sydney non-residential rolls are lodged

with the NSWEC. Objections to council non-residential rolls are lodged with the relevant council.

Over the last reporting period there were no objections lodged for the NSW residential roll or the City of Sydney non-residential rolls.

### Provision of Electoral Rolls

Under NSW electoral law, the NSWEC must provide electoral information to certain organisations and individuals for electoral process or law enforcement purposes. In the reporting year the electoral roll was provided to:

- registered political parties;
- Members of the NSW Parliament;
- Candidates and groups and participating in the electoral process and state agencies such as the NSW Police, Sheriff's Office, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Office of State Revenue, Department of Fair Trading and the NSW Crime Commission; and
- certain health screening programmes – within National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines.

Electoral rolls are not available for sale and it is illegal to copy an electoral roll. Recent changes to NSW electoral laws place a heavy penalty on any organisation or person who has used electoral enrolment information for a non-approved purpose.

The principles outlined in the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* are observed by the NSWEC in managing the roll and documented in the 'NSWEC Policy and Guidelines for Disclosure of Electoral Enrolment Information'.

### Discretionary Provision of Electoral Roll

Under section 31D of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*, other individuals or organisations may apply to access enrolment information. The NSWEC must identify the public interest in providing the requested information, and make a finding as to whether or not that request outweighs the public interest in protecting the privacy of personal information in the particular circumstances.

If the NSWEC makes a favourable finding, it may provide the list, and may charge a fee to cover the cost of provision.

During the reporting year the NSWEC established a Disclosure Advisory Panel to advise the Electoral Commissioner in the approval of access to electors' enrolment information for medical research, health screening and other types of research.

The Panel consists of four members including:

- the NSW Privacy Commissioner;
- the Health Care Complaints Commissioner;
- the Chair, Australian Health Ethics Committee, NHMRC; and
- the Executive Director, St James Ethics Centre.

Under Section 31D the NSWEC must also report all requests for copies of the NSW electoral roll. During the reporting year seven requests were received. In each instance the Electoral Commissioner concluded that the protection of personal information outweighed the public interest and the requests were not approved. Details of the requests appear in the table below.

**Table 10: Requests for Copies of the NSW Electoral Roll 2008/09**

Date of Request	Organisation	Request
9 July 2008	NSW Ministry of Transport	Elector roll request for use in connection with community consultation as part of the NSW Government's response to the recommendation of the Unsworth review of bus services in NSW.
16 September 2008	Macbeth Genealogical Services, Victoria	Elector roll request for use in connection with the administration of deceased estates.
25 September 2008	University of NSW Injury Risk Management Centre	Elector roll request for use in connection with a study of environment and health in people aged 60 years and over.
13 November 2008	NSW Department of Health	Elector roll request for use in connection with the NSW Population Health survey.
28 November 2008	NSW Department of Housing	Elector roll request for use in connection with people either applying for, or residing in, public housing.
19 December 2008	Bankstown City Council	Elector roll request to assist Council to form a Residents Panel.
13 January 2009	Ku-ring-gai Council	Elector roll request for the purpose of checking names, gender etc for correspondence.



*“Polling Day – Election Officials Assisting Voters”*

## Performance

The NSWEC has two objectives in its work on electoral roll management as set out in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan, namely:

- people who are eligible are on the roll; and
- the roll is accurate so people can exercise their right to vote.

The NSWEC performed well against targets set in our Corporate Plan based on accuracy of the roll with 99.99% of electors correctly coded to electorates for the NSW 2008 Local Government Elections (target 100%).

The percentage of eligible electors who were on the roll increased from 90.16% for the 2007 State General Election to 92.01% for the 2008 Local Government Elections. Using Key Performance Indicators in the NSWEC Corporate Plan to measure enrolment participation levels, the NSWEC underperformed against its target to enrol 98% of young eligible citizens (aged 17-25) (result 79.8 %) and target of 95% of voters aged 26+ (result 94%).

The internal debrief conducted by the NSWEC and the feedback from stakeholders have indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the residential roll. In terms of the non-residential roll for the Council of the City of Sydney, the NSWEC notes that despite extra advertising the decline in enrolment numbers has continued. The NSWEC will investigate the reasons for the decline and discuss with the Council of the City of Sydney so that an appropriate strategy can be developed.

Of the council General Managers providing feedback, 73.8% said that they had a non-residential roll for the 2008 Local Government Elections. Of these, 57.5% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the advice from the NSWEC as to how to manage these rolls while 16.3% reported some difficulties, with the major concern being for advice to be in plain English.

The challenge for meeting this request is that councils have a legal obligation to manage the process, not the NSWEC (except in the case of the Council of the City of Sydney).



*“Polling Day – Election Officials”*

In terms of the residential roll, accuracy of personal details was not reported as a problem by either electors or council General Managers. Feedback from council General Managers indicated that 89.3% were neutral, satisfied to very satisfied with the accuracy of the residential roll for their council. In councils with wards, 61.2% of council General Managers were satisfied or very satisfied with the accuracy of coding of electors to their correct wards (with 26.5% neutral).

Personal details were correct for almost all electors (96.5%) responding to the survey. For the small proportion (2.9%) where there was a perceived issue, the greatest proportion of electors (28.3%) indicated this was due to their error in not updating their details.

## Challenges and Future Directions

### NSWEC Enrolment Function

SmartRoll is the most strategic enrolment initiative for many decades. The NSWEC will provide a total managed solution for the maintenance of

the NSW roll for the 2011 State General Election and if successful, all subsequent State and Local Government elections in NSW. This new enrolment approach will use the AEC roll as a basis for the SmartRoll supplemented with various other data sources.

It is anticipated that the SmartRoll Project will enter a testing or pilot phase in the next financial year with the aim by 2011 to:

- deliver all lists and products required to run an election event; and
- ensure a high number of additional electors are enrolled.

### Maximising Enrolment

A major challenge for the NSWEC continues to be in encouraging those potential voters identified who had a low enrolment rate in past elections. Advertising strategies for the 2011 State General Election will target electors aged between 18-26 years, indigenous communities, and electors who do not have English as their first language.



# Communication and Public Awareness

The NSWEC's communication and public awareness programme aims to emphasise to all sectors of the community the importance of participating in the democratic system.

The 2008 Local Government Elections' communication strategy consisted of a statewide advertising campaign, including statutory advertisements in local media and election information brochures, media releases, a telephone inquiry service, publications and the NSWEC website.

The three objectives of the campaign were to create awareness of the coming elections to maximise participation, encourage enrolment from those under-represented on the electoral roll and publicise voting arrangements such as key dates, polling places, candidates, services for Aboriginal electors, culturally and linguistically diverse electors and electors with disabilities as well as special services for those in rural and remote locations.

## Advertising Campaign

From mid July 2008 until election day, the NSWEC placed a total of 163 press advertisements in a mix of general, multilingual and Aboriginal press throughout NSW. The NSWEC also placed a total of 3,244 radio advertisements during the course of the campaign, and 260 'live reads' in the week before the elections in Sydney and Newcastle.

The four statutory advertisements required under legislation were placed in 217 different local newspapers across NSW, including at least one local newspaper from each council area.

**electoral commission NSW**

**PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL ELECTION**  
SATURDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2008

**Thinking of nominating as a candidate for your local Council?**

If so it is important that you read this notice.

As a candidate you have certain obligations and responsibilities under law. Check the website: [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au) and [www.efa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.efa.nsw.gov.au) for further details.

**How to nominate for election as Councillor**  
To nominate for Council, you must lodge a nomination form and \$125 nomination deposit by 12 noon Wednesday, 13 August 2008, with the Returning Officer.

**Where do I get a nomination form?**  
Nomination forms and other important nomination and electoral information are available from the Returning Officer or from the New South Wales Electoral Commission website: [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au).

**Candidate Information sheets:** Every candidate is required to lodge the candidate information sheet which is included in the nomination form.

**Grouping of candidates and group voting squares:** Two or more candidates may form a group and, in certain circumstances, request a group voting square on the ballot paper. A request to form a group must be lodged with the Returning Officer by 12 noon Wednesday, 13 August 2008. See [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au) for the publication 'Handbook for Parties, Groups, Candidates and Scrutineers at Local Government elections' for more details.

**Where and when to nominate**  
Your nomination form and deposit must be lodged with the Returning Officer of Port Stephens RO Office, 29 Sturgeon Street, Raymond Terrace, during council business hours from Monday, 4 August 2008 to 12 noon Wednesday, 13 August 2008.

Returning Officer details  
Leanne Sullivan  
Port Stephens RO Office  
29 Sturgeon Street Raymond Terrace NSW 2324  
Phone 0437 571 204

Information: [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au) or 1300 135 736  
(TTY) (02) 9247 3568 (text telephone)  
For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service 13 14 50

**BLACKTOWN CITY COUNCIL ELECTION**  
SATURDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2008 | FIRST WARD, SECOND WARD, THIRD WARD, FOURTH WARD, FIFTH WARD  
Election of 15 Councillors

**VOTING ON ELECTION DAY**  
Saturday, 13 September 2008 between the hours of 8 am and 6 pm.

**WHEN CAN I VOTE?**  
If you are enrolled in this council area you must vote at one of the polling places listed below for your ward.  
On election day you cannot vote outside the ward in which you are enrolled.

**WHERE CAN I VOTE?**  
To check your enrolment details and confirm where you can vote visit [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 135 736

**POLLING PLACES**

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**VOTING BEFORE ELECTION DAY**  
Postal Voting is available for all voters.  
Voting in Person  
Voting by Proxy  
Voting by Post

**VOTING IS COMPULSORY**  
Voting is compulsory for all eligible electors who are being told.  
The penalty for not voting is \$20.

**CANDIDATES**  
CANDIDATES - COUNCILLORS

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**LEGISLATION**  
If a Polling Place is in an Electoral Area  
For information regarding accessibility please call  
1300 135 736

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION SHEET**  
www.elections.nsw.gov.au or at the office of the Returning Officer

**INFORMATION**  
www.elections.nsw.gov.au or 1300 135 736  
www.efa.nsw.gov.au or 1300 135 736  
For information regarding accessibility please call 13 14 50

**VECKI GALLER**  
Returning Officer for Blacktown

**electoral commission NSW**

"Selection of Ads – Statutory"







“Elector Communication – Yabun Festival”

### Reports and Briefings

Regular briefings were provided to the NSW Premier, the Minister for Local Government and the Department of Local Government on the progress in preparing for the 2008 Local Government Elections. These briefings covered significant issues such as implementation of the changes to the Regulation and changes to the *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981*, the costs of conducting the elections, candidate nominations, contested and uncontested elections, inclusion of Braille ballot papers and topical issues. Following the elections, further briefings were provided on the outcomes, timing of the declaration of results and the November 2008 By-elections.

### Ensuring Equal Access to Democracy within the Community

Participation in a democracy cannot be limited to those who either have the knowledge or physical ability to access the electoral process. Sections of the community who are less likely to participate in elections include people who have difficulty with physical access to facilities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and electors from Aboriginal communities.

In addition to direct communications provided to electors and local councils through newsletters, emails and presentations, the NSWEC used advertising, media interactions and the networks provided by key NSW public sector agencies to increase awareness of the elections and to reach groups typically under-represented in the democratic process. The NSWEC achieved some success with developing a greater presence in and connection with Aboriginal communities.

### Improving Information and Access for Electors with Disabilities

In order to maximise the participation of people with disabilities, the NSWEC Equal Access to Democracy Reference Group reviewed the NSWEC's 2007 *Equal Access to Democracy Plan*.

Key improvements delivered for the 2008 NSW Local Government Elections included:

- provision of Braille ballot papers for vision impaired electors;
- increased consultation with NSW government organisations such as the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care;
- increased website accessibility including specific information for electors with a disability;
- newsletters outlining both electoral information and the employment opportunities available in the 2008 Local Government Elections;
- review of Returning Officer guidelines to include information on assisting electors with a vision impairment, mental illness and intellectual disability; and
- effective strategies such as provision of information to and liaison with community groups and the non-government sector.

#### Braille Ballot Paper for Vision Impaired Voters

The NSWEC provided on its website audio and large print guides for those electors with visual disabilities. The election information brochure and another guide *'This can help you when you vote'* were also prepared in audio format. The NSWEC's call centre was available to read printed material such as candidate information sheets to those with vision difficulties.

For more information on the Braille initiative see page 27.



"Voting – Vision Australia"



"Voting – Vision Australia"



### Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Electors

Three major initiatives for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) electors were introduced for the elections:

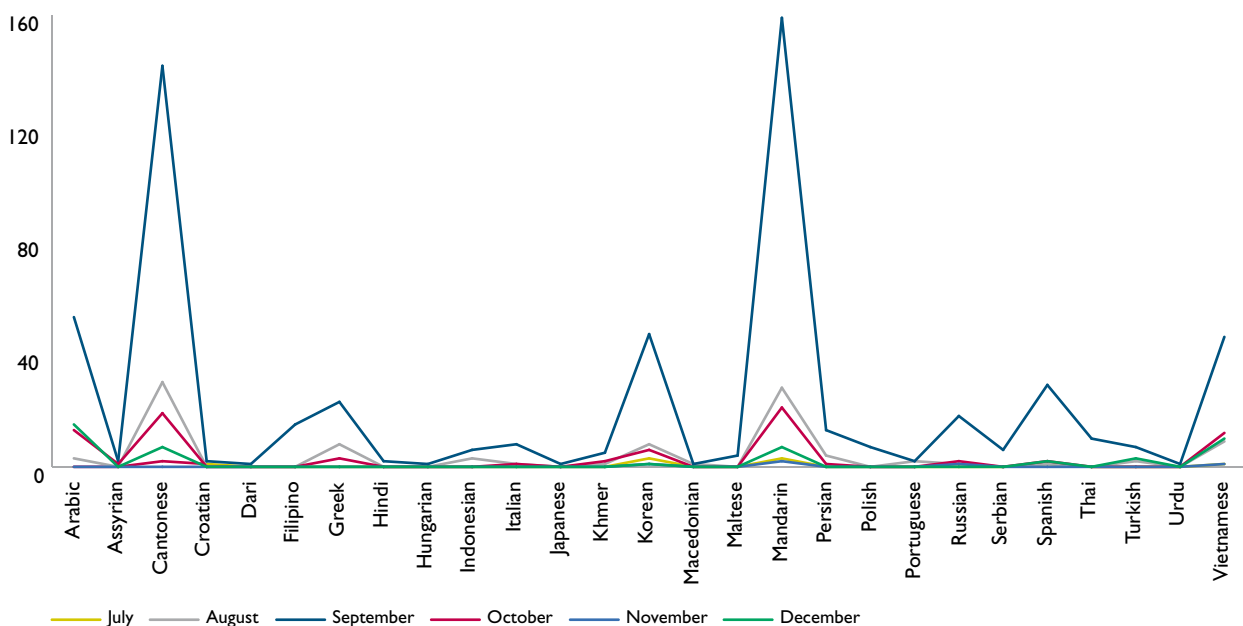
- the introduction of *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse News* newsletters distributed through the Community Relations Commission network;
- the development of the CALD electors' page on the NSWEC website; and
- the preparation of material for CALD electors including a multilingual voting assistance guide with election information in 24 community languages available at all pre-poll voting centres and polling places.

The NSWEC made available access to a telephone translating service through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). Call volumes through the translating service were significantly higher than average during September with more than 600 calls taken in the month. Electors requiring translations in 27 different languages used the service, with the majority of callers in September requiring assistance in Mandarin (26%) or Cantonese (23.2%).

On the basis of its strategy to address equal access for electors from multicultural communities, the NSWEC was a finalist in the 2008 National Multicultural Marketing Awards.

Graph 14

2008 Local Government Elections TIS National Calls Received by Language, July – December 2008





## Case Study – Purfleet Polling Place

Purfleet is an Aboriginal community located on the outskirts of Taree. While a large number of votes were not predicted for the polling place, the NSWEC located a polling place within the community which assisted the many residents of Purfleet who had limited access to transport.

Members of the local Aboriginal community were selected to work at the polling place on election day and electors who voted at Purfleet polling place specifically noted that polling place staff were helpful and respectful.

Community Elders said that they felt proud to have a polling place located in their community and that it reflected that the NSW Government felt that their vote mattered. The Elders asked that the Purfleet polling place operate at all Federal, State and Local Government elections. The NSWEC is liaising with the AEC to ensure that Purfleet is considered as a polling place location for the next Federal election.



*“Yabun Festival – Children’s Dance Competition”*

### Aboriginal Elector Information Strategy

Following a review of feedback and an assessment of possible strategies to increase the participation of Aboriginal electors, there were two major components to the 2008 Local Government Elections Aboriginal stakeholder strategy. These were to encourage enrolment and voting as well as boosting recruitment of Aboriginal people as polling officials.

The activities undertaken included:

- participating in the Aboriginal festival Yabun on 26 January 2008 to raise awareness of the elections, increase enrolment, and to promote employment opportunities provided by the 2008 Local Government Elections;
- circulating newsletters outlining electoral information and the employment opportunities available at the 2008 Local Government Elections;
- distributing information via the networks of Aboriginal peak bodies; and
- using the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) organisation to distribute information to their stakeholders.

## Performance

The NSWEC has three objectives in its communication and public awareness programme as set out in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan – namely that:

- people know of their obligation to enrol and vote;
- candidates and parties are informed of their entitlements and responsibilities; and
- the public and other stakeholders are informed of the conduct and outcomes of elections.

