



**NORTHERN  
TERRITORY  
ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION**

## **Annual Report 2011 - 2012**

*EVERY vote counts!*

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The Hon. K. Purick MLA  
Speaker  
Northern Territory Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
Darwin, NT 0800

Madam Speaker

I am pleased to provide the Annual Report of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission for the 2011-12 reporting year.

The report details the performance, key achievements and outlook for the Commission for the year ending 30 June 2012. It has been prepared in accordance with the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993* and the *Financial Management Act 2003*.

Additional copies have been provided for tabling the report in the Legislative Assembly within three sitting days after its receipt.

**Bill Shephard**  
Electoral Commissioner

29 October 2012



## ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

The 2011-12 financial year has been another demanding one for the Northern Territory Electoral Commission.

The agency's election program was crammed, with the main features being the conduct of the Local Government General Election (March 2012) and preparations for the Legislative Assembly General Election (August 2012).

The local government poll was the first general election involving all municipalities and shires and, as such, was the largest election event ever conducted in the NT. The Legislative Assembly General Election was also the first conducted with a fixed election date and so the preparations and the management of the event departed significantly from previous general elections. The advent of new legislation and the postponement of the conjoint Constitutional Convention election very late in 2012 also had a serious impact on preparations and implementation. A full and detailed report on the Local Government General Election will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly in due course.

Heavy involvement by the NTEC in enrolment activities for the past year helped deliver some great improvement to the quality of the roll. The conversion to new electoral boundaries for local government and the Legislative Assembly was a time-consuming and detailed task and both conversions were accomplished successfully, despite the added pressure of a most demanding timetable. In particular, the enrolment stimulation and roll cleansing generated by the NTEC's Quality Roll 2012 project was truly outstanding.

On the public awareness front, all records were broken in the delivery of school education sessions and new tools for our staff performing education roles were developed. Complex advertising and publicity campaigns for the major elections were developed in-house and were well received. The agency's website was also overhauled and is now providing a modern electoral service over the internet in keeping with the standards of our interstate counterparts.

The year also saw the office shift to new premises late in 2011 at short notice at a time when election preparations were running high. The small corporate area was also challenged in other areas, especially with the workload associated with the election staffing, payments and accounts for our electoral events.

The achievements of the NTEC this financial year have been significant and I thank all members of our workforce, both permanent and casual, for a job well done.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Shephard'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a dotted line.

**Bill Shephard**  
Electoral Commissioner  
29 October 2012





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# 1. THE NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION

## 1.1 Purpose and functions

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) provides independent, impartial and accessible electoral services to the people of the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, municipal and shire councils and other organisations.

The Commission's functions are prescribed under the *Electoral Act* (the Act), section 309. Key responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the Northern Territory electoral roll in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC);
- Managing parliamentary and non-parliamentary elections including all local government and, on request, fee-for-service, elections;
- Delivering public electoral awareness programs;
- Providing advice and reports relating to electoral matters to the Legislative Assembly;
- Conducting electoral research; and
- Providing support to redistribution committees reviewing Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries and to representation review processes for local councils.

NTEC activities include:

- Development and implementation of roll register reviews and enrolment stimulation strategies to raise roll quality and elector participation for Legislative Assembly and council elections;
- Planning and implementation of programs to conduct set term Legislative Assembly and local government general elections and periodic by-elections in the required timeframe and according to best practice principles;
- Development and management of electoral awareness programs for school children and the general public, including minority groups, so they are aware of their electoral rights and responsibilities;
- Provision of support for the parliamentary electoral redistribution and council representation reviews and then, in conjunction with the AEC, coordinating and verifying changes on the national roll following gazettal of changes;
- Development of structures and nurturing of inter-agency relationships to support the NTEC's core business of election management in an environment that demands specialist knowledge and perceived/actual impartiality in service delivery.

The NT Electoral Commissioner, the chief executive of the agency, is an independent officer. An appointment to the position is by the Administrator following consultation by the responsible Minister with the leader of each political party represented in the Legislative Assembly and all members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) who are not affiliated with a political party. The Commissioner sits on both the Redistribution and the Augmented Redistribution Committees that review and determine electoral boundaries for the Legislative Assembly.

Following changes to the *Local Government Act* in December 2011, effective from 1 May 2012, the Electoral Commissioner became the prescribed provider for electoral services for all municipal and shire councils.

The NTEC may conduct ballots for persons, government and non-government organisations on request on a fee-for-service basis.

## 1.2 Mission, values and vision

The mission of the NTEC is to provide impartial, high quality and accessible electoral services that are effective, efficient and delivered in accordance with the law.

The following values are fundamental to achieving its goals:

- Integrity;
- Impartiality;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Commitment to high standards of service delivery;
- Commitment to continuous improvement;
- Respect for the law.

The objective of the NTEC is to receive wide recognition for expert and excellent electoral administration.

### **1.3 The operating environment for the NTEC**

The NTEC operates in an environment that includes:

- A small, culturally diverse, dispersed and mobile population;
- A politically charged and sensitive context;
- A broad and diversified range of agency governance and specialised electoral responsibilities;
- A small permanent staff structure;
- Requirements to remain progressive and implement best practice;
- High operational demands at short notice;
- Close working relationships with the AEC, interstate electoral authorities and other organisations.

### **1.4 Legislative base**

During the 2011-12 year, the following Acts and Regulations were administered by the NTEC:

- *Electoral Act* and Electoral Regulations under that Act;
- *Referendums Act* and Regulations under that Act.

The *Constitutional Convention (Election) Act 2011* received assent on 21 December 2011. Under that Act, the NTEC is charged with conducting any election for delegates to a constitutional convention to discuss statehood for the Northern Territory. General and financial management of the Act remains with the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

Until the end of April 2012, the *Local Government Act* (LGA) required the NTEC to prepare an election roll for any council election or poll of council members, make it available to the returning officer appointed to conduct a council election or poll and make the roll available for public inspection at its offices. Under the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations (LGER), the NTEC also approved selected forms for use in council elections and could be appointed as returning officer. It was also, by Gazette notice, able to give directions to returning officers about any aspect of the local government electoral process. The NTEC was also to be consulted when a council carries out its representation review once each council term.

Following changes to the LGA and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations effective from 1 May 2012, the Electoral Commissioner became responsible for the conduct of all council elections. It is expected that from 1 July 2012, an Administrative Arrangements Order (AAO) would be signed giving general and financial management responsibility to the NTEC for Chapter 8 of the *Local Government Act* (Elections and Polls). This responsibility would include the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations.

## **1.5 Strategic issues**

The Key Result Areas (KRAs) set out in the NTEC Corporate Plan 2011-2015 are:

- Enrolment;
- Elections;
- Education and Information;
- Corporate Support.

### **Noteworthy events in the 2011-12 reporting year**

Emerging election priorities, changes in the operating environment and significant amendment to legislation in late 2011 resulted in an emphasis on the following during the reporting year:

#### **Enrolment**

The agency was allocated funding and implemented a program commencing in July 2011 in response to the declining quality of the NT roll and the unsuitability for NT circumstances of the national model for roll management pursued by the AEC. The program aimed at a quality roll for the set term whole of Territory council and Legislative Assembly elections in 2012 - Quality Roll 2012 (QR12). During 2011-12 the NTEC collected 50% of all enrolments and identified the majority of electors removed from the roll.

The NTEC finalised commitments to boundary determinations for the Legislative Assembly and the consultative process on representation reviews for local councils; this led, in conjunction with the AEC, to the coordination and verification of changes on the national roll following gazettal of changes;

#### **Election management**

Discussions took place over the implications of harmonisation for both parliamentary and local government electoral legislation, with the objective of updating current provisions in the interests of best practice and industry developments. The legislation received assent on 21 December 2011 at the same time as legislation to hold an election for delegates for a constitutional convention. The election, which was mooted to be held concurrently with the council elections, did not proceed.

The NTEC was appointed in the role of returning officer to conduct the first simultaneous general elections for all municipal and shire councils using a proportional representation vote counting system. This was followed by six supplementary elections to finalise unfilled vacancies. The NTEC also conducted one enterprise agreement ballot, one fee-for-service election, and provided electoral services for two general elections (New Zealand and Queensland) and three by-elections for interstate jurisdictions.

#### **Education and information**

The significant increase in education sessions delivered required the redeployment of existing staff and writing of new materials. A whole of Territory election awareness campaign was conceptualised and implemented for the council elections. The NTEC's website has been redeveloped and is scheduled to go 'live' in July 2012.

#### **Corporate support**

The fixed date general elections in 2012 required the employment on contract of project officers to develop new election systems and review procedures and training. The new systems were used for the council general elections. Additional seconded and project personnel were employed for the March council elections, with several committing to provide continuity and support for the August 2012 LA elections.

Refurbishment of the NTEC's new Darwin premises was completed by November 2011.

## 1.6 Progress on major tasks identified in the 2010-11 Annual Report

Task	Progress during 2011-12
To continue the project entitled Quality Roll 2012 (QR12). The emphasis to be on enrolment compulsion and enhancing the accuracy of the roll for the 2012 general elections. Features of the campaign to include phone/mail/contact with un-enrolled eligible people (as identified from AEC data), targeted fieldwork, a community presence (show circuit, festivals etc) and collaboration with the AEC's remote program. To focus particularly on the close of rolls period for both general elections.	Program planning commenced in May 2011 with activities commencing from 1 July 2011. Between then and the close of rolls for the LG elections, activities included: stalls on the show circuit, fieldwork, mail-outs to electors, review of data and subsequent phone contact with potential electors, enrolment stalls in major shopping centres and a comprehensive advertising campaign. The program resulted in over 19 000 enrolment transactions to 30 June 2012 and the removal of 4 000 electors from the roll. While enrolment increased by 800 only during the period, roll accuracy was significantly improved.
To develop processes and procedures for any conjoint election of delegates for a constitutional convention as prescribed by enabling legislation.	In addition to contributing to discussions on legislation for electing delegates, the NTEC conceptualised potential processes for conjoint elections.
To finalise operational plans for the fixed date municipal and shire council elections in March 2012.	By late January 2012, materials had been updated to incorporate legislative changes assented to in December and plans proceeded for stand-alone council elections.
To implement advertising and publicity for the March elections focussed on enrolling to have your say, how to vote and voting services.	The 'Vote Family' was introduced to voters – Roland, Mark, Earl and Polly Vote. The caricatures were used at key election stages to encourage enrolment, voting and awareness of voting services.
Progress development of the new Sharepoint 2010 website.	Redevelopment of the website, including the rewriting of content for conversion to Sharepoint 2010 is scheduled to go online in July 2012. Rewriting of the content to provide dedicated election pages and to improve access to enrolment and general election information.
To assess operational needs across all four strategic areas; to deploy staff and ITC resources to underpin election conduct.	Personnel from the Department of Business and Employment (DBE) were seconded to provide additional support for recruitment, pay, procurement and financial transactions. An ITC infrastructure was implemented to cover January to September 2012. Project officers were identified to provide electoral expertise and program input.
To undertake forward planning for the Legislative Assembly elections scheduled for 25 August 2012.	Program preparation accelerated following the March 2012 council elections and benefited from feedback and initiatives from that event.

## 1.7 National representation

The Electoral Council of Australia (ECA), a consultative council of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Electoral Commissioners and other senior electoral officials from the Commonwealth, met four times during the reporting year. The NT Electoral Commissioner was present at three of the meetings and was precluded from attending in March 2012 prior to the Queensland general elections as it was held in the same week as the NT council general elections. Issues discussed by the ECA included the likely introduction of direct enrolment on a nation-wide basis, the JSCEM report on the 2010 federal election, options for electronic voting, youth enrolment and participation, polling place accessibility, elector data sourcing with other government agencies, school based elections and the introduction of a new elections portal which provides a single access point to Australian electoral authorities.

The Electoral Commissioner also attended forums of the association of State and Territory Electoral Commissioners (STEC). These forums generally take place prior to ECA meetings to discuss electoral matters of particular interest to States/Territories only (not the Commonwealth) as well as cooperative activities and research projects at the State/Territory level.

## **1.8 Partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)**

Electoral program delivery for enrolment and public awareness activities are undertaken by both the NTEC and AEC NT offices in the Territory.

The roll-out of the QR12 program, reported on in Section 2, contributed greatly to positive enrolment outcomes in both urban and remote areas.

## **1.9 Organisational structure and staffing at 30 June 2012**

At 30 June 2012 the NTEC had 19.5 full-time equivalent employees including the Electoral Commissioner. The number of contract staff fluctuates according to the demands of the electoral cycle and evaluation of electoral events. Page 7 shows the organisation structure as at 30 June 2012.

## **1.10 Looking to the future 2012-13**

### **Enrolment**

- Analyse the impact of the Quality Roll 2012 project on enrolment outcomes for the 2012 election year and follow up non-voting from the 2012 Legislative Assembly elections;
- Assess and liaise with the AEC in respect to the impact and roll-out of the new Commonwealth legislation related to direct enrolment;
- Review the respective roles of the NTEC and the Department of Local Government in relation to local government representation reviews.

### **Elections**

- Conduct a general election for 25 members of the Legislative Assembly;
- Review and analyse operations, performance outcomes and relevant legislation following the 2012 local government and Legislative Assembly general elections and compile and lodge detailed reports;
- Conduct by-elections for casual council member vacancies including by-elections for the Tiwi Islands and Victoria Daly Shires immediately after the polls have been declared for the 2012 Legislative Assembly elections;
- Provide technical advice and commence planning for a Constitutional Convention election;
- Amend forms and manuals to reflect the Electoral Commissioner having responsibility to conduct all council elections.

### **Education**

- Continue agency commitment to developing a multi-faceted electoral education program after the 2012 Legislative Assembly elections and build on the school education program initiatives with the Parliamentary Education Unit, including identifying new groups, working with Indigenous groups, young people, those with English as a second language and the take up of civics and citizenship programs by schools;
- Review public awareness programs delivered in the 2012 local government and Legislative Assembly general elections and commence planning for a public awareness program customised for the Constitutional Convention election;
- Review, refine and further develop the structure and content of the NTEC's new website scheduled to be launched in July in time for the August 2012 Legislative Assembly elections.

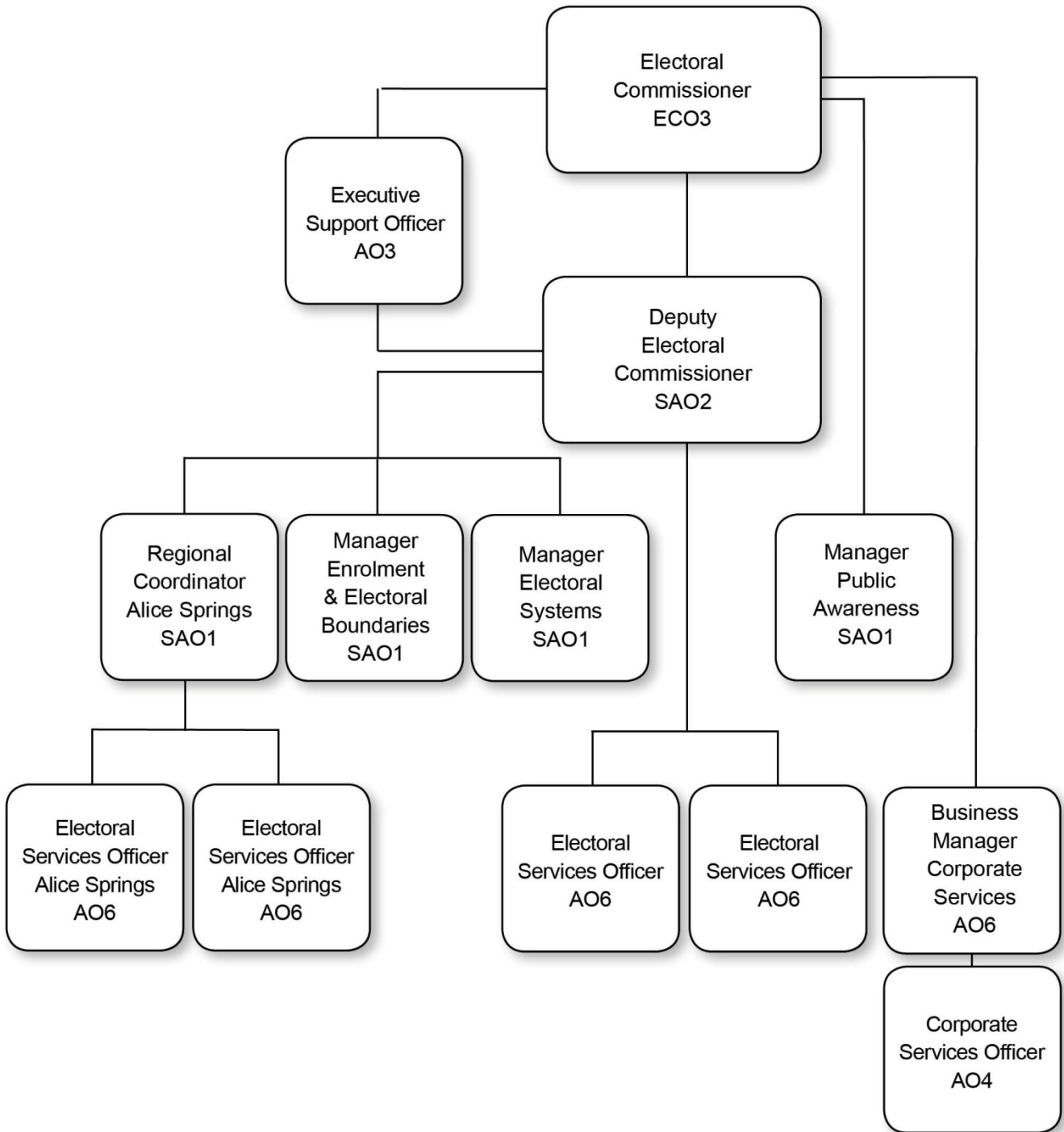
### **Corporate**

- Issue invoices to each local government authority and apply for a Treasurer's Advance to cover Legislative Assembly election expenses; finalise and support audits of the accounts for the 2012 local government and Legislative Assembly elections;
- Undertake recruitment of senior electoral officers (Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Manager - Enrolment and Electoral Boundaries, Office Manager Alice Springs);

- Review the organisational structure, processes and funding models in the light of recent legislative changes and operational experience, especially in relation to set Legislative Assembly terms, the Administrative Arrangements Order (effective 1 July 2012) pertaining to the 2012 *Local Government Act* and the advent of the NTEC's recently acquired sole provider responsibilities in relation to local government elections;
- Assess and implement succession planning strategies and initiatives to address upcoming turnover of senior NTEC staff.



