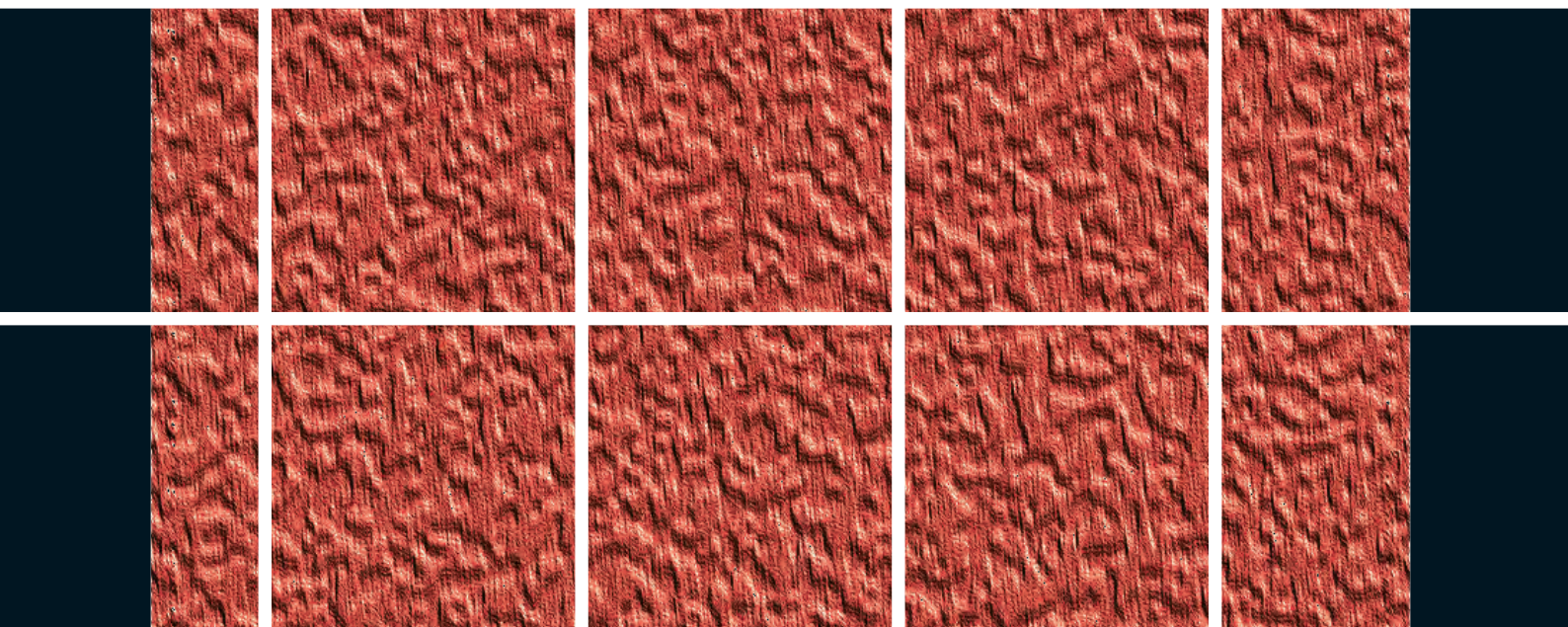


2017-2018
Annual
Report



**Northern Territory
Electoral Commission**
EVERY vote counts!

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GLOSSARY

ADF	Australian Defence Force	KPI	Key performance indicators
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission	JOINT ROLL	The electoral roll or list of electors eligible to vote for Commonwealth, NT and local government elections
ANZSOG	Australia and New Zealand School of Government	JRA	Joint roll arrangement
BCS	Business classification scheme	LA	Legislative Assembly
CDR	Court of Disputed Returns	LG	Local Government
CDU	Charles Darwin University	LGA	<i>Local Government Act</i>
COMMISSION	Northern Territory Electoral Commission	LGANT	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
COMMISSIONER	NT Electoral Commissioner	MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
COR	Close of electoral roll	MyVOTE CENTRAL	The NTEC office in Alice Springs
CRU	Continuous roll update	NT	Northern Territory
DCIS	Department of Corporate and Information Services	NTEC	Northern Territory Electoral Commission
DHCD	Department of Housing and Community Development	NTG	Northern Territory Government
DHS	Department of Human Services	NTLA	NT Legislative Assembly
DISCLOSURE	The disclosure of information to increase transparency and inform the public about the financial dealings of candidates, registered political parties, local branches/sub-party units and their associated entities, donors and other participants in the electoral process	NTPS	Northern Territory Public Service
DLA	Department of the Legislative Assembly	OCPE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
EA	Enterprise agreement	QR14	Quality Roll 2014 – enrolment stimulation program
ECANZ	Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand	REDISTRIBUTION	A redistribution of NT Legislative Assembly boundaries
eLAPPS	electronic Legislative Assembly Polling Place System	REPRESENTATION REVIEWS	A council must review its structure and representation once in every term so imbalances in elector numbers that develop over time between council wards, can be reviewed in order that all electors and communities have a fair say in council decision making
ELECTIONS ACT	ACT Electoral Commission	RMANS	National Roll Management System
EMS	Election Management System	SLA	Service level agreement
ESL	English as a second language	SMS	Short message service (text message)
EVC	Early voting centre	TA	Treasurer's Advance
FDEU	Federal direct enrolment update	TIGER	The Information Gateway to Electoral Resources (NTEC Election Management System)
FOI	Freedom of information	TIMS	Telephone information management system
FOC	Free of charge	TRM	Territory records management
HR	Human resources	WHS	Work, health and safety
ICT	Information and communication technology		
IT	Information technology		
IEPP	Indigenous electoral participation program		

LETTER TO SPEAKER



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

Madam Speaker

I am pleased to provide the Annual Report of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission for the 2017-2018 reporting year.