A web-based survey, in which stakeholders were invited to comment on service aspects of the 2008 Local Government Elections, indicated that electors did know of their obligation to enrol and to vote, however the findings are not reliable as an indicator of those in the community who did not respond to the survey and who may not have known of their obligation to enrol to vote.

Council General Managers (50%) also believed that electors knew of their obligation to enrol to vote with 39.6% being neutral on this issue. Of the responding General Managers, 60.4% believed that electors knew of their obligation to vote (26.4% neutral).

General Managers (61%; 29.5% neutral) believed that candidates, groups and parties were informed of their responsibilities.

Candidates (84.7%) were particularly satisfied with the NSWEC's advertising concerning their election funding and disclosure responsibilities. The majority of candidates were able to obtain the information they required and were satisfied with the materials provided by the NSWEC to assist them in standing as a candidate. The views of candidates ranged from neutral through to very satisfied with the provision of the *Candidates Handbook* 92.2%, Information Seminars 90.9% and Inquiry Desk 92.4%.

The NSWEC sought to use its website as the major communication tool in its conduct of the elections. All stakeholders provided positive feedback about the NSWEC's website. It was both well utilised and navigation was reported to be easy with content and presentation rating highly. The most useful web-based information for electors was results [51.7%] and information on polling places [46.4%]. Candidates also provided positive feedback with 72.2% being either satisfied or very satisfied with the NSWEC's website.

Feedback from electors showed that the NSWEC's advertising in newspapers, radio and other means was effective in reaching electors and being recalled. 86.1% of electors who received the NSWEC's brochure indicated that the information was useful to them. This compares well with overseas findings when methodological differences are taken into account. In New Zealand, the majority of voters (83%) recalled seeing or hearing some electoral advertising prior to the election.<sup>1</sup> In British Columbia, Canada 75% of respondents indicated that in the weeks leading up to the election, they saw, heard or read information of advertising about the election distributed by the electoral commission.<sup>2</sup>

The main topic that participants recalled from the NSWEC's advertising was to remember to vote (30%), followed by information on candidates and polling places (21.7%). The most frequently recalled advertising subject in the New Zealand study was enrolment (28%) followed by advice on voting or how to vote (22%).

Council General Managers, candidates and the media were also positive about the NSWEC's communication campaign. The majority of General Managers (70.9%) believed that the outcomes of the elections were made available appropriately. As table 11 shows General Managers were most satisfied with the accuracy of content and placement of advertisements as well as timeliness of advertising.

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand: Ministry of Justice, New Zealand, 'Chief Electoral Office, Minister of Justice Voter/Non-Voter Satisfaction Survey, 15 December 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Canada, Elections British Columbia, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, *Elections Awareness and Satisfaction Performance Measures Final Report August 2005*.

**Table 11: 2008 Local Government Elections, General Managers on NSWEC Advertising, %**

	% Very Unsatisfied	% Unsatisfied	% Neutral	% Satisfied	% Very Satisfied
Accuracy in content	1.0	2.9	12.6	72.8	10.7
Accuracy in placement	1.0	3.0	11.9	70.3	13.9
Newspaper coverage	2.0	15.7	11.9	58.8	11.9
Radio coverage	2.0	7.9	53.5	32.7	4.0
Timeliness	1.0	6.9	17.6	65.7	8.8

Feedback from electors showed that the NSWEC's advertising in newspapers, radio and other means was effective in reaching electors and being recalled. 86.1% of electors who received the NSWEC's brochure indicated that the information was useful to them. This compares well with overseas findings.

Perceptions of the timeliness of results information were not as positive with the General Managers (48%), some candidates (29.5%) and the media expressing some dissatisfaction about the timeliness of updates.

The NSWEC's internal debrief showed that vote counting concluded ahead of schedule and while there were delays in some councils' results, the overall picture was not as late as perceived.

The NSWEC however does believe that it could better manage the communication with councils and candidates to advise them of progress in the count and, in the case of centralised counting, when their votes were being data entered, when the results would be run and when results would be declared.

#### Participation and Informality Rates

Participation and informality rates provide a measure of the engagement of the community with elections. The overall participation rate for the 2008 Local Government Elections was 83.4%, less than the NSWEC key result indicator target of 95%. However participation in Local Government elections is traditionally less than in Federal or State general elections.

**Table 12: Participation and Informality Rates Local Government Elections 2004 and 2008**

	2004 %	2008 %
Participation Rate	85.2	83.4
Informality Vote Rate	7.0	7.1

Compared to the 2004 Local Government Elections, the 2008 participation rate appears slightly lower although methodological issues make strict comparisons between elections difficult.

While the NSWEC compares favourably with other jurisdictions when comparing voter participation rates at Local Government elections, such comparisons

can only be regarded as indicative due to the differing nature of Local Government voting systems across Australia.

Total votes in the 2008 Local Government Elections numbered 3,529,220 with formal votes for councillor elections totalling 3,278,188 and informal votes 251,032.



## Performance

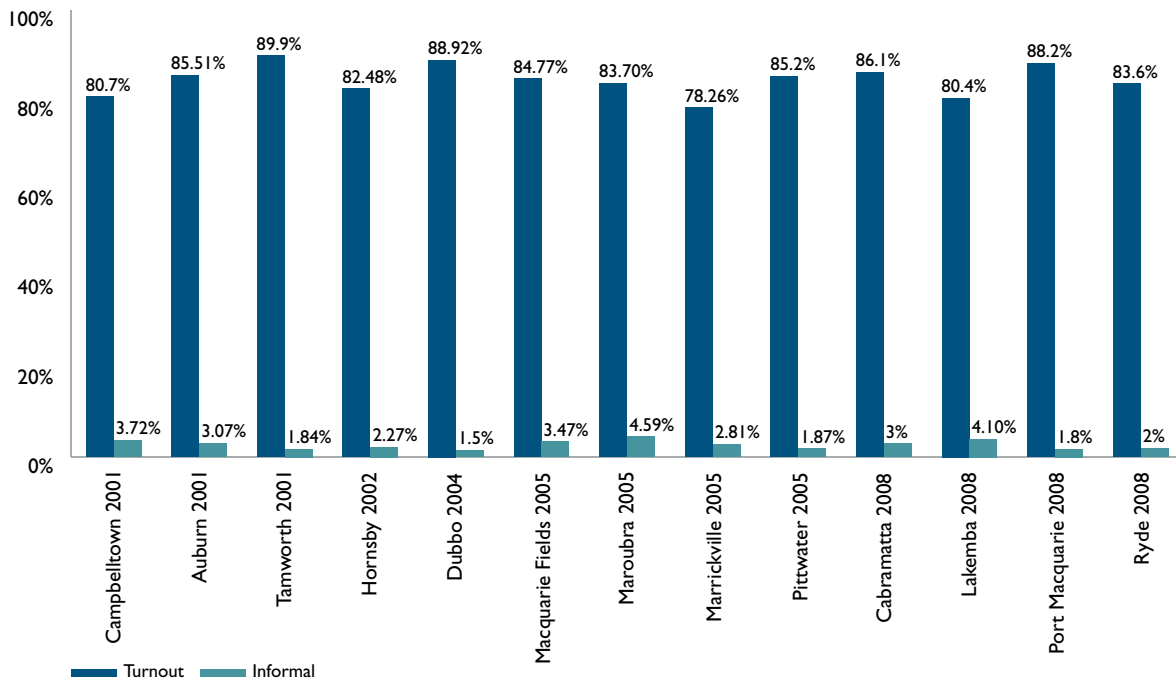
Statewide formality was recorded at 92.9% with an informality rate of 7.1%. This was below the NSWEC result indicator target of less than 3% of voters.

Significant influences upon informal voting have been reported. These included a higher than average number of candidates, a high proportion of citizens from non-English speaking backgrounds, differences between electoral systems and proximity to other electoral events.



“Pre-poll Voting – How to Vote Instructions”

**Graph 15**  
Voter Turnout and Informal Votes at State By-elections 2001-2008





*“NSWEC Education Stand – Community Awareness”*

## Challenges and Future Directions



*“iRoll – Access to the Electoral Roll Electronically”*

### Communication of Electoral Services

The NSWEC will look to consider more technological communication approaches better geared to younger and more electronically oriented members of the community. Also, the differences identified through the elector survey in retention of advertising messages between metropolitan and rural electors will be used by the NSWEC in the development of future election communication strategies.

### Candidate Information Seminars

To ensure a high level of involvement in the candidate information seminars the NSWEC will consider developing an online expression of interest system in which all potential candidates can register their contact details. The system would allow the NSWEC to directly provide candidates with seminar information and other relevant election and election funding information through an email network.

The NSWEC will continue to operate the candidate information seminars and will offer councils the option of selecting their own session on a fee for service basis.

### Marketing Strategy for Commercial Elections

The NSWEC is developing a marketing strategy with a view to substantially expanding services for commercial elections, in particular the registered club industry. The NSWEC will develop a strategy to communicate its services through production of brochures, use of the website, internet advertising and use of letters to these organisations. The NSWEC has a wealth of experience in conducting elections that could be of value to other organisations.

### Equal Access for All

The NSWEC will continue to develop its programmes to reach groups within the community that find it more difficult to participate in NSW's electoral systems. One strategy to be explored is greater community engagement to deliver appropriate education programmes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with disabilities.

The NSWEC will be reviewing available existing studies and working with appropriate agencies such as the NSW government sector, councils and peak bodies to ensure that its initiatives are well grounded and effective.



“Setting up the Count Area – Online Training Module”

## Financial Operations

A major focus for the NSWEC is to provide value for money for the people of NSW.

The NSWEC has in place budgeting and reporting systems to manage and monitor expenditure and carries out its functions in accordance with the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the NSW Treasurer’s directions.

The NSWEC performed well against its Corporate Plan financial targets, with \$5.3M in savings on yearly budgeted expenditure, 100% of planned operational costs for the 2008 Local Government Elections recovered and costs per elector averaged at \$5.71.

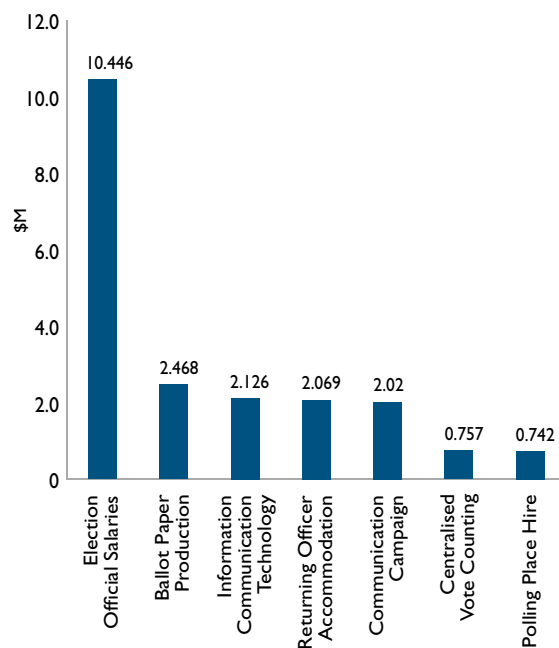
The percentage of the NSWEC’s expenditure devoted to corporate overheads was in line with the increased resources required to run the 2008 Local Government Elections.

The NSWEC’s accounts payable policy outlines account payment standards of invoices and during 2008/09 92.5% of our accounts were paid on time with no penalty interest or charges paid on outstanding accounts.

The annual growth target for new business revenue in the Corporate Plan is 5%, however due to the focus on managing the 2008 Local Government Elections, the growth level achieved was 0.13%.

## Organisational Development and Innovation

Graph 16  
Major Expenditure Items for the 2008 Local Government Elections, \$M.



Other financial operational achievements included:

- the centralised payables process for all accounts associated with the 2008 Local Government Elections was introduced to ensure the alignment of invoices and purchase orders;
- returning Officers were provided with extensive finance guidelines and training on payroll, nominations and banking procedures through an online training module and finance manual located on the Returning Officers’ intranet; and
- a web based payroll system was developed, which in co-operation with the Australian Taxation Office, successfully trialled an online tax declaration pilot scheme.



## Case Study – Funding and Costs of the 2008 Local Government Elections

The major focus for expenditure for the 2008/09 year was the 2008 Local Government Elections. The NSWEC is not funded by the NSW Government for the conduct of the elections. As prescribed in the Act the Electoral Commissioner conducts Local Government elections on a full cost recovery basis. This arrangement imposes accountability on the NSWEC for the cost of the elections as well as the standard of services provided.

The final total cost of the 2008 Local Government Elections was \$25.9 million with:

- average cost per elector of \$5.71;
- average cost per metropolitan council of \$369,550;
- average costs per rural council of \$92,796;
- highest actual cost of \$821,700 for Blacktown City Council (114,277 electors and five elections);
- lowest cost for a council with contested elections was \$8,600 for Jerilderie Council (1,196 electors with one election); and
- lowest cost for an uncontested election was \$4,100 for Conargo Council.

The final cost of the elections was \$5.2 million less than the budget estimate of August 2008 (16.9% below budget).

As part of our accountability the costing model used by the NSWEC was reviewed independently by Walter Turnbull to ascertain whether:

- all relevant projects associated with the 2008 Local Government Elections were captured in the model, and that only relevant project costs had been included;
- appropriate cost drivers had been used in the model; and
- charges were sufficient to recover costs.

The review found that NSWEC had captured all operational costs associated with the 2008 NSW Local Government Elections and apportioned them in a fair and equitable manner. The report was made publicly available via the NSWEC website.

The review also found that more than \$7 million of costs related to the running of the Local Government elections were not being recovered from local councils including capital equipment provided from the 2007 State General Election; roll maintenance costs paid annually to the Commonwealth; and development costs for an Election Management Application system that helped collate results.

The NSWEC was provided with a total recurrent services appropriation of \$35,515,000 and expended \$32,004,000 with transfers of \$2,203,000 made to the Election Funding Authority to meet its obligations under the *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981*. Further details on the NSWEC's financial position and performance are available in the Financial Performance section of this report.



## Human Resources

To enable the NSWEC to exercise its functions, staff are employed under Chapter 1A of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002*.

Historically the NSWEC maintains a small core number of permanent staff as well as utilising casual, temporary and contract staff to support the delivery of key projects and services associated with major elections occurring in four yearly cycles. In its planning and conduct of an election the NSWEC is supported by a programme management framework in which officers are responsible for or participate in a range of election projects of varying complexity.

With a view to positioning the organisation and its business functions for the 2011 State General and 2012 Local Government Elections, a review of the NSWEC structure was completed during

the year. As a result of the increased funding and disclosure responsibilities under amended legislation, the NSWEC structure now provides increased administrative support to the EFA through the establishment of six positions of which two were filled during the reporting year. A position of Director, Funding and Disclosure was created and will be filled in the coming financial year.

During 2008-09 the NSWEC had:

- 36 permanent staff;
- an average of 7.53 days of sick leave per employee;
- six work-related injuries;
- four compensation claims; and
- an average of 3.7 training days per staff member.

**Table 13: NSWEC Head Office Staff Profile as at 30 June 2005/06 to 2008/09**

Staff	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Actual permanent staff	33	33	38	36
Staff	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Statutory Appointee	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Service <sup>(a)</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Senior Officer	4	4	5	5
Clerk	28	28	33	31
Casual/Temporary Officer	15	12	11	8

**Note:**

(a) In 2008/09 an SES position was created but was still to undergo recruitment action as at 30 June 2009.

There were no exceptional movements in employee wages, salaries or allowances in the reporting year.

### Preparation for the 2011 State General Election

In March 2009 the NSWEC issued a tender for Programme Management Services relating to the 2011 State General Election. In May 2009 Tranzform group was engaged to provide programme management and quality assurance services for the preparation of the 2011 State General Election.

In June 2009, the NSWEC Electoral Commissioner, branch directors and key senior management

attended a seminar on the 2011 State General Election Programme in which an agreed governance framework and structure for the Programme was established.

In the lead up to the Director's seminar, workshops were undertaken with personnel from all NSWEC branches to understand what projects would constitute the Programme and what significant matters would need to be addressed.





*“Local Government – Count Centre”*

### Learning and Development

The opportunity to foster a learning culture within the NSWEC and to support the promotion and maintenance of professional and committed staff is an essential pre-requisite to delivering services effectively.

The NSWEC provided an opportunity for personal development in areas such as communications, information technology, logistics, resourcing, event management and electoral administration.

The Corporate Plan Key Result target of three average training days per staff member was exceeded with an average of 3.7 days per staff member achieved during the reporting year.

### Flexible Work Practices

The NSWEC supports flexible work arrangements for staff in order to balance personal commitments with the necessity to meet work deadlines. At the time of an election a variety of flexible work arrangements are utilised.

In the lead up to the 2008 Local Government Elections, flexible working arrangements were introduced which included the staged introduction of standard operational hours for some staff, working from home, part-time work, part-time leave without pay and variation of working hours. This flexibility was welcomed by staff.

### 2008 Local Government Elections’ Staffing

It is not possible for the NSWEC to retain election staff between elections hence recruitment and training of election staff formed a major component of preparing for the 2008 Local Government Elections. The NSWEC employed 13,684 election officials of which 82.3% were employed just for election day on 13 September 2008. All of these officials were trained in their duties by the NSWEC.

Of the staff employed only for election day, 82.5% had worked at an election previously.

In terms of 2008 Local Government Elections recruitment, 96.9% of respondents were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral on the online employment application process.

While many election staff noted that the work on election day was arduous and at times demanding, feedback from election staff indicated a high level of satisfaction with the payment methods (97.8%), speed of payment (94.0%) and amount of payment received (76.1%). A good indication of the satisfaction of election staff in terms of their ability to provide services and their employment conditions can be measured by the number of staff who would work, based on their experience at this election, for the NSWEC again. Of the election staff who participated in the feedback survey 97.1% indicated that they would be interested in working for the NSWEC again with 40.5% interested in taking on a higher role such as polling place manager.