**Organisation Chart**  
as at 30 June 2012



**Note:** A staffing cap of 11 positions is in place, however the NTEC is regularly exceeding this cap due to workload requirements and election activities. Refer Part 5, Corporate Governance.

## 2. ENROLMENT

### Objective

A complete, accurate and securely maintained roll of Northern Territory electors that meets the requirements of stakeholders

### 2.1 Roll maintenance

In accordance with the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* and the *Electoral Act*, the enrolment provisions of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* apply for NT purposes, i.e. if an eligible person resident in the Territory is enrolled on the Commonwealth roll, they are automatically enrolled for Legislative Assembly (LA) and local government (LG) elections. The *Electoral Act* section 20 provides that the Administrator may enter into an Arrangement with the Governor-General for the maintenance of the joint Territory and Commonwealth Roll. The present Arrangement has been in place since 1994.

The roll is maintained by the AEC and provided to the NTEC on request and at election time in accordance with the Joint Roll Arrangement (JRA). Enrolment stimulation and roll review activities at the local level are, on occasion, agreed between the NTEC and AEC.

Following the inquiry into the conduct of the 2010 federal election, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) recommended that the federal Act be amended to allow for the automatic update of the roll, i.e. a change of details on an official database such as Motor Vehicle Licence or Centrelink, would be applied automatically to the electoral roll. The following Bills were introduced into the federal Parliament to amend the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*.

#### **Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Maintaining Address) Bill 2011**

The Bill was passed by the House of Representatives on 23 November 2011 and is currently before the Senate. It will allow the federal Electoral Commissioner to:

- Update an elector's enrolled address following receipt and analysis of reliable and current data sources from outside the AEC;
- Notify an elector of the Electoral Commissioner's intention to enrol them at a new address and give the elector the opportunity to object to the change;
- Enable objection action to be discontinued and the elector's enrolled address updated so that the elector is not removed from the electoral roll.

#### **Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Protecting Elector Participation) Bill 2012**

The Bill was passed by the House on 15 February 2012 and is currently before Senate. It will allow the federal Electoral Commissioner to:

- Directly enrol a person if the Electoral Commissioner is satisfied that the person has met certain criteria;
- Notify the Commission's intention to enrol them and give the elector the opportunity to object to the enrolment;
- Admit certain declaration votes (at federal elections) to further scrutiny and enrol certain persons who have cast declaration votes and who have been removed from the roll.

The effect of the two Bills, if passed by the Senate, is firstly to allow the AEC to 'automatically' enrol eligible persons who are not on the roll, including persons turning 17 years of age, new citizens and persons previously removed from the roll. Secondly, persons who are already enrolled but who move can be automatically transferred to their new residential address. Further, it will allow persons who cast a declaration vote to be re-instated to the roll. Under NT legislation, new enrolments, transfer of address and re-instatement of electors to the roll will automatically apply to the Northern Territory roll.

## 2.2 Roll status

The NT roll increased this financial year by 798 electors to a total of 121 749 electors as at 30 June 2012, due largely to enrolment updating generated by the QR12 program, processing at the close of rolls on 21 February 2012 for the LG elections and subsequent enrolments and other information received during the election period.

The Northern Territory's participation rate in relation to enrolment and voting is consistently 10-15% below that for interstate jurisdictions and nationally. This is due in part to the younger average age of the eligible population, the high level of mobility in the community including interstate moves and the special difficulties of maintaining the roll in remote areas where enrolment and voting rates are significantly lower than in the urban areas of the Territory.

**Table 1:** Estimated eligible participation on the roll - 2004, 2008, 2012

Participation rates for 30 June 2004, 2008 and 2012 <sup>1</sup>			
Year	Area	Total Enrolment	18-25 enrolment
2004	NT	82.2%	61.9%
	National	92.5%	80.9%
2008	NT	83.3%	68.3%
	National	92.2%	82.0%
2012*	NT#	78.9%	56.0%
	National	90.6%	73.0%

\*Note: the ABS modified a longstanding participation rate formula used to estimate eligible population, resulting in the lowering of estimates of eligible electors. This caused previously reported figures to show a change in the participation rate across the board and will also impact on trend analysis.

# The figures are before the close of the roll for the NTLA elections on 8 August 2012.

The NTEC has online access to the national roll database (RMANS) and provides the AEC with geographic and elector information useful for roll maintenance. Data from enrolment stimulation and review programs conducted by the NTEC and enrolment forms collected from the public in community settings and at elections are provided to the AEC for processing.

### Online Enrolment

Since late 2010, currently enrolled electors have been able to update their details online, removing the necessity to print and forward a signed form. A person enrolling for the first time or a person previously enrolled but subsequently removed by objection is still required to submit a signed, hard copy of the form. A new AEC online enrolment service went live on 16 May 2012, followed by the cessation of the SmartForm function on 29 June 2012.

20% of enrolment transactions in the NT are being completed online compared with approximately 33% nationally. Online access from remote parts of the Territory is problematic and other more direct enrolment mechanisms are pursued.

## 2.3 Roll stimulation activities and initiatives

In accordance with the JRA, the NTEC contributes to roll maintenance by undertaking direct enrolment stimulation activities before the various elections it conducts and by maintaining a regular presence at public awareness events. It provides the AEC with the information collected. During 2011-12, the NTEC's roll integrity program QR12 not only stimulated enrolment, but identified many electors who may no longer be residing at their enrolled addresses, including electors who have permanently left the NT.

<sup>1</sup> Electoral Management Information System 2004 and 2008 Key Performance Measure data, Australian Electoral Commission

## Roll Review

The NTEC program to the end of June 2012 included election and enrolment awareness campaigns undertaken in support of LG elections. This included television advertising and the circulation of tailored public awareness materials and enrolment displays at special stalls in major shopping centres, the notation of rolls by shire service centre staff and the collection of enrolments and other roll information at the close of rolls and at polling places. An estimated 5 000 enrolment forms were received in response to the NTEC awareness campaign between the announcement of the election and the CoR and a further 3 000 forms were received by the close of polling.

The NTEC staffed office in Alice Springs serves as a shopfront for enrolment and other electoral enquiries from the public. The office is also a base for regular enrolment activities at public venues, schools and communities within the town and in the Centre generally, including assistance with enrolment at citizenship ceremonies in Alice Springs.

School based campaigns raise electoral awareness amongst young people and are an opportunity to collect enrolments from senior students.

## Quality Roll 2012 (QR12)

Program activities were planned and designed to ensure that the rolls for the 2012 LG and LA elections were as accurate as possible. The NTEC activities resulted in approximately 19 000 enrolment forms for processing (66% of all NT enrolments) and almost all of the 3 900 objections (removal from the roll) actioned in the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. The 2011-12 activities included:

- Enrolment activities in July 2011 in Alice Springs following the shows through to Darwin to stimulate enrolment and advertise the changes in the LA divisional boundaries. The NTEC designed posters and advertising for the public awareness campaign and staffed stalls at all of the shows. As a result of this activity over 300 enrolment forms were collected;
- Enrolment and information activities at citizenship ceremonies in Alice Springs;
- Contacting those who failed to vote at the three elections in 2010-11, i.e. the federal election (Alice Springs area), the Araluen by-election and the Alice Springs Town Council by-election. Action after the last two elections resulted in 165 people being removed from the roll;
- Roll review activity at addresses where information was available that residents with different surnames were enrolled (data held and provided by the AEC). This activity identified a significant number of electors who had permanently left their enrolled address. A total of 1 179 people were removed from the roll as a result of NTEC follow up;
- Fieldwork (door knocking) was conducted in new areas in Alice Springs and the Palmerston suburb of Bellamack, resulting in 60 and 70 new enrolments respectively;
- In late October 2011, a letter and enrolment form was mailed to all electors with a deliverable street address or postal address (Darwin/Palmerston region, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs) advising of the new LA boundaries (approximately 85 000 letters). Enrolment stimulation using local and regional newspapers, posters, television and enrolment stalls at major shopping centres and markets supported the target mail campaign. Based on replies to this letter (including RTS mail), 1 812 people were removed from the roll and 4 186 enrolment forms were received by the NTEC, with additional enrolments received by the AEC online;
- In November/December 2011, in collaboration with Tangentyere Council, all town camps in and around Alice Springs were door knocked, once the new houses were occupied. All data collected from this activity was provided to the AEC for further action;
- In December/January, fieldwork was conducted in Darwin on addresses identified as vacant. This resulted in 115 enrolment forms and valuable data on these addresses, i.e. where they no longer existed or were units, etc;
- Election and enrolment awareness campaigns undertaken in support of LG elections. This included the circulation of tailored public awareness materials, the notation of rolls by shire service centre staff and the collection of enrolment forms and other roll information at the close of rolls and at polling places. 5 500 enrolment forms were received in response to the NTEC awareness campaign between the

announcement of the LG elections and the CoR and a further 3 000 forms were received by the close of polling;

- Letters were sent to 13 000 electors in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Katherine who were identified as having failed to vote at the March 2012 LG elections to check on their enrolment. Follow up will continue into 2012-13 with an estimated 400 already marked for removal from the roll before the 2012 LA general elections.

**Table 2: NT Enrolment Activity 1 July 2011 - 30 June 2012 including the February close of local government rolls**

<b>Enrolment Activity for NT roll - 1 July 2011 - 30 June 2012</b>			
<b>TRANSACTIONS</b>	<b>1 July 2011- 21 Feb 2012 (CoR LG Elections)</b>	<b>1 July 2011- 30 June 2012</b>	<b>Roll as at 1 July 2011 120 950</b>
<b>Additions</b>			
New enrolments	2 118	3 474	
Re-enrolments	1 179	2 089	
Re-instatements	433	682	
Transfers from interstate	4 515	6 508	+12 753
<b>Movements within NT</b>			
Transfers between division	5 850	8 394	
Changes within division	3 231	5 252	
No change enrolments	2 135	4 382	
<b>Deletions</b>			
Objections	3 353	3 946	
Deaths	507	730	
Duplications	76	112	
Transfers interstate	4 177	7 166	-11 954
			<b>Roll as at 30 June 2012 121 749</b>

**Table 3: Enrolment transactions – Additions, deletions and transfers for the NT roll since 2007-2008**

Enrolment at Start of Financial Year	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
		112 313		118 958		112 313		118 958		12 095
Plus additions to the roll										
New enrolments	4 358		2 203		2 447		3 949		3 474	
Re-enrolments	4 698		1 010		1 753		2 414		2 089	
Re-instatements	83		11		47		54		682	
Interstate transfers to NT	6 792		4 724		5 170		6 067		6 508	
<b>Total Additions</b>		<b>+15 931</b>		<b>+7 948</b>		<b>+9 417</b>		<b>+12 484</b>		<b>+12 753</b>
No change to total Transfers within NT										
Transfer between divisions	8 388		5 184		4 655		5 884		8 394	
Changes within division	4 421		2 284		1 912		3 948		5 252	
Amendments to elector details	2 938		1 086		1 675		2 104		2 010	
Less - Deletions to the roll										
Removal by objection	2 321		940		5 543		1 326		3 946	
Deaths	837		745		738		680		730	
Duplications	149		54		84		90		112	
Interstate transfers from NT	5 981		5 558		5 205		6 891		7 166	
<b>Total Deletions</b>		<b>-9 288</b>		<b>-7 297</b>		<b>-11 570</b>		<b>-8 987</b>		<b>-11 954</b>
Net adjustments		+2		-1		-1		-1		-11
<b>Enrolment at Close of Financial Year</b>		<b>118 958</b>		<b>119 608</b>		<b>117 454</b>		<b>120 950</b>		<b>121 749</b>

**Notes:**

- **New enrolments** - all electors who enrolled for the first time;
- **Re-enrolments** - re-enrolling electors who previously had been enrolled;
- **Re-instatements** - the re-instatement of electors to the roll removed previously based on the receipt of new information that they still reside at their earlier enrolled address;
- **Interstate transfers to NT** - interstate transfers of enrolment to an NT address;
- **Interstate transfers from NT** - electors previously enrolled in the NT who transfer their enrolment to another jurisdiction;
- **Transfers within NT** - electors notifying a change of address to another NT LA division or within same division. Transfers within NT do not alter total enrolment;
- **Amendment** - changes to enrolment details other than name or enrolled address e.g. amendment to mail delivery address, council re-numbering of street addresses;
- **Removed by objection** - electors removed from the roll generally on the ground that they are apparently no longer resident at their enrolled address;
- **Duplication** - removal of a duplicate entry on the roll due to an official error e.g. a transfer of enrolment not matched to an existing enrolment;
- **Provisional enrolment** - includes electors who enrol when they are 16 (the latter applies since July 2010) or 17 and obtain full enrolment and voting rights on their 18th birthday;
- **Adjustments** - variations to statistics arising from processing amendments.

Electoral events took place as follows:

2007-08: federal election 21.8.2010, NT municipal elections 29.3.2008;

2008-09: NT LA elections 9.8.2008, NT inaugural shire and rural council elections 25.10.2008;

2009-10 to 2010-11: accumulated roll integrity and objection activities following major electoral events and governance decisions from 2007 impacting on the NT rural sector.

## **Indigenous Electoral Participation Program (IEPP)**

The IEPP program is funded by a federal budget allocation and managed by the AEC to increase enrolment and electoral participation of Indigenous people Australia wide. As part of the program, field officers visit remote communities and regional centres and make temporary use of the NTEC's Alice Springs office for activities in Central Australia. IEPP officers were informed of relevant matters relating to the 2012 general elections and their work programs were adjusted to accommodate and enhance NTEC activities.

## **2.4 Supply of roll data**

In accordance with the JRA, roll data was extracted from RMANS to meet a range of NTEC requirements during the year, including:

- Rolls for the LG elections - the roll close was Gazetted for 21 February 2012; the same roll was used for six supplementary elections when the original election failed;
- Jury rolls;
- Monthly updates of roll changes for supply to Members of the Legislative Assembly and registered parties;
- Data extracts for the Redistribution Committees and for council representation reviews; and
- The supply of roll data to approved entities for health screening programs.

Under strict confidentiality provisions, councils were asked to confirm roll allocations and data to be supplied for the 2012 LG elections. Service centres in the remote shires were requested to notate reference rolls prior to the roll close with information about the continued eligibility of electors. The information was forwarded to the AEC for enrolment follow-up.

The AEC met the performance standards set out in the JRA for the management of the close of rolls for the elections and was responsive to NTEC requests for ad-hoc data extracts.

Discussions to improve NTEC access to the roll were deferred, with resolution expected during the 2012-13 reporting year.

## **2.5 Support for redistributions and electoral representation reviews**

Redistributions of electorate boundaries are undertaken in all Australian jurisdictions in accordance with the relevant legislation and are carried out by independent commissions or local government boundary adjustment panels and boards.

### **2011 Redistribution of Legislative Assembly boundaries**

In accordance with s138 of the *Electoral Act*, a redistribution of LA divisions is required to commence two years and six months after the last election.

The 2011 Redistribution Committee commenced deliberations on 11 February and published its proposal on 31 May 2011. Following the release of the proposal, the Augmented Redistribution Committee was established to consider objections and determine the boundaries and names of divisions to apply at the 2012 LA general elections. The Augmented Committee's determination was notified by Gazette on 26 July 2011 and maps of divisions and the Committee's report made available immediately after that date.

The Augmented Committee received 36 comments, objections and petitions to the boundaries, mainly in relation to the boundaries between Fannie Bay/Fong Lim, and Stuart/Barkly/Macdonnell. It also received objections to

the name change for Araluen and general comment on the proposed redistribution from both the Party and Parliamentary Wing of the Country Liberals and from the ALP.

