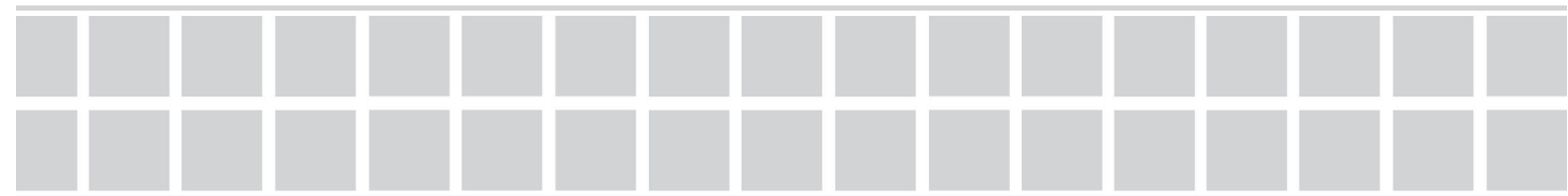




**NORTHERN  
TERRITORY  
ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION**  
*EVERY vote counts!*

Annual Report  
2009 - 2010



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#### **DARWIN**

2nd Floor AANT Building  
79-81 Smith Street  
DARWIN NT 0800  
GPO Box 2419  
DARWIN NT 0801

Phone: (08) 8999 5617  
**1800 MYVOTE**  
Fax: (08) 8999 5845

Website: [www.ntec.nt.gov.au](http://www.ntec.nt.gov.au)

Email: [ntec@nt.gov.au](mailto:ntec@nt.gov.au)

#### **ALICE SPRINGS**

MyVote Central  
Suite 3, Yeperenye Centre  
Gregory Terrace  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870  
PO Box 2304  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

Phone: (08) 8953 7969  
**1800 MYVOTE**  
Fax: (08) 8952 4216



**NORTHERN  
TERRITORY  
ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION**

2nd Floor, AANT Building | 79 Smith Street, Darwin | GPO Box 2419, Darwin NT 0801  
T 08 8999 5617 | F 08 8999 5845 | E mail.ntec@nt.gov.au | ABN 8408 5734 992

The Hon Jane Aagaard 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 2009-10 reporting year.

The report details the performance, key achievements and outlook for the Commission for the year ending 30 June 2010. 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 Shepherd**  
Electoral Commissioner

29 October 2010



## ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

The 2009-10 was again an extremely busy one for the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC).

In 2008, the NTEC conducted an unprecedented three general elections in the space of only eight months. A municipal general election was held in March 2008, a Legislative Assembly general election in August 2008 and the inaugural rural and remote shire general election in October 2008. A redistribution of electoral boundaries for the Legislative Assembly was also implemented during that time.

After a year like that, the Commission might have expected to have some respite but that has hardly been the case. The frequency of local government by-elections has risen dramatically since the creation of the remote and rural shires in 2008. In this financial year, the Commission has conducted 13 local government by-elections, 12 of which were for the shires and occurring at all points of the compass.

The reporting function of the agency was also substantial this financial year. In particular, comprehensive election reports were compiled for both the Legislative Assembly and rural and remote shire general elections. These reports contained many recommendations for improvements and the NTEC now expects to be involved in making significant contributions to any reform processes that eventuate.

The Commission has also pressed ahead this financial year with the establishment of *MyVote Central*, a one-stop shop for all electoral services in Alice Springs. With support from the Australian Electoral Commission, the NTEC has developed and implemented the concept of a jointly branded office that provides enrolment, election and electoral education services to Central Australia from the one location. The office is already proving a success in meeting ongoing electoral demands in the region and is well placed for its role as headquarters for southern region services at its first major electoral event, whenever that might occur.

Looking ahead, the agency will be supporting the Commonwealth at its next general election and continuing to meet its own operational commitments in regard to Legislative Assembly and local government elections. It will also be conducting a Legislative Assembly redistribution and acting in a consultative role with councils as they undertake their own local representation reviews. Most importantly, however, the agency will need to commence planning and preparations for the next round of local government and Legislative Assembly general elections which are currently scheduled in March 2012 and August 2012 respectively.

The NTEC was established as an independent body in 2004 and still is a fledgling agency in many respects. I continue to admire the dedication of its small band of staff in meeting operational demands and its commitment to continuous improvement. I am particularly indebted to them for their efforts over the past year.



Photo: Bill Shephard

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 2010



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## **1. THE NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

### **1.1 Purpose and Functions**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) provides an independent, professional and accessible electoral service to the people of the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and various client groups, including municipal and shire councils and other organisations.

The Commission commenced operations on 15 March 2004, following assent to the *Electoral Act 2004* (the Act). Its functions are prescribed under section 309 of the Act. The NTEC is required to maintain electoral rolls, conduct elections and promote public awareness of election matters. It provides information and advice on election matters to the Legislative Assembly (LA) and Members (MLAs), the Executive Council, Cabinet, political parties, candidates and Territory authorities. The NTEC also conducts research and publishes material relating to elections and other associated functions and conducts ballots for persons and organisations.

The NT Electoral Commissioner, the Chief Executive Officer 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 MLAs who are not affiliated with a political party. The Commissioner sits on both the Redistribution and the Augmented Redistribution Committees, which review and determine electoral boundaries for the Legislative Assembly.

In accordance with provisions of the *Local Government Act (LGA) 2008*, the NTEC must prepare an election roll for any council election or poll of council members, make it available to the returning officer and make the roll available for public inspection at its public offices. The NTEC may be appointed as returning officer and, under the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations (LGER), approves selected forms for use in council election. It may also, by Gazette notice, give directions to returning officers about any aspect of the local government electoral process. The Commission must be consulted when a council carries out its representation review once each council term.

### **1.2 Vision, Mission and Values**

The vision of the NTEC is to be recognised widely for its expertise and performance excellence in electoral administration.

To achieve this vision, its mission is to provide high quality and accessible electoral services that are fair, impartial, effective, efficient and in accordance with the law.

The following corporate values are considered vital to its success:

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

### 1.3 Challenges for the NTEC

The NTEC's ongoing challenges are to:

- Provide an appropriate level of service to a small, culturally diverse, dispersed and mobile population;
- Work impartially in a politically sensitive environment;
- Implement a broad charter and complementary governance structure for the NTEC;
- Manage, support and build the capacity of a small permanent staff resource to meet the demands of electoral events with heavy operational requirements;
- Work productively with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), interstate electoral authorities and other organisations;
- Meet the increasing requirements of elections and by-elections, especially in relation to local government elections; and
- Ensure sound knowledge management practices and processes are in place in order to capture and share the knowledge, insights and experiences that exist within the NTEC.

### 1.4 Legislative Base

The following Acts and Regulations are administered by the NTEC:

- *Electoral Act 2004* and Electoral Regulations 2004;
- *Referendums Act 2001* and Referendums Regulations 2003.

As already reported, an *Electoral Amendment Act* received assent and became effective on 12 March 2009:

- Establishing fixed four year terms for parliamentary elections on the fourth Saturday in August every four years;
- Providing for nominations to close four days after the issue of the writ;
- Allowing the issue of postal votes as soon as possible after the close of nominations, giving an extension of one day in the time for postal vote mail-out; and
- Increasing the election timetable by one day from 19 to 20 days.

The new measures went some way to addressing timetabling concerns outlined in the NTEC's report on the 2005 LA elections, tabled in May 2007. However the NTEC indicated in its report on the 2008 LA elections, tabled in November 2009, that other legislative recommendations and measures to improve electoral processes and procedures outlined in both reports were still relevant for the parliament to consider. In the view of the Electoral Commissioner, many of these are of a technical nature, non-contentious and, if adopted, would enable the legislation to be in harmony with electoral legislative developments in other jurisdictions.

The NTEC does not have carriage of the local government legislation – that rests with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services (DHLGRS). The NTEC outlined in its report on the shire and rural council elections, presented to the Minister in December 2009, a number of practical and harmonising enhancements to the local government legislation and nominated a number of key issues for consideration in the future.

## 1.5 Strategic Issues

Outcomes for 2009-10 are reported against the Key Result Areas (KRAs) set out in the NTEC Corporate Plan 2007-2011. The KRAs, as used in the framework for this Annual Report, are:

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

A five year operational plan was sketched out incorporating key dates leading up to a fixed date Legislative Assembly general election and municipal and shire council elections to be held in 2012, on the assumption that the NTEC will be playing a major role in the council elections.

The NTEC's organisational structure was addressed. A structure was identified and jobs described, assessed and approved prior to the reporting year end. The roll out of the new structure needs to be managed within current government resource restraints and commitments.

The establishment of a service level agreement with the Department of Business and Employment (DBE) for the delivery of a range of corporate services as part of a bureau service to smaller agencies was explored. The NTEC was advised that it was not considered a viable option and that the Commission would need to call on providers for ad-hoc requirements on a needs basis.

The two reports into the 2008 August LA and October shire and rural council elections both provided a chronological account of the election events but were also structured to report and analyse those events in accord with the NTEC strategic objectives ie enrolment, education and information, elections and corporate support. The evaluation of those events required a considerable commitment of resources by the NTEC.

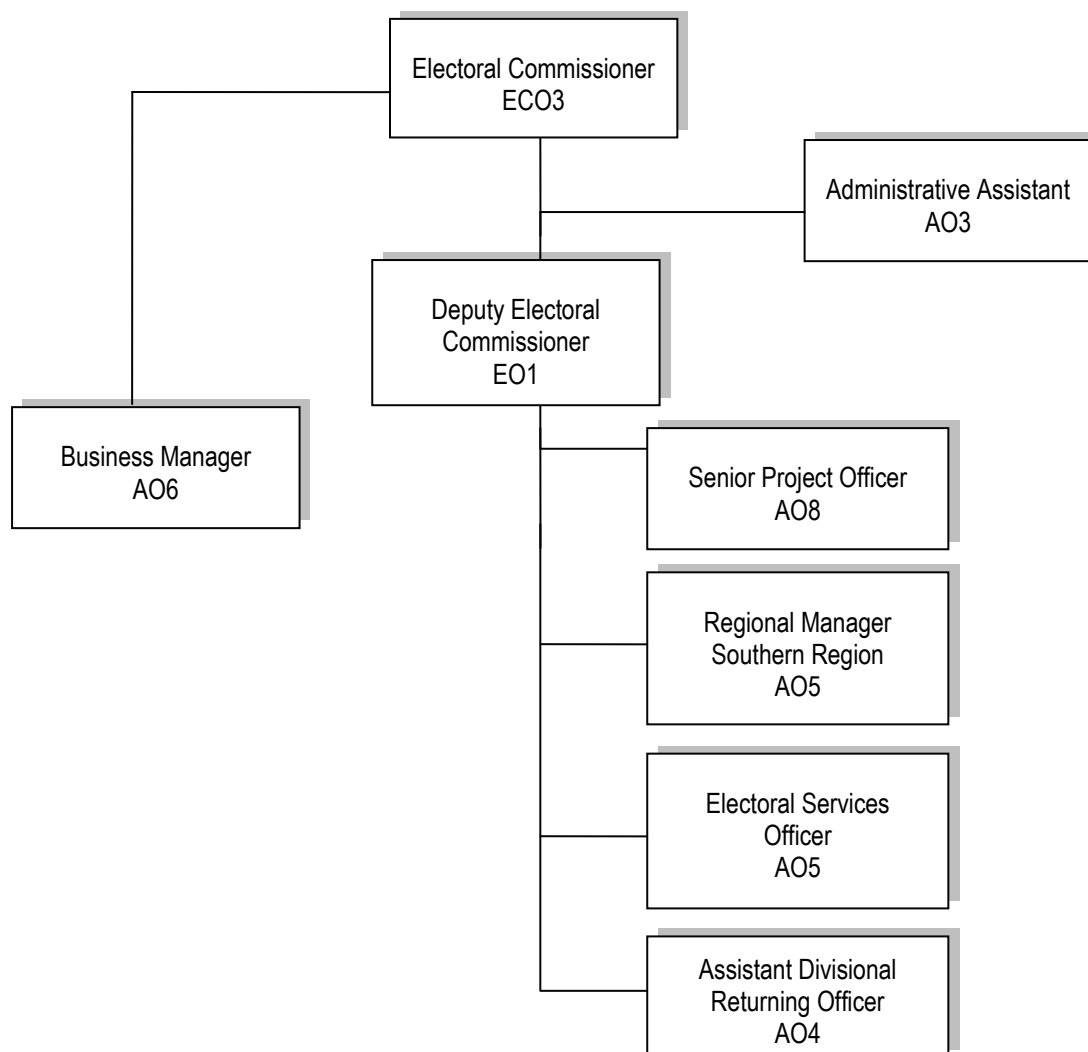
## 1.6 Organisational Structure and Staffing at 30 June 2010

At the year end, the NTEC had 11 FTE employees including the Electoral Commissioner. The permanent and contract staff levels of the NTEC fluctuate according to the demands of election preparation and evaluation of electoral events.