## Human Resources

The usefulness of the content of the online polling place manager training module was reported by the majority (87.4%) to be either very satisfactory (42.8%) or satisfactory (44.6%). Online training was received well by 90.4% of polling place managers with 96.1% very satisfied, satisfied or neutral on the

content and 93.1% similarly very satisfied, satisfied or neutral on the usability of the online training.

The total number of staff employed in each of the categories of staffing is provided below.

**Table 14: 2008 Local Government Elections, Election Official Categories, Numbers and %**

Staff Categories	Number	%
Returning Officer Support Officers	10	0.1
Returning Officers	90	0.7
Office Assistants	2,326	17.0
Polling Place Managers	2,205	16.1
Deputy Polling Place Managers	811	5.9
Polling Staff	7,607	55.6
Scrutiny Assistants	635	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,684</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Occupational Health and Safety

The NSWEC is strongly committed to providing a workplace free from harm and its Occupational Health and Safety Policy outlines the fundamentals of the NSWEC OHS Programme including:

- OHS training and education;
- hazard identification;
- emergency procedures;
- workplace inspection;
- incident reporting methods; and
- consultation methods.

In addition, the OHS Warehouse Policy on warehousing functions performed by the NSWEC outlines the requirements related to the use, provision, maintenance and replacement of personal protective equipment and protective work clothing in line with Clause 15 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

During the year there were six reported safety incidents involving injuries. Four resulted in a claim for medical expenses and time lost from work.

**Table 15: Occupational Health and Safety – Injuries and Claims 2005/06 to 2008/09**

Injuries and Claims	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Work related injuries*	5	7	4	6
Claims*	2	1	1	4

\* For permanent NSWEC employees

The NSWEC is strongly committed to providing a workplace free from harm.



“NSWEC Warehouse – Election Preparation”

Occupational health and safety risks are at their highest during an election year. An increase in the number of reported incidents can be directly related to a huge increase in the number of employees and visitors on election day and the use of premises that are not owned or managed by the NSWEC.

As part of the evaluation of the conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections, the NSWEC received feedback from electoral staff on workplace issues including safety. This feedback will be used for planning the 2011 State General Election and the 2012 Local Government Elections.

### Sick Leave Management

The NSWEC monitors individual sick leave to allow for early intervention and assistance to officers when required.

An employee assistance programme was introduced in the reporting year to assist employees with both work and personal issues which may affect their attendance and work performance.

The NSWEC provided staff with updates based on the NSW Government advice concerning the Swine Influenza, such as what individuals could do to minimise their chance of infection and strategies to be implemented should a staff member become unwell. During the winter, emphasis was placed upon ensuring unwell personnel did not return to the workplace until completely well.

Sick leave averages were lower than previous years and were mainly due to a small number of officers with lengthy periods of absence.

Sick leave statistics are identified in the table 16.

Table 16: Sick Leave Statistics 2005/06 to 2008/09

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Average Occasions	3.93	4.70	4.92	4.31
Average Absences (days)	8.19	6.83	7.72	7.53

### Equal Employment Opportunity Achievements

The NSWEC's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan for 2008-2011 seeks to recognise and eliminate possible sources of direct and indirect discrimination under three key focus areas, namely:

- integrating EEO principles into the NSWEC workplace culture;
- permanent employment and developing opportunities for EEO target groups; and
- returning Officer and election activities.

During the reporting year the NSWEC actively focused on efforts to encourage EEO target groups with the following activities:

- the provision of EEO awareness information in Returning Officer manuals;
- the encouragement of Aboriginal citizens as election officials; and
- advertising and recruitment strategies to encourage applications from EEO group members.

EEO group statistics for the NSWEC's permanent staff are detailed in the following tables.

**Table 17: Trends in the Representation of EEO Groups 2005 to 2009, % of Total Staff**

EEO Group	Benchmark or Target %	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %
Women	50	42	35	55	55	50
Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders	2	0	0	0	0	0
People whose first language is not English	20	12	5	0	0	0
People with a disability	12	5	5	0	0	0
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment	7	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 18: Trends in the Distribution of EEO Groups 2005 to 2009, Distribution Index<sup>(a)</sup>**

EEO Group	Benchmark or Target %	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Women	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	87	90
Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
People whose first language is not English	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
People with a disability	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0

#### Notes

(a) The Distribution Index is not calculated where EEO group or non-EEO group numbers are statistically insignificant. A distribution index of 100 indicates that the centre of the distribution of the EEO group across salary levels is equivalent to that of other staff. Values less than 100 mean that the EEO group tends to be more concentrated at lower salary levels than is the case for other staff.





“Local Government Elections – NSW Elector Inquiry Centre”

### Consultation with Unions

Consultation with the Public Service Association (PSA) focused on the NSWEC restructure and associated Staff Management Plan. In addition, details of initiatives under the Savings Implementation Plan and associated memorandum of understanding were provided to the PSA.

### Protected Disclosures

One public official has made a disclosure under the *Protected Disclosures Act 1994*. With the assistance of an external investigator, the Commissioner conducted an investigation, found that the allegation lacked substance and did not refer the matter for any further investigation.

### Code of Conduct

The NSW community is entitled to expect the NSWEC to conduct its business efficiently, economically, fairly, impartially and with integrity.

The integrity and reputation of the NSWEC is supported by a clear statement of expected behaviour detailed in the Code of Conduct which establishes standards of behaviour for all staff and provides guidance on good administrative practice. There has been no change to the code during the reporting year.

In addition, the NSWEC's Statement of Business Ethics provides guidance to staff, contractors, clients, agencies and suppliers on the principles of fairness, equity and honesty in doing business with the NSWEC.

### Secondments with NSW Departments

The Electoral Commissioner agreed to the secondment of one NSWEC officer to the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal until November 2009.

### Secondments with Interstate Electoral Commissions

During the reporting year the NSWEC provided staff to the Victorian and Western Australian electoral commissions on a short term secondment basis.

For a period of three weeks a NSWEC staff member worked at the Victorian Electoral Commission to assist in the preparation and print management of postal ballot papers and candidate information statements for the Victorian Local Council elections held on Saturday, 29 November 2008.

In May 2009 a NSWEC staff member assisted with the Western Australian Daylight Saving referendum held on Saturday, 16 May 2009.

### Liaison with other Jurisdictions

The NSWEC, the AEC and other State and Territory commissions collaborated during the reporting year on a number of projects. The NSWEC values the opportunity to share resources and undertake joint research in order to improve election services to all stakeholders.

### Corruption Prevention Policy

There were no reports of suspected corrupt conduct lodged via the internal reporting system.

### Guarantee of Service

The NSWEC's Guarantee of Service can be found in Appendix 14.

### Committees and Special Offices

A list of NSWEC Committees and Special Offices is available at Appendix 5.



“NSWEC ITStaff – Support Centre”

The Information Technology Branch of the NSWEC plays an important role by supporting central election processes and assisting the NSWEC to conform to certain legal and statutory requirements.

Although the 2008 Local Government Elections provided an operational and logistical challenge for the Information Technology Branch due to the scale of the exercise and the geographical distribution of NSW councils, there were no major information technology failures, the roll out of equipment and networks went well and new and improved systems functions added to the successful conduct of the elections.

Projects and services undertaken by the Information Technology Branch which contributed to improved service delivery for the 2008 Local Government Elections included:

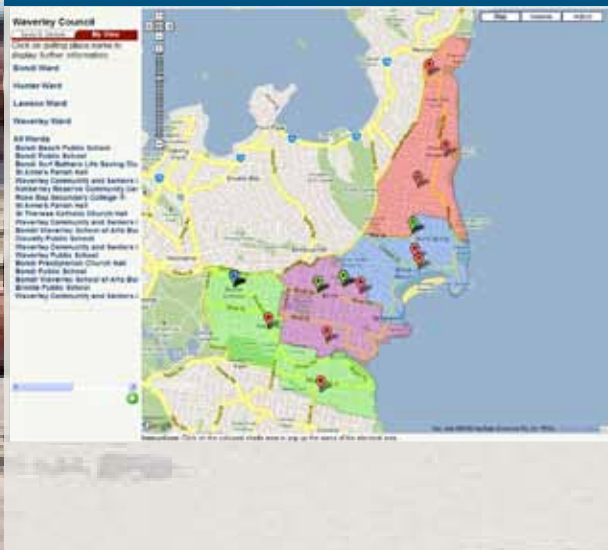
- The deployment of more than 500 computers, printers and telecommunications systems to 90 Returning Officer offices around NSW and the creation of temporary networks to support the regional setup;
- Two successful trials of software and hardware function and stress for regional office networks conducted before the elections;
- Co-ordination of roll data feeds from the AEC at close of rolls and supplementation with non-residential roll data to create Local Government election roll products;

## Information Technology

- Help Desk services for Electoral Commission staff and non-metropolitan election officials, including on demand assistance with hardware or software faults, count issues for local count processing, ensuring adequate networking, software and hardware facilities and maintenance and upgrades of software and hardware to ensure optimal operational efficiency;
- Telecommunication setup and support for the Elector Inquiry Centre and Candidate Call Centre;
- Enhancements made to the ‘Election Management Application’ (EMA) tailored the internet-based information management system for the 2008 Local Government Elections. Redeveloped modules which allowed significant service delivery improvements for the 2008 Local Government Elections included roll lookup, candidate nominations, declaration votes, registration of political parties, election resourcing and results;
- Development of online learning programme for polling place managers on counts, and ballot papers;
- Development of ‘iRoll’ and electronic look up facility for each polling place to inform electors of where they were enrolled;
- Development of infrastructure, including temporary networks and NSWEC vote counting software for the central LGCC; and
- Creation of a ‘Virtual Tally Room’ providing regular updates of count results on the website, a first for Local Government elections. The Virtual Tally Room website received a record four million hits on the Sunday after election day.



Use the link on the NSWEC Website to find polling place locations in council areas using Google Maps.



“Google Maps – Waverley Council Polling Place Locations”



For the NSWEC website:

- An online registration system for the recruitment of election staff on the NSWEC website;
- A Google Maps function for council and ward boundary information; and
- Online search facility to locate polling and pre-polling centres.

Of the Corporate Plan measures focusing on information technology, performance targets were met with no major issues with deployed hardware or networks occurring during the 2008 Local Government Elections (target: zero).

Testing of the count software demonstrated that the technology was stable and reliable and there were no failures on election night with NSWEC count software handling the high volume of data and results accurately and efficiently. Two minor issues encountered during the election included:

- The NSWEC website was unavailable for one hour on election night due to the high volume of visitors; and
- several short term technical difficulties were experienced at the electors call centre in the week leading up to the elections.

### Records Management

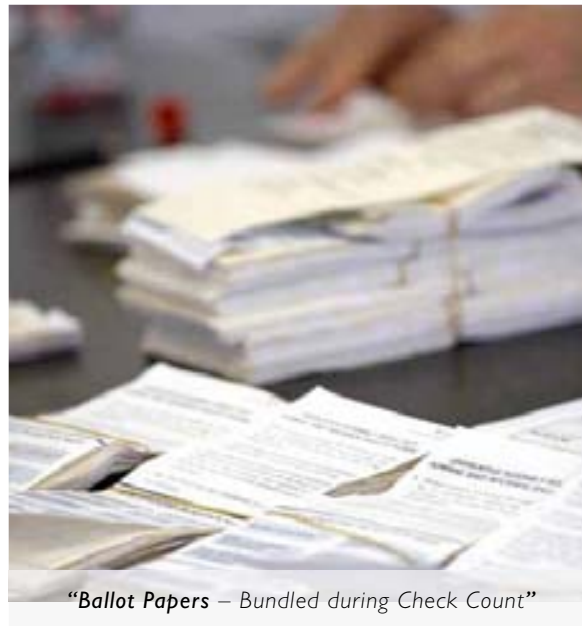
In the reporting year the NSWEC Management Committee reviewed current record management software and agreed to upgrade the records management system. It is expected that the roll out of the new software including training of all staff will occur in the next financial year.

*The NSWEC Waste Reduction and Purchasing Plan identifies key reduction areas and addresses avoidance, re-use, recycle and disposal strategies to minimise waste during an election.*



*“Cardboard Furniture – Litter Bins for Polling Places”*

## Environmental Management



*“Ballot Papers – Bundled during Check Count”*

### Waste Reduction Plan

The NSWEC Waste Reduction and Purchasing Plan identifies key reduction areas and addresses avoidance, re-use, recycle and disposal strategies to minimise waste while recognising that under the current legislative arrangements the conduct of elections is predominantly a paper-based activity.

Recent initiatives however have seen electronic applications, such as the web-based payroll and recruitment systems, SmartRoll, the EMA and online e-learning programmes allow information to move throughout the organisation and to stakeholders via an electronic workflow.

Where election processes utilise paper products, office equipment and consumables, the NSWEC has developed waste mitigation and minimisation strategies such as:

- Contracts for the purchase of ballot boxes and voting screens made of recycled content continue to be implemented at Local Government elections and by-elections conducted during 2008/09;

- Re-use of election material in the local community is a top priority. Material that cannot be re-used (including ballot papers) is recycled; and
- Extensive office recycling programme including paper, toner and consumable recycling programmes.

In the 2008 Local Government Elections, the ballot papers used had 10% recycled content and the cardboard equipment had 70% recycled content. Due to the legislative provisions applying to used and unused ballot papers and other materials, such as certified lists, these materials were returned to the NSWEC for security destruction.

As part of the NSWEC's commitment to sustainability and in line with Government Policy, a rating of the Indoor Environment in our tenancy will be undertaken by an independent third party in 2009/10. The rating will be undertaken in accordance with the National Australian Built Environment Ratings System scheme, a national rating system developed by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change to assess the environmental performance of several types of buildings, including offices.

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## Quality Assurance

High quality electoral processes serve as a link between the electorate and the democratically elected members of NSW Parliament and councillors. The NSWEC is committed to providing the highest standard of services to our stakeholders and ensuring that elections are carried out impartially, efficiently and in accordance with the law.

Quality assurance activities for the 2008 Local Government Elections included:

- project and risk management approaches to election planning and execution, including the use of standard operating procedures and training modules for election processes, and use of scrutineers and an independent observation team during the count;
- performance measurements captured and defined against identified corporate targets;
- customer feedback surveys completed for all stakeholder groups;
- reports on the conduct of elections provided to major stakeholders;
- Submission to the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters completed;
- complaints management system and corrective actions; and
- reviews and internal and independent audits conducted on the elections and NSWEC systems.



*"Report – Local Government Elections"*



*"Local Government Reports – By Individual Council"*

*During 2009/10 the NSWEC will develop strategy documents, programmes and project methodologies in preparation for the 2011 State General Election.*

The NSWEC is committed to ensuring the goals and strategies set out for providing high quality and cost effective electoral services are supported by excellence in people, processes and technologies. Our challenge for the next financial year is to continuously review our services with a focus on the following organisational improvements:

#### **Returning Officer Recruitment and Assessment**

Development and implementation of a cyclic recruitment programme and new assessment procedures resulting in the employment of Returning Officers and Senior Office Assistants to conduct the 2011 State General Election and beyond. The new programme and database will capture all the application details, contact details and performance assessments of the Returning Officers and Senior Office Assistants for future reference and employment purposes.

The aim of the recruitment programme is to ensure that the NSWEC retains an eligible pool of highly trained Returning Officers and Senior Office Assistants for the purposes of conducting State, Local Government and commercial elections.

#### **Election Official Training – ilearning**

In keeping with being a learning organisation we evaluate our approaches after each election and look for new ways to deliver effective training to the many thousands of people we employ at election time. For the next State General Election in 2011 the NSWEC will be looking to utilising technology more than ever to deliver training content.

#### **Review of Polling Place Staffing Structure**

Proposals that would alter the way the NSWEC currently staffs polling places are presently under consideration. These would aim to:

- help ease the morning rush at polling places and voter queuing;
- ease the workload on Polling Place Managers after 6pm on election day; and
- address potential OHS issues.

## Challenges and Future Directions

Cost modelling is currently being undertaken and it is proposed to undertake simulated trials and, where possible, live trials at by-elections with a view to implementation at the 2011 State General Election.

#### **Standard Operating Procedures Project**

The NSWEC employs approximately 18,000 temporary staff to implement key election processes at a State General Election and Local Government Elections. These roles include Returning Officers, office assistants, polling place managers and other election officials. To improve consistency and quality of the implementation of these processes, the NSWEC is developing a foundation set of procedures which defines all the critical processes undertaken by temporary staff working in Returning Officer offices and polling places. These procedures will be integrated into activity based training (both online and face to face) for all election officials engaged by the NSWEC at election time.

#### **IT Systems for the 2011 State General Election**

In 2009/10 the Information Technology Branch will begin the redevelopment of new systems for the coming 2011 State General Election to cater for improved State specific functions, including non-voter software, the implementation of a virtualised server environment, an upgrade of the operating environment to allow the warehouse to share the head office network facilities and a centralised postal voting automated facility.

Similarly the EMA will be reconfigured to cater for the 2011 State General Election including the results, candidates and voting modules.

Focus on the SmartRoll Project will be on the products that SmartRoll will deliver for the 2011 State General Election including trials of data matching and interfaces of data sources for the maintenance of the NSW electoral roll by the NSWEC.

# 5

## CORPORATE

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## GOVERNANCE

Central to the NSWEC's **governance** is the *executive management team*, which sets its **strategic direction** to deliver **elections** and **monitor performance**.