Key features of the redistribution determined by the Augmented Committee were:

- The retention of existing divisional boundaries in Alice Springs, Katherine and the rural and remote areas except for minor changes to the boundary between Daly and Stuart;
- Adjustment to boundaries of the three Palmerston divisions to allow for anticipated enrolment growth in new residential areas in the period up to the 2012 general elections;
- Changes to boundaries for eight of the nine divisions within the municipality of Darwin to account for relative growth in the inner suburbs and in the suburb of Lyons;
- Changing the division name of Macdonnell to Namatjira as the Committee considered the former name was no longer appropriate.

During 2011-2012 the NTEC provided administrative and technical assistance to the Augmented Committee in the following areas:

- The extraction of roll data and preparation of reports of enrolment trends by division;
- The publication of notices, maps, reports and associated media releases;
- Liaison with the AEC to apply the new boundaries to the electoral roll, including a check of all NT streets and localities to ensure they were held against the correct LA division.

In October 2011, the NTEC wrote to all electors with a mail delivery address advising of the division that would apply to them at the August 2012 LA general elections. The mailing of approximately 85 000 advice letters resulted in an estimated 6 000 changes to the roll, including 4 200 enrolment forms.

Early in July 2012, the redistributed boundaries will be moved into production to apply to all roll products (MP data, elector enrolment acknowledgement) for the August 2012 LA general elections.

The next redistribution is due in 2015.

### **2010-11 reviews of representation by councils**

Local government in the NT comprises five municipal and ten shire councils (including those for Coomalie and Wagait) and the community of Belyuen. Five of the 16 councils do not have a ward structure (i.e. Alice Springs, Katherine, Palmerston, Wagait and Belyuen).

Under the 2008 *Local Government Act* (LGA) and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations (LGER), a council must:

- Review its structure with respect to electoral representation once in every four year term [LGA s23(2)] and [LGER r63];
- Consult with the NT Electoral Commission (NTEC) during the process [LGER r63 (4)];
- Complete the review 12 months before the next general election [LGER r63(5)].

In the absence of guidelines on mechanisms for the consultative process, the NTEC undertook to supply enrolment data and provided comment on draft representation plans.

By May 2011, ten councils had provided review reports to the NTEC. One report was subsequently provided later in 2011, with no reports received from four councils, including Belyuen (under administration).

The reviews for Darwin City Council and Roper Gulf Shire required changes to existing ward boundaries. The Barkly and East Arnhem Shire reviews required the creation of new wards and changes to representation. A change to representation, but without ward changes, was recommended by Victoria Daly Shire. The Minister approved the review recommendations for the above councils in late 2011 and the NTEC was formally notified of this in early 2012.



**Table 4:** Changes applied to the electoral roll

Council	Change
Barkly Shire	Create Alpururulum Ward in the eastern part of Alyawarr Ward
Darwin City Council	Amendments to Waters and Chan wards by moving their boundaries closer to the Darwin city area (Lyons Ward), resulting in the transfer of approximately 2 000 electors
East Arnhem Shire	Creation of two new wards, Gumurr Miyarrka and Birr Rawarrang
Roper Gulf Shire	Expand the existing Never Never Ward to the north into Nyirranggulung Ward

All NT council areas on the roll were re-numbered to accommodate the new wards. Details of localities on the roll were circulated to all councils for checking to ensure location in the correct ward/council. No errors were noted at the March LG elections.

The above changes to the roll were undertaken in consultation with the AEC in early 2012 against a very cramped election timeframe. The changes required extensive research by the NTEC, consultation with councils and checking that the new boundaries were correctly applied and in place for the March 2012 LG elections. The next reviews are scheduled for 2014 to 2015.

## **2.6 Targets 2012-13**

- Monitor the progress of the legislation in federal Parliament.
- Review the enrolment information in NTEC procedural manuals, forms and website.
- Continue cleansing the roll via objection processing for the upcoming LA elections.
- Continue with the QR12 program. Projects will include:
  - Undertaking a follow-up roll review at the Alice Springs town camps prior to the LA elections close of rolls;
  - Attendance at the 2012 show circuit;
  - Attendance at shopping centres and market stalls to raise awareness of the LA elections and for enrolment stimulation;
  - A remote area enrolment campaign whereby staff will be physically located in growth towns for short periods to stimulate enrolment and raise awareness about the LA elections.
- Provide the AEC (for roll review and update purposes) all relevant enrolment information collected during the LA elections and on polling day, e.g. that electors had permanently left their enrolled address.
- Prepare a project plan for the processing of non-voter and other relevant enrolment data arising from the 2012 LA elections.

## 3 ELECTIONS

### Objective

Efficient and effective conduct of elections

#### 3.1 Legislation

During 2011-12 the NTEC provided input into a review of parliamentary and local government election legislation.

The Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was introduced into Parliament in mid 2011. It amended the *Electoral Act*, the *Local Government Act* and the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations, firstly to harmonise electoral legislation and make technical changes as previously recommended by the Electoral Commissioner and in accord with practice and legislation in other jurisdictions; secondly, it made substantial amendments to legislation in a number of key areas.

The Act received assent and, with respect to the *Electoral Act*, came into effect on 21 December 2011. The following two pages provide summaries of the *Electoral Act*, *Local Government Act* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations amendments.

The *Local Government Act* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations were amended in the 2011 November sittings and enacted on 21 December 2011 and 9 January 2012, providing internal consistency across the NT's electoral legislation, bringing procedures in line with practices in other Australian jurisdictions and giving effect to a range of recommendations made by the Electoral Commissioner.

Further amendments relating to transitional arrangements and other matters, particularly that making the Electoral Commissioner sole provider for local government elections, came into effect on 1 May 2012, after the 2012 local government general elections.

Election procedures and forms were reviewed immediately following the introduction of the Amendment Bill into Parliament and finalised following enactment on 21 December 2011 to ensure that necessary changes to election systems would be in place for the LG elections on 24 March 2012.

Changes were made to:

- the Candidate Handbook and nomination form, to reflect the amendments at s37(1)(d) of the Act and regulations 7 and 8;
- procedures and training manuals for the issuing of absent votes (r24) and determining the formality of votes (regulations 18, 45);
- information, procedures and documentation to accommodate the proportional representation (PR) vote counting system;
- consolidate software options for implementation of PR for multi-member constituency counts – the AEC's 'EasyCount' was used;
- the NTEC's website to provide information for prospective candidates and the public.

All updates to manuals, forms and IT systems were in place by late January 2012.

The changes effective from 1 May 2012 did not impact on the conduct of the six supplementary elections required after the conclusion of the general council elections as they were conducted using the same election roll and legislative provisions as the general elections. All of the changes will be implemented for future local government by-elections and general elections.

**Table 5: Summary of *Electoral Act* (EA) legislative changes effective 21 December 2011**

Amendment	EA Legislative Reference
Clarification that electoral roll information is not for sale, and the right to inspect the roll does not include the right to copy or record the roll, to prevent inappropriate and commercial use of enrolment records.	s12(5)
A limitation on party nominations per legislative assembly division - only one person may be nominated as a candidate of a registered political party to contest a legislative assembly division.	s31(2)
Clarification of the process for the return of the candidate nomination deposit.	s39
The extension of postal and early voting services to disabled voters or voters who fear for their safety.	s60 (2c )& (2d)
Discretion for the electoral commissioner to set the locations of mobile polling at locations to service a specific class or classes of voters. Only a person in that class may vote at the mobile polling place.	s78 (2) (3) & (4)
The ability for the Electoral Commissioner to approve the use of automated or electronic systems to facilitate election processing, voting in strict circumstances and the use of electronic and certified lists in polling places.	s85a
Formality provisions have been modified. The modification permits a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> to be marked on a ballot paper, allowing the ballot paper to be formal if all other candidate squares have been marked with consequentially increasing numbers (one square may be left blank – deemed the voter's last preference). This change should not be conveyed to electors. Electors are still directed to fill the ballot paper completely, commencing with the elector's preferred candidate at number 1 and then successive preferences for all other candidates.	s94 (3)(3a) and 3(b)
Clarification of rules associated with the assessment and processing of votes by unenrolled voters.	ss104, 105
An application to register a political party must be received by the NTEC prior to six months before the date of a scheduled general election, for registration processing to take place before that election. A requirement for a registered political party to provide, within 16 weeks after the end of the financial year, as part of their annual return to the Electoral Commissioner, a current constitution and statement for the purpose of monitoring a party's continued eligibility for registration.	s156(2) s171a
Provisions relating to electoral matter in candidates' campaign material have been strengthened, requiring all electoral campaign material containing electoral matter to be properly authorised, to be clear and unambiguous and not contain misleading or deceptive information. These requirements extend to capture electronic and other forms of transmissions and modern technology commonly used for publishing and distributing electoral material.	ss268, 268a, 269 and 270
Push polling activities cannot be conducted without first stating the name and address of the person authorising the activity.	s271
<i>Applies also to local government legislation</i>	

**Table 6:** Summary of the principal amendments to the *Local Government Act* (LGA)

Amendment	LGA Legislative Reference
Removed the reference to 'returning officer', thereby establishing the Electoral Commissioner as sole electoral service provider for all local government elections (effective from 1 May 2012).	s3 (Definitions)
Provided that an employee of council is disqualified from holding office as an elected member.	s37(1)(d)
Prescribes parameters, rather than set periods, for the date of a by-election to allow some flexibility for the Electoral Commissioner to customise an election timetable to better suit the needs of each ward/council election (from 1 May 2012).	s86
Provisions relating to electoral matter in candidates' campaign material have been strengthened, requiring all electoral campaign material containing electoral matter to be properly authorised, to be clear and unambiguous and not contain misleading or deceptive information. These requirements extend to capture electronic and other forms of transmissions and modern technology commonly used for publishing and distributing electoral material.	s99

**Table 7:** Summary of the amendments to the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations (LGER)

Amendment	LGER Legislative Reference
Definitions of 'election campaign material', 'mobile polling period', 'mobile polling place' and 'polling hours' amended.	r3 (Definitions)
Removal of the requirement for a candidate nomination deposit (\$100) at local government elections.	r7
A nomination can only be lodged at the office of the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer.	r8
A returning officer need not rely on the declaration of eligibility by a nominating candidate if there is evidence to the contrary.	r10
The modification of formality provisions permits a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a <input type="checkbox"/> to be marked on a ballot paper, allowing the ballot paper to be formal if all other candidate squares have been marked with consequentially increasing numbers (one square may be left blank – deemed the voter's last preference). This change should not be conveyed to electors. Electors are still directed to fill the ballot paper completely, commencing with the elector's preferred candidate at number 1 and then successive preferences for all other candidates.	rs18 and 45
Provides that a voter at a polling place wishing to cast a vote for another ward of the council, or another council area, does so as an absent voter. This change clarifies the process and harmonises the Regulations with voting procedures under the <i>Electoral Act</i> .	r24
The extension of postal and early voting services to disabled voters or voters who fear for their safety.	r22, 25(2)iii,
Discretion for the electoral commissioner to set the locations of mobile polling at locations to service a specific class or classes of voters. Only a person in that class may vote at the mobile polling place.	rs 32(4), 33 and 37
The counting of votes and filling of vacancies is determined in accordance with Schedule 1 to the Regulations. Schedule 1 sets out the procedures for applying the Single Transferable Vote Proportional Representation (STVPR) vote counting system for local government elections.	rs52, 53 and 54.
Aligns the provisions for the resolution of ties in the counting of votes for ordinary members with the provisions for resolution of ties for principal members.	r54
The ability for the Electoral Commissioner to approve the use of automated or electronic systems to facilitate election processing, voting in strict circumstances and the use of electronic and certified lists in polling places.	r64A
<i>Applies also to Electoral Act legislation</i>	

## 3.2 Electoral services

The 2011-12 year saw the NTEC managing general elections for all councils, municipal and shire, one enterprise agreement ballot, one fee-for-service election and provided support for the New Zealand and Queensland State general elections and three by-elections for interstate jurisdictions.

### 3.2.1 Legislative Assembly (LA) elections

The next LA election is scheduled for 25 August 2012.

Due to the enactment of changes to the *Electoral Act* in December 2011 and the pressure of the LG elections in March, the necessary changes to forms and procedures were being undertaken at the close of the reporting year.

The new Election Management System (EMS) and automated postal voting/excuses system, used for the first time at the March 2012 LG elections, will also be used at the August 2012 LA elections.

Work plans and project plans were developed and implemented for the 2012 LA elections with deadlines of July 2012 set for:

- Completion of update of forms, manuals and candidate packs;
- Finalisation of hire agreements for static polling places and draft mobile polling schedules - subject to local advice, schedules would be confirmed at the close of roll;
- Staff confirmation for regional coordinators, early voting, mobile and static polling;
- Production of new stocks of cardboard voting screens and ballot boxes.

### 3.2.2 Council Elections

#### By-elections

As the legislation provides that vacancies occurring in the 12 months before the next general election may be filled by appointment rather than election, no council requested that the NTEC conduct a by-election between 1 April 2011 and 24 March 2012.

#### General Council Elections 24 March 2012

The 2012 LG elections were the first for all Territory councils to be held on the same date under common legislation. Whilst the size of the elections provided a challenge to the NTEC, it did allow uniform election systems and operational procedures to be employed, e.g. with respect to nominations and absent voting, and the implementation of a comprehensive Territory wide public awareness campaign.

The fixed date (determined by the Minister and Gazetted in March 2011) gave the NTEC the opportunity to commence planning during 2010-11, taking into account possible amendments to legislation and the likelihood that the Electoral Commissioner would be appointed as Returning Officer (RO) with the NTEC as sole provider.

The NTEC was able to undertake preliminary discussions with council CEOs and DHLGRS staff during 2011 regarding service delivery, as well as undertake upgrades to systems in time for use at both the LG and LA general elections in 2012.

Amendments to the *Local Government Act* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations enacted on 21 December 2011 made significant changes to procedures and rules covering nominations, vote formality, absent voting, mobile polling and the vote counting system. The latter involved a move to election of members by quota using the proportional representation (PR) vote counting system.

With some early notice of a number of likely amendments, the NTEC held discussions with council CEOs commencing in the first half of 2011. The Electoral Commissioner was appointed as RO by all councils for the general elections, allowing the Commission to undertake election planning with certainty, especially as council by-elections had ceased.

Several events severely impacted on the planning for the elections:

- The late notice of the proposed Constitutional Convention election being run conjointly with the LG elections and the logistical and public awareness implications resulting from elections being run conjointly on different boundaries;
- NTEC involvement in the development of legislation for the election of delegates to a Constitutional Convention and the enabling Bill to amend a number of provisions in the *Electoral Act, Local Government Act* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations (passed in late November 2011);
- Ministerial approval of changes to council boundaries being received in late December 2011;
- The subsequent abandonment of the Constitutional Convention election, requiring major alterations to the election roll-out and public awareness campaigns.

## **Enrolment**

The enrolment program commenced in July 2011 when the NTEC implemented a roll integrity program (QR12) to improve the quality of the roll for the 2012 LG and LA general elections. The program included review mailing of election information/LA redistribution letters in October 2011, roll review fieldwork and mailing, enrolment stalls at major shopping centres and direct public contact supported by a public awareness campaign.

Changes to council ward boundaries arising from the 2009-10 representation reviews were applied and checks carried out on all council boundaries with reference to streets and localities. All councils signed off on the accuracy of the boundaries by the election roll close on 21 February 2012. Enrolment totalled 117 479 electors.

## **Elections**

Election forms, handbooks, operational and training manuals were reviewed to reflect the changes to legislation that came into effect in late 2011. Of particular importance were the changes to provisions covering nominations.

Experienced temporary staff were recruited as project managers, regional coordinators and deputy returning officers in Darwin and regional centres ahead of the notice inviting nominations on 10 Feb 2012 – a total of 13 staff were recruited. Temporary regional offices were established in Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

Static polling places, mobile polling arrangements and stores/materials requirements were identified and arrangements made for hire and/or purchase as appropriate.

Nominations closed 1 March 2012 and were declared 2 March 2012:

- 251 nominations were received for the 156 vacancies;
- 30 nominations for the 7 principal member positions;
- 221 for the 149 ordinary member positions.

44 nominations were received on the last morning (1 March). Females made up 33% of nominations.

237 candidates stood for the 251 vacancies, with 14 candidates standing for a principal and ordinary member position.

Out of 64 possible council/ward elections:

- 40 were contested, 18 uncontested (nominations equalled vacancies);
- 4 partially failed (insufficient nominations);
- 2 had no nominations.

Supplementary elections were held 17 May 2012 to fill the partially and totally failed elections.

## **Public awareness**

An in-house communication strategy was developed after consultation with council CEOs in 2011. The strategy covered formal notices, newspaper advertisements, TV and radio advertisements, election publications and utilising the NTEC website. In early 2012 an enrolment/election stimulation brochure was 'letterbox dropped' at all urban street addresses and after the close of rolls, a personalised letter was mailed to electors with information about voting arrangements.