**Table 1:** NTEC staffing profile as at 30 June 2009 and 2010

Designation	Number of Staff (Including Contract)	
	30 June 2009	30 June 2010
Executive Contract Officer 3	1	1
Executive Officer 1	1	1
Administrative Officer 8	4	3
Administrative Officer 7	0	0
Administrative Officer 6	1	3
Administrative Officer 5	1	0
Administrative Officer 4	1	0
Administrative Officer 3	2	1
Administrative Officer 2	1	2
Administrative Officer 1 (part time)	0.4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12.4 FTE</b>	<b>11FTE</b>

## 1.7 Permanent Staff Organisational Structure as at 30 June 2010



## 1.8 National Representation

The NT Electoral Commissioner is a member of 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. It met three times during the reporting period, including prior to the general elections held in South Australia and Tasmania in March 2010. Representatives from the NTEC also separately attended roll management and funding and disclosure forums.

The NT Electoral Commissioner also participates in a separate association of State and Territory Electoral Commissioners (STEC). This body meets prior to ECA meetings to discuss matters specific to States and Territories, to formalise existing cooperative activities and sponsor and engage in special STEC projects at the State/Territory level.

## 1.9 Partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)

The NTEC maintains a close working relationship with the NT office of the AEC regarding the operation of enrolment and public awareness activities in the Territory. Senior officers of both Commissions meet regularly to plan and report on electoral program delivery.

It is anticipated that the NTEC will provide a high level of support to the AEC for enrolment, public awareness and election operations during the conduct of the upcoming Federal Election. This will be reported on in the 2010-11 reporting year.

### 1.10 Progress - Major Tasks Identified in the 2008-09 Annual Report

Task	Progress during 2009-10
Finalisation of reports into the 2008 Legislative Assembly and the rural council general elections	The Legislative Assembly report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly 25 November 2009. The report on the inaugural rural council general elections was provided to the Minister in December 2009.
Provision of advice in any reviews of the Electoral and Referendums Acts and local government electoral provisions	Both the Legislative Assembly and rural council general election reports included recommendations on legislative change. In discussions on NT electoral legislation during the year, the NTEC reiterated its view as to the benefits of such changes being implemented.
Development of an integrated enrolment, education and election plan to take into account the new fixed four year election cycle	The NTEC has largely deferred this project to fit in with a whole of election planning approach in 2010-11.
Continued refinement of documentation and advertising templates for the conduct of by-elections	The NTEC finalised 14 council elections in the reporting period and continually evaluated its program content.
Finalisation of the redevelopment of the NTEC website	Work on the redevelopment of the NTEC website was suspended pending a whole of NT Government move to a Microsoft SharePoint Platform for all government websites.
Development of new electoral education and public awareness materials	Resources were allocated for the preparation of electoral fact sheets and the production of artwork for public awareness materials.
Involvement with other Commissions on a project seeking to develop on-line training modules for polling staff	Interest and commitment has been expressed in on-line training manuals being adopted by other state electoral administrations. This project will be further pursued as a joint initiative in the 2010-11 reporting year.
Establishment of staff and services at the new electoral services centre in Alice Springs;	MYVOTE CENTRAL opened in October 2009 and offered a full range of election and education activities in the southern region for the remainder of the reporting year.
Investigation of suitable division names and the acquisition of redistribution software for the next redistribution of electoral boundaries	A project framework was implemented for researching and documenting suitable electorate names for the 2011 redistribution. Favourable discussions were held with a provider regarding the acquisition of redistribution software in 2010-11.

## **1.11 Noteworthy Events in the 2009-10 Reporting Year**

- Finalisation of 14 council elections, four fee-for-service elections and support for seven parliamentary elections and by-elections interstate.
- Tabling of LA Election Report and lodgement of LG Election Report.
- Consultation with staff on positions for a new structure and performance development framework.
- Implementation of agreed procedures with the AEC for roll review activities in remote shires prior to a by-election roll close and capacity to download roll data and products from the AEC mainframe computer on to the NTEC server.
- Discussions with councils and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services (DHLGRS) over the NTEC's role in representation reviews and the preparation and dissemination of council/ward elector data for councils to use for their reviews.
- A strengthening relationship with councils and incorporation of council input where appropriate to the by-election program to meet council needs.
- Liaison with the Government Printing Office to allow ballot paper templates to be emailed to NTEC offices for immediate in-house printing of ballot papers as soon as possible after nominations close for an election.
- Investigation of appropriate redistribution software and electorate names for the 2011 redistribution committees.
- A productive liaison with the Parliament House education unit to facilitate on-going electoral education activities.
- Development of appropriate artwork for inclusion in publicly available materials.
- Completion of the conceptual framework for the NTEC website.

## **1.12 Looking to the Future 2010-11**

The following tasks are expected to feature on the Commission's work program for 2010-11:

- Coordination with the AEC over the roll-out of a targeted enrolment program for 2011-2012.
- Continue the dialogue with councils on their proposed representation arrangements.
- Make arrangements for the redistribution committees to commence their review of LA division boundaries.
- Provide input to a review of the voting system for council elections.
- Contribute to any legislative reforms in respect to the Electoral Act and council electoral legislation.
- Further develop the five year operational plan to reflect program and service delivery requirements for the fixed date Legislative Assembly general election and municipal and shire council elections scheduled for 2012, on the assumption that the NTEC will be playing a significant role in the council general elections.
- Support the federal, Victorian and New South Wales electoral commissions in their general election activities, including the provision of early voting facilities.
- Progress development work on the website.
- Further development work on text based materials, posters and distance delivery materials for public awareness.
- Revisit the corporate plan, taking into account the increased service levels for the local government sector.
- Commence the recruitment of permanent and project personnel for office and event planning activities.

## **2. ENROLMENT**

### **Objective – Outcome**

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

#### **2.1 Joint Rolls Arrangement**

Section 14 of the *Northern Territory (Self Government) Act 1978* provides that the NT roll be managed in accordance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. 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) of 1994 between the Administrator and the Governor General.

The JRA provides for a single enrolment form for Territory and Commonwealth purposes. The AEC is responsible for processing enrolments and the review of the roll, including the removal from the roll by objection of those electors who have apparently left their enrolled address.

Enrolment stimulation and roll review activities are agreed annually and set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NTEC and the AEC's NT office. Senior officers of both Commissions meet regularly to monitor performance and report on local service delivery, planning and any emerging roll maintenance issues in the Territory. The senior officers also oversee the management of the Continuous Roll Update (CRU) program as set out in the MOU.

A further MOU was agreed during the year to cover the operating framework for the joint electoral office in Alice Springs, MyVote Central.

The NTEC has on-line access to the national roll database (RMANS) and provides the AEC with geographic and elector information useful for roll maintenance. The NTEC undertakes complementary enrolment stimulation activities, collects enrolment forms directly from the public in community settings and at elections and passes the forms to the AEC for data entry.

#### **2.2 Supply of Roll Data**

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

- Rolls for 13 council by-elections held between July 2009 and June 2010 - the same roll was used in Maningrida Ward (West Arnhem Shire) for a supplementary election when the original election failed;
- Jury rolls;
- Monthly updates of roll changes for supply to Members of the Legislative Assembly and registered parties; and
- The supply of roll data to approved entities for health screening programs.

The AEC managed the close of rolls for the council elections during the reporting period in accordance with the performance standards set out in the JRA.

Following discussions with the AEC, new procedures were implemented for the download of roll data and products from the AEC mainframe computer on to the NTEC server to allow for the timely supply of LG by-election rolls. Discussions are continuing to improve NTEC access to the roll.

## 2.3 Roll Review

The joint NT CRU program to maintain the integrity of the electoral roll includes community based enrolment stimulation activities, the mailing of enrolment reminder and roll review letters and the checking of enrolments at individual addresses by field officers. During the reporting period, CRU activities included the following:

- Mailing of 55 000 enrolment reminder and roll review letters to NT addresses based on RMANS data and change of address information provided by government agencies. This mailing resulted in the receipt of an estimated 8000 enrolment forms and advice that 1500 electors had left their enrolled address ;
- A mail-out in December 2009 of 271 enrolment reminder letters to school leavers with their Year 12 results and regular mailing of 'birthday card' enrolment letters to students and apprentices on their 17th birthday;
- Limited fieldwork undertaken in Darwin in support of the Chan Ward by-election and at a number of remote communities;
- Objection processing to remove 5543 electors from the roll who were apparently no longer resident at their enrolled address. This action was based on the receipt of information at elections, the return of unclaimed mail and failure to respond to non-voting notices.

Data for roll review purposes is provided by federal agencies and the NT's Department of Education and Training, the Power and Water Corporation and the Motor Vehicle Registry. Name and address data supplied by the NT agencies is provided under the demand powers of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. Separate demand powers allow on-line access by the AEC to NT motor licence data held on NEVDIS (the national licence data base) to make enrolment Proof of Identity (POI) checks.

## 2.4 Enrolment Stimulation Activities

During the reporting period the NTEC undertook public awareness and direct enrolment stimulation activities. It was responsible for the collection of some 1600 enrolment forms through its Darwin and Alice Springs offices and at council by-elections, this being approximately 10% of all forms processed for the Territory. Additional forms were distributed by the NTEC for mailing back to the AEC and staff provided counter and phone assistance on a daily basis to electors who had received roll review mail from the AEC as part of the joint CRU program. The main features of the NTEC program to June 2010 were:

- The provision of a fully staffed office in Alice Springs (from October 2009) as a shopfront for enrolment and other electoral enquiries from the public in Central Australia. The office is also a base for regular enrolment activities at public venues, schools and communities within the town and in the Centre generally;
- A major enrolment stimulation and election awareness campaign in support of the Darwin City Council Chan Ward by-election in April 2010. This included the sending of personally addressed letters to all electors in the ward and a separate householder brochure to stimulate enrolment and provide advice regarding the election date and voting arrangements. Any mail returned as unclaimed was provided to the AEC for investigation and where electors were found to be no longer resident, procedures were initiated (objection action) for their removal from the roll;
- Election and enrolment awareness campaigns undertaken in support of all LG shire by-elections. This included the circulation of tailored public awareness materials to the media and for display at public places within the ward, 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;



In addition, the NTEC undertook the following joint enrolment activities in partnership with the AEC:

- An enrolment drive in February 2010 in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek to assist residents to enrol who had recently changed address, including persons new to the Territory. The NTEC provided resources for the public awareness campaign and assisted with the staffing of stalls in shopping centres;
- Enrolment and information activities at the NT show circuit and citizenship ceremonies;
- School based campaigns to raise electoral awareness amongst young people and to collect enrolments from senior students. The main focus of youth enrolment was the AEC campaigns based on school and Centrelink data and the mailing of reminder letters including a 'birthday card' to 17/18 year olds.

## **2.5 Election Rolls**

Roll close was effected for 13 council by-elections held between July 2009 and June 2010. One election failed due to a lack of nominations and, as per regulation, the same roll was used for the consequential supplementary election. In agreement with the AEC, council service centres in the remote shires were requested, under strict confidentiality provisions, to notate reference rolls prior to the roll close in the relevant area with the information to be forwarded to the AEC for action.

## **2.6 Enrolment Transactions**

The NTEC contributes to the joint roll by undertaking regular direct enrolment stimulation activities and by providing the AEC with roll information collected at elections, The information is used by the AEC for roll integrity purposes and for removing electors from the roll who have left their address. During the reporting year, information was collected for roll management purposes from the final processing of non-voter mail arising from the 2008 LA general election and from on-going council by-elections.