## NSWEC Corporate Governance

The NSW Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority established under the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* to conduct State, Local Government and certain statutory elections. To achieve this, the NSWEC's services need to be supported by appropriate business structures and processes.

### Management

Central to the NSWEC's governance is the executive management team, which sets its strategic direction to deliver elections and monitor performance.

### Executive Management Team

#### Electoral Commissioner

The Electoral Commissioner is appointed in accordance with Section 21A of the Act. The Electoral Commissioner is the returning officer for the periodic Legislative Council elections and is also one of three Electoral Districts Commissioners appointed by the Governor to carry out electoral district redistributions according to law.



*“Executive Management Team – Colin Barry, Brian De Celis, Linda Franklin, Nicholle Nobel, Trevor Follett, Ian Brightwell, Sonja Hewison”*

#### Colin Barry

Electoral Commissioner  
(From 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2009)

#### Brian DeCelis

Director, Elections Branch  
(From 1 July 2005 – 1 October 2008)  
Acting Director, Funding and Disclosure Branch  
(From 1 October 2008 – 30 June 2009)

#### Linda Franklin

Acting Director, Elections Branch  
(From 9 February 2009 – 30 June 2009)

#### Nicholle Nobel

Director, Corporate Communications Branch  
(From 13 September 2005 – 14 July 2008)

#### Marie Swain

Director, Corporate Communications Branch  
(From 9 February 2009 – 30 June 2009)

#### Trevor Follett

Director, Finance and Administration Branch  
(From 19 October 2005 – 30 June 2009)

#### Ian Brightwell

Director, Information Technology Branch  
(From 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2009)

#### Sonja Hewison

Senior Legal Officer  
(From 15 December 2008 – 30 June 2009)

Details of the NSWEC's Senior Executive Service profile is available at Appendix 4.

*The NSWEC's approach to operational risk management is programme based, with each project manager developing comprehensive risk management plans for their area of electoral operations.*

### Appearances before Parliamentary Committees

There were no appearances before Parliamentary Committees during the reporting year.

### Service on External Committees

#### Electoral Council of Australia

The NSW Electoral Commissioner is an active member of the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA), a consultative council of all Electoral Commissioners. It reviews the management of electoral rolls for Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government elections and considers advances of electoral administration in Australia. During the reporting year the ECA met on three occasions.

#### State and Territories Electoral Commissions

In addition to the ECA the Electoral Commissioner is also the Chairperson of the State and Territories Electoral Commissions (STEC), a collaborative body that considers electoral policy and operational matters of mutual interest. The STEC group met on four occasions throughout the reporting year.

The NSWEC convened a STEC meeting on 18 June 2009 to discuss performance measurement and reporting, electoral staff feedback mechanisms and the SmartRoll project.

### Risk Management

The NSWEC is committed to establishing and maintaining an effective risk management framework to provide the foundations and organisational arrangement for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management throughout the organisation.

The NSWEC's risk package includes:

- Corporate, operational and project risk registers;
- Business Continuity Plan;
- Disaster Recovery Plan; and
- Fraud Prevention Policy.

Corporate risk strategies reflect existing governance practices and organisational goals as articulated in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan.

The NSWEC's risk approach to election operations is programme based, with each project manager developing comprehensive risk management plans for their area of electoral operations. Risks are identified and rated and results are reviewed to ensure all controls are in place and new controls developed if necessary.

The Executive Management Team and the Internal Audit Committee regularly review business risk assessments, plans and controls. During the reporting year the Business Continuity Plan was reviewed and updated with risk treatments and strategies for managing the effects of Swine Flu on the provision of services.

Risk training for all staff associated with the 2011 State Election is planned for the upcoming year.

### Internal Audit Committee

The NSWEC Internal Audit Committee reviews practices and processes, and can make recommendations designed to reduce business risk and improve corporate governance.

The Internal Audit Committee consisted of:

- Jim Mitchell, Chairman;
- John Barbeler, Director of Corporate Services, Council of the City of Sydney; and
- Kathleen Haddock, former Returning Officer.

The Director, Finance and Administration is the Secretary of the Committee and was in attendance at each meeting of the Audit Committee.

## Public Accountability

The following attended meetings of the Committee by invitation:

- Colin Barry, Electoral Commissioner;
- Don Walter, Auditor Walter Turnbull; and
- Damien Knowles, Auditor Walter Turnbull.

Internal Audits completed during 2008-09 included:

- Review of Local Government Election Pricing;
- Payroll System Review;
- Project Management; and
- IT failure to vote systems.

### Customer Complaints Process

Election stakeholders are able to provide feedback to the NSWEC by letter, email, telephone and in person. Complaints received generally cover issues surrounding the NSWEC operations and services and the conduct of candidates and political parties.

Complaint numbers are at their highest during an election year. An increase can be directly related to a huge increase in the number of actively interested election stakeholders and people accessing election services in the lead up to and on election day. The NSWEC received a total of 181 substantive complaints during the 2008 Local Government Elections period. The majority of the complaints received concerned the activities of candidates with some concerning services provided by the NSWEC. The three most frequently received complaints concerned electoral material (27.1%), pre-poll voting centres and polling places (23.2%) and the conduct of candidates, workers, officials and participants in electoral process (12.7%).

The NSWEC endeavours to respond to all complaints in a timely manner to provide faster resolution for the complainant and reduce amount of administrative work for officers.

A number of improvements have been made by the NSWEC as a result of the feedback received through complaints and they are outlined in the 'Challenges and Future Directions' sections of this report.

During the reporting year the NSWEC continued to review the complaints handling policy.

### Reports on the 2008 Local Government Elections

Following the 2008 Local Government Elections the NSWEC prepared a comprehensive election report for the NSW Premier and Minister for Local Government and commenced preparation of 148 separate council reports for each council that held an election.

The reporting demonstrates accountability to election stakeholders and provides the NSWEC with an opportunity to educate stakeholders on the challenges and issues involved in conducting the 2008 Local Government Elections. The reports also serve as a means to communicate the election outcomes.

The report for the NSW Premier and Minister for Local Government contained detailed information on the NSWEC's role and involvement in the conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections, a review of services provided to the various stakeholder groups, detailed information on the NSWEC's costing model and a full review of stakeholders' satisfaction and feedback. In addition, the report covered the areas referred to in the terms of reference for the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into the 2008 Local Government Elections.

On 2 March 2009, the Premier of NSW referred to the JSCEM an inquiry into conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections.



"Meeting - In Progress"

"Under the Committee's terms of reference, the Committee may:

"(2)... inquire into and report upon such matters as may be referred to it by either House of the Parliament or a Minister that relate to:

- (a) The following electoral laws:
  - (i) *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* (other than Part 2);
  - (ii) *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981*; and
  - (iii) Those provisions of the *Constitution Act 1902* that relate to the procedures for, and conduct of, elections for members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council (other than sections 27, 28 and 28A);
- (b) The administration of and practices associated with the electoral laws described at (a)".

I wish to refer all matters that relate to (a) and (b) above in respect of the September 2008 Local Government Elections to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may wish to make, including in relation to the costs of the 2008 Local Government Elections."

### Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

On 2 March 2009 the Premier of NSW referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) an inquiry into the conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections, including matters relating to election costs. The terms of reference for the Inquiry as referred to in the Premier's letter to the JSCEM include (see left).

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Electoral Commissioner is required to conduct the Local Government elections with each council responsible for covering the full cost of its elections. Throughout the election process the matter of election costs was an ongoing area of dispute with much discussion held between the NSWEC, a number of councils and the Local Government and Shires Associations. The JSCEM Inquiry presented the NSWEC with an opportunity to report on the administration and conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections in a manner open to scrutiny.

The JSCEM called for submissions on 1 April 2009. The NSWEC provided a submission to the JSCEM in June 2009. The report submission detailed the services provided by the NSWEC to election stakeholders at the Local Government level, provided a detailed explanation of the election costing model used by the NSWEC, detailed services for electors, councils, candidates, groups and registered political parties and election staff. The report also detailed the NSWEC's performance against measures listed in the NSWEC 2008-2011 Corporate Plan and an assessment of stakeholder satisfaction.

## Legislative Compliance

### NSWEC Legislation

The NSWEC's work is governed by the following ten main pieces of legislation:

- *Constitution Act 1902*;
- *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*;
- *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981*;
- *Local Government Act 1993*;
- *The City of Sydney Act 1988*;
- *Registered Clubs Act 1976*;
- *Industrial Relations Act 1996*;
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*;
- *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*; and
- *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002*.

### Legislative Amendments

#### *Local Government Act 1993 (and regulations)*

There were no amendments made in relation to elections since 1 July 2008 to date.

#### *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 (and regulations)*

There were no amendments made since 1 July 2008 to date.

#### *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981 (EFDA)*

Major reforms were introduced under the *Election Funding Amendment (Political Donations and Expenditure) Act 2008* which commenced in two stages – the majority of amendments commencing on 10 July 2008 and sections 96A, 96B, 96C and Part 6, Div 4 commencing on 1 August 2008. Details of these changes are available in the 2008/09 Election Funding Authority Annual Report.

### Freedom of Information

In the reporting year the NSWEC received five Freedom of Information (FOI) applications, in line with the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*. The information sought in some of these applications was publically available upon request and was therefore provided to the applicants outside the provisions of the Act in these cases. Application fees in those cases were refunded.

The NSWEC has a Summary of Affairs which is available on request. The Statement of Affairs is available at Appendix 9.

### NSWEC Privacy Policy

The protection of personal information and the privacy of individuals are of paramount concern to the NSWEC and are covered in its privacy policy developed to comply with the provisions of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

The NSWEC uses electoral roll information to conduct State and Local Government elections and by-elections. The NSWEC may use the electoral roll information to write to electors about their enrolment or to provide them with information about an election.

### Privacy and Data Protection

Personal information is not collected, used, disclosed or accessed for purposes other than as provided for in privacy legislation, electoral legislation or purposes directly related to the electoral process. As prescribed in section 31B of the Act, the printed NSW electoral roll is available for public inspection at the NSWEC. The roll is not available for sale.



# 6

## FINANCIAL

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## PERFORMANCE

The NSWEC has in place budgeting and reporting systems to manage and monitor expenditure and carries out its functions in accordance with the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the NSW Treasurer's directions.



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## Financial Position

The NSWEC carries out its functions in accordance with the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the Treasurer's directions. Audited Financial Statements accompany this report.

The net cost of services for the year ending 30 June 2009 was \$14.28M. This was over budget by \$0.90M. Additional funds were provided for the provision of a non-voters processing operation (\$1.205M), by-election costs (\$0.764M) and SmartRoll (\$0.100M). This was offset by an increase in Revenue of \$1.707M due to an increase in Local Government Revenue of \$1,088M and increase in interest of \$0.341M.

Revenue of \$25.006M is comprised primarily of earnings from conducting the 2008 Local Government Elections, State General and by-elections, statutory and industrial ballots and interest earnings.

Transfers amounting to \$2.203M to the Election Funding Authority (EFA) were made to meet its obligations under the *Election Funding Act 1981*. For further details on the EFA see the 2008/09 EFA Annual Report.

### Payment Performance Indicators

The payment performance indicators reflect a continued high performance, with an average of 92.5% of all accounts being paid on time.

The performance indicators reflect a small number of invoices in dispute and discrepancies in billings. An analysis of payment performance indicators is available at Appendix 13.

### Major Works

The NSWEC undertook four major works in 2008/09.

### Consultancies

The NSWEC did not have any consultancies over \$30,000 during the reporting period.

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# Financial Position

## Major Assets

The NSWEC has \$15.385M in assets. \$7.635M of these are held in cash and receivables. The majority of the rest are plant and equipment (\$1.871M) and intangible assets (\$5.879M).

A list of the NSWEC's major non-financial assets appears below.

**Table 19: NSWEC Non-financial Assets 2008/09.**

Assets	Value
Election Management Application (EMA)	\$3.7M
Legislative Council Counting Programme	\$0.7M
EFA Application	\$0.7M
Level 25, 201 Kent Street Office Fit Out	\$1.0M
SmartRoll	\$0.67

## Leave Entitlements

Recreation leave accruals for some officers are in excess of the maximum accrual. The NSWEC is working to an agreed plan to reduce leave balances and ensure that all employee leave is in line with the Public Service Conditions of Employment Award. Consistent with the award, the NSWEC aims to reduce leave balances for officers with balances over 30 days to between 20 to 30 days, on an ongoing basis, and for all officers to take at least two consecutive weeks leave every 12 months.

During the reporting year all officers with excessive leave balances were required to prepare a recreation leave plan in consultation with their director, to reduce their leave balance. In recognition of the work required in the lead-up to the 2008 Local Government Elections, approval was provided for officers to postpone extended periods of proposed leave until after the elections.

Details of leave entitlements appear below.

**Recreation Leave:** \$544,000  
**Long Service Leave:** \$1,211,000

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## Statement by the Electoral Commissioner

Pursuant to Section 45F of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, I, to the best of my knowledge and belief state that:

- (a) The accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies, the applicable clauses of the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005 and the Treasurer's Directions;
- (b) The statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position of the NSW Electoral Commission as at 30 June 2009, and transactions for the year then ended; and
- (c) There are no circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



Colin Barry  
Electoral Commissioner  
13 October 2009

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# Independent Auditor's Report



GPO BOX 12  
Sydney NSW 2001

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTORAL COMMISSION

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

I have audited the accompanying financial report of New South Wales Electoral Commission (the Commission), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2009, the operating statement, statement of recognised income and expense, cash flow statement and a summary of compliance with financial directives for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

### Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report:

- presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as at 30 June 2009, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations)
- is in accordance with section 45E of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (the PF&A Act) and the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

### Electoral Commissioner's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Electoral Commissioner is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the PF&A Act. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Electoral Commissioner, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

### Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the Commission's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Electoral Commissioner, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.



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# Independent Auditor's Report

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

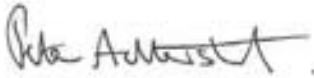
My opinion does not provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the Commission,
- that it has carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically,
- about the effectiveness of its internal controls, or
- on the assumptions used in formulating the budget figures disclosed in the financial report.

## Independence

In conducting this audit, the Audit Office of New South Wales has complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical requirements. The PF&A Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General, and
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.



Peter Achterstraat  
Auditor-General

16 October 2009  
SYDNEY

# Operating Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2009

## Start of audited financial statements

	Notes	Actual 2009 \$'000	Budget 2009 \$'000	Actual 2008 \$'000
<b>Expenses excluding losses</b>				
<b>Operating expenses</b>				
Employee related	2(a)	5,995	5,816	5,324
Other operating expenses	2(b)	4,380	2,223	1,936
Depreciation and amortisation	2(c)	2,175	1,327	1,473
Other expenses	2(d)	26,728	27,314	8,815
<b>Total Expenses excluding losses</b>		<b>39,278</b>	<b>36,680</b>	17,548
<b>Income</b>				
Sale of goods and services	3(a)	24,495	3,149	3,339
Investment income	3(b)	492	150	253
Other income	3(c)	19	20,000	268
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>25,006</b>	<b>23,299</b>	3,860
<b>Loss on disposal of assets</b>	4	9		89
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	22	<b>14,281</b>	<b>13,381</b>	13,777
<b>Government Contributions</b>				
Recurrent appropriation	5	12,901	31,444	13,785
Capital appropriation	5	3,129	1,800	2,200
Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities	6	18	307	450
<b>Total Government Contributions</b>		<b>16,048</b>	<b>33,551</b>	16,435
<b>Surplus for the Year</b>		<b>1,767</b>	<b>20,170</b>	2,658

The accompanying notes form part of these financial reports

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## Statement of Recognised Income and Expense

for the year ended 30 June 2009

	Notes	Actual 2009 \$'000	Budget 2009 \$'000	Actual 2008 \$'000
<b>Total Income and Expense Recognised directly in Equity</b>				
Surplus for the Year	18	1,767	20,170	2,658
<b>Total Income and Expense Recognised for the Year</b>		1,767	20,170	2,658

The accompanying notes form part of these financial reports

## Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2009

	Notes	Actual 2009 \$'000	Budget 2009 \$'000	Actual 2008 \$'000
<b>Assets</b>				
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	9	4,155	5,603	6,067
Receivables	10	3,369	7,094	3,994
Others	11	111	162	162
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>7,635</b>	<b>12,859</b>	<b>10,223</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>				
<b>Property, Plant and Equipment</b>				
Plant and Equipment	12	1,871	1,427	2,029
Intangible assets	13	5,879	5,838	4,763
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>7,750</b>	<b>7,265</b>	<b>6,792</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>15,385</b>	<b>20,124</b>	<b>17,015</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Payables	15	1,392	1,618	1,618
Provisions	16	671	740	740
Other	17	3,100	6,122	6,188
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>5,163</b>	<b>8,480</b>	<b>8,546</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>				
Provisions	16	262	181	276
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>262</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>5,425</b>	<b>8,661</b>	<b>8,822</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>9,960</b>	<b>11,463</b>	<b>8,193</b>
<b>Equity</b>				
Accumulated funds	18	9,960	11,463	8,193
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>9,960</b>	<b>11,463</b>	<b>8,193</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial reports

# Cash Flow Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2009

	Notes	Actual 2009 \$'000	Budget 2009 \$'000	Actual 2008 \$'000
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>				
<b>Payments</b>				
Employee related		(6,152)	(5,509)	(4,649)
Other		(35,406)	(31,078)	(13,476)
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>(41,558)</b>	<b>(36,587)</b>	<b>(18,125)</b>
<b>Receipts</b>				
Sale of goods and services		26,778	3,149	1,003
Interest received		543	150	223
Other		2,524	20,366	1,826
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>29,845</b>	<b>23,665</b>	<b>3,052</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Government</b>				
Recurrent appropriation		29,801	29,358	13,785
Capital appropriation		3,129	1,800	2,200
Cash transfer to the Consolidated Fund		(16,900)	(16,900)	–
<b>Net Cash Flows from Government</b>		<b>16,030</b>	<b>14,258</b>	<b>15,985</b>
<b>Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>	22	<b>4,317</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>912</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>				
Purchases of Plant and Equipment & Intangibles		(3,141)	(1,800)	(2,201)
<b>Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>		<b>(3,141)</b>	<b>(1,800)</b>	<b>(2,201)</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Financing Activities</b>				
Proceeds from borrowings and advances		(3,088)	–	6,188
<b>Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities</b>		<b>(3,088)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>6,188</b>
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash</b>		<b>(1,912)</b>	<b>(464)</b>	<b>4,899</b>
Opening cash and cash equivalents		6,067	1,772	1,168
<b>Closing Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	9	<b>4,155</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>6,067</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial reports



## Summary of Compliance with Financial Directives

	2009				2008			
	Recurrent Appropriation	Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund	Capital Appropriation	Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund	Recurrent Appropriation	Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund	Capital Appropriation	Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Original Budget Appropriation/Expenditure</b>								
Appropriation Act	31,444	28,344	1,800	1,800	25,211	19,066	2,400	2,200
	31,444	28,344	1,800	1,800	25,211	19,066	2,400	2,200
<b>Other Appropriations/Expenditure</b>								
Treasurer's Advance	4,071	3,660	2,300	1,329	4,954	4,772	–	–
	4,071	3,660	2,300	1,329	4,954	4,772	–	–
<b>Total Appropriation Expenditure/ Net Claim on Consolidated Fund (includes transfer payments)</b>								
	35,515	32,004	4,100	3,129	30,165	23,838	2,400	2,200
<b>Amount draw down against Appropriation</b>								
		35,104		3,129		30,026		2,200
<b>Liability to Consolidated Fund</b>								
		3,100		–		6,188		–

The Summary of Compliance is based on the assumption that Consolidated Fund moneys are spent first (except where otherwise identified or prescribed).