The NTEC Lotus Notes website was updated, initially in late 2011 to reflect legislative changes, then with a full refresh for 10 February 2012 to accommodate enrolment, general election information and election results. Councils/ward maps and polling place locations were identified on the website as well as public awareness materials - notices, advice letters and display advertising.

## **ITC**

New IT systems were brought into production, including the EMS, EasyCount (for the counting of votes under the PR system) and TIGER (a database for the management of mobile polling). A postal vote/excuse database was also developed and implemented.

Election project plans were revisited with DBE in October 2011 and preliminary arrangements made for support services for the Darwin office and regional centres, taking into account the requirements for count software and hardware at each location. Later discussions centred on technical and on-call support for key dates.

## **Finance**

Councils were asked for advances to cover preliminary costs of the elections early in 2012 which were subsequently provided. Internal procedures were reviewed for managing election finances including the accurate coding of costs to individual councils. Additional experienced finance staff were seconded from NT agencies commencing in December 2011 and were to be retained for the 2012 LA elections.

## **Postal voting**

3 039 postal vote packs were issued, including packs with two ballot papers where there was a principal member to elect. Of these, 80% were issued to electors living in municipalities.

By the 30 March cut-off, 2 255 electors had returned completed postal vote certificate envelopes. Of these, 1 983 postal vote certificates were admitted to the count, i.e. 88% of certificates received from electors by the cut-off date. 417 postal certificates were not admitted due to not being signed and/or witnessed, or received after the cut-off date.

## **Post polling day**

All ballot papers to hand were counted on election night (24 March) with progressive totals posted to the NTEC website. Processing and counting of absent and declaration votes continued up to the final receipt of postal votes at 6pm on Friday 30 March.

Fourteen single member elections were finalised by manual counts. Preferences shown on ballot papers in 26 multi-member PR counts were data entered into EasyCount at the NTEC offices in Darwin and Alice Springs and at the temporary regional election offices in Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

Final results were posted to the NTEC website on the evening of 30 March. The declaration of polls took place on Monday 2 April at the NTEC's Darwin and Alice Springs offices and at Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

**Table 8: Council Election Comparisons – 2012 and 2008 (excludes supplementary elections)**

Issue	LG ELECTIONS 2012		LG ELECTIONS 2008			
	March 2012		October Rural		March Municipal	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>No. on roll</b>	117 479 (contested elections 109 295)		39 003 (contested elections 34 125)		76 604	
<b>No. vacancies</b>	156		117		36	
<b>No. nominations (candidates)</b> Ratio nominations :vacancies	251 (237) 1.6:1		211 (206) 1.8:1		90 (77) 2.5:1	
<b>Elections</b>						
Uncontested	18		17		-	
Contested	40		31		11	
Partially failed	4		1			
Failed (no nominations received)	2		-			
Total possible elections	64		49		11	
<b>Polling</b>						
Postal	1 979	2.6	430	2.5	816	1.5
Early	9 108	11.8	1 360	8.0	5 519	10.2
Mobile	3 422	4.5	8 225	48.5	201	0.4
(15 statics in remote areas)						
Static	56 385	73.3	6 508	38.4	44 592	82.4
Absent	5 740	7.5	395	2.3	2 890	5.3
Declaration	247	0.3	38	0.2	78	0.1
<b>Turnout</b>						
No. & % voting (contested elections)	76 887	70.3	16 956	49.7	54 096	70.6
<b>Informality</b>						
% voting informally	6.5 5.4 PM 7.7 OM			9.6		6.5 mayor 9.2 alderman
<b>Staffing</b>						
No. mobile teams	22		15		7	
Polling/casual admin positions	411		93		139	
Seconded staff	13		8		2	
<b>Polling locations</b>						
Early Intra-state	10		7		5	
Early Interstate	-		-		-	
Mobile	134		208		23	
Static	105 remote, 29 urban 57 Inc 15 in remote areas		15		27	

OM – Ordinary member

PM - Principal member



Table 9: Voters by Vote Type and Turnout by Council/Ward at 2012 Council Elections

COUNCIL	PRINCIPAL MEMBER/WARD	No. VACANCIES	No. NOMINATIONS	STATIC VOTES	MOBILE POLLING VOTES	EARLY VOTES	POSTAL VOTES	ABSENT VOTES	DECLARATION VOTES	TOTAL VOTES	ENROLMENT	TURNOUT %	INFORMALITY %
ALICE SPRINGS	Mayor	1	5	7 698	231	2 252	180	151	24	10 536	14 239	74.0	4.4
	Town Council	8	15	7 707	230	2 254	180	152	24	10 547	14 239	74.0	8.8
	Vote type by %			73.1	2.2	21.4	1.7	1.4	0.2				
BARKLY	President	1	3	1 081	589	244	58	269	20	2 261	4 324	52.3	3.2
	Alpururulam (supplementary)	1	0								278		
	Alyawarr (supplementary)	4	2								1 541		
	Patta	5	8	839	61	195	11	102	7	1 215	2 001	60.7	7.6
	Yapakurlangu	2	2	Elected unopposed							504		
Vote type by %			47.8	26.1	10.8	2.6	11.9	0.9					
CENTRAL DESERT	Akilyarre	2	2	Elected unopposed							263		
	Anmatjere (supplementary)	4	1								953		
	Northern Tanami	2	2	Elected unopposed							433		
	Southern Tanami	4	6	138	98	30	5	72	0	343	934	36.7	10.2
Vote type by %			40.2	28.6	8.7	1.5	21.0	0.0	343				
COOMALIE	Adelaide River Rural	1	1	Elected unopposed							92		
	Adelaide River Town	2	2	Elected unopposed							95		
	Batchelor Rural	1	3	67	0	11	2	0	1	81	117	69.2	1.2
	Batchelor Town	3	3	Elected unopposed							181		
	Coomalie Tortilla	1	1	Elected unopposed							49		
	Lake Bennett	1	1	Elected unopposed							50		
Vote type by %			82.7	0.0	13.6	2.5	0.0	1.2					
DARWIN CITY	Lord Mayor	1	4	25 342	0	3 592	1 006	2 768	90	32 798	42 583	77.0	4.3
	Chan	3	7	6 354	0	787	240	658	14	8 053	10 540	76.4	6.7
	Lyons	3	9	6 312	0	900	295	594	20	8 121	11 198	72.5	8.1
	Richardson	3	6	6 628	0	1 200	234	716	25	8 803	10 890	80.8	6.1
	Waters	3	6	6 077	0	712	236	805	20	7 850	9 955	78.9	7.0
	Vote type by %			77.3	0.0	11.0	3.1	8.4	0.3				
EAST ARNHEM	Anindilyakwa	2	3	138	175	0	0	16	2	331	894	37.0	10.9
	Birr Rawarrang	2	3	228	0	1	2	15	0	246	634	38.8	11.4
	Gumurr Gattjirk (supplementary)	2	0								700		
	Gumurr Marthakal	3	4	334	45	3	1	22	4	409	1 301	31.4	6.6
	Gumurr Miwajj	3	4	173	137	7	0	43	6	366	1 253	29.2	9.8
	Gumurr Miyarrka	2	5	267	16	1	0	9	9	302	706	42.8	7.3
Vote type by %			68.9	22.6	0.7	0.2	6.3	1.3					
KATHERINE	Mayor	1	6	2 492	105	912	85	154	14	3 762	5 085	74.0	4.0
	Town Council	6	9	2 492	105	912	85	154	14	3 762	5 085		6.2
	Vote type by %			66.2	2.8	24.2	2.3	4.1	0.4				
LITCHFIELD	Mayor	1	3	6 298	14	787	218	973	52	8 342	11 046	75.5	5.5
	Central	1	1	Elected unopposed							2 272		
	East	1	1	Elected unopposed							2 623		
	North	1	1	Elected unopposed							2 992		
	South	1	3	1 901	14	249	67	212	10	2 453	3 159	77.7	7.4
Vote type by %			75.5	0.2	9.4	2.6	11.7	0.6					
MACDONNELL	Iyarrka	2	2	Elected unopposed							690		
	Ljirapinta	3	6	83	102	23	6	52	0	266	648	41.0	5.3
	Luritja Pintubi	3	3	Elected unopposed							850		
	Rodinga (supplementary)	4	3								1 126		
Vote type by %			31.2	38.3	8.6	2.3	19.5	0.0					
PALMERSTON	Mayor	1	5	9 532	0	1 100	320	538	19	11 509	15 329	75.1	8.9
	City Council	6	7	9 538	0	1 099	309	538	19	11 503	15 329		9.9
	Vote type by %			82.8	0.0	9.6	2.8	4.7	0.2				

COUNCIL	PRINCIPAL MEMBER/WARD	No. VACANCIES	No. NOMINATIONS	STATIC VOTES	MOBILE POLLING VOTES	EARLY VOTES	POSTAL VOTES	ABSENT VOTES	DECLARATION VOTES	TOTAL VOTES	ENROLMENT	TURNOUT %	INFIRMALITY %
ROPER GULF	Never Never	3	5	0	438	11	33	38	2	522	767	68.1	2.9
	Numbulwar Numburindi	1	1	Elected unopposed							512		
	Nyirranggulong	3	4	0	322	5	4	76	0	407	952	42.8	6.1
	South West Gulf	3	5	151	256	6	17	44	0	474	893	53.1	6.3
	Yugul Mangi	2	3	327	0	6	0	54	2	389	730	53.3	4.9
<i>Vote type by %</i>				26.7	56.7	1.6	3.0	11.8	0.2				
TIWI ISLANDS	Milikapiti	3	7	0	170	0	0	35	0	205	289	70.9	5.9
	Nguu (recount)	5	15	497	0	1	0	57	0	555	958	57.9	10.6
	Pirirangimpi	3	4	0	147	2	0	29	0	178	273	65.2	1.1
	Wurankuwu	1	2	0	4	0	0	15	0	19	34	55.9	5.3
	<i>Vote type by %</i>				51.9	33.5	0.3	0.0	14.2	0.0			
VICTORIA DALY	Mayor	1	4	720	533	26	38	219	5	1541	3 526	43.7	13.8
	Daguragu	1	1	Elected unopposed							440		
	Milingin	1	4	0	177	7	2	38	0	224	363	61.7	10.7
	Nganmariyanga	1	3	0	95	1	0	13	1	110	205	53.7	1.8
	Pine Creek	1	2	85	21	11	8	12	3	140	226	61.9	3.6
	Thamarrum/Pindi Pindi	4	6	523	0	2	0	68	1	594	1 501	39.6	14.6
	Timber Creek	1	3	0	102	2	11	23	0	138	438	31.5	3.6
	Tyemiri	1	1	Elected unopposed							82		
	Walangeri	1	1	Elected unopposed							271		
	<i>Vote type by %</i>				46.7	34.6	1.7	2.5	14.2	0.3			
WAGAIT	Wagait	7	8	174	0	21	0	0	0	195	275	70.9	4.6
<i>Vote type by %</i>				89.2	0.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0				
WEST ARNHEM	Barrah	3	3	Elected unopposed							444		
	Gunbalanya	3	4	373	35	1	1	27	4	441	774	57.0	12.9
	Kakadu	3	5	228	6	65	8	58	4	369	731	50.5	3.5
	Maningrida (supplementary)	3	2								1 746		
	<i>Vote type by %</i>				74.2	5.1	8.1	1.1	10.5	1.0			
<b>Total Voters by Vote Type</b>				<b>56 385</b>	<b>3 422</b>	<b>9 108</b>	<b>1 979</b>	<b>5 740</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>76 881</b>	<b>117 479</b>	<b>70.3*</b>	
<i>Vote type by % (all Councils)</i>				73.3	4.5	11.8	2.6	7.5	0.3				

\* Contested elections

Table 10: Supplementary Elections 17 May 2012 for Ordinary Member Vacancies Unfilled at Council General Elections

BARKLY	Alpururulam	1	1	Elected unopposed							278		
	Alyawarr	2	4	51	302	0	0	32	0	385	1 541	25.0	6.5
CENTRAL DESERT	Anmajere	3	4	50	232	5	10	34	0	331	953	34.7	9.1
EAST ARNHEM	Gumurr Gattjirk	2	2	Elected unopposed							700		
MACDONNELL	Rodinga	1	2	43	286	3	23	12	0	367	1 126	32.6	3.3
WEST ARNHEM	Maningrida	1	1	Elected unopposed						0	1 746		

**Table 11: Nominees by Age and Gender**

Elections	No. Nominations by Gender			No. Nominations by Age Range						Nominations by Age	
	Total	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Not Given	Total
General	251	168	83	2	20	49	73	74	30	3	251
Supplementary	14	6	8	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>265</b>
%		65.7	34.3	1.1	8.3	19.6	28.7	29.1	11.7	1.5	

**Table 12: Elected Members by Age and Gender**

Elections	Elected Members by Gender			Elected Members by Age Range						Elected Members by Age	
	Total	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Not Given	Total
General	146	95	51	0	13	29	38	45	18	3	146
Supplementary	10	5	5	1	2	2	3	1	-	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>156</b>
%		64.1	35.9	0.6	9.6	19.9	26.3	29.5	11.5	2.6	

### Supplementary elections

At the March council elections, six wards either did not receive a nomination or had insufficient nominations. Supplementary elections were advertised on 4 April 2012. At the close of nominations on 24 April, the number of nominations equalled the vacancies in Alpurulum Ward (Barkly Shire – 1 vacancy), Gumurr Gattjirk (East Arnhem – 2 vacancies) and Maningrida (West Arnhem – 1 vacancy) and no poll was required. Supplementary elections were held for Alyawarr (Barkly – 2 vacancies, 4 nominations), Rodinga (MacDonnell – 1 vacancy, 2 nominations) and Anmatjere (Central Desert – 3 vacancies, 4 nominations) on 17 May 2012.

### Compulsory voting

In accordance with the compulsory voting provisions at section 90 of the *Local Government Act*, councils may authorise an infringement notice to be issued to electors who fail to vote, requesting a valid reason for not voting or the payment of a penalty (maximum 1 penalty unit). The offence may be expiated by payment of \$50. If no expiation or reasonable excuse is received within 28 days, councils may take action under the *Fines and Penalties (Recovery) Act*.

Advertising and public awareness materials circulated by the NTEC before the general elections on 24 March 2012 stressed the need for correct enrolment and that voting is compulsory. A letter was sent to all electors with a mail deliverable address advising them of their enrolment details and listing polling places in their council area.

In accordance with legislative requirements, the NTEC recorded the names of voters on the certified lists for the election. The decision to commence action against non-voters rests with the relevant councils, none of which, at the conclusion of the election period, advised that they would proceed with action against non-voters.

As non-voter information is useful for roll management purposes, the NTEC had all certified lists used in polling places scanned to identify apparent non-voters. Using the scanning data, roll review letters were sent on 3 May to approximately 13 500 electors with a personal mail address to check their current enrolment. At 30 June approximately 3 762 replies had been received, including RTS mail, phone and email contact and 247 enrolment forms for electors' new addresses. Processing of replies will continue up to the LA elections in August 2012.

## Election costs

The NTEC does not receive any funding from the local government sector for on-going services to councils. Charges for conducting council elections are on a marginal cost basis, which does not include:

- Permanent staff time in normal hours, superannuation, leave or other staff overheads;
- Supply of election equipment and specific stores, including in-house printing;
- Computer count software and overheads, including infrastructure and IT services.

Changes to the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations enacted on 1 May 2012 establish the Electoral Commissioner as sole provider for all future NT local government elections. The NTEC will be liaising with DHLGRS to discuss appropriate mechanisms for dialogue between the two agencies on electoral matters.

### 3.2.3 Serving defence personnel - fixed elections 2012

A large number of defence personnel are located at defence sites in and around Darwin and at the Tindal RAAF Base outside Katherine.

The NTEC and the Department of Defence take considerable care to ensure that defence personnel are able to exercise their democratic rights through regular liaison, advice of election events, contributing copy for ship-to-shore alerts and adhering to timely deadlines for postal vote deliveries and returns in the absence (currently) of electronic voting mechanisms.

The NTEC was contacted by several defence personnel in relation to voting at the March 2012 LG elections. Discussions were based around how to best use both agencies' resources to facilitate voting by defence personnel. A flexible approach was required in order to meet the election timelines:

- Postal vote applications were hand-delivered in bulk to identified leaders at Robertson Barracks for completion and later collection by the NTEC. The applications were processed and the postal voting material mailed in bulk to where the personnel were stationed;
- Static polling places in Eaton and Tindal catered for RAAF personnel;
- A bulletin was sent to all staff affected by the election, advising of their obligations to vote.

For the 2012 LA election, given the tight timeframe, a dedicated NTEC officer will be assigned to defence liaison to ensure voting obligations can be met.

### 3.2.4 Fee-for-service elections

The *Electoral Act* s309(h) allows the NTEC to negotiate a fee to provide electoral goods and services to persons or organisations using information or material in its possession or expertise acquired in the exercise of its functions.

The Commission conducts fee-for-service elections for government, non-government and community agencies and organisations that require decisions to be made by ballot. This can include enterprise agreements (EAs), the selection of office holders and plebiscites. These elections are conducted at the discretion of the NTEC taking into account the nature of the election and other workloads and are charged at commercial rates, i.e. direct costs plus 30%.