NTEC enrolment activities contributed significantly to the 15% increase in the number of additions to the roll, however, overall enrolment activity was significantly lower than in comparable periods in the electoral cycle. The total number of electors on the roll showed a 2% decline over the year, due in part to the relative decline in enrolment activity compared to previous years and the actioning of objections to remove electors from the roll who were no longer resident at their enrolled address, many of whom having moved to interstate addresses over the previous two years. The objections arose mainly from the processing of federal and LA general election non-voting information and were processed in large batches in July and September 2009 resulted in over 5543 electors being removed from the roll in a short period. Following a request from State/Territory jurisdictions, AEC objection processing was returned to a monthly timetable from the commencement of 2010 to avoid large one-off declines in enrolment and to maintain the accuracy of the roll, especially for on-going council by-elections.

**Table 2: Enrolment transactions – Additions, deletions, transfers for the NT roll since 2006-2010**

Enrolment at Start of Financial Year	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
		110 330		112 313		118958		119608
Plus - Additions to the Roll								
New Enrolments	3 266		4 358		2 203		2447	
Re-enrolments	2 923		4 698		1 010		1753	
Re-instatements	176		83		11		47	
Interstate transfers to NT	6 020		6 792		4 724		5170	
<b>Total Additions</b>		<b>+12 385</b>		<b>+15 931</b>		<b>+7 948</b>		<b>+9417</b>
No change to enrolment total								
Transfers within NT								
Transfers between LA Divisions	5 907		8 388		5 184		4655	
Changes within LA Division	3 148		4421		2284		1912	
Amendment to elector details	1175		2938		1086		1675	
Less - Deletions to the Roll								
Removal by objection	3 135		2 321		940		5543	
Deaths	795		837		745		738	
Duplications	115		149		54		84	
Interstate Transfers from NT	6 359		5 981		5 558		5205	
<b>Total Deletions</b>		<b>-10 404</b>		<b>-9 288</b>		<b>-7 297</b>		<b>-11570</b>
Net Adjustments		+2		+2		-1		-1
<b>Enrolment at Close of Financial Year</b>		<b>112 313</b>		<b>118 958</b>		<b>119 608</b>		<b>117454</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 17 and obtain full enrolment and voting rights on their 18th birthday.
- **Adjustments** – variations to statistics arising from processing amendments.

## 2.7 The Impact of Commonwealth Amendments on the NT Roll

In mid 2006, changes to the CEA requiring applicants to provide proof of identity (POI) with claims for enrolment were passed by federal parliament and, in accordance with section 14 of the *Northern Territory (Self Government) Act 1978*, the changes have since applied for NT purposes.

In February 2010 the Electoral and Referendum (Close of Rolls and Other Measures) Bill was introduced into the federal Parliament following recommendations contained in the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report into the conduct of the 2007 federal election. The Bill was passed by the House of Representatives on 10 March and introduced to the Senate where debate was due to take place in the next sitting. Most of the provisions specifically related to voting at federal elections, however the proposed change to allow for on-line update of enrolment details would have applied directly to the Territory roll. A number of the proposed changes are already used at NT parliamentary elections e.g. casting an early vote as an ordinary vote and, whilst a number of other proposals are specific to federal elections, several are of particular note in this jurisdiction. The provisions of interest include enabling electors who are already on the roll to update their enrolment details electronically by providing evidence of their eligibility to change their enrolled address and other details by matching to data held by another 'trusted' agency. This change would flow automatically to the NT roll.

Further discussion at the federal level has taken place on the introduction of legislation to allow for 'direct enrolment' i.e. a change on an official data base such as MV License or Centrelink, would be applied automatically to the roll. This provision now applies for NSW State purposes but is yet to be implemented operationally. The federal government is considering similar provisions and, if eventually implemented, they would apply to the NT roll as a matter of course.

### Enrolment Proof of Identity (POI)

Since 16 April 2007, applicants have been required to provide POI at time of enrolment by:

- Quoting their driver's (MV) licence number on the enrolment form; or if they do not have a licence
- Proving their identity by showing another prescribed ID document to a witness from a prescribed group; or if no prescribed form of ID is held
- Their enrolment being witnessed by two enrolled persons who have known the applicant for one month.

The requirement for applicants for enrolment to provide POI details has been in operation for almost three years. It does not impose any additional requirement for those applicants who have a current drivers' licence, other than the need to complete a more complicated enrolment form than previously. However, the impact of the POI provisions is not clear for those applicants without a licence. It is evident that applicants who need to have their form witnessed by a person from an approved list whilst presenting official proof of identity require significantly more staff assistance in completing the form, assuming an approved witness is available.

There is no available evidence regarding the impact of the POI provisions on persons taking up enrolment; however, there has been a significant decline in the number of enrolment forms received in the Territory since its introduction and especially if comparison is made between the non-election years of 2006-2007 (the last full year of the old provisions) and 2009-2010 (the next non-election year). Between these two reporting periods there has been a 25% decline in enrolment forms received from all sources despite a significant increase in the eligible population and population movement, with the decline evident in first time enrolments, re-enrolments and transfers of enrolled address. The decline is likely to be a consequence of a range of factors, but with the current POI enrolment requirements and the necessarily complicated form being a notable contributor.

Any change to enrolment procedures for Territory purposes is dependent on changes at the federal level and the enrolment Bill before the Senate at the financial year end did not alter the POI provisions; its main impact on enrolment for Territory purposes would be that electors already enrolled would be able to amend their enrolment details on-line.

## **Funding for Aboriginal Electoral Education**

In the 2009 federal budget, the government provided \$13 million over 4 years to establish and operate an Indigenous Electoral Participation Program (IEPP) designed to increase enrolment and electoral participation of Indigenous people Australia wide. A similar program was in place from the late 1970's but was terminated in mid 1996.

The new program is managed by the AEC and was in operation by June 2010 and commenced with visits by field officers to remote communities and regional centres following the recruitment and training of staff in early 2010. It is anticipated that the program will make use of the NTEC's Alice Springs office as a home base for activities in Central Australia.

## **2.8 Redistributions and Electoral Representation Reviews**

Periodic 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.

### **Redistribution of Legislative Assembly Boundaries**

In accordance with Part 8 s138 of the NT Electoral Act, the redistribution of LA divisions must start as soon as practical after 2 years and 6 months after the polling day for the last election and be completed as soon as possible. To meet this requirement and to have the redistribution completed and applied to the roll well in advance of the general election scheduled for August 2012, planning is underway for the Redistribution Committee to convene in February 2011.

During the reporting period, NTEC officers made the following preliminary arrangements in support of the 2011 LA Redistribution:

- Initiated discussion with NT Treasury regarding funding for the operation of the Redistribution Committees;
- Undertook investigations into access to GIS packages already developed by other electoral authorities for the mapping of proposed boundary changes and the analysis of their impact on divisional rolls;
- Extracted sample data from the AEC's computerised roll management system required for the mapping and analysis of redistribution proposals;
- Investigated, as requested by the 2008 Augmented Redistribution Committee, appropriate names should any changes be contemplated to divisions.

Early in the next financial year, Commission staff will be identified to undertake redistribution tasks and dedicated accommodation will be assigned within the NTEC office. The planned commissioning of specialised mapping software will be finalised and the required IT support established. Roll data will be extracted for early investigation of enrolment trends and, after the formal notification of the Redistribution, for dissemination to interested parties to assist in the preparation of submissions. The NTEC will provide on-going support to the Redistribution Committees.

### **Local Government Electoral Representation Reviews**

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

- Review its structure and representation once in every four year term [LGA s23(2), LGER r63];
- Prepare a draft plan recommending its future structure and composition, taking into account matters such as population change, the geography of the area and the interests of the community and may ask for feedback from the community on its future representative structure before finalising its plan;
- Consult with the NTEC during the process [LGER r63 (4)];

- Complete the review at least 12 months before the next general election i.e. by March 2011 for the March 2012 council elections [LGER r63(5)].

The NTEC flagged with DHLGRS in March 2009 that clarification would be needed on the elector representation review criteria prescribed in the new Act and Electoral Regulations. During 2010, councils began their review of the number of elected representatives on council, the number of electors they represent and how the council is structured, including the current ward structure (if applicable).

The Commission was asked by LGANT to speak at a meeting for CEOs in March 2010. The subject of representation reviews was broached by the NTEC and a tentative timetable for the reviews provided. Representation data as at 25 October 2008 and 31 December 2009 was provided for all councils. This was followed by discussion with DHLGRS concerning:

- A more definitive timetable with options for consideration by council;
- The meaning of the prescribed 'consultation' by council with the NTEC;
- The retention of the current external boundaries and vote counting system for the 2012 elections.

The NTEC indicated that it was able to provide roll data by ward, CCD, locality and by street part, depending on the requirements of council and whether it was urban or rural. This data was prepared and issued to councils, along with the name of the NTEC contact officer. Summary elector and representation data for each council was placed on its website.

The NTEC has requested that the Minister considers gazettal of any changes no later than 31 August 2011. As soon as the outcome of any review is gazetted, the NTEC will arrange for any amendments to be made to the national roll database and organise for council to check the new roll for accuracy. The review will become effective at the next general elections in March 2012.

## **2.9 Targets 2010-11**

- Continue to undertake enrolment activities and collect information regarding the accuracy of roll details as part of the NTEC's conduct of council by-elections.
- Undertake enrolment activities on an on-going basis in Alice Springs and surrounding communities and provide shop front enrolment services to electors in Central Australia as well as continuing to provide shop-front services from its Darwin office.
- Provide support and participate, where appropriate, in the major enrolment stimulation program to be undertaken by the AEC in the lead up to the forthcoming federal election.
- Examine and, where appropriate, trial electronic formats of the roll for enquiry and mark-off purposes at LG by-elections.
- Be available to be consulted by councils over their elector representation reviews.
- Commence proceedings of the 2011 LA Redistribution Committees.
- Undertake planning for the enrolment and election awareness activities to commence in 2011 in preparation for LG and LA general elections scheduled for 2012.

### 3. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

#### Objective - Outcome

**A community that is well informed about its voting rights, obligations, electoral processes and services available to electors.**

The NTEC promotes public awareness of matters relating to governance structures, enrolment, nominations and voting services by conducting education and information programs in accordance with s309 of the Act.

During the period July 2009 to June 2010, the NTEC's information activities were focussed on enrolment, nomination and voting services for 14 council elections. At the same time, education and enrolment drives directed at school students, community groups and new residents to the Territory continued.

#### 3.1 School Visits and Education Programs

The NTEC provides an electoral education service to inform the community about the electoral processes, the mechanics of elections and the relationship of democracy to everyday life and issues.

Individual education and information presentations are customised for the audience, whether it is a request from a school or a community organisation. Sessions can include the staging of simulated elections or, in the case of schools, an actual election for the representative council or class captain with students performing polling official duties. Topics discussed include the three levels of government, enrolment, the electoral roll, voting systems, voting obligations, the marking of ballot papers and the electoral services provided by the NTEC and AEC.

During the reporting period, the NTEC and AEC provided face to face presentations to a range of community and school groups in both urban and remote parts of Territory. Whilst both the NTEC and AEC co-operated in the delivery of the joint program, the NTEC was the major provider of dedicated electoral education sessions to schools and particularly to class groups.

In the reporting year the NTEC delivered electoral education programs to 3237 students from all school sectors, an increase of almost 200% compared to the previous year, including presentations to two classes of adult ESL students. The majority of these sessions were undertaken in co-operation with the Parliamentary Relations and Education Unit (PREU) of the Legislative Assembly.

The MyVote Central office in Alice Springs has an electoral education space with state of the art video conferencing facilities and can accommodate up to 30 students or members of the public at a time. During the year, NTEC staff undertook electoral education sessions at the office and at schools in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Arlparra.

**Table 3:** Electoral education sessions undertaken by NTEC staff during 2009-10

Schools Location (by Region)	Number of Sessions	Number of Participants
Darwin	21	2348
Katherine	3	107
Tennant Creek	1	6
Alice Springs	8	617
Nhulunbuy	2	11
English as Second Language (ESL)	2	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3237</b>

The links now established with the PREU, plus the commencement of education services from MyVote Central reflect the increasing commitment of the NTEC to electoral education. The PREU program provides

a link into an existing education service focusing on government and democracy. Also, the NTEC and the Department of Justice are working with the PREU to develop a joint education program to assist with the take up of Civic and Citizenship programs by schools and new citizens. This new program will emphasise the representative nature of democracy in Australia and highlight the functions and processes of government in parliamentary, electoral and court settings.