The report details the Commission's performance, key achievements and outlook for the year ending 30 June 2018. It was prepared in accordance with the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, the *Financial Management Act* and the *Information Act*.

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

Iain Loganathan
Electoral Commissioner

31 October 2018

FOREWORD



The 2017-2018 financial year included the conduct of the 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election.

In August, elections were held for 16 municipal and regional councils across the Northern Territory. Conducting the elections during the dry season significantly reduced costs for councils. These were the first general elections held since amendments to the *Local Government Act* in 2015 deferred the general elections to August 2017. After the 2017 NT Council elections, the Act stipulates that periodic general elections are held every four years, exactly 12 months after the NT Legislative Assembly elections, on the fourth Saturday in August.

The NT Electoral Commission negotiated individual service level agreements with each council that outlined the costs and agreed activities of their elections. These agreements enabled councils to provide resources like staff, premises and vehicles, to assist with the delivery and communication of the elections, and to help offset costs.

In addition to the substantial contributions by the councils, valuable partnerships with the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) greatly enhanced the conduct of the elections. The Commission appreciates their involvement and thanks them for their efforts and commitment.

On 24 March 2018, the City of Palmerston election was held, after being postponed due to the suspension of the council in 2017, and later adjourned for a further week as a result of Cyclone Marcus. Like all council elections since the eligibility criteria was lifted, Palmerston electors utilised early voting and postal voting services in high numbers. Indeed, this was the first election in the Territory where more electors opted to vote early than on election day.

Extensive public awareness campaigns were run for both elections, across many platforms, including extensive use of social media. Direct emails and text messages were sent to electors who had provided these contacts when they enrolled, to promote close of rolls, early voting and election day services. The large influx of reply emails and phone calls following these communications are evidence direct messaging is an effective way to inform electors.

Despite the large numbers of early voters and the widespread public awareness campaigns, voter turnout across both elections was alarmingly low. At the 2017 NT Council elections, 60 per cent of enrolled electors voted (down to just 30 per cent in regional and remote areas), while the City of Palmerston election had a 64 per cent turnout rate. Increasing voter participation, particularly in remote areas, is the priority challenge facing the NT Electoral Commission.