The number of fee-for-service elections undertaken has declined over the last two reporting periods. During 2011-12, the NTEC undertook one community organisation ballot to elect councillors to the National Trust of Australia NT (August 2011) and one EA ballot for NTPS Nurses (October 2011). Details are as follows:

**Table 13:** Non-government elections conducted on a fee-for-service basis 2011-12

Organisation	Poll Date	Ballot		Voting Method	No. Electors	Revenue (\$)
		Type	No. Positions			
National Trust (NT)	2.8.2011	P	8 (elected unopposed)	N/A	201	657
NTPS Nurses	18.10. 2011	P	N/A	Yes/No	2 594	2 377

P - Postal Ballot      NA - Not applicable

Due to the NTEC's commitment to the LG and LA general elections in 2012, resources were not available to undertake private and community elections, however a request for the management of an NTPS industrial ballot would be considered in the context of the LA elections timetable. The NTEC had no formal requests for such elections to take place in 2012-13 and understands that changes may be proposed that could impact on the requirements for enterprise agreement ballots in the future.

**Table 14:** Comparison of 2011-12 with previous reporting periods

Year	Revenue (\$)	No. Elections/Ballots
2007-08	21 568	11
2008-09	5 113	6
2009-10	4 125	4
2010-11	24 564	4
2011-12	3 034	2

### 3.2.5 Assistance for inter-jurisdiction elections

NTEC provides, on request, polling services for interstate and New Zealand electors visiting Darwin and Alice Springs during elections in their own jurisdictions. The support is mainly in the form of early voting facilities. The NTEC office in Alice Springs is also available for this purpose.

**Table 15:** Inter-jurisdictional support provided during the year:

Jurisdiction	Poll date	Election type	Chamber	District/Division	Electors Voting		
					Darwin	A/S	Total
New Zealand	25.11.2011	General			43	29	72
South Australia	10.02.2012	By	LA	Port Adelaide, Ramsay	3	1	4
Queensland	24.03.2012	General	LA		248	105	353
Victoria	24.03.2012	By	LA	Niddrie	0	N/A	0
Tasmania	05.05.2012	By	LC	Hobart, Western Tiers	0	0	0

A/S Alice Springs Office  
 N/A Not Appointed  
 By By-election  
 LC Legislative Council  
 HoR House of Representatives  
 LA Legislative Assembly

The NTEC anticipates it will be asked to provide support for the following parliamentary elections in 2012-13:

- Victoria Legislative Assembly by-election for the District of Melbourne - mid 2012;
- ACT Legislative Assembly general election - October 2012;
- Western Australia State general election - latest date is Saturday 4 May 2013;
- Commonwealth Election general election - at a date to be fixed but before the end of 2013.

### 3.2.6 Northern Territory Statehood and election for delegates to a Constitutional Convention

A Statehood Steering Committee was established in April 2005 to research and publicise the benefits of statehood and to chart possible steps to achieve it.

The Statehood Steering Committee concluded its work of conducting a series of public forums in urban and remote centres throughout the Territory and released a report in late 2010 to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee (LCAC). The latter appointed a new advisory committee, the NT Constitutional Convention Committee (NTCCC), to plan for a convention and advise the LCAC on resources and other requirements.

Originally, a Constitutional Convention was envisaged for November 2011 preceded by an election for delegates to be conducted by the NTEC.

The NTEC opened preliminary discussions with the Statehood Steering Committee Executive Officer, prior to its conclusion, regarding the potential role of the NTEC in any election of delegates and the practical prerequisites and logistics for that to occur.

In mid 2011, discussions took place on costs, the method of selecting delegates, the possibility of conducting an election on the same date as the LG general elections (24 March 2012) and the difficulties a conjoint election might pose. Discussion also took place on alternative representational arrangements to harmonise the election with council boundaries.

The Legislative Assembly decided on Thursday, 30 November 2011 to defer the holding of the election of candidates to the Constitutional Convention and the Convention itself. The *Constitutional Convention (Election) Act 2011* came into effect on 21 December 2011. It sets out arrangements for the conduct of an election for delegates to a statehood convention. The timing of the election is at the discretion of the Minister but can only be held after the August 2012 LA general elections.

The NTEC will be seeking early confirmation of any plans for a delegate election to be held in the 2012-13 year.

### 3.2.7 Disclosure

Though NT electoral legislation does not provide for the funding of political parties, the *Electoral Act* Part 10 ss176 to 224 requires annual disclosure by registered parties and their associated entities, and election specific disclosure returns from candidates, publishers and broadcasters. There are no funding or disclosure requirements for local government elections.

The original alignment between Commonwealth and Territory disclosure requirements ceased when the previous Commonwealth Government significantly increased the threshold limits for disclosure in 2006. Although it has been indicated that the federal threshold limits for disclosure would be lowered, no new federal provisions have as yet been effected. This means that NT parties effectively cannot submit a Commonwealth return for NT purposes.

Returns are due within 16 weeks of the financial year end and are to be posted by 1 March of the following year. Parties were reminded of their obligation [NTEA s196 (2)] to prompt associated entities contributing to them to comply with NT disclosure provisions and the threshold of \$1 500.

All four NT parties registered at the 30 June 2011 submitted their annual disclosure returns by the due date.

### 3.2.8 Party registration

The NT has five registered parties following the registration of the Australian Sex Party NT on 19 November 2011.

**Table 16:** NT registered political parties

Political Party	Date of Registration
Australian Labor Party NT (ALP)	18 April 2005
Australian Sex Party NT	19 November 2011
Country Liberals	27 January 2010*
First Nations Political Party	25 May 2011
The Greens	23 March 2005

\* First registered 30 March 2005 as the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party

The 2011 amendments to the *Electoral Act* introduced a requirement for a registered political party to provide, within 16 weeks after the end of the financial year, as part of their annual return to the Electoral Commissioner, a current constitution and statement for the purpose of monitoring a party's continued eligibility for registration. An approved form was introduced for this purpose in time for the 2011-12 reporting year obligations. The approved form was provided to the registered parties, together with a reminder on return deadlines for registered parties and associated entities.

A second change to party registration criteria was that any application to register a political party must be received by the NTEC prior to six months before the date of a scheduled general election, for registration processing to be decided before that election. As a result, any application received after 24 February 2012 would not be decided before the August 2012 LA elections.

Election disclosure returns for candidates or their agents, candidate donors, publishers and broadcasters were reviewed before the August 2012 LA elections.

### **3.3 Election policies, processes and procedures**

Technology's role in enhancing election processing activities in recent years has been marked, leading to an elimination of much repetitive work. Enabling legislation in December 2011 allows the Electoral Commissioner to approve the use of automated or electronic systems to facilitate election processing, voting in strict circumstances and the use of electronic certified lists in polling places. Technological innovations can be pursued with these guidelines in place, subject to costs and an increasing dependence on scarce IT skills – both limitations for a small agency.

Following the LG elections, a number of recommendations were made to refine the EMS, TIGER (the mobile polling database) and the postal voting/excuses system in readiness for their application and use at the LA elections. A contractor was also sourced to develop software for the electronic projection of results data onto screens at the tally centre for the LA elections.

All systems will be reviewed following the LA elections, with the intention of capturing future needs and system capacities of the agency and putting in place a timetable to source the expertise to develop and test any new modules. The desired outcome will be integrated election modules.

### **3.4 Recruitment, training and tools**

The staffing module of the EMS was well utilised during the year. Data was uploaded to the new system after an extensive review of the existing information. Staff held on the database were contacted before the end of 2011, advised of the 2012 election dates and confirmation sought as to their availability to work at those elections. Interstate contacts were approached to provide experienced electoral, regional and mobile polling support.

The training programs and materials for staff were scheduled for readiness ahead of the close of nominations period and incorporated reference to, and explanation of, the new legislative measures.

### **3.5 Targets 2012-13**

- Re-evaluate the content and delivery mode of training sessions for the LA elections.
- Incorporate the 2011 legislative changes into LA election information and publicity materials, including the website, and update LA election procedural manuals and training materials.
- Conduct the 25 August LA elections.
- Prepare detailed election reports on the 2012 LG and LA elections that include recommendations for future elections.
- Liaise with DHLGRS over suggested amendments to local government electoral legislation regarding issues arising in the 2012 LG general elections report.
- Undertake preliminary planning in the event that the Constitutional Convention election is announced for a date in 2012-13.
- Based on experience in other jurisdictions and a trial of electronic rolls on netbooks at the Katherine Council by-election in February 2011, the NTEC will consider cost effective alternative methodologies for the capture of voter data at the time of ballot paper issue in order to improve efficiency and accuracy in the marking of the roll and to streamline post-election processing of voter data. It will also review bar coding and scanning technologies for postal vote issuing and processing.

## 4 EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

### Objective

A community that is well informed about its electoral rights, responsibilities, processes and available services

#### 4.1 Public advertising and publicity campaigns

Section 309 of the *Electoral Act* requires the NTEC to promote public awareness of elections and the Legislative Assembly by conducting education and information programs and any other appropriate strategies.

Activities undertaken in support of enrolment and election awareness included:

- Enrolment stimulation programs using television, local and regional newspapers, posters and targeted mail campaigns based on the QR12 program and the NTEC's 2012 general elections media plan.
- Having a stall at the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin shows in July 2011 to promote enrolment, changes to LA divisional boundaries and the 2012 general elections.
- Liaising with NT councils in 2011 to develop a public awareness plan for the 2012 council elections and the distribution of information about enrolment, nomination and voting services. Public awareness and education materials were also provided to MPs' electorate offices.
- A radio and television advertisement campaign, commencing at the 2012 council elections, using caricatures based on a roll, pencil, ballot paper and ballot box with an election jingle backing. Matching public awareness materials were also distributed.
- Staging enrolment stalls at shopping centres in Darwin, Palmerston, Howard Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs to promote the QR12 program and the 2012 general elections.
- Activities culminated in the council election advertising campaign that ran from early February to the end of March 2012.

#### 4.2 Education and information services

Up to 30 June 2012, the NTEC had conducted 93 electoral education sessions in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine involving 3 914 participants (see table below).

- Participation increased by 40% from 2010-11 with an increase in the proportion of older students from middle and high schools, due in part to the provision of transport. Programs were also undertaken at remote centres in conjunction with Parliamentary Education Services.
- New information materials on voting activities were included as part of the NT show circuit.

Table 17: Details of the number of education sessions and participants conducted by region

Group (by Region)	Number of Sessions	Number of Participants
Darwin	55	1 926
Katherine	5	138
Tennant Creek	1	21
Alice Springs Region	5	393
Remote	13	274
English as Second Language (ESL)	6	133
Show Circuit (8 days)	8	1 029
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>3 914</b>



## **Civics and citizenship**

A civics program for new citizens/adult migrants focussing on democracy, parliament and voting, developed in conjunction with Parliamentary Education Services, was implemented by the end of the reporting year.

The NTEC also worked with Parliamentary Education Services on the 'Step Up, Be Heard' program covering elections and parliament for Year 11 and 12 Darwin High School legal and political studies students.

### **NTEC website**

The redevelopment of the NTEC website was awarded to Captovate Pty Ltd in April 2011. The new website, with rewritten content on a SharePoint 2010 platform was moved into the production test site at the end of June 2012.

The existing Lotus Notes website was extensively updated in late 2011 to provide dedicated council election pages and to improve access to enrolment and general election information.

## **4.3 Information activities supporting the 2012 Local Government elections**

The NTEC liaised with councils during 2011 to develop a communication strategy for the 2012 LG elections. A communication plan was then developed, incorporating mail outs, special web pages, a call centre and an expanded advertising presence, particularly in the electronic media. The plan was launched in early 2012.

The campaign encouraging enrolment made full use of television, radio and newspaper advertising and was based on the communication strategy developed by the NTEC. Election bulletins and media releases were distributed at key election dates.

Advertisements were placed in regional newspapers and notices providing information about nominations, council/ward boundaries, voting services, remote mobile polling and contested elections were transmitted to council service centres. This was supplemented by radio advertising, including advertising in ten Aboriginal languages.

Personally addressed and letter box dropped mail also provided electors with information on enrolment, council/ward boundaries, voting services and polling place locations.

Election information was provided at briefing sessions in various regional locations for councils and prospective candidates; the sessions were also attended by representatives from LGANT. The NTEC also developed materials to support awareness activities undertaken by electoral officers in advance of the general elections.

A free call centre was set up to respond to enquiries about enrolment and voting services. The website was used as a major tool to provide election and enrolment information, including links to the AEC website for online enrolment, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services and provide dedicated pages for each council. It also provided information on the new vote counting system.

Public events were staged for the council declaration of nominations and declaration of polls.

## **4.4 Research and electoral developments**

The *Electoral Act* s309(f) allows the NTEC 'to conduct and promote research into matters relating to elections or other matters relating to its functions'. Research activities are undertaken by operational staff or, where appropriate, by project staff and are generally focussed on providing information to support current programs and impending electoral events.

Due to election priorities in 2011-12, the current focus of NTEC research has been to support immediate operational needs. Research activity during the year included analysis of NT enrolment trends to support the QR12 project and to provide Ministerial briefings and reports to the ECA.

An operational plan was developed for the management of major mail outs to electors (a new NTEC initiative in 2011-12). Two mailings of approximately 80 000 letters each took place in October 2011 (election and LA redistribution advice) and March 2012 (LG voting advice). These required detailed project plans covering resourcing, data management, processing of replies and enrolment follow up.

The redevelopment of the NTEC website, including the rewriting of content, continued. This included analysis of the existing site, comparison with other electoral sites (particularly those in NZ and Victoria) and the development of suitable links with sites such as Google Maps and the AEC. The new website was in the final stages of testing for introduction in July 2012. Documentation and formatting of historical NT election results data for uploading to the new NTEC website was completed.

Continued involvement in ECA/STEC initiated research activities included projects for the use of social media. An NTEC officer led an inter-jurisdiction workshop to discuss key statistical measures that could be adopted by all electoral commissions as commonly accepted reporting tools.

A survey of informal voting at the LG elections was completed in May 2012 with a focus on the impact of the legislative changes to formality provisions. A report on the survey will be included in the LG elections report.

#### **4.5 Public reporting**

The 2010-11 Annual Report and Araluen By-election Report were tabled on 21 November 2011. Reporting on the LG and LA general elections is expected to be finalised within 12 months of the conclusion of those respective polls.

#### **4.6 Targets 2012-13**

- Implement the strategic communication plan for the 2012 LA elections including the roll out of new television and radio advertising promoting enrolment and voting services before and during the election period.
- Review public awareness programs delivered in the 2012 LG and LA elections.
- Review, refine and further develop as required, the structure and content of the NTEC's new website scheduled to be launched in July in time for the 2012 LA elections.
- Continue agency commitment to developing a multi-faceted electoral education program after the 2012 LA elections.
- Build on the school education program initiatives with the Parliamentary Education Unit.
- Commence planning for a public awareness program customised for the Constitutional Convention election.
- Undertake a survey of informal ballot papers following the 2012 LA elections.

## 5. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### Objective

Staff, infrastructure and business systems that meet governance and operational requirements

#### 5.1 The organisation

The NTEC has only a small number of ongoing positions. It accesses support and input from other NT government agencies and seconds or recruits specialist project staff where required.

The Department of Business and Employment (DBE) provides ITC, payroll, procurement, property and recruitment support. The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) and Treasury liaise over personnel issues and financial matters respectively.

Table 18: NTEC staffing profile as at 30 June 2011 and 2012

Designation	Number of Staff (Including Contract)	
	30 June 2011	30 June 2012
Executive Contract Officer 3	1	1
Senior Administrative Officer 2	1	0
Senior Administrative Officer 1	4	6
Administrative Officer 7	0	1
Administrative Officer 6	5	3.5
Administrative Officer 5	1	2
Administrative Officer 4	0	1
Administrative Officer 3	1	4
Administrative Officer 2	0.5	1
Administrative Officer 1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.5 FTE</b>	<b>19.5 FTE</b>

A staffing cap of 11 positions is in place however, the NTEC is regularly exceeding that cap due to workload requirements and election activities.

Permanent recruitment is required for four positions - those of Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Manager Enrolment and Electoral Boundaries, Regional Coordinator (Alice Springs) and an Electoral Officer (Alice Springs). The Commission is yet to evaluate the organisation structure in relation to the workload associated with the local government sector.

#### Employee expenses

Ongoing employee expenses are funded from the appropriation budget, with separate arrangements made for staff employed for elections, election project work and for secondments. The staffing expenditure component is proportionately higher in years when major electoral events take place. In such years the additional staff expenses are met from election budgets.

In 2011-12, employee expenses came to approximately \$2.9m, around 50% of total expenditure for the year. This included remuneration and other costs for temporary project and polling official positions for the March 2012 council elections.

## **Darwin office**

At 30 June 2012 the NTEC's Darwin office had a permanent staff complement of seven, including the Deputy Electoral Commissioner position (currently not occupied). This excludes the CEO's position that is funded on a long term contract basis. Additional temporary long term staff included a senior project officer, a business support officer (public awareness) and a supernumerary officer (public awareness and education).