The NTEC is a member of the Electoral Educators Network, a national forum of State and Territory electoral commission staff that has been established to evaluate programs and explore emerging concepts in the area of electoral education.

### **3.2 General Public Awareness Activities**

There were 14 NT council elections, including a supplementary election, during the reporting period. Public awareness activities/outcomes supporting these elections included:

- Development of communication strategies to inform the community of the elections;
- Dedicated election web pages, electorate maps and web links for each NT council;
- Enrolment stimulation programs using newspaper (and radio advertising where appropriate), targeted mail out notices (Chan Ward, Darwin City Council) and posters;
- Local and regional print media advertising to invite nominations and notify voting services (including maps highlighting the affected wards within the council area);
- Extensive distribution of customised election posters to local service centres;
- Customised radio advertising in English and language (the Central Desert Shire Council) inviting nominations;
- Media releases providing election updates and responses to issues arising;
- Holding public events for the declaration of nominations and declaration of polls with candidates, media and the public invited;
- Free call centre for electors and stakeholders;
- Providing information sessions for council staff and candidates, where appropriate;
- Trial of new public awareness technology at polling locations in the Roper Gulf Shire – Nyirranggulong Ward by-election (pre-recorded voting instructions in language);
- Electoral bulletins issued at key stages in selected elections advising of processes and procedures.

The NTEC's public awareness activities were supplemented independently by the activities of candidates and affected councils.

The NTEC and AEC also provide the community with general electoral awareness information on an on-going basis. Remote fieldwork is part of a continuing program to ensure electoral services are delivered effectively to remote communities. AEC officers, as part of the IEPP, visited more than 36 remote communities and outstations during the reporting period. NTEC and AEC staff worked with councils and indigenous elders, particularly in remote areas, to assist with raising awareness about enrolling and voting, especially as new people move into the area.

Specific promotion activities about updating enrolment are undertaken early in each year targeted at new residents to the Territory and others who have moved address. In February 2010 the NTEC and AEC operated enrolment and information stalls in Darwin, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. Subsequent activities included the regular staffing of stalls at shopping centres and at the show circuit to promote enrolment. The AEC also informed pastoralists about enrolment and voting, including registration as a General Postal Voter (GPV).

Where required, the NTEC provided election messages in language, usually broadcast by radio, as this is the most flexible and far reaching medium to target Indigenous voters in remote areas. As an alternative to radio, 'One Talk Technology' posters were used on a trial basis by mobile polling staff in the Roper Gulf Shire - Nyirranggulung Ward by-election. The posters had an inbuilt pre-recorded message in both English and language about enrolment and voting, including reminders about the secrecy of the vote and the need to number all squares on the ballot paper in the voter's order of choice, a key objective in decreasing informal voting.

The informality at that election was reduced although it is not possible to determine with certainty that this was a result of the talking poster or a consequence of a direction to the mobile polling team to emphasise to each voter the importance of numbering every square.

Other public awareness activities in the reporting year included:

- The development of electoral 'characters' in cartoon format for inclusion in election advertising and other resource materials such as website content and TV commercials;
- The use of the NTEC smart number **1800 MYVOTE** on all advertising, materials and forms.

### **3.3 Public Awareness for the Chan Ward by-election**

The NTEC public awareness campaign for the Chan Ward by-election targeted the suburbs of Coconut Grove, Jingili, Moil and Rapid Creek where eligible electors resided. Approximately 7500 brochures outlining details of enrolment and voting services, packaged with two enrolment forms and a return envelope, were delivered to all addresses within the ward by letter box drop. In addition, enrolment stands were located at local shopping centres and markets.

After roll close, the NTEC focused on circulating public awareness notices within the ward, timed to coincide with key phases in the election timetable. Compulsory voting was a recurring theme in all advertising. Approximately 9000 personally addressed mail articles, reminding electors about polling arrangements and voting obligations were delivered in the week leading up to polling day.

A call centre was staffed during the election period and responses provided on a range of queries, mostly with regard to enrolment, postal voting and advice from electors unable to attend a polling place.

### **3.4 NTEC Website**

The NTEC website is the Commission's prime means of providing information to the NT general public.

The website was updated for each council by-election with information being added to coincide with the various election stages.

A review of the website was commenced by the NTEC in July 2008 with a view to increasing its functionality, content and user friendliness. However, the project was suspended temporarily when it was determined that SharePoint would become the preferred platform for all NT government websites.

### **3.5 Research and Reports**

The NTEC conducts and promotes research into elections and other matters relating to its functions, subject to the availability of resources, in accordance with s309 of the Act.

A compendium of election results and a short history of electoral administration since the Territory obtained its own elected legislature in 1974 has been compiled by Professor Dean Jaensch of Flinders University with external funding. The design and formatting of this report is being developed and managed in-house by NTEC staff.



Reports into the 2008 LA and shire and rural council elections were finalised in the 2009-10 reporting year containing detailed statistics and analyses of the elections, including:

- Legislative recommendations;
- Informal ballot paper types and rates;
- Interpretation of participation, postal voting and other voting trends;
- Expenditure by category.

Other NTEC investigations included:

- Surveys of informal ballot papers following all contested by-elections (see Table 4 below);
- A review of materials used at council by-elections including canvassing input from shire personnel.

**Table 4:** Summary of informal ballot paper surveys for the 5 contested council by-elections 2009-10

Council /Ward	No. Candidates	Apparent Deliberate Informality					Apparent Uninformed Informality											Total
		Totally Blank	Scribble	All the same	Other	Sub-Total	1st preference	✓ or ×	✓ or × + preferences	Duplicated	Non-Sequential Numbering	Incomplete Numbering	Illegible	Signed	Alpha Used	Incorrect Issue	Sub-Total	
Coomalie/ Adelaide River Rural	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Coomalie/ Batchelor Township	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Darwin/Chan	5	198	11	83	0	292	16	16		0	23	23	2	0	0	0	80	372
Roper Gulf/Nyiranggulung	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	11		0	3	0	0	0	0	0	14	15
West Arnhem/Gunbalanya	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	24		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	25
<b>Total No. %</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>198</b> 47.6	<b>11</b> 2.6	<b>87</b> 20.9	<b>0</b> 0.0	<b>296</b> 71.2	<b>16</b> 3.8	<b>52</b> 12.5	<b>0</b> 0.0	<b>0</b> 0.0	<b>26</b> 6.3	<b>24</b> 5.8	<b>2</b> 0.5	<b>0</b> 0.0	<b>0</b> 0.0	<b>0</b> 0.0	<b>120</b> 28.8	<b>416</b>

**Legend**

Blank	As described	Duplicated	Preferences repeated eg 1, 2, 2, or 1, 2, 3, 3
Scribble	Slashes or comments dismissive of voting	Non-sequential	Sequential preferences omitted eg 1, 2, 4, 6,
All the same	eg 1, 1, 1, 1 or x, x, x, x	Incomplete	Insufficient preferences recorded eg 1, 2, 3 only for 11 candidates
Other	Insertion of own candidate's name	Illegible	As described
1st preference	Marked with 1 only	Signed	Elector identified
✓ or ×	Marked with a tick or cross only	Alpha used	Elector used eg A, B, C, D to indicate preferences
✓ or × + preferences	Marked with a tick or cross plus preferences	Incorrect Issue	eg Wrongly declared/incorrect ballot paper issue

Figures show a high percentage of apparently deliberate informality in the Darwin City Council Chan Ward by-election (53.2% of the informal ballot papers were blank), compared to informality at shire by-elections.

**3.6 Targets 2009-10**

- Develop a range of customised materials to support the NTEC's electoral education program.
- Continuation of tailored public awareness activities in support of by-elections.
- Develop and implement a public awareness program to be managed from the Alice Springs office, including use of the education facility.
- Develop a public awareness plan for the 2012 LA and LG general elections (the latter if required), incorporating a multi-media approach to the promotion of enrolment and voting services.
- Monitor emerging concepts in electoral education, such as youth engagement, working with indigenous groups utilising offline and on-line social networks.
- Continue working with the Electoral Educators Network and PREU to develop cross curricular links and assist with the take up of Civic and Citizenship programs by schools.
- Identify materials/resources for groups that are less likely to participate in the electoral processes. Identified groups include young people, indigenous Territorians and persons with English as a second language.
- Establish the new NTEC website and incorporate updated website content.
- In cooperation with the AEC, continue to undertake school and community visits as an integral part of electoral education programs.

## 4. ELECTIONS

### Objective - Outcome

#### Efficient and effective conduct of elections.

During the 2009-10 reporting year, the NTEC finalised election programs and reporting of the 2008 Legislative Assembly (LA) election and the 2008 inaugural shire and rural council elections. Fourteen council elections and four fee-for-service elections were managed by the NTEC in the reporting period. Voting facilities were provided for seven inter-jurisdiction elections and by-elections.

#### 4.1 Legislative Assembly (LA) Elections

The non-voter program following the August 2008 LA election was finalised and a full report of non-voter action was provided in the LA Report provided to the Assembly in November 2009. The NTEC will explore the use of an electronic device for marking-off voters in polling places as this would provide significant improvements in cost and time in the generation of files of apparent non-voters for subsequent compulsory voting action.

The General Election Report was tabled in the Assembly on 25 November 2009. It contained five recommendations and eight action items for the Commission, detailed on the following page.

Whilst no LA elections have been conducted since the 2008 election, constitutional developments in the first quarter of the reporting period were closely monitored by the Commission. Attention was given to infrastructure, logistical support measures and election preparedness should an extraordinary general election have eventuated.

The Commission continued monitoring relevant proposed Commonwealth legislation and initiatives in other State/Territory jurisdictions that might have application in NT elections.

Of particular interest are initiatives to enable sight-impaired voters to cast an independent and secret vote by electronically assisted means. A number of other measures to harmonise legislation will be investigated if they are passed by both Houses.

The NTEC report on the 2008 LA general elections made a number of recommendations, including the reiteration of many recommendations made in its 2005 LA election report. Extracts detailing the recommendations in the 2008 report follow.

It is recommended that:

- All recommendations contained in the 2005 Legislative Assembly General Election Report (with the exception of Recommendations 1, 4 and 8\*) be adopted;
- A separate and expanded election timetable be provided in the *Electoral Act* for an extraordinary general election and that this timetable provide for at least an additional week in the election period;
- The NTEC be provided with an advance in the 2011-12 financial year to support the preliminary planning for the 2012 Legislative Assembly election;
- The NTEC be authorised to impose a fine for failure to vote and that the necessary legislation be put in place to enable the NTEC to forward cases of non-payment of these fines to a fines recovery unit along the same lines as applies in some States; and
- The *Electoral Act* be reviewed to achieve harmonisation, where appropriate, with the electoral legislation of the Commonwealth and other States/Territories.

\* See status and comment on issues 1, 4 and 8 on the next page

The current status of the 2005 election report recommendations is detailed in the table below.