Following the elections, work began on overhauling the Commission's website, including the transition to a new content management system and increasing the use of smart forms. The new website is scheduled to be ready in the second half of 2018. Early review activities of the electoral roll also commenced in preparation for the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution, the major electoral event for the 2018-2019 financial year.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all staff for their hard work and dedication throughout a very busy year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain Loganathan', written in a cursive style.

Iain Loganathan
Electoral Commissioner
31 October 2018

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Purpose, vision, mission and values

The purpose of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) is to:

- provide quality electoral services to clients throughout the Northern Territory
- ensure the electoral system, especially the right to vote and to vote in secret, is fully accessible to all electors.

The NTEC's vision is to be widely recognised for its expertise and excellence in electoral administration.

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

The NTEC's values are fundamental to achieving its goals. These are:

- integrity
- impartiality
- transparency and accountability
- commitment to high standards of service delivery
- commitment to continuous improvement
- respect for the law.

Operating environment

The Commission operates in an environment that includes:

- a small, culturally diverse, dispersed and mobile population
- a broad charter of electoral operations and corporate governance responsibilities
- a small permanent staff structure
- a requirement to modernise and implement best practice
- close working relationships with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), interstate electoral authorities and other organisations.

Strategic issues

Key Result Areas (KRAs) set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 are:

- Enrolment
- Elections
- Public Awareness
- Corporate

Legislative base

The following Acts and Regulations are administered by the Commission:

- The *Electoral Act* and Regulations under that Act.
- The *Referendums Act* and Regulations under that Act.
- Electoral provisions contained in the *Local Government Act* and the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations.

From 23 April 2015, amended legislation gave councils the option to determine their service provider for the conduct of by-elections. General elections remain the responsibility of the Electoral Commissioner.

Under the *Constitutional Convention (Election) Act*, assented to on 9 September 2014, the NTEC is charged with conducting any election for delegates to a constitutional convention to discuss statehood for the Northern Territory.

General and financial management of the *Constitutional Convention (Election) Act* remains with the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

AGENCY PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS

The NTEC provides independent, impartial, high quality and accessible electoral services to the people of the Northern Territory, the NT Legislative Assembly, local government municipal, regional and shire councils and other organisations.

The Commission's functions are prescribed under section 309 of the *Electoral Act* (the Act).

Key responsibilities include:

- maintaining the joint electoral roll for both the NT Legislative Assembly (LA) and NT Local Government (LG) in partnership with the AEC
- managing parliamentary and non-parliamentary elections including local government and, on request, fee-for-service elections
- delivering electoral awareness and education programs to the public
- providing advice and reports relating to electoral matters to the NT Legislative Assembly
- conducting electoral research
- providing support to redistribution committees reviewing NT Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries and to representation review processes for local councils.

NTEC activities include:

- development and implementation of enrolment stimulation strategies to improve roll quality and increase elector participation for NT LA and NT LG elections
- planning and implementation of programs to conduct fixed term LA and LG general elections and periodic by-elections in the required timeframe and according to best practice principles
- development and management of electoral awareness programs for the general public and school students, including minority groups, so they are aware of their electoral rights and responsibilities
- provision of support for parliamentary electoral redistribution and council representation reviews and then, in conjunction with the AEC, coordinating and verifying changes on the electoral roll following gazettal of changes
- development of structures and nurturing of inter-agency relationships to support the NTEC's core business of election management in an environment that demands specialist knowledge and impartiality in service delivery.

Since 23 May 2015, a local government council has the option of appointing its own service provider to conduct by-elections or conduct a by-election itself. The NT Electoral Commission remains the prescribed provider for electoral services for LG general elections.