## **Alice Springs office**

One of two Electoral Services Officer positions was vacated in December 2011 and is still to be filled. An additional temporary position is maintained in the office for general admin and enrolment support duties, filled by two part-time casual staff.

## **2012 Council General Elections**

Additional staff were recruited for the 2012 council elections for project management, regional coordinator and deputy returning officer positions and as short term election casuals.

- Election project staff and deputy returning officers: 13 staff were employed for periods of approximately two months (including two employed for longer periods to manage IT projects). Seven staff were located in the Darwin Office, two in Alice Springs and Katherine and one each in Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.
- Election casuals: employment opportunities were offered for 411 short term positions to fill polling place, early voting centre, mobile team and office assistant positions.
- Finance staff: three experienced DBE officers were temporarily located at the NTEC to assist in the management of budgets, processing accounts, administer travel and accommodation and organising employment paperwork. They will continue in these positions until after the conclusion of the August 2012 LA elections.

The processing of election casual staff employment contracts was managed through the upgraded EMS with wages and entitlements extracted from the system post-election and supplied in electronic form, greatly reducing turnaround times when forwarding to Payroll Services.

## **5.2 NTEC office premises**

### **Darwin office**

The NTEC Head Office moved to a new location at the TCG Centre (Mitchell Street) in May 2011. The initial move made use of the existing fit-out left over by the previous tenant, but included upgraded IT cabling which allowed NTEC staff to commence work immediately.

A budget of \$710 000 was allocated to the NTEC for the relocation that allowed plans and a program of works to be prepared in 2010-11. The fit-out commenced immediately on occupation, with NTEC staff taking up temporary facilities at the front end of the office whilst building work was undertaken in the rear.

Work on the fit-out of the main office, including the public counter, storage areas and kitchen, was completed by November 2011. New furniture, lighting and signage were specified in early 2011-12 which was installed in time for the 2012 LG elections. Refurbishment of the executive offices took place in April 2012 and the erection of display panels and the general layout of the combined education and main meeting room area was finalised by June 2012.

### **Alice Springs**

MyVote Central was established in Alice Springs in mid 2009. It is centrally located and is used for a range of enrolment, election and education activities and as an early voting centre. It includes a training area, video-conferencing system and space to provide voting facilities for NT, interstate and federal elections. The NTEC receives an annual fee from the AEC for services provided by MyVote Central under a joint arrangement.

MyVote Central was used as a fully resourced facility at the 2012 LG elections. Enhancements to the office in the reporting period include the application of public awareness display materials on the windows.

### **5.3 Management and reporting**

As an independent agency, the NTEC is required to manage its own finances and payroll including budgeting and reporting activities, procurement and general office services and management for all HR activities. The corporate unit is made up of a business manager and an administration officer. Additional experienced finance staff were seconded from DBE for the 2012 general elections.

By 30 June 2012:

- All financial transactions for the 2012 LG elections had been satisfactorily managed;
- A new Electronic Invoice Management System (EIMS) module for creating and approving purchase requests had been implemented;
- New templates for the creation of forms and the tracking of payments to casual election employees had been developed in the EMS;
- The NTEC's relocation to the TCG Centre on Mitchell Street had been completed.

#### **Report under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act s18***

The NTEC reports to the Commissioner for Public Employment in relation to the Commission's compliance with the prescribed principles of human resource (HR) management. No grievances or disputes arose during the 2011-12 reporting year.

The NTEC seeks advice from DBE regarding the application of NT public sector wide HR legislation, instructions and guidelines and the implementation of the relevant HR policies, practices, terms and conditions.

#### **Equal opportunity**

Staff selection is merit based. Polling official appointments are also made in accordance with merit principles. Staff in leadership positions were assessed following the council elections and comments recorded on responsiveness and application to duties.

Polling officials are required to sign an undertaking that they are not a member of a political party or active in political affairs and that they will retain this status during the period of their employment.

Gender balance was applied, particularly for mobile polling teams, to ensure appropriate dialogue with electors for enrolment, electoral awareness and election activities.

#### **Equity and diversity**

The NTEC supports the selection of staff able to communicate and interact with NT communities, regardless of any perceived barriers presented by gender, language, ethnicity, disadvantage or any physical or other impairment.

Of the 365 positions at the council elections on which data was available, 104 were held by males (28.5%) and 261 (71.5%) were held by females. Positions held by females included a majority of leadership as well as issuing officer positions, except for mobile team leaders.

#### **Flexible work practices**

Flex-time is available to staff except during election periods.

#### **Occupational health and safety (OH&S)**

The NTEC attempts to identify and mitigate risks in both office and field situations.

Guidelines in all manuals were updated to reflect the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* that sets out the national occupational health and safety (OH&S) obligations for employers and employees. External clearance on content was received by a DBE consultant. The Act stipulates duties of care on employers and employees in relation to OH&S. First-aid kits were assessed and new stocks acquired for polling places and mobile teams.

Mobile polling teams are required to report on arrival at and departure from, all polling locations. Issues with new satellite phones used at the council elections were discussed with the provider and it is expected that equipment from a previous supplier will be used for the LA elections.

No reportable safety issues were recorded during the year. However, due to inclement cyclonic weather during the March council elections, the situation of mobile teams near the Gulf of Carpentaria and the border with WA were closely monitored. The NTEC uses twin-engine planes wherever possible.

### **Report under Section 7 of the *Carers Recognition Act***

Since 1995, carers of people unable to attend a polling place on polling day are eligible to apply for a postal vote under provisions of the Act. A carer may apply for a single election or on an ongoing basis as a registered postal voter.

Amendments to the *Electoral Act* and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations in December 2011 extended postal and early voting services to voters who are disabled, and/or their carers. The amendments were in place for the 2012 general elections.

At 30 June 2012, 40 carers were registered as postal voters out of a total of 1 517 on the register for reasons of remoteness, disability, illness, religion, etc.

No NTEC staff were granted carers' leave during the reporting year.

### **Insurance reporting**

Over the course of 2011-12, the NTEC made one small self insurance claim and paid no insurance premiums.

The NTEC has in place a number of mitigation strategies to help reduce the insurable risk arising from its operations. The agency maintains an 'Accounting and Property Manual', which contains specific reference to insurance and litigation matters. These include detailed instructions for drivers of Commission vehicles with reference to the 'NT Fleet handbook'.

### **Records Management**

Pursuant to section 131 of the *Information Act*, the agency has implemented processes to achieve compliance with the archives and records management provisions prescribed in Part 9 of the Information Act.

### **Corporate review**

Reporting templates were amended to take account of the redefined corporate objectives, emphasising that corporate activities underpin all agency objectives.

## **5.4 ITC operational support**

The NTEC drew on qualified and experienced external providers to support ITC and election software programs.

### **Provision of services by DBE and external ITC provider(s)**

Whole of government contracts determine providers for most telecommunications, hardware, generic software and helpdesk support. Agencies' hardware and software requirements are assessed on a rotational basis.

ITC support is provided to the NTEC by DBE, with responsibility for day to day ITC matters resting with the NTEC Business Manager.

DBE provided timely logistical ITC support during the 2012 LG elections. This included the provision of additional IT assets for the Darwin and Alice Springs offices and the temporary regional electoral offices in Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek. The election support was coordinated between the NTEC, DBE and representatives from the whole of government contracted provider of hardware/software support.

Goods and services received free of charge amounted to approximately \$870 000, a higher than usual amount, mostly due to infrastructure requirements and logistical support for the LG and LA elections that was organised for mid January through to mid September 2012.

## **Hardware**

The NTEC was moved up in the refresh queue for new computers and received these in December 2011 in preparation for the 2012 general elections.

Extra capacity was added to the NTEC's IT cabinet to accommodate additional hardware not envisioned in the original fit-out project. At the same time, additional cabling was installed to relocate or add power points, switches and computer ports within the office to reflect current usage.

New multi-function copiers were acquired, one each for the Darwin and Alice Springs offices.

## **Software**

The NTEC was upgraded to Microsoft Office 2007 in accordance with the Northern Territory Government (NTG) schedule. The upgrade was required to address version compatibility. A move to Microsoft Office 2010 and Windows 7 is scheduled for 2012-13.

New IT systems were specified and brought into production for use at the 2012 general elections. These included the EMS, TIGER (a database for the management of mobile polling and used with the permission of the AEC) and a postal vote/excuse database. The EMS scoping included specifications designed to streamline payroll processing.

The AEC provided additional log-ons to the roll management system (RMANS) for the LG elections however network problems limited access to RMANS at the temporary offices in regional centres.

Procurement documentation was drafted for the provision of software to display election result data onto large projection screens in the tally room for the 2012 LA elections.

The AEC gave permission to use its EasyCount vote counting software for complex proportional representation counts for LG elections. Formalities relating to its acquisition and implementation were negotiated.

## **Website**

A new contract was awarded in 2010-11 for the redevelopment of the NTEC website, incorporating the requirement to operate under the NTG's preferred platform, Microsoft SharePoint. The conversion to SharePoint 2010 was near completion by the reporting year end, at which point the new NTEC website was scheduled to go live in July in time for the LA elections.

## **5.5 Staff development and recognition**

The NTEC was made aware of the government's consideration of Proportional Representation (PR) for any election of delegates to a Constitutional Convention and, at the same time, of examining its application for elections in the local government sector.

As a result, two NTEC staff were seconded to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to support their local government elections in October 2011 to observe first-hand the PR system in use. Additionally, a project officer was seconded specifically for his expertise in PR to support the LG elections. He proceeded to develop a training package, including a manual on the PR count, which was undertaken by all NTEC election staff. He also customised PR material for the NT jurisdiction which was placed on the NTEC website and incorporated into information available to candidates and stakeholders.

Manuals and forms were reviewed and updated to reflect legislative amendments.

Project and regional staff received system and agency orientation training and regional staff were briefed before being established in regional centres.

All election staff received a briefing prior to undertaking their roles.

## **5.6 Targets 2012-13**

- The NTEC to be upgraded to Microsoft Office 2010 and Windows 7.
- Continue discussions with DBE regarding ITC support for the LA elections. Most of the hardware from the LG elections will be retained for the LA elections with additional requirements for the tally room.

- Process payment of LA elections casual staff within best practice deadlines.
- Review casual staff performance with respect to future employment.
- Fill permanent staff vacancies.
- Reconcile all expenditure related to the 2012 LG elections, monitor and manage ongoing expenditure for the 2012 LA elections including budgeting, processing of invoices and preparing submissions for Treasurer's Advance(s).
- Monitor and track any additional expenses relating to the redevelopment of the NTEC's website (scheduled to go 'live' in July 2012).
- Complete all works associated with the Darwin office relocation and identify any additional fit-out requirements.



## The corporate plan 2011 to 2015

### **Enrolment**

**Objective - A complete, accurate and securely maintained roll of Northern Territory electors that meets the requirements of stakeholders.**

#### **Strategies**

Maintain rolls for the Legislative Assembly and local government in partnership with the AEC in an efficient and effective manner.

Monitor performance in terms of completeness, accuracy and the timely update of the electoral roll.

Develop and implement enrolment stimulation activities and initiatives including joint programs with the AEC.

Provide roll data in accordance with legislation.

Provide support to Legislative Assembly redistribution committees and local government representation reviews and effect changes following final boundary determinations.

#### **Performance Measure**

Percentage of estimated eligible electors enrolled in the Territory compared to previous years.

### **Elections**

**Objective - Efficient and effective conduct of elections.**

#### **Strategies**

Advocate best practice in electoral legislation for government elections and in non-government election rules.

Enhance our knowledge of the needs of our diverse client base to customise electoral services.

Review and document election policies, procedures and processes.

Review recruitment and training programs and tools for effective service delivery.

#### **Performance Measures**

Voter participation rate compared to similar electoral events in previous years.

Relative cost of elections, compared to similar electoral events in previous years.

### **Education and Information**

**Objective - A community that is well informed about its electoral rights, responsibilities, processes and available services.**

#### **Strategies**

Conduct targeted public advertising and publicity campaigns.

Develop programs to deliver education and information services across the Northern Territory.

Maintain and improve school based education programs.

Conduct research and monitor external electoral developments.

Expand strategic alliances with organisations providing services to our diverse community.

Review and improve the public reporting program.

#### **Performance Measure**

Number of participants at school and community education sessions.

### **Corporate Support**

**Objective - Staff, infrastructure and business systems that meet governance and operational requirements.**

#### **Strategies**

Monitor the organisational structure so that it best meets the strategic challenges of the NTEC.

Document, maintain and improve policies and procedures that uphold the business requirements of the NTEC, the Northern Territory Public Service and relevant legislation.

Continuously improve IT operational support systems.

Encourage staff development and recognition.

#### **Performance Measure**

Performance in the corporate support area is to be reported on an activity basis in the Annual Report.

## **6. FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **6.1 Financial performance**

The NTEC is funded through an annual appropriation from Treasury, with provision of additional funding through Treasurer's Advances for major electoral events such as Legislative Assembly general elections or redistribution (every four years) and ad hoc Legislative Assembly by-elections. Advances may also be provided, with Cabinet approval, for any major initiatives, such as the NTEC's recent office relocation, specialist software/website development, etc.

The annual appropriation budget supports expenditure on:

- NTEC Head Office (Darwin) and MyVote Central (Alice Springs);
- Salaries and expenses for approximately 11 ongoing staff positions;
- Enrolment, election, education and corporate support functions; and
- The payment of approximately \$150 000 to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for annual Joint Roll Arrangement (JRA) costs.

With the advent of a fixed election date, the NTEC was provided for the first time, some advance funding to conduct the 2012 LA elections, however that advance will need to be supplemented significantly by means of a Treasurer's Advance once accounts for the event are finalised.

The cost of the LA general elections is currently around \$2 million and a by-election about \$50 000. The cost of an uncontested council by-election may be up to \$3 000 whilst a contested council by-election can vary between about \$12 000 to \$60 000, depending on the nature and geographic location of the electorate. A redistribution costs approximately \$220 000 and is held every four years.

The NTEC also conducts local government general and by-elections and public service ballots on a marginal cost recovery basis.

Subject to competing priorities and resource constraints, the NTEC also occasionally conducts fee-for-service elections on the basis of direct costs plus a management fee of 30%.

The NTEC receives a fee of \$55 000 per annum from the AEC for services provided by its regional office at MyVote Central, Alice Springs.

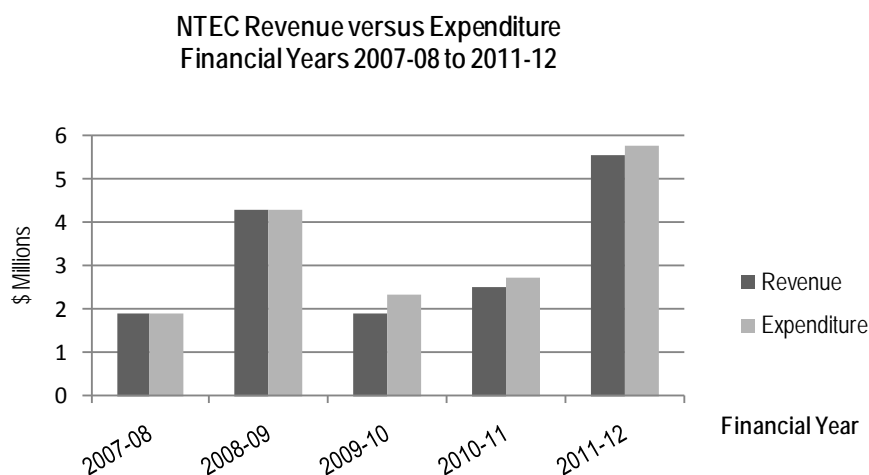
The appropriation for the 2011-12 year was \$2.174 million, made up of 56% for employee expenses and 44% for administrative expenses. The increase of \$400 000 from the original published budget represents provision for early expenditure in preparation for the 2012 LA general elections.

An additional amount of \$80 000 was provided in 2011-12 for fit-out and furniture items for the new Darwin office. Expenditure for the fit-out exceeded this amount and was met from the NTEC's ongoing allocation.

During the year, the agency's expenditure budget moved from \$3.9 million to \$5.8 million. Overall income for the year was \$5.6 million and expenses incurred were \$5.8 million. With approvals sought and granted to increase the NTEC's expenditure and budget, the result was an operating deficit of \$237 000 for the year.

To date, an amount of \$1.109 million (less GST charged) has been received from the councils as advance payments for the management of the 2012 council general elections. Expenditure reconciliation for this election and the subsequent six supplementary elections in May 2012 was being conducted at the year end.

The following graph shows the fluctuations in revenue and expenditure over an electoral cycle, with the peak in 2008-09 coinciding with the LA and inaugural shire and rural council elections in August and October 2008 respectively and the peak in 2011-12 coinciding with the March 2012 LG elections.



The appropriation for 2012-13 is \$2.261 million which includes further approved funding of \$600 000 for the August 2012 LA elections.

Any election for delegates to a Constitutional Convention will increase the estimated expenditure.

In the 2011-12 and 2012-13 years, the NTEC will manage, in consecutive years, its normal appropriation budgets plus maintain financial accountability for major event related expenditure.