**Table 5:** Current status of the 2005 election report recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Status and Comments
1	A fixed poll date be established or, if that is not supported, then the period from the issue of the writ to polling day be extended by at least a week.	The Act has now been amended to fix a poll date but the timetable for extraordinary general elections under the changes is tight and should be extended
2	Commonly exempted advertising items in other jurisdictions also be specifically exempted under the authorisation provisions contained in the Act.	Still supported by the Commission.
3	More detailed guidelines be provided on the processing and assessment procedures in respect to declaration votes for unenrolled electors.	Still supported by the Commission.
4	Allow for the issue of postal and pre-poll votes as soon as practicable after the close of nominations.	The Act has now been amended to provide for this.
5	Allow electors to lodge an application for a postal vote for a nominated period of up to one year, at any time or at least once the final year of the current Parliament has commenced.	Still supported by the Commission although fixed term elections will address some of the problems that generated this recommendation.
6	The NTEC examine options for using electronic means to enhance services to remote, interstate and overseas electors and the Act be amended to permit the application of electronic voting means where secure and certain prescribed circumstances exist.	Still supported by the Commission.
7	Additional funding for a public awareness information program for remote communities is provided to the NTEC once parliament has served its first three years.	The Commission will make a submission for an advance of funding for the fixed general election (that will include an allocation for public awareness) in the financial year preceding the now fixed election.
8	Establish a how-to-vote card distribution service for mobile polling that is overseen by the NTEC.	The Commission has reviewed its position following the 2008 election and now supports the view that NT legislation should reflect Commonwealth legislation as part of the current harmonisation initiative (see 8.3) and also bearing in mind the problems associated with any implementation and reduced party concern at the 2008 poll.
9	Amend Section 78 of the Act to more specifically set the criteria for the selection of locations for mobile polling.	Still supported by the Commission.
10	Allow the draw for positions on the ballot paper to be conducted at sites determined by the Electoral Commissioner.	Still supported by the Commission.
11	Allow the roll as at roll close be made available to all candidates, subject to an appropriate undertaking being made by the candidate that restricts its electoral usage to the election period only.	Still supported by the Commission.
12	Amend the financial disclosure provisions to set Territory specific reporting thresholds and allow redesign of the returns so as to draw identical information from both endorsed and unendorsed candidates.	The Commonwealth are currently reviewing their disclosure legislation with a view to a reduction in its thresholds that is likely to be in the realm of the current NT threshold. The NTEC would support replication of Commonwealth thresholds if they are around current NT limits. Mirroring thresholds has a number of administration and reporting benefits for both the NTEC and the parties. It would also harmonise legislation and practice.
13	Allow for the destruction of electoral papers relating to a general election to occur at the discretion of the Electoral Commission once returns can no longer be disputed.	Still supported by the Commission.

The NTEC is committed to implementing the following suggested improvements in preparation for general elections in 2012:

- Establishing a joint enrolment program with the AEC over a four year cycle that improves the accuracy of the rolls for NT general elections and other major electoral events;
- Lodging postal votes to eastern Barkly addresses directly at Mt Isa post office as part of the initial regional dispatches;
- Scheduling a simultaneous review of the general postal voter register and a promotion of registered postal voting services in the lead up to future fixed elections;
- Exploring possible enhancements to the lay-out, detail and presentation of the postal vote certificate envelope to minimise any involuntary errors in completion by electors;
- Appointing pre-poll centres at Mt Isa and selected overseas locations;
- Appointing mobile polling locations at appropriate locations outside NT borders;
- Exploring opportunities to provide more interpreter support at polling places; and
- Exploring on-line training possibilities for polling staff with other State/Territory Commissions.

## 4.2 Council By-Elections

The NTEC expected that at least six by-elections might occur in the 2009-10 reporting year based on the history of vacancies occurring when ATSIC elections operated. In fact 14 elections were initiated: 13 by-elections and one supplementary. In eight of the elections, the number of nominations coincided with the number of vacancies and were uncontested, five were contested and one failed. The failed by-election drew no nominations for the single vacancy and as a consequence, a supplementary election was scheduled and one nomination was received.

By-elections require the same amount of planning and co-ordination by the NTEC up to the close of nominations whether they are contested or not. Work undertaken up until the close of nominations includes the preparation of artwork, a webpage, a statutory notice inviting nominations and advertising the roll close date, distributing nomination packs, provisionally costing the program, organising a roll close with the AEC, planning mobile polling routes, selecting polling places, establishing contact with the government printer and making preliminary arrangements for advertising polling, including early and postal voting, in case of requirements after nomination close.

**Table 6:** Local government election details 2009-10, conducted by NTEC

COUNCIL	ELECTION DESCRIPTORS										BALLOT PAPERS			TURNOUT				
	D/AS Managed	Scheduled polling day	Election Type	Ward	No. on Roll	No. Vacancies	Nominations Received			Members Elected	C/U	Formal		Informal		Total	No	%
							M	F	Total			No	%	No	%			
Roper Gulf	D	29-Aug-09	By	Yugul Mangi	1400	1	1	0	1	1	U							
West Arnhem	D	29-Oct-09	By	Gunbalanya	731	1	2	0	2	1	C	237	90.5	25	9.5	262	262	35.8
Central Desert	A/S	25-Nov-09	By	Anmatjere	1009	1	1	0	1	1	U							
Central Desert	A/S	25-Nov-09	By	South Tanami	900	3	1	2	3	3	U							
Roper Gulf	D	9-Dec-09	By	Nyirranggulung	869	1	1	1	2	2	C	394	96.3	15	3.7	409	409	47.1
East Arnhem	D	17-Mar-10	By	Gumurr Gatjirk	1232	1	1	0	1	1	U							
West Arnhem	D	13-Mar-10	By	Kakadu	744	1	1	0	1	1	U							
West Arnhem	D	13-Mar-10	By	Maninirrida	1451	1	0	0	0	0	F							
West Arnhem	D	22-Apr-10	Supp	Maninirrida	1451	1	1	0	1	1	U							
Darwin City	D	17-Apr-10	By	Chan	9735	1	2	3	5	1	C	5848	94.0	372	6.0	6220	6220	63.9
Litchfield	D	19-Jun-10	By	Central	2298	1	0	1	1	1	U							
Coomalie CGC	D	19-Jun-10	By	Adelaide River Rural	81	1	1	1	2	1	C	42	95.5	2	4.5	44	44	54.3
Coomalie CGC	D	19-Jun-10	By	Batchelor Township	190	1	1	1	2	1	C	89	97.8	2	2.2	91	91	47.9
West Arnhem	D	15-Jul-10	By	Gunbalanya	705	1	1	0	1	1	U							

### Legend

D Darwin	By	By-election	M	Male	C	Contested election
AS Alice Springs	Supp	Supplementary Election	F	Female	U	Uncontested election

**Table 7: Age range of candidates and elected members 2009-10**

Council	Ward	By-election Candidates by Age range							By-election Elected Members by Age Range								
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Not given	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Not given	Total
Roper Gulf	Yugul Mangi					1		1					1			1	
West Arnhem	Gunbalanya					1	1	2					1			1	
Central Desert	Anmatjere		1					1		1						1	
Central Desert	Southern Tanami		1		2			3		1		2				3	
Roper Gulf	Nyirranggulung		1				1	2							1	1	
East Arnhem	Gumurr Gatjirrk			1				1			1					1	
West Arnhem	Kakadu						1	1							1	1	
West Arnhem	Maninigrida (Supp)		1					1		1						1	
Darwin	Chan			1	2	2		5				1				1	
Litchfield	Central				1			1				1				1	
Coomalie CGC	Adelaide River Rural			1		1		2					1			1	
Coomalie CGC	Batchelor Township					2		2					1			1	
West Arnhem	Gunbalanya					1		1					1			1	
<b>Total</b>			4	3	5	8	0	3	23	0	3	1	4	5	0	2	15

The CEO of Barkly Shire continued to conduct that council's own by-elections this financial year as returning officer (RO). All other by-elections since October 2008 have been NTEC managed. Two councils are known to have made standing appointments for the Electoral Commissioner to be RO for the current council term, with one council already appointing the Electoral Commission as RO for the 2012 general elections.

The NTEC refined its processes for the shire by-elections, its service delivery mechanisms and the content of public awareness materials. Advertising and procedural templates were developed and a guide and checklists for the deputy RO managing the by-election. A closer rapport than that which was possible at the general election was developed with council staff at all levels. The experience gained is expected to impact favourably on the delivery of LG services in 2012, if the NTEC is appointed as RO.

An initiative pursued with the support of the Government Printing Office allows a ballot paper image to be emailed to NTEC offices following approval in order to issue postal ballot papers as early as possible in the voting period.

The NTEC provided the Minister for Local Government with a comprehensive report on the conduct of the 2008 shire and rural council elections. This report is now available on the NTEC website. The Commission will work through issues raised in the report during working party sessions with officers of the DHLGRS. A review of forms and procedures used at local government elections is underway following the experience gained at the 2008 elections.

The NTEC was asked by LGANT to speak at a meeting for council CEOs in March 2010. The subject of representation reviews was broached by the NTEC (see Part 2.8) and the report on the 2008 council elections was discussed along with a summary of each council's notional share of the general election costs. Councils were reminded of the services the NTEC can provide for the conduct of elections and that where the Electoral Commissioner is appointed RO, the NTEC only charges marginal costs to the council.

Under previous legislation the time limit for holding an election was prescribed as 12 months prior to the next general elections but this is no longer the case. Nevertheless, in the twelve months prior to the general council elections scheduled for March 2012, the NTEC would expect to be appointed to manage fewer by-elections as councils, after 31 March 2011, exercise their option to adopt a policy to fill a vacancy by appointment rather than at a by-election.

Ideally, the number of by-elections would be kept to an absolute minimum after 1 July 2011. Preparations must be made for the 2012 elections and this includes publicising the outcomes of elector representation reviews. Any by-election in the last 12 months would need to be held on current boundaries and representation arrangements and therefore may cause voter confusion in the run-up to the 2012 elections.

### 4.3 Fixed elections 2012

As currently scheduled, two whole of Territory electoral events are timetabled five months apart in March and August 2012.

During the first half of 2009, the NTEC looked at the likely calendar of events over a 5 year period (2009-2013) when considering its joint program of activities with the AEC and likely demands on resources over that timeframe. This was briefly revisited during the reporting year to accommodate the NTEC's rising workload and emerging tasks that included:

- Re-location of the electoral premises in Alice Springs (completed October 2009);
- Planning for the re-location of the Darwin office (expected early 2011);
- Involvement in discussions on LA and LG electoral legislation;
- On-going LG by-election and fee-for-service election activities;
- Certain topical research activities.

The NTEC accommodated the implications of set-term elections and a focus on a 2012 state of preparedness in workload assessment and discussions on service delivery and programs during the reporting year. The following key tasks were addressed:

- Restructuring of the roll objection program after representation to the AEC concerning the impact on the quality of the LA and council rolls caused by AEC delays in removing electors who had left their address;
- Honing of public awareness materials for council by-elections to refine election messages; this will have a spin-off effect for LA election messages;
- Organisation of the polling and associated public awareness programs on preferred polling days and routes;
- The establishment of working relationships with key local stakeholders leading to improved community support for election activities.

The NTEC plans to develop its programs in its key strategic areas during the course of 2011 in preparation for the two major events:

- The roll – integrity and enrolment stimulation;
- Public awareness - including the website;
- Election services - remote mobile polling, voting services, electoral official training, materials and equipment, transport arrangements;
- Corporate support - accommodation, project and election staff recruitment /secondment, ITC infrastructure and system support, identification of cost centres, role of the Alice Springs office.

The Commission is fully aware that it will be dependent on positive liaison and interaction with other agencies, including councils, the AEC, interstate electoral authorities, DBE and DHLGRS to ensure that its planning results in the delivery of an efficient and effective major event program.

## 4.4 Fee-for-Service Elections

Section 309(h) & (i) of the Act allows the Commission to conduct ballots for persons and organisations and to provide, on payment of a fee, electoral goods and services using information or material in its possession or expertise acquired in the exercise of its functions. Fee-for-service ballots are conducted for government and non-government organisations for purposes set out in their rules, including the endorsement of enterprise agreements, the election of office holders and the holding of plebiscites.

The NTEC managed four fee-for-service elections in 2009-10:

- National Trust of Australia (NT);
- Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Programmes Unit (CAAAPU)
- Nguiu Ullintjinni Association; and
- Association of NT School Education Leaders (ANTSEL).

The NTEC was approached by ANTSEL, the Multicultural Council (NT) and Remote Health to provide input to their frameworks for the conduct of elections or EBA ballots for their organisations. It rejected a number of requests from organisations seeking support for their elections, which had either already commenced or left no time for rule updates before a scheduled commencement date.

The Commission conducted elections for office-holders for the Central Land Council in Tennant Creek in April 2010, at the request of the AEC. It also contributed to the update of rules governing that election.