The "Liability to Consolidated Fund" represents the difference between the "Amount drawn down against Appropriation" and the "Total Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund".

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# Notes to the Financial Reports

## I. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

### (a) Reporting entity

The New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC) includes the commercial activities of conducting Statutory and Industrial Ballots and Local Government Elections.

The NSWEC is a NSW government department. The NSWEC is a not-for-profit entity (as profit is not its principal objective) and it has no cash generating units. The reporting entity is consolidated as part of the NSW Total State Sector Accounts.

This financial report for the year ended 30 June 2009 has been authorised for issue by the Electoral Commissioner on 13 October 2009.

### (b) Basis of preparation

The NSWEC's financial report is a general purpose financial report which has been prepared in accordance with:

- applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations)
- the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and Regulation and
- the Financial Reporting Directions published in the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies or issued by the Treasurer.

Plant and equipment are measured at fair value. Other financial report items are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Judgements, key assumptions and estimations management has made are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial report.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

### (c) Statement of compliance

The financial statements and notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards, which include Australian Accounting Interpretations.

### (d) Administered activities

The NSWEC administers, but does not control, certain activities on behalf of the Crown Entity. It is accountable for the transactions relating to those administered activities but does not have the discretion, for example, to deploy the resources for the achievement of the NSWEC's own objectives.

Transactions and balances relating to the administered activities are not recognised as the NSWEC's incomes, expenses, assets and liabilities, but are disclosed in the accompanying schedules as "Administered Incomes" and "Administered Expenses".

The accrual basis of accounting and applicable accounting standards has been adopted.

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**(e) Insurance**

The NSWEC's insurance activities are conducted through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund Scheme of self insurance for Government agencies. The expense (premium) is determined by the Fund Manager based on past claim experience.

**(f) Accounting for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except that:

- The amount of GST incurred by the NSWEC as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense and
- Receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

Cash flows are included in the cash flow statement on a gross basis. However, the GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the Australian Taxation Office are classified as operating cash flows.

**(g) Income recognition**

Income is measured at the fair value of the consideration or contribution received or receivable. Additional comments regarding the accounting policies for the recognition of income are discussed below.

**(i) Parliamentary appropriations and contributions**

Except as specified below, parliamentary appropriations and contributions from other bodies (including grants and donations) are generally recognised as income when the NSWEC obtains control over the assets comprising the appropriations/contributions. Control over appropriations and a contribution is normally obtained upon the receipt of cash.

Appropriations are not recognised as income when the appropriations are unspent at year end. Unspent appropriations are recognised as liabilities rather than income, as the authority to spend the money lapses and the unspent amount must be repaid to the Consolidated Fund.

The liability is disclosed in Note 16 as part of "Current Liabilities – Other". The amount will be repaid and the liability will be extinguished next financial year. Any liability in respect of transfer payments is disclosed in Note 23 "Administered assets".

**(ii) Sale of goods**

Income from the sale of goods is recognised as income when the NSWEC transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership of the assets.

**(iii) Rendering of services**

Income is recognised when the service is provided or by reference to the stage of completion (based on labour hours incurred to date).

#### (iv) Investment income

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement.

### (h) Assets

#### (i) Acquisition of assets

The cost method of accounting is used for the initial recording of all acquisitions of assets controlled by the NSWEC. Cost is the amount of cash or cash equivalents paid or the fair value of the other consideration given to acquire the asset at the time of its acquisition or construction or, where applicable, the amount attributed to that asset when initially recognised in accordance with the requirements of other Australian Accounting Standards.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised at their fair value at the date of acquisition.

Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

Where payment for asset is deferred beyond normal credit terms, its cost is the cash price equivalent, i.e. the deferred payment amount is effectively discounted at an asset-specific rate.

#### (ii) Capitalisation thresholds

Plant and equipment and intangible assets costing \$5,000 and above individually (or forming part of a network costing more than \$5,000) are capitalised.

#### (iii) Revaluation of plant and equipment

Physical non-current assets are valued in accordance with the "Valuation of Physical Non-Current assets at Fair Value" Policy and Guidelines Paper (TPP 07-1). This policy adopts fair value in accordance with the AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment.

Plant and equipment is measured on an existing use basis, where there are no feasible alternative uses in the existing natural, legal, financial and socio-political environment. However, in the limited circumstances where there are feasible alternative uses, are valued at their highest and best use.

Fair value of plant and equipment is determined based on the best available market evidence, including current market selling prices for the same or similar assets. Where there is no available market evidence, the asset's fair value is measured at its market buying price, the best indicator of which is depreciated replacement cost.

The NSWEC's non-current assets are comprised wholly of plant and equipment, which are valued at fair value.

**(iv) Impairment of plant and equipment**

As a not-for-profit entity with no cash generating units, the NSWEC is effectively exempted from AASB 136 Impairment of Assets and impairment testing. This is because AASB 136 modifies the recoverable amount test to the higher of fair value less costs to sell and depreciated replacement cost. This means that, for an asset already measured at fair value, impairment can only arise if selling costs are material. Selling costs are regarded as immaterial.

**(v) Depreciation of plant and equipment**

Depreciation is provided for on a straight-line basis for all depreciable assets so as to write off the depreciable amount of each asset as it is consumed over its useful life to the NSWEC.

All material separately identifiable components of assets are depreciated over their shorter useful lives.

Asset Type	Useful Life
Computer Equipment	4 Years
Plant and Equipment	7 Years
Furniture and Fixtures	8 Years
Leasehold Improvements	7 Years or to the end of the lease, if shorter

**(vi) Restoration costs**

The estimated cost of dismantling and removing an asset and restoring the site is included in the cost of an asset, to the extent it is recognised as a liability.

**(vii) Maintenance**

Day-to-day servicing costs or maintenance are charged as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a part or component of an asset, in which case the costs are capitalised and depreciated.

**(viii) Leased assets**

Operating lease payments are charged to the operating statement in the periods in which they are incurred.

No assets have been acquired under finance lease arrangements.

**(ix) Intangible assets**

The NSWEC recognises intangible assets only if it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the NSWEC and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Where an asset is acquired at no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value as at the date of acquisition. Currently, the NSWEC's intangible assets solely comprise software.

The useful lives of intangible assets are assessed to be finite.



Intangible assets are subsequently measured at fair value only if there is an active market. As there is no active market for the NSWEC's intangible assets, the assets are carried at cost less any accumulated amortisation.

The NSWEC's intangible assets are amortised using the straight line method over a period of between 4 years and 6 years.

Intangible assets are tested for impairment where an indicator of impairment exists. If the recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount the carrying amount is reduced to recoverable amount and the reduction is recognised as an impairment loss.

#### (x) Receivables

Receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. These financial assets are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Subsequent measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less an allowance for any impairment of receivables. Any changes are accounted for in the operating statement when impaired or derecognised.

Short-term receivables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

#### (xi) Other assets

Other assets are recognised on a cost basis.

### (i) Liabilities

#### (i) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the NSWEC and other amounts. Payables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Subsequent measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Short-term payables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

#### (ii) Employee benefits and other provisions

##### (a) Salaries and wages, annual leave, sick leave and on-costs

Liabilities for salaries and wages (including non-monetary benefits), annual leave and paid sick leave that fall due wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised and measured in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date at undiscounted amounts based on the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Long-term annual leave that is not expected to be taken within twelve months is measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 Employee Benefits. Market yields on government bonds of 5.52% are used to discount long-term annual leave.

**(a) Salaries and wages, annual leave, sick leave and on-costs continued**

Unused non-vesting sick leave does not give rise to a liability as it is not considered probable that sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future.

The outstanding amounts of payroll tax, workers' compensation insurance premiums and fringe benefits tax, which are consequential to employment, are recognised as liabilities and expenses where the employee benefits to which they relate have been recognised.

**(b) Long service leave and superannuation**

The NSWEC's liabilities for long service leave and defined benefit superannuation are assumed by the Crown Entity. The NSWEC accounts for the liability as having been extinguished, resulting in the amount assumed being shown as part of the non-monetary income item described as "Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities".

Long service leave is measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 Employee Benefits. This is based on the application of certain factors (specified in NSWTC 09/04) to employees with five or more years of service, using current rates of pay. These factors were determined based on an actuarial review to approximate present value.

The superannuation expense for the financial year is determined by using the formulae specified in the Treasurer's Circulars. The expense for certain superannuation schemes (i.e. Basic Benefit and First State Super) is calculated as a percentage of the employees' salary. For other superannuation schemes (i.e. State Superannuation Scheme and State Authorities Superannuation Scheme), the expense is calculated as a multiple of the employees' superannuation contributions.

**(iii) Other provisions**

Other provisions exist when: the NSWEC has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

If the effect of the time value of money is material, provisions are discounted at 5.52%, which is a pre-tax rate that reflects the current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the liability.

**(j) Budgeted amounts**

The budgeted amounts are drawn from the budgets as formulated at the beginning of the financial year and with any adjustments for the effects of additional appropriations, s 21A, s 24 and/or s 26 of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

The budgeted amounts in the Operating Statement and the Cash Flow Statement are generally based on the amounts disclosed in the NSW Budget Papers (as adjusted above). However, in the Balance Sheet, the amounts vary from the Budget Papers, as the opening balances of the budgeted amounts are based on carried forward actual amounts; i.e. per the audited financial report (rather than the carried forward estimates).

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**(k) Comparative information**

Except when an Australian Accounting Standard permits or requires otherwise, comparative information is disclosed in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements.

**(l) New Australian Accounting Standards issued but not effective**

The following new Accounting Standards have not been applied and are not yet effective as mandated by the Treasurer. The possible impact of the Standards in the period of initial application is not able to be reliably measured.

- AASB 3 (March 2008), AASB 127 and AASB 2008-3 regarding business combinations;
- AASB 8 and AASB 2007-3 regarding operating segments;
- AASB 101 (Sept 2007) and AASB 2007-8 regarding presentation of financial statements;
- AASB 123 (June 2007) and AASB 2007-6 regarding borrowing costs;
- AASB 2007-10 regarding presentation of financial statements;
- AASB 1039 regarding concise financial reports;
- AASB 2008-2 regarding puttable financial instruments;
- AASB 2008-05 and AASB 2008-6 regarding amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Annual Improvements Project;
- AASB 2008-9 regarding AASB 1049 amendments consistent with AASB 101;
- AASB 2008-11 regarding business combination with not-for-profit entities;
- AASB 2009-1 regarding borrowing costs of not for profit public sector entities;
- AASB 2009-2 regarding financial instrument disclosures;

## 2. Expenses Excluding Losses

### (a) Employee related expenses

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
Salaries and wages (including recreation leave)	5,358	4,323
<b>Superannuation</b>		
defined benefit Plan	199	216
defined contribution Plan	253	215
Long service leave	-199	245
Workers' compensation insurance	68	40
Payroll tax and fringe benefits tax	316	285
	<b>5,995</b>	<b>5,324</b>

### (b) Other operating expenses include the following:

<b>Auditor's remuneration</b>		
- audit or review of the financial report	63	58
- internal audit	109	62
<b>Operating lease rental expense</b>		
- minimum lease payments	741	710
Storage	29	50
Printing	297	35
Postage	460	88
Consulting	553	142
Software maintenance and licences	739	228
Advertising	257	94
Legal fees	-	38
Restoration Costs	11	10
Insurance	57	71
Telephone	57	60
Travel	58	15
Maintenance*	2	1
Recruitment	71	34
Electricity	39	19
Stationery	67	49
Training	63	15
Low Pool Assets	189	-
Other	518	157
	<b>4,380</b>	<b>1,936</b>

## 2. Expenses Excluding Losses

### \*Reconciliation – Total Maintenance

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
Maintenance expense – contracted labour and others (non-employee related), as previous page	2	1
Employee related maintenance expense included in Note 2(a)		
<b>Total maintenance expense included in Note 2(a) and 2(b)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

### (c) Depreciation and amortisation expense

Depreciation	631	683
Amortisation	1,544	790
	<b>2,175</b>	<b>1,473</b>

### (d) Other expenses

By election	1,043	–
General Election	541	2,354
Joint Roll Agreement (payment to the Commonwealth)	3,932	3,707
Local Government Election	21,126	2,503
Smart Roll	86	251
	<b>26,728</b>	<b>8,815</b>

## 3. Income

### (a) Sale of goods and services

Sale of goods	33	74
Rendering of services	1,089	762
Rendering of services – Local Government Election	23,373	2,503
	<b>24,495</b>	<b>3,339</b>

### (b) Investment income

Interest	492	253
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### (c) Other income

Other	19	268
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#### 4. Loss on disposal of Assets

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
Disposal of plants and equipment	9	89

#### 5. Appropriations

<b>Recurrent appropriations</b>		
Total recurrent draw-downs from NSW Treasury (per Summary of Compliance)	35,104	30,026
Less: Liability to Consolidated Fund (per Summary of Compliance)	(3,100)	(6,188)
	<b>32,004</b>	<b>23,838</b>
Comprising:		
Recurrent appropriations (per Operating Statement)	12,901	13,785
Local Government Election Refunded	16,900	–
Transfer payments	2,203	10,053
	<b>32,004</b>	<b>23,838</b>
<b>Capital Appropriations</b>		
Total capital draw-downs from NSW Treasury (per Summary of Compliance)	3,129	2,200
Less: Liability to Consolidated Fund (per Summary of Compliance)	–	–
	<b>3,129</b>	<b>2,200</b>
Comprising:		
<b>Capital appropriations (per Operating Statement)</b>	<b>3,129</b>	<b>2,200</b>

#### 6. Acceptance by the Crown Entity of Employee Benefits and Other Liabilities

Superannuation	199	216
Long service leave	-193	221
Payroll tax	12	13
	<b>18</b>	<b>450</b>

#### 7. Transfer Payments

Election Funding Authority	2,203	10,053
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## 8. Service Group Statement

The NSW Electoral Commission has one service group only. Details of the expenses, income, assets and liabilities for this service group are available in the operating statement and balance sheet. Service group statements therefore have not been prepared. Administered expenses and income are shown as a separate note.

## 9. Current Assets – Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
<b>Cash at bank and on hand</b>	<b>4,155</b>	6,067

For the purposes of the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and cash at bank.

Cash and cash equivalents assets recognised in the Balance Sheet are reconciled at the end of the financial year to the Cash Flow Statement as follows:

Cash and cash equivalents (per Balance Sheet)	4,155	6,067
<b>Closing cash and cash equivalents (per Cash Flow Statement)</b>	<b>4,155</b>	6,067

## 10. Current Assets – Receivables

Sale of goods and services	406	317
Accrued income	2,813	2,753
GST recoverable from the taxation authority	127	81
Prepayments	23	843
	<b>3,369</b>	3,994

As all amounts owing are considered collectable, receivables have not been impaired for doubtful debts.