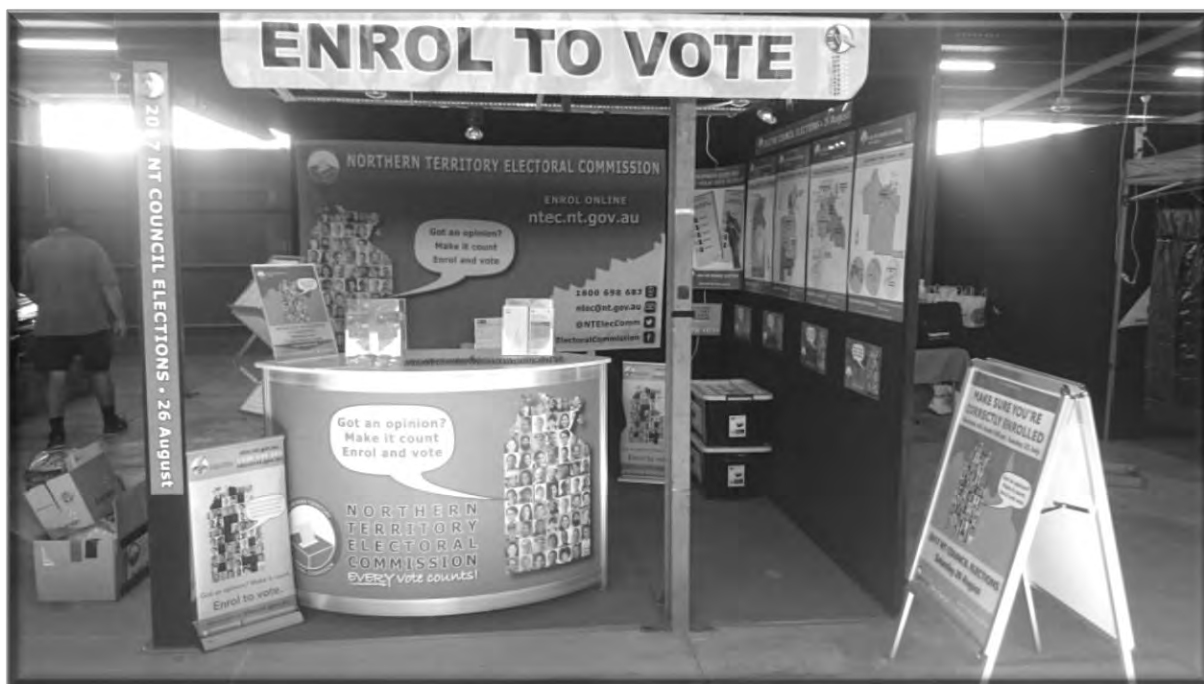
The Commission may conduct ballots for persons, government and non-government organisations, on a fee-for-service basis.

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

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ENROLMENT

- As at 30 June 2018 there were 137,639 electors on the NT electoral roll.
- Of the total enrolment transactions processed, there were:
 - 13,446 additions to the roll, including 3,949 new enrolments
 - 1,177 re-enrolments
 - 11,276 changed their enrolled address within the NT
 - 8,222 transfers to the NT from interstate
 - 12,638 deletions, the majority for transfer of enrolment out of the NT.
- At 30 June 2018, the youth enrolment (18 to 25 years) participation rate was 64.7 per cent, compared to a national average of 86.0 per cent.
- The 2017 NT Council elections service charter aimed for an enrolment participation rate of 85 per cent; the actual figure was 83.8 per cent.
- The enrolment public awareness campaigns for the 2017 NT Council elections included:
 - TV, radio, print, digital and banner advertising
 - Emails and SMS direct to electors
 - Show circuit and expos
 - Roll cleansing activities by councils.
- An electoral roll review by email began in May 2018 across six NT Legislative Assembly divisions in preparedness for the next re-distribution process to commence in early 2019. The review will continue through all 25 divisions.
- From July 2017, AEC staff in the NT was significantly reduced and enrolment functions transferred to the AEC Queensland office. As a result, there is no ongoing remote field program operating in the NT.