## 6.2 Targets 2012-13

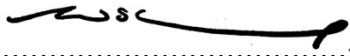
- Complete all processing of expenditure for the March 2012 council general elections.
- Finalise the budget for the 2012 Legislative Assembly elections and all processing of expenditure by mid 2012-13.
- Monitor ongoing expenditure and adjust accordingly for unexpected events such as conducting an unplanned by-election.

## CERTIFICATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We certify that the attached financial statements for the Northern Territory Electoral Commission have been prepared from proper accounts and records in accordance with the prescribed format, the *Financial Management Act* and Treasurer's Directions.

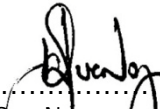
We further state that the information set out in the Comprehensive Operating Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to and forming part of the financial statements, presents fairly the financial performance and cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2012 and the financial position on that date.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.



.....  
William Shephard  
Electoral Commissioner - Chief Finance Officer

30 August 2012



.....  
Warren Que Ndy  
Business Manager - Accountable Officer

30 August 2012

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2012**

	Note	2012 \$000	2011 \$000
<b>INCOME</b>			
Taxation revenue			
Grants and subsidies revenue			
Current		50	100
Appropriation			
Output		3 504	1 660
Sales of goods and services		1 117	389
Interest revenue			
Goods and services received free of charge	4	870	507
Gain on disposal of assets	5		
Other income			
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	3	<u>5 541</u>	<u>2 656</u>
	Note	2012 \$000	2011 \$000
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Employee expenses		2 893	1 608
Administrative expenses			
Purchases of goods and services	6	1 796	707
Repairs and maintenance		20	7
Property Management		120	72
Depreciation and amortisation	10	79	77
Other administrative expenses <sup>1</sup>		870	507
Grants and subsidies expenses			
Interest expenses	16		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	3	<u>5 778</u>	<u>2 978</u>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>		<u>(237)</u>	<u>(322)</u>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>			
<b>COMPREHENSIVE RESULT</b>		<u>(237)</u>	<u>(322)</u>

<sup>1</sup> Includes DBE service charges.

<sup>2</sup> Income received from a number of fee-for-service elections including Shire and Municipal Council elections.

The Comprehensive Operating Statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**As at 30 June 2012**

	Note	2012 \$000	2011 \$000
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and deposits	7	278	264
Receivables	8	34	127
Inventories	9		
Advances and investments			
Prepayments			
Other assets			
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>312</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Receivables	8		
Advances and investments			
Property, plant and equipment	10	196	247
Intangibles			
Biological assets			
Heritage and cultural assets			
Prepayments			
Other assets			
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>196</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>508</b>	<b>638</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Deposits held			
Payables	11	(90)	(90)
Borrowings and advances			
Provisions	12	(211)	(157)
Other liabilities	13	(2)	(3)
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>(303)</b>	<b>(250)</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Borrowings and advances			
Provisions	12	(90)	(53)
Other liabilities	13		
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>(90)</b>	<b>(53)</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>(393)</b>	<b>(303)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>115</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Current Year Surplus/Deficit		(237)	(322)
Capital		280	264
Accumulated funds		72	394
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>115</b>	<b>335</b>

The Balance Sheet is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2012**

	Note	Equity at 1 July \$000	Comprehensive result \$000	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners \$000	Equity at 30 June \$000
<b>2011-12</b>					
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>		72	(237) <sup>(1)</sup>	0	(165)
Changes in accounting policy					
Correction of prior period errors					
Transfers from reserves					
Other movements directly to equity					
		72	(237)	0	(165)
<b>Reserves</b>	14				
<b>Capital – Transactions with Owners</b>		264	0	0	264
Equity injections					
Capital appropriation					
Equity transfers in		0	0	16	16
Other equity injections					
Specific purpose payments					
National partnership payments					
Commonwealth – capital					
Equity withdrawals					
Capital withdrawal					
Equity transfers out					
		264	0	16	280
<b>Total Equity at End of Financial Year</b>		<b>336</b>	<b>(237)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>2010-11</b>					
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>		394	(322)	0	72
Changes in accounting policy					
Correction of prior period errors					
Transfers from reserves					
Other movements directly to equity					
		394	(322)	0	72
<b>Reserves</b>	14				
<b>Capital – Transactions with Owners</b>		257	0	0	257
Equity injections					
Capital appropriation					
Equity transfers in		0	0	6	6
Other equity injections					
Specific purpose payments					
National partnership payments					
Commonwealth – capital					
Equity withdrawals					
Capital withdrawal					
Equity transfers out					
		257	0	6	263
<b>Total Equity at End of Financial Year</b>		<b>651</b>	<b>(322)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>335</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Net Surplus/(Deficit) from the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

The Statement of Changes in Equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2012**

	Note	2012 \$000	2011 \$000
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Operating Receipts</b>			
Taxes received			
Grants and subsidies received			
Current		50	100
Appropriation			
Output		3 504	1 660
Receipts from sales of goods and services		1 383	358
Interest received			
<b>Total Operating Receipts</b>		<u>4 937</u>	<u>2 118</u>
<b>Operating Payments</b>			
Payments to employees		(2 787)	(1 522)
Payments for goods and services		(2 108)	(853)
Grants and subsidies paid			
Current			
Capital			
Community service obligations			
Interest paid			
<b>Total Operating Payments</b>		<u>(4 895)</u>	<u>(2 375)</u>
<b>Net Cash From/(Used in) Operating Activities</b>	15	<u>42</u>	<u>(257)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Investing Receipts</b>			
Proceeds from asset sales	5		
Repayment of advances			
Sales of investments			
<b>Total Investing Receipts</b>			
<b>Investing Payments</b>			
Purchases of assets		(28)	(7)
Advances and investing payments			
<b>Total Investing Payments</b>		<u>(28)</u>	<u>(7)</u>
<b>Net Cash From/(Used in) Investing Activities</b>		<u>(28)</u>	<u>(7)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Financing Receipts</b>			
Proceeds of borrowings			
Deposits received		(1)	3
Equity injections			
Capital appropriation			
Commonwealth appropriation			
Other equity injections			
<b>Total Financing Receipts</b>		<u>(1)</u>	<u>3</u>
<b>Financing Payments</b>			
Repayment of borrowings			
Finance lease payments	17		
Equity withdrawals			
<b>Total Financing Payments</b>			
<b>Net Cash From/(Used in) Financing Activities</b>		<u>(1)</u>	<u>3</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		14	(247)
Cash at beginning of financial year		264	511
<b>CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	7	<u>278</u>	<u>264</u>

The Cash Flow Statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.



**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2012**

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## **1. OBJECTIVES AND FUNDING**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission (the Commission) was established in March 2004 to support government by providing a fair, impartial and professional electoral service and ensuring there is an opportunity for the people of the Northern Territory to participate in free and democratic elections. The Commission is responsible for conducting elections for the Legislative Assembly, municipal and shire councils and other organisations in an efficient and cost-effective manner, consistent with legislative requirements.

## **2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

### **a) Basis of Accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Management Act* and related Treasurer's Directions. The *Financial Management Act* requires the Northern Territory Electoral Commission to prepare financial statements for the year ended 30 June based on the form determined by the Treasurer. The form of agency financial statements is to include:

- (i) a Certification of the Financial Statements;
- (ii) a Comprehensive Operating Statement;
- (iii) a Balance Sheet;
- (iv) a Statement of Changes in Equity;
- (v) a Cash Flow Statement; and
- (vi) applicable explanatory notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared using the accrual basis of accounting, which recognises the effect of financial transactions and events when they occur, rather than when cash is paid out or received. As part of the preparation of the financial statements, all intra-agency transactions and balances have been eliminated.

Except where stated, the financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

The form of the agency financial statements is also consistent with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards. The effects of all relevant new and revised Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that are effective for the current annual reporting period have been evaluated. The Standards and Interpretations and their impacts are:

**b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations Issued but not yet Effective**

At the date of authorisation of the financial statements, the Standards and Interpretations listed below were in issue but not yet effective.

Standard/Interpretation	Summary	Effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after	Impact on financial statements
AASB 12 <i>Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities</i>	Requires the extensive disclosure of information that enables users of financial statements to evaluate the nature of, and risks associated with, interests in other entities and the effects of those interests on its financial position, financial performance and cash flows.	1 Jan 2013	
AASB 13 <i>Fair Value Measurement</i> , AASB 2011-8 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 13 [AASB 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 2009-11, 2010-7, 101, 102, 108, 110, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 128, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 1004, 1023 &amp; 1038 and Interpretations 2, 4, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 131 &amp; 132]</i>	Replaces the guidance on fair value measurement in existing AASB accounting literature with a single standard. The Standard defines fair value, provides guidance on how to determine fair value and requires disclosures about fair value measurements.	1 Jan 2013	
AASB 2011-7 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Consolidation and Joint Arrangements standards [AASB 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 2009-11, 101, 107, 112, 118, 121, 124, 132, 133, 136, 138, 139, 1023 &amp; 1038 and Interpretations 5, 9, 16 &amp; 17]</i>	Makes consequential amendments to a range of Standards and Interpretations in light of the issuance of AASB 10 <i>Consolidated Financial Statements</i> and AASB 12 <i>Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities</i> .	1 Jan 2013	
AASB 2011-9 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Presentation of Items of Other Comprehensive Income [AASB 1, 5, 7, 101, 112, 120, 121, 132, 133, 134, 1039 &amp; 1049]</i>	Requires entities to group items presented in other comprehensive income on the basis of whether they are potentially reclassifiable to profit or loss subsequently.	1 July 2012	

### **c) Agency and Territory Items**

The financial statements of Northern Territory Electoral Commission include income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity over which the Northern Territory Electoral Commission has control (Agency items). Certain items, while managed by the agency, are controlled and recorded by the Territory rather than the agency (Territory items). Territory items are recognised and recorded in the Central Holding Authority as discussed below.

#### **Central Holding Authority**

The Central Holding Authority is the 'parent body' that represents the Government's ownership interest in Government-controlled entities.

The Central Holding Authority also records all Territory items, such as income, expenses, assets and liabilities controlled by the Government and managed by agencies on behalf of the Government. The main Territory item is Territory income, which includes taxation and royalty revenue, Commonwealth general purpose funding (such as GST revenue), fines, and statutory fees and charges.

The Central Holding Authority also holds certain Territory assets not assigned to agencies as well as certain Territory liabilities that are not practical or effective to assign to individual agencies such as unfunded superannuation and long service leave.

The Central Holding Authority recognises and records all Territory items, and as such, these items are not included in the agency's financial statements.

### **d) Comparatives**

Where necessary, comparative information for the 2010-11 financial year has been reclassified to provide consistency with current year disclosures.

### **e) Presentation and Rounding of Amounts**

Amounts in the financial statements and notes to the financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars, with amounts of \$500 or less being rounded down to zero.

### **f) Changes in Accounting Policies**

There have been no changes to accounting policies adopted in 2011-12 as a result of management decisions.

### **g) Accounting Judgments and Estimates**

The preparation of the financial report requires the making of judgments and estimates that affect the recognised amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses and the disclosure of contingent liabilities. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis for making judgments about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Judgments and estimates that have significant effects on the financial statements are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

### **h) Goods and Services Tax**

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred on a purchase of goods and services is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as part of receivables or payables in the Balance Sheet.

Cash flows are included in the Cash Flow Statement on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities, which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are classified as operating cash flows. Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable or payable unless otherwise specified.

## **i) Income Recognition**

Income encompasses both revenue and gains.

Income is recognised at the fair value of the consideration received, exclusive of the amount of GST. Exchanges of goods or services of the same nature and value without any cash consideration being exchanged are not recognised as income.

### **Grants and Other Contributions**

Grants, donations, gifts and other non-reciprocal contributions are recognised as revenue when the agency obtains control over the assets comprising the contributions. Control is normally obtained upon receipt.

Contributions are recognised at their fair value. Contributions of services are only recognised when a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would be purchased if not donated.

### **Appropriation**

Output appropriation is the operating payment to each agency for the outputs they provide and is calculated as the net cost of agency outputs after taking into account funding from agency income. It does not include any allowance for major non-cash costs such as depreciation.

Commonwealth appropriation follows from the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, resulting in Special Purpose Payments (SPPs) and National Partnership (NP) payments being made by the Commonwealth Treasury to state treasuries, in a manner similar to arrangements for GST payments. These payments are received by Treasury on behalf of the Central Holding Authority and then on-passed to the relevant agencies as Commonwealth appropriation.

Revenue in respect of appropriations is recognised in the period in which the agency gains control of the funds.

### **Sale of Goods**

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised (net of returns, discounts and allowances) when:

- the significant risks and rewards of ownership of the goods have transferred to the buyer;
- the agency retains neither continuing managerial involvement to the degree usually associated with ownership nor effective control over the goods sold;
- the amount of revenue can be reliably measured;
- it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the agency; and
- the costs incurred or to be incurred in respect of the transaction can be measured reliably.

### **Rendering of Services**

Revenue from rendering services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract. The revenue is recognised when:

- the amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the entity.

### **Interest Revenue**

Interest revenue is recognised as it accrues, taking into account the effective yield on the financial asset.

### **Goods and Services Received Free of Charge**

Goods and services received free of charge are recognised as revenue when a fair value can be reliably determined and the resource would have been purchased if it had not been donated. Use of the resource is recognised as an expense.

## **Disposal of Assets**

A gain or loss on disposal of assets is included as a gain or loss on the date control of the asset passes to the buyer, usually when an unconditional contract of sale is signed. The gain or loss on disposal is calculated as the difference between the carrying amount of the asset at the time of disposal and the net proceeds on disposal. Refer also to Note 5.

## **Contributions of Assets**

Contributions of assets and contributions to assist in the acquisition of assets, being non-reciprocal transfers, are recognised, unless otherwise determined by Government, as gains when the agency obtains control of the asset or contribution. Contributions are recognised at the fair value received or receivable.

### **j) Repairs and Maintenance Expense**

Funding is received for repairs and maintenance works associated with agency assets as part of output revenue. Costs associated with repairs and maintenance works on agency assets are expensed as incurred.

### **k) Depreciation and Amortisation Expense**

Items of property, plant and equipment, including buildings but excluding land, have limited useful lives and are depreciated or amortised using the straight-line method over their estimated useful lives.

Amortisation applies in relation to intangible non-current assets with limited useful lives and is calculated and accounted for in a similar manner to depreciation.

Assets are depreciated or amortised from the date of acquisition or from the time an asset is completed and held ready for use.

### **l) Interest Expense**

Interest expenses include interest and finance lease charges. Interest expenses are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

### **m) Cash and Deposits**

For the purposes of the Balance Sheet and the Cash Flow Statement, cash includes cash on hand, cash at bank and cash equivalents. Cash equivalents are highly liquid short-term investments that are readily convertible to cash. Cash at bank includes monies held in the Accountable Officer's Trust Account (AOTA) that are ultimately payable to the beneficial owner – refer also to Note 20.

### **n) Inventories**

Inventories include assets held either for sale (general inventories) or for distribution at no or nominal consideration in the ordinary course of business operations.

Inventory held for distribution is regularly assessed for obsolescence and loss.

### **o) Receivables**

Receivables include accounts receivable and other receivables and are recognised at fair value less any allowance for impairment losses.

The allowance for impairment losses represents the amount of receivables the agency estimates are likely to be uncollectible and are considered doubtful. Analyses of the age of the receivables that are past due as at the reporting date are disclosed in an aging schedule under credit risk in Note 18 Financial Instruments.

Reconciliation of changes in the allowance accounts is also presented.

Accounts receivable are generally settled within 30 days and other receivables within 30 days.

### **p) Property, Plant and Equipment**

#### **Acquisitions**

All items of property, plant and equipment with a cost, or other value, equal to or greater than \$10 000 are recognised in the year of acquisition and depreciated as outlined below. Items of property, plant and equipment below the \$10 000 threshold are expensed in the year of acquisition.

The construction cost of property, plant and equipment includes the cost of materials and direct labour, and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

### **Complex Assets**

Major items of plant and equipment comprising a number of components that have different useful lives, are accounted for as separate assets. The components may be replaced during the useful life of the complex asset.

### **Subsequent Additional Costs**

Costs incurred on property, plant and equipment subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised when it is probable that future economic benefits in excess of the originally assessed performance of the asset will flow to the agency in future years. Where these costs represent separate components of a complex asset, they are accounted for as separate assets and are separately depreciated over their expected useful lives.

### **Construction (Work in Progress)**

As part of the financial management framework, the Department of Construction and Infrastructure is responsible for managing general government capital works projects on a whole of Government basis. Therefore appropriation for all agency capital works is provided directly to the Department of Construction and Infrastructure and the cost of construction work in progress is recognised as an asset of that Department. Once completed, capital works assets are transferred to the agency.

### **q) Biological Assets**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no biological assets in 2011-12 and 2010-11.

### **r) Revaluations and Impairment**

#### **Revaluation of Assets**

Subsequent to initial recognition, assets belonging to the following classes of non-current assets are revalued with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount of these assets does not differ materially from their fair value at reporting date:

- land;
- buildings;
- infrastructure assets;
- heritage and cultural assets;
- biological assets; and
- intangibles.