## 11. Current Assets – Other

<b>Accrued interest income</b>	<b>111</b>	162
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## 12. Non-Current Assets – Plant and Equipment

	Computer Hardware \$'000	Furniture, Fittings & Leasehold Improvement \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>At 1 July 2008 – fair value</b>				
Gross carrying amount	1,258	1,796	319	<b>3,373</b>
Accumulated depreciation	(573)	(646)	(125)	<b>(1,344)</b>
<b>Net Carrying amount</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2,029</b>
<b>At 30 June 2009 – fair value</b>				
Gross carrying amount	1,456	1,984	375	<b>3,815</b>
Accumulated depreciation	(865)	(912)	(167)	<b>(1,944)</b>
<b>Net Carrying amount</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>1,871</b>

### Reconciliation

A reconciliation of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current reporting period is set out below:

<b>Year ended 30 June 2009</b>				
Net carrying amount at start of the year	685	1,150	194	<b>2,029</b>
Additions	238	188	56	<b>482</b>
Disposals	(9)			<b>(9)</b>
Depreciation expense	(323)	(266)	(42)	<b>(631)</b>
<b>Net carrying amount at end of the year</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>1,871</b>

<b>At 1 July 2007 – fair value</b>				
Gross carrying amount	1,390	1,800	250	<b>3,440</b>
Accumulated depreciation	(292)	(358)	(100)	<b>(750)</b>
<b>Net Carrying amount</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>1,442</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>2,690</b>
<b>At 30 June 2008 – fair value</b>				
Gross carrying amount	1,258	1,796	319	<b>3,373</b>
Accumulated depreciation	(573)	(646)	(125)	<b>(1,344)</b>
<b>Net Carrying amount</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2,029</b>

### Reconciliation

A reconciliation of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current reporting period is set out below:

	Computer Hardware \$'000	Furniture, Fittings & Leasehold Improvement \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>Year ended 30 June 2008</b>				
Net carrying amount at start of the year	1,098	1,441	151	<b>2,690</b>
Additions	30		81	<b>111</b>
Disposals	(85)	(2)	(2)	<b>(89)</b>
Depreciation expense	(358)	(289)	(36)	<b>(683)</b>
<b>Net carrying amount at end of the year</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2,029</b>

### 13. Intangible Assets – Softwares

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
Gross carrying amount	<b>11,257</b>	8,897
Accumulated amortisation	<b>(5,378)</b>	(4,134)
<b>Fair value</b>	<b>5,879</b>	4,763

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Gross carrying amount	8,897	6,807
Accumulated amortisation	(4,134)	(3,344)
<b>Fair value</b>	<b>4,763</b>	<b>3,463</b>

### Reconciliation

A reconciliation of the carrying amounts of softwares at the beginning and end of the current reporting period is set out below:

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
Net carrying amount at start of the year	4,763	3,463
Additions	2,660	2,090
Disposals	–	–
Amortisation expense	(1,544)	(790)
<b>Net carrying amount at end of the year</b>	<b>5,879</b>	<b>4,763</b>

### 14. Restricted Assets

<b>Liability to Consolidated Fund</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>6,188</b>
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### 15. Current Liabilities – Payables

Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs	101	315
Creditors	1,291	1,303
	<b>1,392</b>	<b>1,618</b>

### 16. Current/Non-Current Liabilities – Provisions

<b>Current</b>		
<b>Employee benefits and related on-costs</b>		
Recreation leave (a)	544	580
Long service leave on-costs (a)	103	109
	<b>647</b>	<b>689</b>
<b>Other provisions</b>		
Lease incentive on rental	24	51
<b>Total Current Provisions</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>740</b>

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
<b>Non-Current</b>		
<b>Employee benefits and related on-costs</b>		
Long service leave on-costs (a)	5	6
<b>Other provisions</b>		
Lease incentive on rental	56	80
Restoration costs (b)	201	190
	<b>257</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>Total Non-Current Provisions</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Aggregate employee benefits and related on-costs</b>		
Provision – current	647	689
Provision – non-current	5	6
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs (Note 15)	101	315
	<b>753</b>	<b>1,010</b>

(a) The value of leave and on-costs expected to be taken within twelve months and after twelve months is as follows:

<b>Short term – less than twelve months</b>		
Recreation leave	245	266
Long service leave on-costs	5	9
	<b>250</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Long term – after 12 months</b>		
Recreation leave	299	314
Long service leave on-costs	103	106
	<b>402</b>	<b>420</b>



(b) A provision has been recognised for the estimated costs to be incurred for the make good clause on the Kent Street Office fit out once the lease term expires in seven years. A discount rate of 5.7% based on market yield on Commonwealth government bonds has been applied to reflect the present value of the estimated costs to be incurred.

### Movements in other provisions

Movements in provisions during the financial year, other than employee benefits, are set out below:

#### 2009

	Lease incentive on rental \$'000	Restoration costs \$'000	Total \$'000
Carrying amount at the beginning of financial year	131	190	321
Additional provisions recognised	–	12	12
Amounts used	(51)	–	(51)
<b>Carrying amount at end of financial year</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>282</b>

#### 2008

Carrying amount at the beginning of financial year	221	180	401
Additional provisions recognised	–	10	10
Amounts used	(90)	–	(90)
<b>Carrying amount at end of financial year</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>321</b>

### 17. Current Liabilities – Other

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
<b>Liability to Consolidated Fund</b>	<b>3,100</b>	6,188

### 18. Changes in Equity

Accumulated Funds	2009	2008
Balance as the beginning of the financial year	8,193	5,535
<i>Changes in equity – other than transactions with owners as owners</i>		
Surplus for the year	1,767	2,658
	<b>9,960</b>	8,193

## 19. Commitments for Expenditure

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
<b>Operating Lease Commitments</b>		
Future non-cancellable operating lease rentals not provided for and payable		
Not later than one year	1,164	1,010
Later than one year and not later than five years	4,478	2,256
Later than five years	1,051	–
<b>Total (including GST)</b>	<b>6,693</b>	<b>3,266</b>

These operating lease commitments are not recognised in the financial statements as liabilities. GST has been calculated at the rate of 10% and has been assumed to remain constant for the five years.

## 20. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

The NSWEC has no significant liability as at 30 June 2009 (As at 30 June 2008, the contingent liability was \$2,503,000 in respect of the rendering of services for the Local Government Election.)

The NSWEC has no contingent assets.

## 21. Budget Review

### Net cost of services

The actual net cost of services was higher than budget by \$900,000. This was primarily due to the provision of a Non Voters processing operation (\$1,205,000). A new branch to deal with Election Funding and Disclosures (\$1,999,000), By election costs (\$764,000) and Smart Roll (\$100,000) additional funding which was not included in the original budget. This was offset by an increase in Revenue of \$1,707,000 due to an increase in Local Government Revenue of \$1,088,000 and increase in interest of \$341,000. EFA transfer payment of \$2,086 is included in the expenses budgeted amount.

### Assets and Liabilities

Assets were below budget by \$4,740,000. This is primarily due to receivables being below budget by \$3,725,000 as accounts receivable is only outstanding for \$380,000 due to the fact that only three councils have not paid and three paid only partially for the issued invoices for Local government Elections by 30/06/09.

Liabilities were below budget by \$3,235,000. This is primarily due to the decrease of liability-others of \$3,022,000. As we have recovered almost all accounts receivable we have refunded all liabilities as per the budget and recognise a new liability of \$3,100,000 for the next financial year.

## Cash Flows

The increase in cash was due to the additional funding of \$4,071,000 for Non Voters (\$1,205,000), EFA operation (\$1,374,000), EFA transitional (\$625,000), By election (\$764,000) and Smart Role (\$100,000) which was not included in the original budget. This was offset by a refund of \$6,188,000 liability and recognition of \$3,100,000 for liability for the next financial year.

## 22. Reconciliation of Cash Flows from Operating Activities to Net Cost of Services

	2009 \$'000	2008 \$'000
Net cash flows from operating activities	4,317	912
Cash Flows from Government/Appropriations	(16,030)	(15,985)
Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities	(17)	(450)
Depreciation and amortisation	(2,175)	(1,473)
Decrease/(increase) in provisions	81	46
Increase/(decrease) in receivables and other assets	(674)	2,875
Decrease/(increase) in payables	226	387
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of plant and equipment & intangible assets	(9)	(89)
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>(14,281)</b>	<b>(13,777)</b>

## 23. Administered Assets

<b>Fines for failure to vote</b>	<b>330</b>	–
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## 24. Administered Income – Debts Written Off

There were no debts written off which related to Administered Income.

## 25. Administered Income

<b>Fines for failure to vote</b>	<b>10,026</b>	224
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## 26. Administered Assets – Schedule of Uncollected Amounts

There is \$ 7,736,000 to be collected for the fines.

## 27. Administrated Liabilities

<b>Fines for failure to vote</b>	<b>12</b>	–
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## 28. Financial Instruments

The NSWEC's principal financial instruments are outlined below. These financial instruments arise directly from the NSWEC's operations or are required to finance the NSWEC's operations. The NSWEC does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments, for speculative purposes.

The NSWEC's main risks arising from financial instruments are outlined below, together with the NSWEC's objectives, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk. Further quantitative and qualitative disclosures are included throughout this financial report.

The Audit Committee has overall responsibility for the establishment and oversight of risk management and reviews and agrees policies for managing each of these risks. Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced by the NSWEC, to set risk limits and controls and to monitor risks. Compliance with policies is reviewed by the Audit Committee on a continuous basis.

### (a) Financial instrument categories

Financial Assets	Note	Category	Carrying Amount 2009 \$'000	Carrying Amount 2008 \$'000
<b>Class:</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	9	N/A	4,154	6,067
Receivables*	10	Loans and receivables (at amortised cost)	428	317

### (b)

<b>Class:</b>				
Payables**	16	Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	375	455

### Notes

\* Excludes statutory receivables and prepayments (i.e. not within scope of AASB 7).

\*\* Excludes statutory payables and unearned income (i.e. not within scope of AASB 7).

### (c) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises when there is the possibility of the NSWEC's debtors defaulting on their contractual obligations, resulting in a financial loss to the NSWEC. The maximum exposure to credit risk is generally represented by the carrying amount of the financial assets (net of any allowance for impairment).

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Credit risk arises from the financial assets of the NSWEC, including cash, receivables, and authority deposits. No collateral is held by the NSWEC. The NSWEC has not granted any financial guarantees.

**(c) Credit Risk** continued

Credit risk associated with the NSWEC's financial assets, other than receivables, is managed through the selection of counterparties and establishment of minimum credit rating standards.

**Cash**

Cash comprises cash on hand and bank balances within the NSW Treasury Banking System. Interest is earned on daily bank balances at the monthly average NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) 11am unofficial cash rate, adjusted for a management fee to NSW Treasury. The TCorp Hour Glass cash facility is discussed in para (d) below.

**Receivables – trade debtors**

All trade debtors are recognised as amounts receivable at balance date. Collectability of trade debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Procedures as established in the Treasurer's Directions are followed to recover outstanding amounts, including letters of demand. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. An allowance for impairment is raised when there is objective evidence that the entity will not be able to collect all amounts due. This evidence includes past experience, and current and expected changes in economic conditions and debtor credit ratings. No interest is earned on trade debtors. Sales are made on 30 day terms.

The NSWEC is not materially exposed to concentrations of credit risk to a single trade debtor or group of debtors. Based on past experience, debtors that are not past due (2009: \$380,800; 2008: \$317,000) these represent 100% of the total trade debtors.

There are no financial assets that are past due or impaired.

**(d) Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the NSWEC will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due. The NSWEC continuously manages risk through monitoring future cash flows and maturities planning to ensure adequate holding of high quality liquid assets. The objective is to maintain a balance between continuity of funding and flexibility through the use of overdrafts, loans and other advances.

During the current and prior years, there were no defaults or breaches on any loans payable. No assets have been pledged as collateral. The NSWEC's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods or services received, whether or not invoiced. Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in Treasurer's Direction 219.01. If trade terms are not specified, payment is made no later than the end of the month following the month in which an invoice or a statement is received. Treasurer's Direction 219.01 allows the Minister to award interest for late payment.

**(d) Liquidity risk** continued

The table below summarises the maturity profile of the NSWEC's financial liabilities, together with the interest rate exposure.

	Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate %	Nominal Amount \$'000	Interest Rate Exposure			Maturity Dates		
			Fixed Interest Rate	Variable Interest Rate	Non- interest bearing	< 1yr	1-5 yrs	> 5 yrs
<b>2009</b>								
Payables	1.00	1,392	–	–	–	1,392	–	–
<b>2008</b>								
Payables	1.00	1,618	–	–	–	1,618	–	–

**(e) Market risk**

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. NSWEC has no exposure to foreign currency risk and does not enter into commodity contracts.

**29. After Balance Date Events**

There are no events subsequent to balance date which affect the financial report.

**30. Position under new super agencies**

There are no changes in position for NSW Electoral Commission under new super agencies.

**31. Related party transaction**

All transactions for election Funding Authority of New South Wales are conducted through the NSW Electoral Commissions' accounting framework. Within this framework, employee related expenses of \$969,541 (\$440,000 in 2008) and other operating expenses of \$963,309 (\$101,000 in 2008) are recognised as attribute to the EFA. The increase in expenses is due to introduction of The Election Funding and Disclosures Act, an important piece of legislation introduced by the government to increase the transparency and accountability of election campaign finance.

To meet the new requirements of the legislation the number of staff positions and the associated operational budget for the Election Funding Authority was increased.

**End of audited financial reports**



# 7

## APPENDICES

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# Appendix I

Registered Political Parties under Part 4A of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*

## Parties Registered

- Australian Democrats (NSW Division);
- Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch);
- Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group);
- Country Labor Party;
- Liberal Party of Australia NSW Division;
- National Party of Australia – NSW;
- Outdoor Recreation;
- Restore the Workers' Rights Party;
- Save Our Suburbs;
- Socialist Alliance;
- The Fishing Party;
- The Greens;
- The Shooters Party; and
- Unity Party.

## Parties Deregistered

- Horse Riders Party.

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## Appendix 2

### Registered Political Parties under Section 320 of the *Local Government Act 1993*

#### Parties Registered

- Albury Citizens and Ratepayers Movement;
- Australia First (Council Elections) Party;
- Australian Business Party;
- Bob Thompson's Independent Team;
- Burwood Community Voice;
- Central Coast First;
- Clover Moore Independent Team;
- Community Development "Environment" Save Campbelltown Koalas;
- Eurobodalla First;
- Holroyd Independents;
- Kogarah Residents' Association;
- Liverpool Community Independents Team;
- Lorraine Wearne Independents;
- Manly Independents – Putting Residents First;
- No Parking Meters Party;
- Our Sustainable Future;
- Parramatta Better Local Government Party;
- Residents Action Group for Auburn Area;
- Residents First Woollahra;
- Russell Matheson Community First Team;
- Save Tuggerah Lakes;
- Shire Watch Independents;
- Shire Wide Action Group;
- Shoalhaven Independents Group;
- The Parramatta Independents;
- Totally Locally Committed Party;
- Wake Up Warringah;
- Woodville Independents; and
- Yvonne Bellamy Independents.

#### Parties Deregistered

- Community Before Developers – Stop Over Development;
- Community First Alliance;
- Leichhardt Council Community Independents;
- No Politics; and
- Roads and Services Action Party.

## Appendix 3

### Clubs, Statutory Boards and Industrial Ballots

Month	Organisation	Election
<b>July 2008</b>	–	–
<b>August 2008</b>	The Colliery Officials' Association	2008 Election of State President and Secretary/Treasurer
	Police Association Salaried Officers Union	2008 Committee of Management
	The Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Aust NSW Branch	2008-09 Election of Executive Officers
<b>September 2008</b>	Leichhardt Bowling and Recreation Club Ltd	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Cabra Vale Ex-Active Services Club	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Earwood Ex-Servicemen's Club	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	NSW Gun Club Ltd	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Auburn Tennis and Recreation Club Ltd	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Tibooburra Village Committee	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Ports Corporation	2008 Election of Staff Elected Directors for Sydney Ports, Newcastle Port and Port Kembla Port Corporation
	TAB Agents Association	2008 Election of Members of Council
<b>October 2008</b>	Merimbula-Imlay Bowling Club Ltd	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Building Workers' Club	2008 Election of Executive Members
	Local Government Association	2008 Election
	Clubs NSW	2008 Election of Directors
	Real Estate Employers' Federation of NSW	2008 Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members
	The Restaurant and Catering Industry	2008 Election Committee of Management
<b>November 2008</b>	Commercial Club (Albury)	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	St Johns Park Bowling Ltd	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	South Sydney Junior Rugby League Club	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Mingara Recreation Club	2008 Election of Board of Directors
	Banana Industry Committee	2008 Election Regional Members for the Coffs Harbour and Richmond Brunswick Regions
	Federated Tobacco and Cigarette Workers' Union of Aust, NSW Branch	2008 Election of Executive Committee
	Bus and Coach Industrial Association of Australia (NSW)	2008 Election of Committee of Office Bearers
	Funeral and Allied Industries Union	2008 Election of Committee

## Appendix 3

Clubs, Statutory Boards and Industrial Ballots *continued*

Month	Organisation	Election
	The Master Fish Merchants Association of Australia	2008 Election of Committee of Management
<b>December 2008</b>	Public Service Association	2008 Election
	Aged Care Association	2008 Election of Committee Members and Office Bearers
	The Association of Principals of Independent Schools in NSW	2008 Election of Executive Committee
	The Association of Principals Employed in Catholic Schools	2008 Election of Executive Committee
<b>January 2009</b>	Architects' Registration Board	2008 Election of 2 Architects to the Board
<b>February 2009</b>	Lord Howe Island Board	2009 Election
<b>March 2009</b>	Auburn RSL Club Co-operative Ltd	2009 Election of Board of Directors
	Smithfield RSL Club	2009 Election of Board of Directors
	Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees' Federation of Australia, Newcastle and Northern NSW	Election President, Vice President and Committee of Management 2009
	The Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia, NSW Branch	Committee of Management 2009/10
	Industrial Staff Union	2009 Election of Office Bearers
<b>April 2009</b>	–	–
<b>May 2009</b>	Canley Heights RSL Club	2009 Election of Board of Directors
	Miranda RSL Club	2009 Election of Board of Directors
	NSW Institute of Teachers	2009 Election of Members of the Quality Teaching Council
	The NSW Pharmacy Guild	2009 Election of Secretary
	Quality Bakers Australia Pty Ltd	2009 Enterprise Agreement
<b>June 2009</b>	Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust	2009 Enterprise Agreement
	Institute of Marine and Power Engineers	2009 Election

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## Appendix 4

### Senior Executive Service Profile

#### Number of CES/SES Positions

There were no SES officers in the NSWEC during 2008/09.