ELECTIONS

- There were two major elections; the 2017 NT Council elections held in August, and the 2018 City of Palmerston election held in March.
- An election service charter detailing key performance indicators and service standards was developed for the 2017 NT Council elections; including, City of Palmerston (CoP).
- Service level agreements were established with every council individually outlining costs and agreed activities of the elections. These agreements enabled councils to provide resources (i.e. staff, vehicles, advertising) to offset election costs.
- Widespread public awareness campaigns were delivered for both elections; including, multiple forms of advertising, social media, direct email and SMS messaging to electors, a dedicated website, and a call centre, amongst other public awareness and media activities.
- For the 2017 NT Council elections, 149 vacancies across the 16 NT Councils were contested. A total of 295 nominations were received with an additional 16 nominations rejected due to ineligibility reasons, and one nomination withdrawn prior to nominations closing.
- For the 2018 City of Palmerston election, 25 nominations were received for a total of eight positions. There were no rejected or withdrawn nominations.
- A number of voting services were provided for both elections, including:
 - Online postal vote applications
 - Early voting centres located in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Coolalinga, Palmerston, Casuarina, and Darwin city
 - Mobile voting in remote and urban areas (i.e. hospitals and aged care centres)
 - Election day voting services
 - Electronic certified lists of electors, used at all voting centres
 - Formality information videos in all voting centres. These videos were available in 13 Indigenous languages, English and Tagalog.
- Election results were displayed and updated on a dedicated results page on the Commission's website.
- City of Darwin, Lichfield Council and City of Palmerston decided to pursue non-voters.
- All councils received individual election reports.
- A general election report, detailing election outcomes such as enrolment, voter participation and proposed electoral reform, will be finalised in the second half of 2018.
- There were three council by-elections during the reporting year.
- There were nine fee-for-service elections conducted through the reporting period; seven enterprise bargaining agreements and two organisation board elections.



PUBLIC AWARENESS

- An ongoing brand building social media campaign continued via Facebook and Twitter.
- Comprehensive public awareness campaigns were run for both the 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election. The campaigns included:
 - advertising campaigns across TV, radio, print and digital platforms as well as large banners and posters in the community
 - Social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter
 - Emails and SMS directly to electors
 - Dedicated election website
 - Media appearances
 - Promotion through stalls on the show circuit and at other expos
 - Newsletters to stakeholders (including councils, candidates and media outlets)
 - Call centre.
- A re-development of the agency's electoral education programs was undertaken and a full suite of free programs is available on request to schools, adult education centres and community groups.
- The strong relationship with the Department on the Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Education Services unit continues and there was an increase in the number of electoral education sessions delivered at Parliament House under the joint program. In addition, there was an increase in visits to schools and adult education centres, as well as involvement in school-run elections.
- Democracy Dash, an interactive way for students to learn about Darwin's democratic institutions, was run for its second year as an NT Youth Week event, with an increase in participants and continued positive feedback. A modified version was also held at Darwin High School on request.
- The transition to a more functional website has begun, moving from a SharePoint platform to Squiz Matrix. The project will be undertaken in-house and includes re-branding and modernising the website.



CORPORATE

- From June 2017 to June 2018, the agency's full time staff numbers were reduced from 12 to nine.
- A new position, an IT systems officer, was created and recruited to in June 2018. The successful applicant will take up the new role in July 2018.
- A large number of casual staff were employed for the NT Council elections.
- An online training program was utilised for election staff.
- Employee expenses account for almost half the agency's total expenditure.
- The Electoral Commissioner attended three meetings of the Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand (ECANZ).
- Significant progress has been made to fully transition to the HPE Content Manager electronic document and records management system (EDRMS), including the new business classification scheme.



THE YEAR AHEAD

ENROLMENT

- Undertake a review of enrolment prior to the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution.
- Analyse the impact of the 2017 NT Council elections enrolment programs on enrolment outcomes, including the roll cleansing project.
- In consultation with the AEC, develop ongoing partnerships with suitable service providers in providing electoral enrolment and education programs in remote communities.
- Implement an enrolment strategy following the AEC's decision to transfer enrolment functions to Queensland.

ELECTIONS

- Conduct NT Local Government (Council) by-elections as requested.
- Conduct NT Legislative Assembly by-elections as required.
- Conduct fee-for-service elections as requested.
- Submit the report on the conduct of the 2017 NT Council elections and recommend operational improvements and legislative change for future elections.
- Develop detailed plans and/or research on the proposed amendments to the *Electoral Act*, as detailed in the 2016 Territory election report and through the political donations inquiry.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Implement the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution strategic communications plan.
- Improve and expand the education and community engagement functions.
- Improve and expand the education and electoral awareness in remote communities.
- Finalise the development and implementation of the new NTEC website.