**Table 8:** Details of the fee-for-service elections conducted 2009-10

Organisation	Poll Date	Ballot		Voting Method	No. Electors
		Type	No. Positions		
National Trust of Australia (NT)	7.08.2009	P	12	Pref	255
CAAPU	28.11.2009	A	9 Directors	Multi-member FPP	29
Nguiu Ullintjinni Association	9.12.2009	A	8	Pref	Nguiu Roll used
ANTSEL	11.06.2010	P	5	FPP	182

### Legend

Ballot type		Voting method	
A	Attendance ballot	FPP	First Past the Post
P	Postal ballot	Pref	Preferential

## 4.5 Assistance for Inter-Jurisdiction Elections

Under reciprocal arrangements between state/territory electoral commissions, the NTEC provides access to polling facilities at the NTEC head office in Darwin and at MyVote Central in Alice Springs for eligible electors from other jurisdictions who are in the Territory when an election or referendum is called in their home state.

During the reporting period, staff provided inter-state voting services for the elections set out below.

**Table 9:** Provision of voting services for inter-jurisdictional elections

Jurisdiction	Poll date	Election type	Chamber	District/Division	Electors Voting		
					Darwin	A/S	Total
Tas	01.08.09	By	LC	Pembroke	3	-	3
WA	28.11.09	By	LA	Willagee	-	-	0
VIC	31.02.10	By	LA	Altona	1	-	1
Tas	20.03.10	GE	HA	All	9	12	21
SA	20.03.10	GE	HA & LC	All	276	104	380
Tas	01.05.10	GE	LC	Apsley, Elwick	-	-	0
NSW	19.06.10	By	LA	Penrith	1	-	1
		<b>2 GE, 5 By</b>			<b>290</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>406</b>

#### Legend

Election type		Chamber		Voting location	
By	By-election	HA	House of Assembly	A/S	Alice Springs Office
GE	General Election	LA	Legislative Assembly		
		LC	Legislative Council		

In 2010-2011, the NTEC anticipates providing support to the AEC for the forthcoming federal elections and to interstate visitors from Victoria and New South Wales who are in the NT during set term elections in those states in November 2010 and March 2011 respectively.

## 4.6 Disclosure

The Act requires annual disclosure returns by registered parties, associated entities and donors, and election specific disclosure by candidates, donors, publishers and broadcasters. The return requires parties to disclose their donations received above \$1500 and expenditure during the year. Donors to parties are also required to furnish a return to the Commission within 20 weeks of the end of the financial year. Further requirements to lodge returns occur whenever an LA election or by-election is held.

All registered parties lodged their annual returns for 2008-09 within the prescribed timeframes and the returns were displayed on the NTEC website. Following a comparison with Commonwealth disclosure details for NT registered parties, it was noted that a number of entities failed to disclose donations that were above the NT threshold but below the Commonwealth threshold and corrections that needed to be effected. Parties will be reminded of their obligation [NTEA s196(2)] to prompt donors, including associated entities, contributing to them to comply with NT disclosure provisions and the threshold of \$1500.

There were no elections requiring candidates to submit disclosure returns.

Discussions have been held between Electoral Commissioners regarding the operational implications of having different reporting provisions at state and federal levels. Changes made to the CEA in 2006 significantly increased reporting thresholds for donations to federal political parties, generally increasing tenfold the amount at which donations need to be disclosed. The provisions did not apply to donations made in accordance with NT legislation; however, the result was that the separate Acts no longer have the same reporting thresholds. In 2008 the federal government sought to change the CEA again to reduce the disclosure threshold for political donations, ban foreign donations, tie public funding of elections to genuine election expenditure and return



disclosure thresholds to a similar position to that before. This legislation was defeated in the Senate in late 2008.

In the absence of new federal legislation, the NTEC continues to operate a reporting regime with lower thresholds and stricter reporting requirements than applies under the Commonwealth Act. Registered parties will effectively not be able to lodge their Commonwealth return to meet NT disclosure obligations as originally contemplated in the NT *Electoral Act*.

#### **4.7 Northern Territory Statehood**

The NTEC has liaised with the Statehood Steering Committee Executive Officer occasionally on matters of common interest. As the likely administrator of any future plebiscite, the NTEC has continued to distance itself from the Committee's general operations so as to preserve a non-partisan position.

#### **4.8 Targets 2010-11**

- Maintain the NTEC's responsiveness to requests for the Electoral Commissioner to act as RO for council elections.
- Liaise with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment over enterprise agreement ballots in 2010-11.
- Contribute to discussions on the legislative framework for both NT parliamentary and local government elections with a view to identifying enhancements required in the light of operational experience and of harmonising NT and Commonwealth legislation, where appropriate.
- Provide electoral services to the Australian, Victorian and New South Wales electoral commissions for their next general elections in 2010-2011.
- Research alternatives to the scanning of hard copy certified lists to capture non-voter data e.g. the use of netbook computers or other electronic devices to mark off the roll as trialled in other jurisdictions or, in the case of the ACT and Tasmania, as used at recent general elections.
- Monitor and contribute, where appropriate, to developments related to the holding of a constitutional convention in 2011 and any subsequent referendum.

## **5. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

### **Objective - Outcome**

**An agency that provides the necessary staff and infrastructure to meet corporate and operational obligations.**

The NTEC has a small complement of full and part-time staff. It draws on other NT government agencies for specialized support and input in the following areas:

- Finance – Treasury;
- IT, payroll, procurement, property, recruitment - Department of Business and Employment (DBE);
- Personnel - the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE).

### **5.1 Human Resource Management**

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

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

The NTEC responded to the Commissioner for Public Employment concerning the Commission's compliance with the prescribed principles of human resource (HR) management during the reporting year. No grievance disputes arose during the year.

#### **Equal Opportunity**

The NTEC selects its staff, including temporary and casual office staff, on the basis of merit based employment criteria. Staff for polling places and the mobile polling programs are chosen using merit based criteria, subject to the exigencies of the election timetable. All employees, including casual staff, must sign an acceptance and 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.

The Commission promotes gender balance in recruitment programs to facilitate appropriate dialogue with electors, particularly for enrolment, electoral awareness and election activities in communities. Though no major electoral events occurred during the year, the policy was applied in selecting staff for mobile polling teams to ensure an appropriate balance in service to remote communities in particular.

#### **Equity and Diversity**

The NT has diverse communities of electors populating a geographically wide area. The NTEC supports the recruitment of personnel able to communicate and interact with these communities, regardless of any perceived barriers presented by gender, language, ethnicity, disadvantage or any physical or other impairment. During the year, the agency contributed to forums discussing a whole of government 'Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy' (IECDS) and will be developing an in-house policy supportive of the IECDS agenda.

As indicated above, recruitment for casual mobile polling positions took into account the desirability to have a gender mix on all teams visiting remote and urban communities and care facilities.

## **Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)**

The agency is mindful of risks that may occur in the office and field situations. It is exploring the use of appropriate GPS technology with the AEC for use by mobile teams in remote areas. Ideally a combination of GPS/enrolment software could be utilised on the same equipment carried by mobile teams.

Powerpoint presentation material and hard copy training manuals incorporate reference to safe working practices and a verbal reminder reinforces the message at training sessions.

No safety issues were reported during the year.

## **Flexible Work Practices**

The agency was able to allow flex-time to be accrued and taken during the year, whilst meeting operational commitments for the various elections that took place. As many elections close or are finalised after hours or at weekends, the NTEC liaises closely with staff to ensure operational needs are met and mutually acceptable overtime and time-in-lieu arrangements are maintained.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

The agency lost three staff during the year, one of whom played a key role in public awareness and corporate activities, the other two in election operational roles. No recruitment has as yet taken place for those positions due to restructuring. Two short-term positions were maintained for corporate support, one in Darwin and one in Alice Springs. Longer term contract positions gave rigour to key positions for enrolment/representation, education/ public awareness, election support and regional co-ordinator activities.

An advertisement was placed in the NT News late in the reporting year seeking expressions of interest from persons interested in casual electoral employment and 49 responses were received. Details were passed on to the AEC from those applicants who agreed to this in writing. All electoral administrations around the country have found it increasingly difficult in recent years to recruit election casuals.

An HR professional was contracted to review six positions within the agency. A comprehensive process was initiated to draw on contributions from all staff. The positions were assessed and evaluated before the end of the reporting year and recruitment to a new structure is expected during 2010-11.

### **Darwin office**

The NTEC as at June 2010 had a small permanent staff complement of four persons. It was also funding the CEO (longer term contract), one supernumary in the public awareness and education area and two short-term contract officers - a senior project officer and an electoral services officer. Additional casual support was being given to the corporate services area.

### **Alice Springs office**

The Alice office was relocated in the first quarter of the reporting year and was subsequently staffed by a contract regional coordinator and 2 part-time employees. The office redefined its work objectives to focus on the southern region.

Occasional casual support was required for administrative purposes in both locations. The challenge for the NTEC will be to fill the vacant positions in the Darwin and Alice Springs offices with recruits capable of meeting the agency's intense operational demands over the next couple of years.

## **Employee Expenses**

Ongoing employee expenses are normally funded from the appropriation budget, with separate arrangements made for staff employed for elections, election project work and for secondments. In 2008-09, during which the NTEC conducted two major elections, employee expenses were approximately \$1 992 000, or 44% of total expenditure for the year. In 2009-10, this fell to \$1 215 000, 51 % of total expenditure.

Employee expenditure can be affected by fluctuations in the number of LA and local government general and by-elections and the need to recruit more staff in the lead up to general elections for planning and for program implementation.

In the 2007-08 funding allocations, the agency was granted an additional \$250 000 for two years (2008-09 and 2009-10) for increased capacity to support core electoral services across the Territory, mostly generated by additional functions under the Electoral Act 2004, the establishment of local services in Alice Springs and subsequent local government reform. This funding will be ongoing from 2010-11.

As indicated, the NTEC organisation structure was reviewed during the year to provide for an adequacy of ongoing positions in Darwin and Alice Springs to maintain electoral services throughout the Territory, but this may need to be revisited as the operational workload of the agency continues to grow inexorably due to its ever increasing local government activities.

An HR consultant was employed to:

- Oversee JAQ and JES documentation for a restructure, subsequently scored and approved by the relevant evaluation committees; and
- Provide a performance development framework for the agency.

The approach employed for both projects was consultative and consensus seeking for gathering staff input to the processes.

## **Election Staff**

Expenditure on election staff depends on the frequency of electoral events and whether they proceed to poll following nominations. If the election is contested a full polling program, including officials to provide voting services, needs to be implemented. For general elections, there is now more clarity in timing, with LA elections having fixed terms and council elections scheduled for March every four years.

A number of casual election staff was employed for mobile polling teams in the three remote shires that went to poll, although the NTEC also takes advantage of by-elections to offer electoral development opportunities for its own and AEC electoral staff. The Chan Ward by-election afforded excellent experience for staff in urban mobile and static polling, especially as the ward included Nightcliff, which is the largest polling place in the Territory.

## **Employee Development Activities**

As a small agency, the NTEC requires staff to be conversant with its core business and have the capacity to work across positions. The NTEC has commenced rotating staff across different election projects to develop multi-skilling, to expand the total staff knowledge base and to reduce agency risk.

The NTEC has signalled the need to adopt improved training techniques and materials for permanent officers and casual staff undertaking parliamentary and local government elections. The NTEC is part of a national group of electoral commissions from other States and the ACT developing on-line training for polling officials. This initiative is expected to better cope with the high turnover of polling staff between elections and the difficulties of organising training at central venues for elections that take place across the Territory.

Set term elections will allow a re-appraisal of training and on-the-job support for seconded staff assigned to regional co-ordinator positions. The agency is seeking to reinforce the leadership capacities of certain positions in the Commission's emerging structure and to enhance the skill set of existing employees in the limited windows of opportunity available after meeting ad-hoc election and inter-jurisdictional commitments.

### **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. At 30 June 2010, 36 carers were registered as postal voters.

Three NTEC staff were granted carers' leave during the reporting year.

## **5.2 Corporate Management**

An operational plan is to be developed for program and service delivery requirements for the newly introduced fixed date LA general elections, next scheduled for 2012. The plan will take into account the possibility of the NTEC being appointed by councils to play a significant role in the concurrent municipal and shire council elections in March 2012.

### **IT Directions**

DBE provides the NTEC with ITC support. Internally, responsibility for day to day ITC matters and specialised IT tools rests with the NTEC's Business Manager. Whole of government contracts determine providers for most telecommunication, hardware, generic software and helpdesk support.

#### **ITC hardware**

NTEC desktop hardware is refreshed on a rotational basis with the last refresh undertaken prior to the 2008 elections. Wide screens for graphic work were secured during the year and the agency has flagged its requirements for any refresh of hardware to take place well prior to the 2012 elections.