#### Senior Executive Service (SES) profile

The Electoral Commissioner is not appointed under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002* and is therefore not part of the Chief Executive Service. At 30 June 2008 the Electoral Commissioner's remuneration, determined by the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Tribunal, was \$311,450.00.

#### Performance Statements – Level 5 and Above

**Name:** Colin Barry

**Position and level:** Electoral Commissioner and Division Head of the Office of the NSW Electoral Commission.

**Remuneration:** \$311,450.00

**Period in position:** Full period

**Comment:** The Electoral Commissioner holds an independent statutory position appointed for 10 years. There is no performance agreement with, or annual review by a Minister.



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## Appendix 5

### Committees/Special Offices

#### **NSW Electoral Commission and Australian Electoral Commission Liaison Committee**

A forum established between the State and Commonwealth to discuss electoral policies and procedures.

#### **IT Steering Committee**

To review recommendations for the development and implementation of the NSWEC's IT strategies and to advise the Electoral Commissioner.

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee**

Deals with EEO matters and monitors implementation of the NSWEC's Plan.

#### **Joint Consultative Committee**

A forum for consultation and negotiation between management and unions on structural efficiency strategies and their implementation.

#### **Occupational Health Consultation**

A staff consultation process dealing with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* obligations.

#### **Staff Development Committee**

To develop an annual Staff Development Plan and monitor its implementation.

#### **Electoral Procedures Committee**

To review operational forms, materials and procedures used in the conduct of elections.

### **Special Offices**

#### **Disability Services Co-ordinator**

Marie Swain

Director, Corporate Communications Branch

#### **Ethnic Affairs Co-ordinator**

Marie Swain

Director, Corporate Communications Branch

#### **Director of Employment Equity**

Trevor Follett

Director, Finance and Administration Branch

#### **Energy Management Co-ordinator**

Trevor Follett

Director, Finance and Administration Branch

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## Appendix 5

Committees/Special Offices *continued*

### **Protected Disclosures Co-ordinator**

Trevor Follett

Director, Finance and Administration Branch

### **Freedom of Information Co-ordinator**

Graham Krempin

Team Leader, Policy and Operations

### **Grievance Officers**

Trevor Follett

Director, Finance and Administration Branch

Greg Brandtman

Human Resources Officer

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## Appendix 6

### Overseas Visits and International Delegations

#### Overseas Visits

Officer	When	Countries visited	Purpose
Brian DeCelis, Director, Elections Branch	November 2008	New Zealand	Observe New Zealand's 2008 National Election

#### International Delegations

Date	Name of delegation	Purpose	Officers meeting delegation
May 2009	Seoul Metropolitan Electoral Commission	Observe NSW Electoral Roll and Political Funding Scheme	Colin Barry, Commissioner

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## Appendix 7

### Risk Management and Insurance Activities

The NSWEC maintains insurance under the risk management system of the Treasury Managed Fund, namely, public liability, workers compensation, motor vehicle, property and miscellaneous insurances.

Public liability coverage is met by the NSWEC on behalf of lessors of polling place premises for elections. Risks are at their peak at the time of major electoral events. Incidents relating to the activities of election officials and the attendance of electors at polling places are mitigated via training programmes for election officials that emphasise risk management initiatives.

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## Appendix 8

### Mandatory Annual Reporting Requirements

Under the *Annual Reports Act 1985*, the Annual Reports Regulation 2005 and various Treasury Circulars, the NSWEC is required to include information on the topics in the table below.

Annual Reporting Requirement	Comments
Letter of Submission	Page 1
Particulars of Extensions of Time	No extension of time required
Charter	See page 8
Aims & Objectives	See pages 18 to 22
Access	See inside back cover
Management & Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Names of principal officers</li><li>• Organisational chart indicating functional responsibilities</li></ul>	See pages 6 and 74
Summary Review of Operations	See pages 18 to 22
Funds granted to Non-government Community Organisations	The NSWEC does not grant funds of this kind.
Legal Change	See page 78
Economic or other Factors	n/a
Management & Activities	See pages 17 to 72
Research & Development	See page 67
Human Resources	See page 62
Consultants	See page 80
Equal Employment Opportunity	See page 66
Disability Plans	See Appendix 11
Land Disposal	The NSWEC does not own or dispose of any land or property.
Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publications</li><li>• Overseas Visits</li></ul>	See Appendix 9 and Appendix 6
Consumer Response	See page 76 and Appendix 12
Guarantee of Service	See Appendix 14
Payment of Accounts	See Appendix 13
Time for Payment of Accounts	See page 60
Risk management & insurance activities	See Appendix 7 and page 75
Disclosure of Controlled Entities	The NSWEC has no controlled entities.

## Appendix 8

### Mandatory Annual Reporting Requirements *continued*

Annual Reporting Requirement	Comments
Disclosure of Subsidiaries	The NSWEC has no subsidiaries.
Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement	See Appendix 10
Agreement with the Community Relations Commission	Not applicable
Occupational Health and Safety	See pages 64
Waste	See page 70
Financial Statements	See page 79
Identification of Audited Financial Statements	See page 83 to 84
Inclusion of Unaudited Financial Statements	Not applicable
Additional Matters – List of Major Assets	See page 81
Additional Matters – Compliance with the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i>	See page 78
Additional Matters – copy of amendments made to Code of Conduct	The code of conduct was reviewed in the last reporting year and there were no changes made. See page 67 for more information.
Additional Matters – matters arising since July 2008 having a significant effect on operations or communities we serve.	See page 4 (Commissioner's Year in Review) and page 25 (Legislative changes, impact of).
Additional Matters – total external costs in the production of this report.	Total external costs incurred were \$2750.00 (including GST) for printing. Editorial and design was undertaken by the NSWEC.
Additional Matters – Is the report available in non printed formats?	Yes
Additional Matters – is the report available on the internet?	Yes, at <a href="http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au">www.elections.nsw.gov.au</a> .
Executive Officers	See page 74
Freedom of Information Act	See Appendix 9
Implementation of Price Determination	Not applicable
Heritage Management	Not applicable
Electronic Service Delivery	The NSWEC endeavours to meet the government's commitment for all appropriate government services to be available electronically. For more information see pages 59 and 68.
Credit Card Certification	All NSWEC credit card usage was in accordance with Treasurer's Direction 205.01
Requirements Arising from Employment Arrangements	Not Applicable.



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## Appendix 9

### NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs

#### *Freedom of Information Act, 1989*

#### Statement of Affairs of the New South Wales Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commissioner is responsible for the registration of political parties, enrolment of electors, preparation of lists and rolls of electors, and the conduct of elections. The Electoral Commissioner is also the Electoral Funding Authority Chairperson, the Returning Officer for the periodic Legislative Council elections and is also one of three Electoral Districts Commissioners appointed by the Governor to carry out electoral district redistributions according to law.

The NSWEC supports the Electoral Commissioner by:

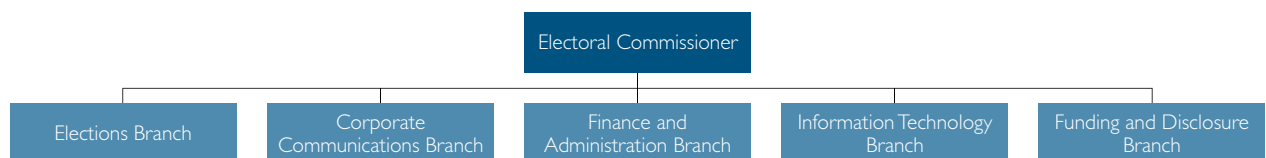
- conducting elections for the Parliament of NSW and elections for local government councils;
- conducting elections for registered clubs, statutory boards and State registered industrial organisations;
- working with the Australian Electoral Commission in the management of the joint electoral roll in NSW; and
- providing administrative support to the Election Funding Authority (EFA).

The NSWEC is located at Level 25, 201 Kent Street, Sydney.

#### Structure and Functions

##### Structure

The organisational structure of the NSWEC is:



The Electoral Commissioner holds an independent statutory position under the provisions of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912*. The Commissioner is the division head of the Office of the NSW Electoral Commission. The NSWEC comprises the following five branches:

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## Appendix 9

### NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

#### **Structure** continued

The **Elections Branch** is responsible for:

- planning for and conducting State General, Local Government and other elections;
- selecting and training Returning Officers;
- developing and implementing effective operational plans for the conduct of elections;
- developing manuals, handbooks and forms for use by election officials, candidates and scrutineers;
- developing training procedures for polling place managers;
- managing the receipt of election results;
- liaising with local government councils and other clients for the provision of election services; and
- resourcing Returning Officers and polling places with election materials and equipment.

The **Corporate Communications Branch** is responsible for:

- developing and implementing voter information strategies for State General and Local Government elections;
- developing materials and information regarding electoral matters for the registered political parties, media and the public;
- dealing with inquiries regarding electoral procedures, election results and election statistics from media and the public;
- maintaining the register of political parties;
- producing election reports to Parliament on the conduct of elections;
- managing the Corporate Plan, business plan and annual reporting processes; and
- advising the Electoral Commissioner on privacy, Freedom of Information and strategic issues.

The **Finance and Administration Branch** is responsible for:

- preparing and managing the budget and expenditure;
- preparing the annual financial statements;
- HR policy and procedures;
- salaries and payroll;
- internal audit programme;
- risk analysis;
- NSWEC accommodation and facilities;
- records and mail; and
- non-voter penalties.

The **Information Technology Branch** is responsible for:

- developing and administering the NSWEC's IT strategic plan;
- developing the Election Management Application (EMA);
- planning the ICT infrastructure for Local Government and State General elections;
- managing the NSWEC's head office ICT infrastructure; and
- managing the NSWEC's website technical infrastructure.

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## Appendix 9

### NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

#### Structure *continued*

The **Funding and Disclosure Branch** is responsible for:

- the registration of candidates, groups of candidates, official agents and party agents for elections;
- receiving and processing claims for payment for State General election campaigns;
- receiving and processing declarations of political donations and electoral expenditure lodged by or on behalf of political parties, elected members, candidates, groups and political donors;
- receiving and processing declarations of expenditure and claims for payment from the Political Education Fund;
- publishing the declarations of political donations and electoral expenditure on the EFA's website;
- making declarations of political donations and electoral expenditure available for public inspection for up to six years after the period in which a declaration was made; and
- conducting random audits of declarations.

#### Functions

The NSWEC is responsible for the:

- conduct of elections for the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council and referendums in accordance with the provisions of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* and the *Constitution Act 1902*;
- conduct of ballots for industrial organisations pursuant to the provisions of the *Industrial Arbitration Act, 1940*;
- conduct of secret ballots by trade unions pursuant to the provisions of the *Industrial Arbitration Act, 1940*;
- conduct of ballots for statutory boards and authorities pursuant to the provisions of various Acts;
- conduct of ballots on behalf of registered clubs pursuant to the provisions of the *Registered Clubs Act 1976*;
- conduct of Local Government elections in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*; and
- administration of registrations, funding, disclosure and compliance processes on behalf of the Electoral Funding Authority pursuant to the EFA's statutory responsibility under the *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981* and the *Election Funding Regulation 2004*.

#### Aims and Objectives

The NSWEC has the following aims and objectives:

- efficient conduct of State General elections and referendums;
- efficient conduct and management of Local Government elections;
- efficient conduct and management of statutory and industrial ballots;
- efficient conduct and management of registered club elections;
- implementation of the determinations of the Redistribution Commissioners on electoral boundaries;
- provision of advice to and education of organisations in the conduct of elections;
- provision of advice to and education of electors;
- compilation and maintenance of an accurate electoral roll for NSW in conjunction with the Australian Electoral Commission (under the Joint Roll Agreement);
- provision of administrative support to the EFA; and
- development of all staff resources.

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## Appendix 9

NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

### Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan for the EFA and NSWEC is available from the NSWEC. The Corporate Plan contains the organisation's mission and values as well as statements of key business objectives, strategies and performance plans.

### Effect of the New South Wales Electoral Commission's Functions on Members of the Public

Many of the functions of the NSWEC relate to the conduct of elections.

The functions are generally statutory in nature involving various aspects of the conduct of elections affecting electors, candidates and scrutineers. Voting at State General and Local Government elections is compulsory.

### Arrangements for Public Participation in Policy Formulation

The views of individual members of the public and community groups are monitored and submitted to the Government with comments for consideration in future electoral reform initiatives.

The NSWEC welcomes the comments of members of the public submitted with a view to improving the electoral process.

### Contracts and Tendering Documentation

The NSWEC is required to make major purchases of materials and services for use in the conduct of State elections. Public sector purchasing and tendering procedures are applied. Many documents in this category contain commercially sensitive material, though in the terms of Government policy, the names and prices of successful tenders are readily available.

Application for access to information in this category should be made to the FOI Co-ordinator:

### Publications – Brochures, Pamphlets and Reports

The NSWEC produces a range of publications. Some of these publications are listed below and are available on the NSWEC website ([www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au)), the EFA website ([www.efa.gov.au](http://www.efa.gov.au)) or can be obtained free of charge by contacting the NSWEC.

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## Appendix 9

### NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

#### Educational Brochures/Material

Name of Publication	Description
<i>Handbook for Parties and Candidates – State By-Elections</i>	Outlines relevant processes and procedures to assist candidates and registered political parties participating in State by-elections.
<i>Handbook for Registration of Political Parties for NSW Parliamentary Elections and 'Handbook for Registration of Political Parties for NSW Local Government Elections</i>	Outlines relevant procedures and legislation to assist applicants to register parties to contest NSW State and Local Government elections.
<i>Redistribution of Electoral Boundaries</i>	The most recent report of the Electoral Districts Commissioners relating to the redistribution of electoral boundaries.
<i>Voters Guide – Multilingual</i>	Comprises information in 24 languages other than English to assist electors in casting their vote.
<i>Statistical Returns and Election Reports</i>	Reports on the administration and results of State elections, by-elections and referendums.
<i>Electoral District Maps</i>	Printed copies can be purchased from the Department of Lands by telephoning 02 9236 7720.
<i>Funding and Disclosure Guide for Political Donors</i>	To assist political donors to understand their obligations and requirements under the <i>Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981</i> and the Election Funding and Disclosure Regulation 2004.
<i>Funding and Disclosure Guide for Elected Members and Official Agents</i>	To assist Elected Members and their official agents understand their obligations and requirements under the <i>Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981</i> and the Election Funding and Disclosure Regulation 2004.
<i>Funding and Disclosure Guide for Local Government Candidates, Groups and Official Agents</i>	To assist Local Government candidates, and groups of candidates contesting Local Government elections and their official agents understand their obligations and requirements under the <i>Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981</i> and the Election Funding and Disclosure Regulation 2004.
<i>Funding and Disclosure Guide for State Government Candidates, Groups and Official Agents</i>	To assist State Government candidates and their official agents understand their obligations and requirements under the <i>Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981</i> and the Election Funding and Disclosure Regulation 2004.
<i>Funding and Disclosure Guide for Parties and Party Agents</i>	To assist Parties and Party Agents understand their obligations and requirements under the <i>Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981</i> and the Election Funding and Disclosure Regulation 2004.

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## Appendix 9

NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

### Educational Brochures/Material *continued*

#### Description of the Kinds of Documents Held by the New South Wales Electoral Commission

The categories of documents held by the NSWEC are described below. Most of the documentation is stored on files relating generally to:

##### Administration

All aspects of the internal administration of the NSWEC including budget and financial matters, correspondence, internal audit, accommodation and management information systems.

##### Electoral Matters

All aspects in relation to the conduct of State elections and referendums, Local Government elections, statutory and industrial ballots and registered club elections.

##### Funding and Disclosure Matters

All records relating to funding and disclosure matters, including registers, declarations, amendments, claims for payment, compliance audits and correspondence between the EFA and its stakeholders.

##### Ministerial and Parliamentary Enquiries

All correspondence to and from Members of Parliament in relation to the activities of the NSWEC.

##### Policy and Planning

All documents relating to corporate planning, programme evaluation and other policy considerations including research into the various aspects of the electoral process.

##### Staff Matters

All files relating to the appointment and training of staff including Returning Officers.

The files of the office are generally not open for inspection. To access information from these files, members of the public should contact the FOI Co-ordinator. Where possible, informal access will be arranged and if copies of documents are required, reasonable copying charges will be levied. Where informal access is not possible, formal FOI procedures and fees will apply.

Staff, however, may gain access to their personal files by contacting the Human Resources Officer.

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## Appendix 9

### NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

#### Policy and Procedures Manuals

The policies and procedures of the NSWEC in some areas have been consolidated into a manual form. Presently manuals cover the following areas:

- Manual of instructions for the guidance of Returning Officers at State elections; and
- Manual of instructions for the guidance of Returning Officers at Local Government elections.

These manuals are available for inspection through the FOI Co-ordinator:

#### Reports

- Annual Report of the NSW Electoral Commission;
- Annual Report of the Electoral Funding Authority;
- Corporate Plan; and
- reports on the conduct of elections.