CORPORATE

- Monitor expenditure to ensure the agency is efficiently meeting its needs and outcomes.
- Undertake a review of the organisational structure to ensure it reflects the future direction and needs of the agency and government.
- Review and modernise the IT infrastructure that supports the Election Management System (EMS).
- Review of the role, budget and functions of the agency.

AGENCY FUNCTIONS

ENROLMENT

OBJECTIVE

Contribute to the maintenance and security of a joint roll of eligible Northern Territory electors.

ROLL MAINTENANCE

The enrolment provisions of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* (1918) apply for Northern Territory purposes, so that if an eligible person residing in the Territory is enrolled on the Commonwealth electoral roll, he or she is automatically enrolled for NT Legislative Assembly and NT Local Government (Council) elections. This is in accordance with the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978*. Amendments to the *Electoral Act*, in force at 2 March 2016, included an express provision regarding compulsory enrolment.

Section 20 of the *Electoral Act* provides that the Administrator may enter into an arrangement with the Governor-General for the maintenance of the joint Northern Territory and Commonwealth electoral roll. The present arrangement has been in place since 1994. The roll is maintained by the AEC and provided to the NTEC on request, in accordance with the Joint Roll Arrangement (JRA).

ELECTORAL ROLL STATUS

During the reporting period, the Northern Territory electoral roll increased by 806 electors to a total of 137,639 as at 30 June 2018. The small increase can, in part, be attributed to the regular federal direct enrolment updates and the regional council roll stimulation activities in the lead-up to the 2017 NT Council elections.

The Northern Territory's participation rate in relation to enrolment and voting has averaged between 10 to 15 per cent below that of most interstate jurisdictions and the national average; this equates to approximately 26,500 eligible electors. This is due to the younger average age of the eligible population, the high level of mobility in the community, and the difficulties in maintaining the roll in remote areas of the Northern Territory; where enrolment and voting rates are significantly lower than urban areas.

Table 1: Estimated eligible participation on the electoral roll – 2012 to 2018

Participation rates 2012 to 2018 ¹			
Year	Area	% Total enrolment	% 18-25 years enrolment
2012	NT [#]	78.9	56.0
	National	90.6	73.0
2014	NT	80.8	60.8
	National	92.3	78.5
2016*	NT	81.4	63.4
	National	93.9	87.0
2017	NT	82.7	64.5
	National	95.0	85.7
2018	NT	83.9	64.7
	National	96.3	86.9

¹ Electoral Management Information System, Australian Electoral Commission

[#] Figures are before the close of the roll (COR) for the NT LA election on 8 August 2012

* Figures encompass the COR campaign for 2 July 2016 Federal election

The NTEC provides data from enrolment stimulation and review programs, as well as enrolment forms collected from the public in community settings and at elections, to the AEC for processing.

DIRECT ENROLMENT

The Federal Direct Enrolment Update (FDEU) program was rolled out in the Northern Territory in February 2013. The process involves the AEC receiving advice of a person's name and address details from a reliable and trusted source - currently the Commonwealth Department of Human Services, Australian Taxation Office and Northern Territory motor vehicle data.

- The person's details are checked against the electoral roll and where the person is not correctly enrolled, a letter is mailed to the person.
- If the person is not qualified to be enrolled at the address, the person is asked to advise the AEC.
- If no advice is received, the person is enrolled for the address provided by the reliable and trusted source.

As the FDEU program depends on electors having a reliable mail address, the program does not operate in rural and remote areas of the Northern Territory, including Tennant Creek. The following are statistics for FDEU processing from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018:

- **13,925** FDEU letters sent
- **12,616** people were enrolled as a result of letters sent
- **889** people provided a suitable reason as to why their enrolment should not be updated (a crossover between electors enrolling and the mailing of FDEU letters is responsible for the numbers not balancing)
- **420** enrolment actions cancelled due to other reasons, including updating their enrolment by other actions, death notifications and requests for further information not provided.

The AEC does not record statistics on enrolment reversals for people who respond too late to the FDEU letter or other reasons.