#### **Software**

The agency normally waits for any whole of government directives to upgrade its Windows operating environment or Microsoft Office Suite of packages. This will be assessed in a review of the agency hardware /software capacity for the 2012 operating year.

Whole of government contracts in the ITC area were renegotiated during the reporting year and will be effective in 2010-2011. The move to a SharePoint platform for government websites impacted on the NTEC's redevelopment of its website, originally planned using a Dot Net Nuke base.

During August and September 2009, the NTEC responded to the political climate and alerted its ITC stakeholders concerning a possible need for support in the event of an extraordinary election. Logistics and locations were explored and put on hold pending any developments.

The NTEC is also supporting a cross jurisdictional project to develop a program and materials for distance training of polling officials over the internet. It has also noted the request of the Redistribution Committees that IT tools, including mapping and statistical software, be examined with a view to them being available for the next LA redistribution.

## **EasyCount**

EasyCount has been identified as the preferred count software for complex local government election counts in 2012 and procurement will be effected next financial year.

## **Election management system (EMS)**

The establishment of a new EMS is a complex and significant task. Options for a new EMS for the NTEC are still being investigated. Support for development and implementation is likely from DBE.

## **In-design**

A software update was acquired and training given for two additional users of In-design, a package used to develop public awareness materials for the agency.

## **RMANS – the roll management system**

NTEC users were introduced by the AEC to GENESIS, the replacement for RMANS that is expected to go live in 2012-13. As stated earlier, NTEC users were given additional RMANS access to enable the downloading of roll data.

## **Provision of Services by DBE and external ITC provider/s**

Liaison officers from DBE and government contracted providers gave IT support throughout the year. To better manage risks, the NTEC gives prior advice to DBE when it might need critical IT support. Monthly meetings are held to monitor ITC needs. The assignment of liaison officers by DBE facilitates quicker response times and provides a level of expertise not present in the Commission.

## **Insurance Reporting**

Over the course of 2009-10, the NTEC made no self insurance or commercial insurance claims in any insurable risk category 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 seeks to:

- Maintain, update and improve the agency's '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;
- Maintain and update the agencies OH&S instructions, guides and checklists, ensuring information and procedures are relevant to operational requirements;
- Provide mandated training on OH&S issues for all field officers and senior polling officials; and
- Limit mobile polling schedules to eight hour shifts, where possible, and issue mobile polling teams with appropriate safety equipment which includes EPIRBs and mobile satellite phones.

## **Records Management**

With respect to the Commissioner's responsibilities pursuant to section 131 of the *Information Act*, the agency has implemented processes to achieve compliance with the archives and records management provisions as prescribed in Part 9 of the *Information Act*.

## **5.3 NTEC Office Premises**

### **Alice Springs Office**

The NTEC received Government approval to relocate its electoral office in Alice Springs from Leichhardt Terrace to more suitable shopfront premises in the CBD. The office opened in October 2009.

The new office has been named 'MyVote Central' and operates under a joint arrangement between the NTEC and the AEC, a partnership that enables a broad range of services to be provided to the central Australian region. The office also acts as a service hub for remote communities in other parts of central Australia, including the provision of voting facilities for interstate jurisdictions at their various State general and by-elections. It is the only joint Commonwealth and State/Territory electoral office in Australia

'MyVote Central' offers a seamless one-stop shop for enrolment, elections and electoral education for schools and community groups, as well as an in-house training and education space, supported by state of the art video-conferencing, which can accommodate up to 30 people.

A number of electoral services and educational programs were provided during the year, including:

- A visit to Utopia School at Arlparra for about 30 students, with an age range from 12-18 years;
- An impromptu training session for a group of around 30 students (age range 14-15 years) and two teachers from Harts Range Primary School;
- An education program followed by a school election at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Senior Campus for 350 students (age range 15-18 years); about 30 teachers and some parents attended, all of whom were entitled to vote at the school;
- A non-parliamentary election at CAAAPU (Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol Prevention Unit) – election of 9 directors;
- Co-ordination centre for council by-elections for the Anmatjere and Southern Tanami Wards of the Central Desert Shire;
- Roll reviews in town camps conducted in conjunction with the AEC; and
- The election for office holders of the Central Land Council on behalf of the AEC.

### **Darwin Office**

The proprietors of the AANT Building have requested all tenants to vacate the building by March 2011. This has increased the urgency of relocating the NTEC to suitable premises. As part of a whole of government strategic plan for office accommodation, the NTEC has been allocated \$710 000 to relocate to alternative premises.

## **5.4 Targets 2010-11**

- Relocate the NTEC's Darwin office by March 2011.
- Progress discussions with preferred providers on election management, count and redistribution software.
- Complete recruitment processes for permanent and election project positions.
- Prepare a corporate plan for the 2012 general elections.

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT

### Financial Performance

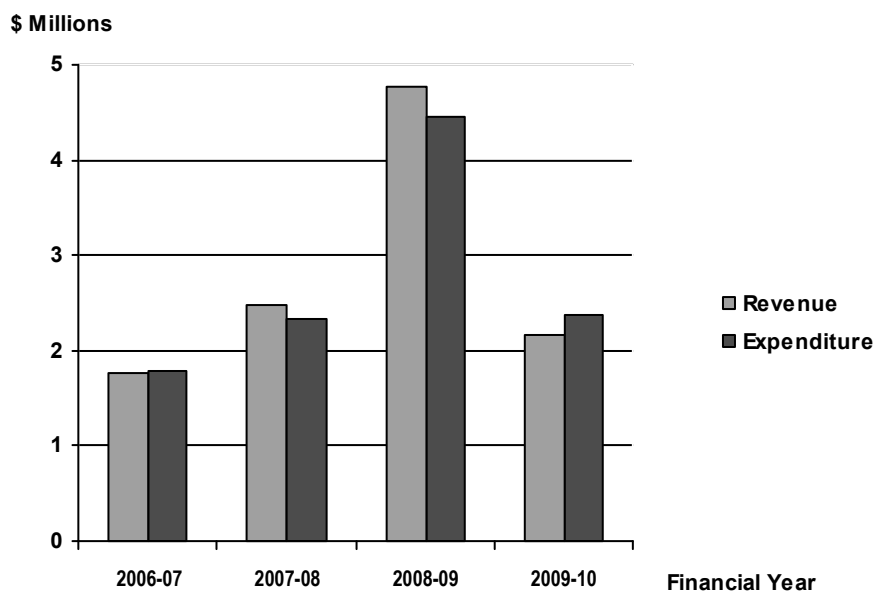
During the year, the agency's expenditure moved from \$1.906 million to \$2.331 million as a result of the following expense increases:

- \$230 000 approved by a carry-over request, representing funds received late in 2008-09 from Treasury and the Department of Local Government to cover the balance of expenses incurred in the conduct of the 2008 inaugural shire elections;
- \$105 000 approved by a carry-over request, recognising revenue received at the end of 2008-09 by the Australian Electoral Commission for 2009-10 NTEC services under an inter-agency agreement ;
- \$70 000 approved by a carry-over request, representing unexpended monies granted for the redevelopment and modernising of the NTEC's internet site; and
- \$20 000 increase in depreciation and amortisation.

Overall income for the year was \$2.170 million and expenses incurred were \$2.382 million. With approval granted to carry over \$428 000, this produced an operating deficit of \$212 000.

The graph below 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 2008.

**Graph:** Revenue/expenditure financial years 2006-07 to 2009-10





## 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.

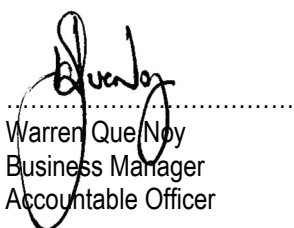
We further state that the information set out in the Comprehensive Operating Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to and forming part of the financial statements, presents fairly the financial performance and cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2010 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.



.....  
Bill Shephard  
Electoral Commissioner  
Chief Finance Officer

31 August 2010



.....  
Warren Que Noy  
Business Manager  
Accountable Officer

31 August 2010

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT  
For the year ended 30 June 2010**

	NOTE	2010 \$'000	2009 \$'000
<b>INCOME</b>			
Taxation Revenue			
<i>Grants and Subsidies Revenue</i>			
Current			
Capital			
Appropriation			
Output		1 703	3 165
Commonwealth			
Sales of Goods and Services		34	1 051
Interest Revenue			
Goods and Services Received Free of Charge	4	432	550
Gain on Disposal of Assets	5		
Other Income		1	5
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2 170</b>	<b>4 771</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Employee Expenses <sup>(2)</sup>		1 215	1 992
<i>Administrative Expenses</i>			
Purchases of Goods and Services	6	704	1 895
Repairs and Maintenance		2	6
Depreciation and Amortisation	10	29	7
Other Administrative Expenses <sup>(1)</sup>		432	550
<i>Grants and Subsidies Expenses</i>			
Current			
Capital			
Community Service Obligations			
Interest Expenses	16		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2 382</b>	<b>4 450</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>		<b>(212)</b>	<b>321</b>

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Additional staffing costs for the newly established MyVote Central in Alice Springs

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
BALANCE SHEET  
As at 30 June 2010**

	NOTE	2010 \$'000	2009 \$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Deposits	7	511	663
Receivables	8	28	29
Inventories	9		
Advances and Investments			
Prepayments		0	64
Other Assets			
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		539	756
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Receivables	8		
Advances and Investments			
Property, Plant and Equipment	10	331	40
Intangibles			
Biological Assets			
Heritage and Cultural Assets			
Prepayments			
Other Assets			
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		331	40
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		870	796
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Deposits Held		0	1
Payables	11	(84)	(29)
Borrowings and Advances			
Provisions	12	(110)	(119)
Other Liabilities	13		
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		(194)	(147)
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Borrowings and Advances			
Provisions	12	(24)	(44)
Other Liabilities	13		
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		(24)	(44)
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		(218)	(191)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		652	605
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Capital		(258)	0
Reserves	14		
Accumulated Funds		(394)	(605)
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		(652)	(605)

*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 2010

	NOTE	Equity at 1 July \$'000	Compre- hensive result \$'000	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners \$'000	Equity at 30 June \$'000
<b>2009-10</b>					
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>		606	(212) <sup>(1)</sup>	0	394
Changes in Accounting Policy					
Correction of Prior Period Errors					
Transfers from Reserves					
Other Movements Directly to Equity					
		606	(212)	0	394
<b>Reserves</b>	14				
<b>Capital - Transactions with Owners</b>					
Equity Injections					
Capital Appropriation					
Equity Transfers In		0	0	258	258
Other Equity Injections					
Specific Purpose Payments					
National Partnership Payments					
Commonwealth - Capital					
Equity Withdrawals					
Capital Withdrawal					
Equity Transfers Out					
		0	0	258	258
<b>Total Equity at End of Financial Year</b>		606	(212)	258	652
<b>2008-09</b>					
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>		284	321	0	605
Changes in Accounting Policy					
Correction of Prior Period Errors					
Transfers from Reserves					
Other Movements Directly to Equity					
		284	321	0	605
<b>Reserves</b>	14				
<b>Capital - Transactions with Owners</b>					
Equity Injections					
Capital Appropriation					
Equity Transfers In					
Other Equity Injections		0	0	281	281
Specific Purpose Payments					
National Partnership Payments					
Commonwealth - Capital					
Equity Withdrawals					
Capital Withdrawal					
Equity Transfers Out					
		(281)	0	281	0
<b>Total Equity at End of Financial Year</b>		3	321	281	605

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

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

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

	NOTE	2010 \$'000	2009 \$'000
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Operating Receipts</b>			
Taxes Received			
<i>Grants and Subsidies Received</i>			
Current			
Capital			
Appropriation			
Output		1 703	3 165
Commonwealth			
Receipts From Sales of Goods And Services		98	1 225
Interest Received			
<b>Total Operating Receipts</b>		1 801	4 390
<b>Operating Payments</b>			
Payments to Employees		(1 238)	(1 947)
Payments for Goods and Services		(655)	(2 105)
<i>Grants and Subsidies Paid</i>			
Current			
Capital			
Community Service Obligations			
Interest Paid			
<b>Total Operating Payments</b>		(1 893)	(4 052)
<b>Net Cash From/(Used In) Operating Activities</b>	15	(92)	338
<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		(61)	(17)
Advances and Investing Payments			
<b>Total Investing Payments</b>		(61)	(17)
<b>Net Cash From/(Used In) Investing Activities</b>		(61)	(17)
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Financing Receipts</b>			
Proceeds of Borrowings			
Deposits Received		1	(1)
<i>Equity Injections</i>			
Capital Appropriation			
Commonwealth Appropriation			
Other Equity Injections			281
<b>Total Financing Receipts</b>		1	280
<b>Financing Payments</b>			
Repayment of Borrowings			
Finance Lease Payments			
Equity Withdrawals			
<b>Total Financing Payments</b>			
<b>Net Cash From/(Used In) Financing Activities</b>		1	280
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash Held		(152)	601
Cash at Beginning of Financial Year		663	62
<b>CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	7	511	663

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

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2. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies
3. Comprehensive Operating Statement by Output Group

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NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

## 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 (if appointed) 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:

*AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements (September 2007), AASB 2007-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 101, AASB 2007-10 Further Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 101*

This Standard has been revised and introduces a number of terminology changes as well as changes to the structure of the Comprehensive Operating Statement and Statement of Changes in Equity. Other Comprehensive Income is now disclosed in the Comprehensive Operating Statement and the Statement of Changes in Equity discloses owner changes in equity separately from non-owner changes in equity.