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

Plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less depreciation, which is deemed to equate to fair value.

#### **Impairment of Assets**

An asset is said to be impaired when the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

Non-current physical and intangible agency assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of impairment exists, the agency determines the asset's recoverable amount. The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's depreciated replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

Impairment losses are recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement. They are disclosed as an expense unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount. Where the asset is measured at a revalued amount, the impairment loss is offset against the asset revaluation surplus for that class of asset to the extent that an available balance exists in the asset revaluation surplus.

In certain situations, an impairment loss may subsequently be reversed. Where an impairment loss is subsequently reversed, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable

amount. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement as income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the impairment reversal results in an increase in the asset revaluation surplus. Note 16 provides additional information in relation to the asset revaluation surplus.

#### **s) Assets Held for Sale**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission held no assets for sale in 2011-12 and 2010-11.

#### **t) Leased Assets**

Leases under which the agency assumes substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset are classified as finance leases. Other leases are classified as operating leases.

#### **Finance Leases**

Finance leases are capitalised. A leased asset and a lease liability equal to the present value of the minimum lease payments are recognised at the inception of the lease.

Lease payments are allocated between the principal component of the lease liability and the interest expense.

#### **Operating Leases**

Operating lease payments made at regular intervals throughout the term are expensed when the payments are due, except where an alternative basis is more representative of the pattern of benefits to be derived from the leased property. Lease incentives under an operating lease of a building or office space is recognised as an integral part of the consideration for the use of the leased asset. Lease incentives are to be recognised as a deduction of the lease expenses over the term of the lease.

#### **u) Payables**

Liabilities for accounts payable and other amounts payable are carried at cost, which is the fair value of the consideration to be paid in the future for goods and services received, whether or not billed to the agency. Accounts payable are normally settled within 30 days.

#### **v) Employee Benefits**

Provision is made for employee benefits accumulated as a result of employees rendering services up to the reporting date. These benefits include wages and salaries and recreation leave. Liabilities arising in respect of wages and salaries, recreation leave and other employee benefit liabilities that fall due within twelve months of reporting date are classified as current liabilities and are measured at amounts expected to be paid. Non-current employee benefit liabilities that fall due after twelve months of the reporting date are measured at present value, calculated using the Government long-term bond rate.

No provision is made for sick leave, which is non-vesting, as the anticipated pattern of future sick leave to be taken is less than the entitlement accruing in each reporting period.

Employee benefit expenses are recognised on a net basis in respect of the following categories:

- wages and salaries, non-monetary benefits, recreation leave, sick leave and other leave entitlements; and
- other types of employee benefits.

As part of the financial management framework, the Central Holding Authority assumes the long service leave liabilities of Government agencies, including the Northern Territory Electoral Commission and as such no long service leave liability is recognised in agency financial statements.

#### **w) Superannuation**

Employees' superannuation entitlements are provided through the:

- Northern Territory Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme (NTGPASS);
- Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS); or
- non-government employee-nominated schemes for those employees commencing on or after 10 August 1999.



The agency makes superannuation contributions on behalf of its employees to the Central Holding Authority or non-government employee-nominated schemes. Superannuation liabilities related to government superannuation schemes are held by the Central Holding Authority and as such are not recognised in agency financial statements.

**x) Contributions by and Distributions to Government**

The agency may receive contributions from Government where the Government is acting as owner of the agency. Conversely, the agency may make distributions to Government. In accordance with the *Financial Management Act* and Treasurer's Directions, certain types of contributions and distributions, including those relating to administrative restructures, have been designated as contributions by, and distributions to, Government. These designated contributions and distributions are treated by the agency as adjustments to equity.

The Statement of Changes in Equity provides additional information in relation to contributions by, and distributions to, Government.

**y) Commitments**

Disclosures in relation to capital and other commitments, including lease commitments are shown at Note 17.

Commitments are those contracted as at 30 June where the amount of the future commitment can be reliably measured.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 30 June 2012

**3. COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT BY OUTPUT GROUP**

	Note	NT Electoral Commission		<Output Group>		<Output Group>		Total	
		2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011
		\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
<b>INCOME</b>									
Taxation revenue									
Grants and subsidies revenue									
Current		50	100					50	100
Capital									
Appropriation									
Output		3 504	1 660					3 504	1 660
Commonwealth									
Sales of goods and services <sup>2</sup>		1 117	389					1 117	389
Interest revenue									
Goods and services received free of charge	4	870	507					870	507
Gain on disposal of assets	5								
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>5 541</b>	<b>2 656</b>					<b>5 541</b>	<b>2 656</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>									
Employee expenses		2 893	1 608					2 893	2 656
Administrative expenses									
Purchases of goods and services	6	1 796	707					1 796	707
Repairs and maintenance		20	7					20	7
Property Management		120	72					120	72
Depreciation and amortisation	10	79	77					79	77
Other administrative expenses <sup>1</sup>		870	507					870	507
Grants and subsidies expenses									
Interest expenses	16								
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>5 778</b>	<b>2 978</b>					<b>5 778</b>	<b>2 978</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>		<b>(237)</b>	<b>(322)</b>					<b>(237)</b>	<b>(322)</b>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>									
<b>COMPREHENSIVE RESULT</b>		<b>(237)</b>	<b>(322)</b>					<b>(237)</b>	<b>(322)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes DBE service charges.

<sup>2</sup> Income received from a number of fee-for-service elections including Shire and Municipal Council elections.

This Comprehensive Operating Statement by output group is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2012**

	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>4. GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE</b>		
Corporate and information services	870	507
Internal audits and reviews		
	870	507
	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>5. GAIN ON DISPOSAL OF ASSETS</b>		
Net proceeds from the disposal of non-current assets		
Less: Carrying value of non-current assets disposed	( )	( )
Gain on the disposal of non-current assets	0	0
	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>6. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES</b>		
The net surplus/(deficit) has been arrived at after charging the following expenses:		
Goods and services expenses:		
Consultants <sup>(1)</sup>	16	5
Advertising		
Marketing and promotion <sup>(2)</sup>	312	105
Document production	325	80
Legal expenses		
Recruitment <sup>(3)</sup>	0	4
Training and study	5	1
Official duty fares	222	42
Travelling allowance	39	17
	919	254
	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>7. CASH AND DEPOSITS</b>		
Cash on hand	1	1
Cash at bank	277	263
On call or short-term deposits		
	278	264

<sup>(1)</sup> Includes marketing, promotion and IT consultants.

<sup>(2)</sup> Includes advertising for marketing and promotion but excludes marketing and promotion consultants' expenses, which are incorporated in the consultants' category.

<sup>(3)</sup> Includes recruitment-related advertising costs.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
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	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>8. RECEIVABLES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts receivable	18	116
Less: Allowance for impairment losses	( )	( )
	18	116
Interest receivables		
GST receivables	16	12
Other receivables		
	34	128
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Other receivables		
<b>Total Receivables</b>	34	128
	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>9. INVENTORIES</b>		
General Inventories		
At cost		
At net realisable value		
<b>Inventories Held for Distribution</b>		
At cost		
At current replacement cost		
<b>Total Inventories</b>	0	0
	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>10. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>		
Plant and Equipment		
At fair value	385	364
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(202)	(137)
	183	227
Computer Hardware		
At cost	25	25
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(12)	(5)
	13	20
<b>Total Property, Plant and Equipment</b>	196	247

**Property, Plant and Equipment Valuations**

The fair value of these assets was determined based on existing restrictions on asset use. Where reliable market values were not available, the fair value of Agency assets was based on their depreciated replacement cost

**Impairment of Property, Plant and Equipment**

Agency property, plant and equipment assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2012. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
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**10. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (continued)**  
**2012 Property, Plant and Equipment Reconciliations**

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2011-12 is set out below:

	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure	Construction (Work in Progress)	Plant and Equipment	Computer Hardware	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Carrying Amount as at 1 July 2011	0	0	0	0	227	20	247
Additions	0	0	0	0	28	0	28
Disposals							
Depreciation	0	0	0	0	(73)	(6)	(79)
Additions/(Disposals) from administrative restructuring							
Additions/(Disposals) from asset transfers							
Revaluation increments/(decrements)							
Impairment losses							
Impairment losses reversed							
Other movements							
<b>Carrying Amount as at 30 June 2012</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>196</b>

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
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**10. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (continued)**  
**2011 Property, Plant and Equipment Reconciliations**

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2010-11 is set out below:

	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure	Construction (Work in Progress)	Plant and Equipment	Computer Hardware	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Carrying Amount as at 1 July 2010	0	0	0	0	330	0	330
Additions	0	0	0	0	(32)	25	(7)
Disposals							
Depreciation	0	0	0	0	(71)	(5)	(76)
Additions/(Disposals) from administrative restructuring							
Additions/(Disposals) from asset transfers							
Revaluation increments/(decrements)							
Impairment losses							
Impairment losses reversed							
Other movements							
<b>Carrying Amount as at 30 June 2011</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>247</b>

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
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	2012 \$000	2011 \$000
<b>11. PAYABLES</b>		
Accounts payable	45	62
Accrued expenses	45	28
Other payables		
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>12. PROVISIONS</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
<i>Employee benefits</i>		
Recreation leave	138	112
Leave loading	24	13
Other employee benefits	4	4
<i>Other current provisions</i>		
Other provisions	45	28
	211	157
<b>Non-Current</b>		
<i>Employee benefits</i>		
Recreation leave	90	53
<i>Other non-current provisions</i>		
<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>210</b>
<p>The Agency employed 19.52 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees as at 30 June 2012, 11 ordinary staff and 8.52 short term contractual staff to meet current and fluctuating election demands (13 employees as at 30 June 2011).</p>		
<b>13. OTHER LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Other liabilities	2	3
	2	3
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Other liabilities		
	—	—
<b>Total Other Liabilities</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
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	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
<b>14. RESERVES</b>		
<b>Asset Revaluation Surplus</b>		
<i>(i) Nature and purpose of the asset revaluation surplus</i>		
The asset revaluation surplus includes the net revaluation increments and decrements arising from the revaluation of non-current assets. Impairment adjustments may also be recognised in the asset revaluation surplus.		
 <i>(ii) Movements in the asset revaluation surplus</i>		
Balance as at 1 July		
Changes in accounting policies		
Correction of prior period errors		
Increment/(Decrement) – buildings		
Increment/(Decrement) – infrastructure		
<b>Balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**15. NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

**Reconciliation of Cash**

The total of agency 'Cash and deposits' of \$278,000 recorded in the Balance Sheet is consistent with that recorded as 'Cash' in the Cash Flow Statement.

<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	(237)	(322)
<i>Non-cash items:</i>		
Depreciation and amortisation	79	76
Asset write-offs/write-downs		
Asset donations/gifts		
(Gain)/Loss on disposal of assets		
R&M - Minor New Work Non Cash	16	6
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i>		
Decrease/(Increase) in receivables	94	(100)
Decrease/(Increase) in inventories		
Decrease/(Increase) in prepayments		
Decrease/(Increase) in other assets		
Decrease/(Increase) in payables	0	7
Decrease/(Increase) in provision for employee benefits	74	67
Decrease/(Increase) in other provisions	17	9
Decrease/(Increase) in other liabilities		
<b>Net Cash from Operating Activities</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>(257)</b>

**Non-Cash Financing and Investing Activities**

*Finance Lease Transactions*

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission did not acquire plant and equipment/computer equipment and software by means of finance leases in 2011-12.



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**16. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial instruments held by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission include cash and deposits, receivables, payables and finance leases. The Northern Territory Electoral Commission has limited exposure to financial risks as discussed below.

**a) Categorisation of Financial Instruments**

The carrying amounts of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission's financial assets and liabilities by category are disclosed in the table below.

	2012	2011
	\$000	\$000
Financial Assets		
Cash and deposits	278	264
Fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL):		
Held for trading		
Designated as at FVTPL		
Derivative instruments in designated hedge accounting relationships		
Held-to-maturity investments		
Loans and receivables		
Available-for-sale financial assets		
<b>Financial Liabilities</b>		
Fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL):		
Held for trading		
Designated as at FVTPL		
Derivative instruments in designated hedge accounting relationships		
Amortised cost		

**b) Credit Risk**

The agency has limited credit risk exposure (risk of default). In respect of any dealings with organisations external to Government, the agency has adopted a policy of only dealing with credit worthy organisations and obtaining sufficient collateral or other security where appropriate, as a means of mitigating the risk of financial loss from defaults.

The carrying amount of financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the agency's maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral or other security obtained.

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**Receivables**

Receivable balances are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that exposure to bad debts is not significant. A reconciliation and ageing analysis of receivables is presented below.

	Ageing of Receivables \$000	Ageing of Impaired Receivables \$000	Net Receivables \$000
<b>2011-12</b>			
Not overdue	34		34
Overdue for less than 30 days			
Overdue for 30 to 60 days			
Overdue for more than 60 days			
<b>Total</b>	34		34

**Reconciliation of the Allowance for Impairment Losses**

Opening  
Written off during the year  
Recovered during the year  
Increase/(Decrease) in allowance recognised in profit or loss

**Total**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2010-11**

Not overdue	127		127
Overdue for less than 30 days			
Overdue for 30 to 60 days			
Overdue for more than 60 days			

**Total**

127		127
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**Reconciliation of the Allowance for Impairment Losses**

Opening  
Written off during the year  
Recovered during the year  
Increase/(Decrease) in allowance recognised in profit or loss

**Total**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
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**c) Liquidity Risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the agency will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The agency's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure that it will always have sufficient liquidity to meet its liabilities when they fall due.

The following tables detail the agency's remaining contractual maturity for its financial assets and liabilities. It should be noted that these values are undiscounted, and consequently totals may not reconcile to the carrying amounts presented in the Balance Sheet.

**2012 Maturity analysis for financial assets and liabilities**

	Interest Bearing				Total \$000	Weighted Average %	
	Fixed or Variable	Less than a Year \$000	1 to 5 Years \$000	More than 5 Years \$000			Non Interest Bearing \$000
<b>Assets</b>							
Cash and deposits					278	278	100
Receivables					34	34	100
Advances							
Investment, loans and placements							
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>					<b>312</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>							
Deposits held					(2)	(2)	100
Payables					(90)	(90)	100
Advances					(211)	(211)	100
Borrowings							
Finance lease liabilities							
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>					<b>303</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100</b>

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
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**2011 Maturity analysis for financial assets and liabilities**

	Interest Bearing				Total \$000	Weighted Average %	
	Fixed or Variable	Less than a Year \$000	1 to 5 Years \$000	More than 5 Years \$000			Non Interest Bearing \$000
<b>Assets</b>							
Cash and deposits					264	264	100
Receivables					127	127	100
Advances							
Investment, loans and placements							
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>					<b>391</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>							
Deposits held					(3)	(3)	100
Payables					(90)	(90)	100
Advances					(157)	(157)	100
Borrowings							
Finance lease liabilities							
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>					<b>(250)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>100</b>

**d) Market Risk**

Market risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. It comprises interest rate risk, price risk and currency risk.

**(i) Interest Rate Risk**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission is not exposed to interest rate risk as agency financial assets and financial liabilities are non-interest bearing. Finance lease arrangements are established on a fixed interest rate and as such do not expose the Northern Territory Electoral Commission to interest rate risk.

**(ii) Price Risk**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission is not exposed to price risk as the Northern Territory Electoral Commission does not hold units in unit trusts.

**(iii) Currency Risk**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission is not exposed to currency risk as the Northern Territory Electoral Commission does not hold borrowings denominated in foreign currencies or transactional currency exposures arising from purchases in a foreign currency.

**(e) Net Fair Value**

The carrying amount of financial assets and financial liabilities recorded in the financial statements approximates their respective net fair values. Where differences exist, these are not material.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
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	2012 \$000	2011 \$000
<b>17. COMMITMENTS</b>		
(ii) Other Expenditure Commitments		
Other non-cancellable expenditure commitments not recognised as liabilities are payable as follows:		
Within one year	131	241
Later than one year and not later than five years		
Later than five years		
	131	241

**18. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS**

**a) Contingent Liabilities**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at 30 June 2012 or 30 June 2011.

**b) Contingent Assets**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at 30 June 2012 or 30 June 2011.

**19. EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE**

No events have arisen between the end of the financial year and the date of this report that require adjustment to, or disclosure in these financial statements.

**20. ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER'S TRUST ACCOUNT**

In accordance with section 7 of the *Financial Management Act*, an Accountable Officer's Trust Account has been established for the receipt of money to be held in trust. A summary of activity is shown below:

Nature of Trust Money	Opening Balance 1 July 2011	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance 30 June 2012
Nomination money	2 794	800	1 569	2 025
	2 794	800	1 569	2 025

**21. WRITE-OFFS, POSTPONEMENTS, WAIVERS, GIFTS AND EX GRATIA PAYMENTS**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no write-offs, postponements, waivers, gifts or ex gratia payments in 2011-12 and 2010-11.