Corporate Plan

1 January 2008 –
31 December 2011

Foreword

I am pleased to present the New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC) and the Election Funding Authority (EFA) Corporate Plans for 2008 to 2011.

High quality electoral processes serve as a link between the electorate and the democratically elected Members of Parliament and Councillors. The NSWEC is committed to providing electoral services that support access to the democratic process, in a transparent manner, for all electors of New South Wales. The EFA plays an important role in providing the mechanism for parties, candidates and donors to operate in an environment of full disclosure.

The performance of the NSWEC and the EFA needs to be measured and open to scrutiny. We are increasing our efforts in this area with three important initiatives. For the first time, separate key performance measures have been included for the EFA and which will be reported in the EFA's Annual Report. The second initiative is measuring our stakeholders' satisfaction with our services. Stakeholder feedback will be sought on the quantity, quality, accessibility and timeliness of our services with the results shown in the NSWEC and EFA's Annual Reports.

Third, the Corporate Plan includes indicators reflecting 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 will monitor these indicators and work with our partners and stakeholders to provide the foundations for an impartial, trusted electoral and funding and disclosure system in NSW.

Significant focus during the 2008 to 2011 period will be directed towards the preparation and conduct of the September 2008 Local Government elections and the March 2011 State election. The next three years will see the NSWEC and the EFA move forward by introducing smarter, more efficient and dynamic ways to respond to the needs and expectations of our stakeholders.

I am confident that the goals and strategies outlined in this plan will maximise our ability to deliver high quality electoral services to the people of New South Wales.

Colin Barry
Electoral Commissioner
1 January 2008

What we do

The NSWEC implements the democratic principles of an impartial and fair electoral system in which:

- elections are conducted impartially and in accordance with the law;
- voter participation is maximised and informal votes minimised.

In this system, in accordance with the law, the EFA ensures that public funding is unbiased, there is open disclosure of party and candidate donations and expenditure.

Our values

We value:

- integrity
- impartiality
- transparency
- respect for others
- a learning culture
- professionalism

These values underpin our behaviour, our decisions and the standards we apply to the services we provide and how we assess our performance.

An impartial and fair electoral system - result indicators

Results indicators (RIs) measure trends relevant to the robustness of NSW's electoral system.

The impact on the indicators of factors outside the NSWEC and the EFA's control needs acknowledgement to allow correct evaluation of the NSWEC and EFA's efforts.

Results indicators (RIs) have been identified which measure the health of the democratic system but for which the NSWEC alone cannot be held accountable.

RI 1: elections are conducted impartially and in accordance with the law

- number of successful Court challenges to election results (target = 0); and
- Electoral Commissioner's discretion to require recounts (target = 0).

RI 2: citizens who are eligible to enrol are on the electoral roll

- % young eligible citizens (17 – 25) enrolled (target 98%); and
- % all eligible citizens (26+) enrolled (target 95%).

RI 3: voter participation is maximised and informal votes minimised

- % of eligible population enrolled who vote (target = 95%);
- % of informal votes (target = <3%); and
- % of penalties for failure to vote notices as a % of the roll (target = <4%).

RI 4: the provision of public funding is unbiased and there is open disclosure of campaign donations

- number of successful EFA prosecutions (target = 100%); and
- % of declarations lodged with EFA by due date (target = 95%).

Key Result Areas

The NSWEC's corporate plan is structured around four Key Result Areas (KRAs):

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

The EFA's Corporate Plan addresses two KRAs:

- funding and disclosure; and
- organisational development and innovation.

For each of these KRAs in both the NSWEC and EFA's corporate plans, the following pages set out:

- what we will achieve (outcomes);
- how we will assess our performance (service measures); and
- what we will do (strategies).

KRA 1: conduct of elections

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.

How we will assess our performance:

- % polling places where provisional first preferences are counted for the Legislative Assembly and Local Government elections on election night (target = 100%);
- variance rates between count of votes and recount if any (target = <10 votes);
- establish baseline measure of community members' satisfaction with the NSWEC's services in enabling them to vote;
- establish a baseline measure of the satisfaction of Registered Political Parties with registration, continued registration and nomination services provided by the NSWEC; and
- establish a baseline measure of the community's, the media's and Registered Political Parties' satisfaction with the timeliness and accuracy of results.

What we will do:

1.1 make submissions to the NSW Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to make voting more accessible to, and efficient for electors;

1.2 review the role of returning officers and Commission staff;

1.3 continue to improve administrative processes and systems for conducting Legislative Council and Local Government counts;

1.4 upgrade information technology to automate and streamline business processes;

1.5 provide training that equips election officials with the expertise to meet stakeholder and the public's expectations;

1.6 implement strategies to improve electoral services for all people; and

1.7 introduce an independent survey to obtain data on stakeholders' satisfaction with the NSWEC's conduct of elections.

KRA 2: electoral roll management

As a result of our services:

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

How we will assess our performance:

- % of voters' addresses correctly coded to electorates (Target = 100%).

What we will do:

2.1 review arrangements for electoral roll maintenance with the Australian Electoral Commission to improve accuracy in address coding;

2.2 investigate new technologies for management and preparation of the electoral roll;

2.3 develop targeted strategies to increase the registration of groups that are under-represented on the electoral roll; and

2.4 work with Local Government authorities on roll maintenance processes.

KRA 3: communication and public awareness

As a result of our services:

- 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.

How we will assess our performance:

- establish baseline measure of the % of surveyed community members who are enrolled to vote;
- % of electors aware of the NSWEC's information campaign (Target: 75%); and
- report on conduct of elections to be completed (Target: within 6 months from election day for State and Local Government elections and within 2 months of by-elections).

What we will do:

3.1 research the needs of groups, candidates and registered political parties for information on the NSW electoral system;

3.2 review and increase the effectiveness of current information and education strategies to:

- address the needs of people from regional and remote areas, people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and young people;
- engage aboriginal communities; and

- utilise emerging technological or preferred communications to engage the above groups.

3.3 develop an integrated communication and evaluation strategy encompassing:

- use of the website as the principal tool for communication; and
- timely and focussed information for the media about the NSW electoral system and elections.

3.4 re-engineer our approach to communicate election results.

KRA 4: organisational development and innovation

As a result of our organisational development efforts:

- 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.

How we will assess our performance:

- average days training per staff member (target: 3 days);
- % of variation from budget for State and Local Government elections (target: +/- 2% from budget);
- % costs recovered for Local Government elections (target: 95%);
- establish Commission's costs per elector and commence comparison with other jurisdictions and previous years' performance;
- absence of IT business systems failures (target: 0%);
- % of Commission's expenditure devoted to corporate overheads meets accepted range for its size and role; and
- % annual growth in new business revenue over the business cycle (target 5%).

What we will do:

4.1 undertake a business risk analysis and develop mitigation strategies, including a strategic internal audit program;

4.2 assess the feasibility of providing election services beyond our traditional areas by researching the opportunities and then developing a business plan to underpin any extension;

4.3 establish team-based and project management approaches to work planning and implementation; and

4.4 managers and officers address individual development needs arising from project management and position accountabilities.