#### Rolls

Under the provisions of section 31B of the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* the latest prints of the electoral district rolls are available for free public inspection.

#### Public Registers

Under the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*, the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981*, the NSWEC is required to make available the following registers for public inspection:

- Register of Candidates;
- Register of Party Agents;
- Register of Official Agents; and
- Register of Parties.



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## Appendix 9

NSWEC Freedom of Information Statement of Affairs *continued*

### Access Arrangements, Procedures and Points of Contact

#### Access to Documents Published by the NSWEC

All of the published documents may be accessed at the NSWEC between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Some documents are available on the NSWEC website at [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au).

Many of the documents can be sent to enquirers as a free community service.

#### Access to Documents Concerning Personal Affairs

Members of the public may access files relating to them by arranging a convenient time for inspection. In some cases an FOI application will be necessary.

#### Amendment of Documents Concerning Personal Affairs

Members of the public seeking to amend documents held by the NSWEC concerning their personal affairs should contact the FOI Co-ordinator:

#### Access to all other documents

To access all other files and records an application should be made in writing to:

The FOI Co-ordinator  
NSW Electoral Commission  
GPO Box 832, Sydney 2001  
Phone: (02) 9290 5999

#### Fees

Nature of Application	Application Fee	Processing Charge
Access to records by natural persons about their personal affairs	\$30*	\$30/hour after first 20 hours*
All other requests	\$30*	\$30/hour*
Internal Review	\$30**	Nil
Amendment of Records	Nil	Nil

\*Subject to 50% reduction for financial hardship and public interest reasons.

\*\*No application fees may be charged for internal reviews in relation to amendment of records.

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## Appendix 10

### Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement

The NSWEC is mindful of overcoming any perceived barriers which prevent culturally and linguistically diverse communities from participating fully in elections.

The EAPS outcomes are for all Australian citizens of different linguistic, cultural, racial and religious backgrounds to be aware of their obligation to enrol and vote, and to participate fully in the electoral process.

Actions continued in the last year include the development of multilingual voting guides and polling place posters for the 2008 Local Government Elections, arrangements for advertisements to be placed in foreign language media and the provision of telephone translating services through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

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## Appendix II

### Disability Action Plan

#### Disability Action Plan

The NSWEC's Disability Action Plan was developed in accordance with section 9 of the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*, to improve the services and facilities for employees and other stakeholders with disabilities. The NSWEC demonstrates commitment to the plan by implementing the following strategies:

- ensuring people with disabilities have full access to services;
- ongoing assessment of the accessibility associated with premises used for elections;
- provision of appropriate ergonomic equipment to assist staff, including those with a disability in the performance of their work;
- an adjustment policy for employees with disabilities, included in the NSWEC's manual and on the intranet;
- flexible work arrangements for all staff available through the Flexible Work Hours Agreement;
- training of permanent staff, election staff and managers in procedures for people with disabilities, merit selection techniques and other EEO issues.

The NSWEC is committed to improving service provision for people with disabilities through its Equal Access to Democracy Plan available at [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au).

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## Appendix 12

### Customer Service and Complaints

Because of the event focused nature of the NSWEC's work, the majority of its complaints occur around the time of an election event. All stakeholders have the opportunity to provide feedback and it is handled in a fair and impartial manner.

NSWEC monitors all complaints. It endeavours to respond to all written complaints with 21 working days. After the 2008 Local Government Elections, a complaints analysis was undertaken to identify what could be learnt and what to improve and/or change, to reduce any common complaints at future elections.

## Appendix 13

### Payment Performance Indicators

#### Aged analysis at the end of each quarter:

Quarter	Current (ie within due date) \$	Less than 30 days overdue \$	Between 30 and 60 days overdue \$	Between 60 and 90 days overdue \$	More than 90 days overdue \$
September	13,884,302	1,146,213	466,346	13,366	8,017
December	21,462,494	1,028,508	141,019	422,370	21,998
March	11,219,160	1,055,029	37,210	2,907	24,366
June	7,583,462	225,345	22,026	3,149	11,239

#### Accounts paid on time within each quarter:

Quarter	Total Accounts Paid on Time		Total Amount Paid	
	Target %	Actual %	\$	\$
September	100	89.5	13,884,302	15,518,244
December	100	93.0	21,462,494	23,076,390
March	100	90.9	11,219,160	12,338,672
June	100	96.7	7,583,462	7,845,221

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# Appendix 14

## Guarantee of Service

### Guarantee of Service

#### Commitment to Service

The NSWEC has a total commitment to quality and the provision of services which meet the needs of its customers while seeking to fulfil its undertaking to perform its electoral functions, activities and responsibilities impartially, effectively and efficiently.

#### Services Provided

- Provision of roll information
- Provision of general electoral information
- Public education programs and services
- Publications and maps
- Conduct of elections
- Election funding

#### Identification of Customers

The customers of the NSWEC are those people or groups who are affected by, or affect, the operations of the office.

The office's success will depend on its ability to meet the needs and expectations of its customers. The list of customers include, but is not limited to;

- General Community
- Scrutineers
- Media
- Councils
- Members of Parliament
- Political Parties
- Medical Researchers
- Private Enterprise
- Electors
- Educators/Students
- Unions
- Registered Clubs
- Candidates
- Government Agencies
- Aboriginal Community
- Statutory Bodies

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## Appendix 14

### Guarantee of Service *continued*

#### Service Standards

##### Provision of Roll Information

**Aim:** To make available electoral roll information having regard to privacy considerations and in the best interests of the community.

**Availability:** A printed copy of the State electoral roll is available during normal office hours for public inspection. Special requests for roll information are considered.

**Cost:** Public inspection of the electoral roll is free. Costs associated with the supply of roll information relating to authorised requests may apply.

**Service Standard:** Printed copies of the rolls are produced as required for the purposes of an election. No specific period can be stated in respect to special requests for roll information due to the reliance on external suppliers.

##### Publications and Maps

**Aim:** Provision of electoral publications, material and the like for general sale or distribution.

**Availability:** Maps, rolls, statistical returns, reports, Lists of Streets and Localities, Ballot boxes, screens, brochures, pamphlets and leaflets are available during normal office hours for sale, collection or hire (as the case may be). Some publications are available through our Website.

**Cost:** Saleable items are at cost. Postage and handling charges apply to all mail orders. All other publications are free of charge although a photocopy charge will be applied. When a fee is charged for goods, customers are requested to pay prior to dispatch.

**Service Standard:** Information or goods required to be supplied on request if in stock. Mail requests to be despatched within seven days.

##### Provision of General Information

**Aim:** Provision of general information to assist the general public in dealing with and understanding matters of an electoral nature.

**Availability:** Information is available over the counter or by way of telephone, mail or e-mail during normal office hours or through our Website.

**Cost:** Free of charge.

**Service Standard:** Where possible, inquiries are dealt with when received. Research enquiries will be dealt with having regard to resources.



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## Appendix I4

### Guarantee of Service *continued*

**Alternative Formats:** Upon request electoral information in alternative formats for the sight or hearing impaired may be available.

#### **Conduct of Elections/Referendums**

**Aim:** Conduct elections impartially, efficiently and cost effectively in accordance with relevant legislation.

**Availability:** Non-Parliamentary elections are conducted by this office upon application to the Electoral Commissioner. NSW Parliamentary elections and Local Government elections are conducted every four years.

**Cost:** Elections are conducted on a cost recovery basis except for State Elections which are funded by the Parliament.

**Service Standard:** Each elector has the facilities to cast their vote.

#### **Public Education Programs and Services**

**Aim:** To maximise awareness, understanding and participation in the electoral process.

**Availability:** Publications are available and a variety of electoral information campaigns undertaken at the time of elections.

**Cost:** Free of charge.

**Service Standard:** Information is to be clear, concise and in a format relevant to its target audience.

#### **Election Funding**

**Aim:** Ensure that candidates, groups and parties for State and Local Government elections are aware of legislative provisions and associated requirements of the Election Funding Authority regarding the funding and reporting of expenditure.

**Availability:** Information booklets and candidate information seminars are free of charge. Election funding returns held by the Authority are available for public inspection.

**Cost:** Photocopies of returns can be purchased at 55 cents per page.

**Service Standard:** Requests for assistance are answered within two working days.

#### **Languages Spoken**

The office provides free language assistance through the Telephone Interpreter Service of the Department of Immigration Phone: 13 14 50.

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## Appendix 14

### Guarantee of Service *continued*

#### **Access, Suggestions and Complaints**

The NSWEC is located at Level 25, 201 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

The hours of business are 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. Special arrangements are made for Saturday elections.

Access for suggestions or complaints : Director Corporate Communications, NSW Electoral Commission, GPO Box 832, Sydney 2001.

Telephone: (02) 9290 5999

Toll Free: 1300 135 736

TTY: (02) 9200 5925

Facsimile: (02) 9290 5991

Internet/E-mail: [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au)

Telephone Interpreter: 13 14 50

# 8

## GLOSSARY AND INDEX

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# Glossary

## **Absent vote**

A vote made at a polling place by an elector who is outside his or her own electoral district on election day.

## **Absolute majority**

More than 50% of the total formal vote.

## **Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)**

The organisation responsible for conducting Federal elections, referendums and maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll.

## **Ballot box**

The sealed container into which an elector places a completed ballot paper.

## **Ballot paper**

The paper printed for an election which a voter marks to record his/her vote.

## **By-election**

An election held to fill a casual vacancy.

## **Candidate**

A person who nominates for an election to Parliament or to a council.

## **Casual vacancy**

A vacancy in an electoral district, usually caused by retirement, death or resignation of the Member for that district.

## **Check count**

On the Sunday after election day, the ballot papers are checked and counted again at the Returning Officer's office to ensure accuracy of the figures from the election night count.

## **Coalition**

A combination of two or more parties in Parliament, usually to form the Government or Opposition.

## **Compulsory enrolment**

Every person who is entitled to have his or her name placed on the electoral roll must complete an enrolment form and send it to the Australian Electoral Commission within 21 days of becoming entitled. A penalty applies for failing to enrol.

## **Compulsory voting**

Once enrolled to vote, voting is compulsory. A penalty applies for failing to vote without a sufficient reason.

## **Constitution**

A statement of the fundamental laws governing a State. The NSW Constitution is embodied in an Act of Parliament. It establishes the framework for the system of government in the State, eg two Houses of Parliament.

## **Court of Disputed Returns**

The Supreme Court sits as the Court of Disputed Returns to hear petitions challenging the validity of a State election.

## **Declaration vote**

A vote cast by an elector when the ballot papers are enclosed in an envelope containing a printed declaration signed by the elector. This term applies to pre-poll votes, postal votes, Declared Institution votes, absent votes and section votes.

## **Declared Institution**

A nursing home, hospital or similar facility is appointed by the Electoral Commissioner and visited by election officials for the purpose of taking votes from residents who are unable to attend a polling place.

## **Declaration of poll**

An announcement made by the Returning Officer proclaiming the successful candidate elected as the Member for that district, ward or council.

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# Glossary

## **District**

For the Legislative Assembly, the State is divided into 93 geographical areas containing approximately equal numbers of voters. Each of these is a district. For the Legislative Council, the district is the whole State.

## **Division**

Geographical area containing approximately equal numbers of voters as defined for Federal electoral purposes.

## **Donkey vote**

A term used to describe a ballot paper marked with preferences for candidates without consideration of their policies or abilities. A classic donkey vote is one which records preferences straight down the ballot paper in the same order as the names are printed.

## **Dual polling place**

The term given to a single premises which serves as a polling place for two or more districts.

## **Election**

Selection by vote of a person or persons to hold political office.

## **Election Funding Authority (EFA)**

The Election Funding Authority is the statutory body responsible for administering the provisions of the *Election Funding and Disclosures Act 1981*. It is made up of the Electoral Commissioner as Chair, a member appointed on the nomination of the Premier, and a member appointed on the nomination of the Leader of the Opposition.

## **Electors**

A person who is entitled to vote at an election.

## **Electoral Commissioner**

The statutory officer appointed to manage the conduct of State General and other elections.

## **Electoral District**

One of the 93 Legislative Assembly electorates.

## **Election Management Application (EMA)**

A computer software application consisting of four modules (staffing, candidates, declaration votes and results) to automate many of the routine tasks otherwise performed by election officials.

## **Electoral Offence**

A breach of electoral law as specified in the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* or regulations.

## **Electoral Roll**

The certified list of persons eligible to vote at an election. The rolls are maintained by the Australian Electoral Commission.

## **Electorate**

The population of electors or the region in which electors live. Electorates have clearly defined boundaries which are shown on electoral district maps.

## **Enrolment**

The act of enrolling or having one's name added to the list of electors entitled to vote.

## **Electors**

Those entitled to be placed on an electoral roll and vote in an election.

## **Federal Government**

At Federation in 1901, the States handed over certain powers to the central or Federal Government for administration on an Australia wide basis, while reserving other functions for State government responsibility.

## **Formal Vote**

A ballot paper at an election or referendum, which has been correctly marked according to instructions, and contributes to the outcome of the poll.

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# Glossary

## General Election

In NSW, general elections are held for all Legislative Assembly seats (93), and half of the seats in the Legislative Council (21) every four years.

## How-to-vote card

A simulated copy of the ballot paper showing an elector how to mark the paper to vote for a particular candidate or party.

## Independent

A candidate for election to, or a Member of, Parliament who is not a member of a political party.

## Informal Vote

A ballot paper which is either left blank or is incorrectly marked. Those ballot papers are excluded from the count and therefore do not contribute to the election of a candidate.

## Legislative Assembly

The Lower House of Parliament in NSW. It consists of 93 members, one elected for each electoral district.

## Legislative Council

The Upper House of Parliament in NSW. It has 42 Members elected for an eight year term, half of whom are elected at each NSW State General election.

## Mandate

The support or commission given to a government and its policies through an electoral victory.

## Marginal Seat

A seat held by a Member of Parliament with a small majority of votes.

## Members of Parliament

All representatives elected by the people to serve them in Parliament.

## New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC)

The NSW Government agency responsible for the conduct of State General, Local Government, industrial, statutory and other miscellaneous elections.

## Nomination

The process by which a person applies to become a candidate for election.

## Opposition

The party or parties which do not hold sufficient seats in Parliament to lead a government.

## Optional preferential voting

A voting system in which an elector shows by numbers, his/her preferences for individual candidates. It is not necessary to indicate a preference for all candidates on the ballot paper for the vote to be formal.

## Ordinary Vote

A vote recorded in the normal manner at a polling place on election day.

## Parliament

The legislative body, consisting of the elected representatives of the people, which determines the laws governing the nation or State. The candidates or political party holding the majority of seats form the Government.

## Political party

An organised group with a common political philosophy which seeks to win and retain public office for itself and its leaders. Party organisations support or endorse candidates for elections who, if elected, usually vote as a group for their policies in Parliament. The party with the greatest numbers in Parliament forms the government.

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# Glossary

**Poll**

An election.

**Polling Place**

A building, such as a school, designated as a place to which voters go during an election to cast their votes.

**Postal Vote**

Electors who are outside their electoral district on election day, or unable to attend a polling place during polling hours, may send a vote by post. Voters must apply for a postal vote prior to election day.

**Preferential Vote**

A vote for all candidates in order of preference. Preferences of candidates with the least number of votes are then distributed, until one candidate has sufficient votes to be elected. This system of vote counting is used in the Legislative Assembly elections where a candidate needs an absolute majority to be elected.

**Pre-poll Vote**

Electors unable to vote on election day for certain specified reasons can vote before election day at the office of a Returning Officer or a designated pre-poll voting centre.

**Proportional Representation**

A system of voting designed to elect representatives in proportion to the amount of support each has in the electorate. This system of voting is used in the Legislative Council elections.

**Quota**

The proportion or percentage of votes required by a candidate to be elected to the Legislative Council.

**Recount**

A second, or further count of votes in an election.

**Redistribution**

Changes in boundaries of electoral districts to take into account population changes. The result should be that the number of electors enrolled in each district should be equal, give or take three percent.

**Referendum**

Vote taken to allow electors to express their view on a particular subject or issue. Some alterations to the Constitution can only be made after approval in a referendum.

**Registered General Postal Voter**

Electors who are seriously ill or infirm, or who live in remote areas of the State may apply to the NSWEC to have their names included on a register of general postal voters. This means that ballot papers are automatically sent to them without the need to apply for a postal vote at each separate election.

**Registrar**

Person who has the responsibility of maintaining electoral rolls in NSW.

**Return of Writs**

When the election results have been determined, the Writs are returned to the Governor with the name(s) of the successful candidate(s) added.

**Returning Officer**

The election official responsible for conducting an election for a Legislative Assembly district or the Legislative Council or a council.

**Roll**

See electoral roll.

**Scrutineer**

A person appointed by a candidate to ensure that procedures and counting are undertaken in a proper manner.



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# Glossary

**Seat**

A seat in Parliament held by an elected Member or the Member's electoral district.

**Secret Ballot**

A vote made in secret – first adopted by South Australia in 1857.

**Section Vote**

Section votes are those cast on election day by electors whose name cannot be found on the electoral roll, but who declare that they are entitled to vote.

**Tally Room**

The place where voting figures are collected and provisional results are announced.

**Term**

The length of time a Parliament may sit before having to call an election. NSW has fixed four-year terms.

**Vote**

The process of choosing/selecting a candidate for political office.

**Writ**

The document by which the Governor (or the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, in the case of by-elections) directs the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election. The Governor issues Writs on the advice of the Government.

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