*AASB 2009-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Improving Disclosures about Financial Instruments*

The Standard amends AASB 7 *Financial Instruments: Disclosures* to require enhanced disclosures about fair value measurements. It establishes a three-level hierarchy for making fair value

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

measurements, requiring those financial instruments measured at fair value in the Balance Sheet to be categorised into levels.

*AASB 2009-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards, AASB 2009-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 5, 7, 107, 112, 136 & 139 and Interpretation 17]*

The Standards make editorial amendments to a range of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations. AASB 2009-6 also makes additional amendments as a consequence of the issuance of a revised AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements* (September 2007). These Standards do not impact the Financial Statements.

**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.

<b>Standard/Interpretation</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after</b>	<b>Impact on financial statements</b>
AASB 2009-5 Further amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the annual improvements project [AASB 5, 8, 101, 107, 117, 118, 136 and 139]	Some amendments will result in accounting changes for presentation, recognition or measurement purposes, while other amendments relate to terminology and editorial changes.	1 Jan 2010	
AASB 9 Financial instruments	This standard simplifies requirements for the classification and measurement of financial assets resulting from Phase 1 of the IASB's project to replace IAS 39 <i>Financial instruments: recognition and measurement</i> (AASB 139 <i>Financial Instruments: recognition and measurement</i> ).	1 Jan 2013	

**c) Agency and Territory Items**

The financial statements of the 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.



**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

The Central Holding Authority recognises and records all Territory items, and as such, these items are not included in the Agency's financial statements. However, as the Agency is accountable for certain Territory items managed on behalf of Government, these items have been separately disclosed in note 24 - Schedule of Territory Items.

**d) Comparatives**

Where necessary, comparative information for the 2008-09 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 2009-10 as a result of management decisions.

**g) Accounting Judgements and Estimates**

The preparation of the financial report requires the making of judgements 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 of making the judgements 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.

**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 goods and services tax (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 and National Partnership 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 22.

#### **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 are regularly assessed for obsolescence.

#### **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 \$5,000 are recognised in the year of acquisition and depreciated as outlined below. Items of property, plant and equipment below the \$5,000 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 *Financial Management Framework*, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure is responsible for managing general government capital works projects on a whole of Government basis. Therefore appropriation for the Northern Territory Electoral Commission's capital works is provided directly to the Department of Planning 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 2009-10 and 2008-09.

## 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 arms length transaction.

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

NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

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 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 2009-10 and 2008-09.

**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 and 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.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

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:

- NT 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 19 and are consistent with the requirements contained in AASB 101, AASB 116 and AASB 117.

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 2010

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

As the Commission only has the one Output Group, Electoral Services, reference should be made to the Commission's Operating Statement.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>

**4. GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE**

Corporate and Information Services	432	550
Internal Audits and Reviews		
	432	550

**5. GAIN <sup>(a)</sup> ON DISPOSAL OF ASSETS**

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

**6. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

The net surplus/(deficit) has been arrived at after charging the following expenses:

**Goods and Services Expenses:**

Consultants <sup>(1)</sup>	20	24
Advertising <sup>(2)</sup>	2	1
Marketing and Promotion <sup>(3)</sup>	66	279
Document Production	53	98
Legal Expenses <sup>(4)</sup>	3	0
Recruitment <sup>(5)</sup>	4	0
Training and Study	6	3
Official Duty Fares	31	251
Travelling Allowance	10	57

(1) Includes marketing, promotion and IT consultants.

(2) Does not include recruitment advertising or marketing and promotion advertising.

(3) Includes advertising for marketing and promotion but excludes marketing and promotion consultants' expenses, which are incorporated in the consultants' category.

(4) Includes legal fees, claim and settlement costs.

(5) Includes recruitment related advertising costs.

**7. CASH AND DEPOSITS**

Cash on Hand	1	1
Cash at Bank	510	662
On Call or Short Term Deposits		
	511	663

NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
 For the year ended 30 June 2010

	2010 \$'000	2009 \$'000
<b>8. RECEIVABLES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts Receivable	4	10
Less: Allowance for Impairment Losses	( 0)	( 0)
	4	10
Interest Receivables		
GST Receivables	24	19
Other Receivables		
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Other Receivables		
<b>Total Receivables</b>	28	29
 <b>9. INVENTORIES</b>		
<b>General Inventories</b>		
At cost		
At net realisable value		
<b>Inventories Held for Distribution</b>		
At cost		
At current replacement cost		
<b>Total Inventories</b>	0	0
 <b>10. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>		
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>		
At Fair Value	396	92
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	( 65)	( 52)
	331	40
<b>Total Property, Plant and Equipment</b>	331	40

**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 2010. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.



**NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
For the year ended 30 June 2010

**10. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (Continued)**

**2010 Property, Plant and Equipment Reconciliations**

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2009-10 is set out below:

	Land	Bldgs	Infra- structure	Construction (Work in Progress)	Plant & Equipment	Leased Plant & Equipment	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Carrying Amount as at 1 July 2009</b>					40		40
Additions					61		61
Disposals							
Depreciation					(28)		(28)
Additions/(Disposals) from Administrative Restructuring							
Additions/(Disposals) from Asset Transfers					258 <sup>(1)</sup>		258
Revaluation Increments/(Decrements)							
Impairment Losses							
Impairment Losses Reversed							
Other Movements							
<b>Carrying Amount as at 30 June 2010</b>					331		331

<sup>1</sup> New Alice Springs office fit-out

**2009 Property, Plant and Equipment Reconciliations**

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2008-09 is set out below:

	Land	Bldgs	Infra- structure	Construction (Work in Progress)	Plant & Equipment	Leased Plant & Equipment	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Carrying Amount as at 1 July 2008</b>					30		30
Additions					17		17
Disposals							
Depreciation					(7)		(7)
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 2009</b>					40		40

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	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
<b>11. PAYABLES</b>		
Accounts Payable	(25)	(16)
Accrued Expenses	(59)	(13)
Other Payables	(84)	(29)
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>(84)</b>	<b>(29)</b>
<b>12. PROVISIONS</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
<i>Employee Benefits</i>		
Recreation Leave	(81)	(90)
Leave Loading	(9)	(11)
Other Employee Benefits	(1)	3
<i>Other Current Provisions</i>		
<b>Other Provisions</b>	(19)	(21)
	(110)	(119)
<b>Non-Current</b>		
<i>Employee Benefits</i>		
Recreation Leave	(24)	(44)
Other Employee Benefits		
<i>Other Non-Current Provisions</i>		
<b>Other Provisions</b>	(24)	(44)
<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>(134)</b>	<b>(163)</b>
<p>The Agency employed 11 employees as at 30 June 2010 (12 employees as at 30 June 2009).</p>		
<b>13. OTHER LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Other Liabilities	0	(1)
	0	(1)
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Other Liabilities	0	0
<b>14. RESERVES</b>		
<b>Asset Revaluation Surplus</b>		
(i) Nature and Purpose of the Asset Revaluation Surplus		
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.		
(ii) Movements in the Asset Revaluation Surplus		
<b>Balance as at 1 July</b>	0	0
Increment/(Decrement) - Buildings	0	0
<b>Balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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2010  
\$'000

2009  
\$'000

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

**Reconciliation of Cash**

The total of Agency Cash and Deposits of \$511 000 recorded in the Balance Sheet is consistent with that recorded as 'cash' in the Cash Flow Statement.

**Reconciliation of Net Surplus/(Deficit) to Net Cash From Operating Activities**

<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	(212)	321
<i>Non-Cash Items:</i>		
Depreciation and Amortisation	28	7
Asset Write-Offs/Write-Downs		
Asset Donations/Gifts		
(Gain)/Loss on Disposal of Assets		
<i>Changes in Assets and Liabilities:</i>		
Decrease/(Increase) in Receivables	2	34
Decrease/(Increase) in Inventories		
Decrease/(Increase) in Prepayments	64	(64)
Decrease/(Increase) in Other Assets		
(Decrease)/Increase in Payables	55	(2)
(Decrease)/Increase in Provision for Employee Benefits	(27)	36
(Decrease)/Increase in Other Provisions	(1)	6
(Decrease)/Increase in Other Liabilities		
<b>Net Cash From Operating Activities</b>	<b>(91)</b>	<b>338</b>

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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.

	2010	2009
	\$000	\$000
<b>Financial Assets</b>		
Cash and deposits	511	663
Fair value through profit and 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 and loss (FVTPL):		
Held for trading		
Designated as at FVTPL		
Derivative instruments in designated hedge accounting relationships		
Amortised cost		

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NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
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**16. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)**

**(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.

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.

	<b>Ageing of Receivables \$000</b>	<b>Net Receivables \$000</b>
<b>2009-10</b>		
Not Overdue	28	28
Overdue for less than 30 Days		
Overdue for 30 to 60 Days		
Overdue for more than 60 Days		
<b>Total</b>	<u>28</u>	<u>28</u>
<b>2008-09</b>		
Not Overdue	30	30
Overdue for less than 30 Days		
Overdue for 30 to 60 Days		
Overdue for more than 60 Days		
<b>Total</b>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>

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**16. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)**

**(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.

**2010 Maturity analysis for financial assets & liabilities**

	Variable Interest	Fixed Interest Rate			Non Interest Bearing	Total	Weighted Average
		Less than a Year	1 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years			
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%
<b>Assets</b>							
Cash and deposits					511	511	100
Receivables					28	28	100
Advances							
Investment, loans and placements							
<b>Total Financial Assets:</b>					539	539	100
<b>Liabilities</b>							
Deposits Held							
Payables					(84)	(84)	100
Advances					(110)	(110)	100
Borrowings							
Finance Lease Liabilities							
<b>Total Financial Liabilities:</b>					(194)	(194)	100

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**16. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)**

**2009 Maturity analysis for financial assets & liabilities**

	Variable Interest	Fixed Interest Rate			Non Interest Bearing	Total	Weighted Average
		Less than a Year	1 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years			
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%
<b>Assets</b>							
Cash and deposits					663	663	100
Receivables					30	30	100
Advances					64	64	100
Investment, loans and placements							
<b>Total Financial Assets:</b>					757	757	100
<b>Liabilities</b>							
Deposits Held					1	1	100
Payables					(29)	(29)	100
Advances					(119)	(119)	100
Borrowings							
Finance Lease Liabilities							
<b>Total Financial Liabilities:</b>					(147)	(147)	100

**(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.

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**17. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS**

**a) Contingent liabilities**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at 30 June 2010 or 30 June 2009.

**b) Contingent assets**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at 30 June 2010 or 30 June 2009.

**18. 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.

**19. 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 2009	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance 30 June 2010
Nomination money	100	2 000	1 400	700
	100	2 000	1 400	700

**20. WRITE-OFFS, POSTPONEMENTS AND WAIVERS**

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no write offs, postponements or waivers in 2009-10 and 2008-09.