ELECTORAL ROLL STIMULATION ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the JRA, the Commission seeks opportunities to contribute to roll maintenance by undertaking strategic enrolment stimulation activities. Enrolment programs are always held prior to major elections. Between elections, the NTEC maintains a consistent presence on social media and regularly posts enrolment related material, and participates in public awareness opportunities like the show circuit and defence expos.

Enrolment advertising campaigns

In July 2017, the first phase of the 2017 NT Council elections advertising campaign commenced with a three-week enrolment drive designed to improve roll accuracy. The key campaign message was '*Got an Opinion? Make it count. Enrol to Vote.*' with electors encouraged to enrol online.

This included:

- television, radio, print and digital advertising
- banners placed in prominent locations in Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin, encouraging electors to enrol to vote
- social media in the form of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube with a variety of messages to encourage users to enrol to vote for the elections.

The 2018 City of Palmerston election advertising campaign repeated the same activities, targeted specifically to the Palmerston area.

Email and SMS

Two weeks before the close of electoral roll for the 2018 City of Palmerston election an email or SMS was sent to those electors who had provided these details with their enrolment. If electors had provided both, only an email was sent. The messages informed electors about the close of roll date with a link to online enrolment. In total, 8,765 emails and 2,907 SMS with enrolment messages were sent out.

Northern Territory show circuit

Throughout July 2017, stalls providing information on enrolment and election services were set up for the Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Staff were equipped with the NT electoral roll loaded on laptops and encouraged electors to check their enrolment and update their details (including enrolling for the first time) on the spot. Over 350 people checked their enrolment details, 50 enrolments were conducted online and a further 228 enrolment forms were either completed on the spot or provided to electors to fill out and return.

Defence orientation days & 'O' Week

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) hosted a 'Welcome to the Top End Defence expo' at the Tindal Gymnasium on 3 February 2018; which was attended by AEC staff. A week later another defence expo was held at the Darwin Convention Centre on 10 February (just 3 days before the close of roll for the 2018 City of Palmerston election) where a stall was operated by the NTEC. The expos are open to ADF personnel and their families, but also the general public, and are well attended by those newly arrived in the Territory. Staff at both events were again equipped to check and update electors' enrolment details on the spot.

Later that month, NTEC staff also attended the opening day of the Charles Darwin University annual orientation 'O' Week to check and update enrolment, and to promote the City of Palmerston election.

Enrolment activities by councils

An outcome negotiated under the service level agreements for the 2017 NT Council elections was that all regional councils would conduct roll cleansing exercises in their communities, at their cost, utilising their resources. The majority of work was done prior to the reporting year, with an agreed completion date of 30 June 2017. Similar arrangements were used with regional councils undertaking targeted roll cleansing activities prior to NT Local Government (Council) by-elections that occurred in 2017-2018.

Electoral roll review – emails

During May and June 2018, electors in certain NT Legislative Assembly divisions who provided an email address with their enrolment details, were sent an email encouraging them to check and update their enrolment if required. These emails were directed to electors in the divisions of Araluen, Barkly, Braitling, Katherine, Namatjira, and Stuart. The roll review will progressively work through the remaining divisions in preparedness for the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution.

Table 2: Enrolment activity – electoral roll review via emails

Division	Additions	Deletions	No change	Changes within division	Total
Araluen	27	76	56	18	177
Barkly	4	24	2	3	33
Braitling	38	60	61	21	180
Katherine	4	52	13	19	88
Namatjira	3	34	4	4	45
Stuart	6	31	29	0	66
TOTAL	82	277	165	65	589

ALICE SPRINGS OFFICE (MYVOTE CENTRAL)

The Alice Springs office (MyVote Central) serves as a shopfront for enrolment and election enquiries from the public. It provides a base for regular enrolment activities at public venues, schools and communities within the town and in Central Australia generally. Staff from this office also conduct the enrolment functions at citizenship ceremonies held in Alice Springs. The office is managed by the NTEC with an annual contribution of \$15,000 from the AEC for enrolment activities undertaken on their behalf.

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION (AEC)

In July 2017, staff numbers at the AEC's NT office were greatly reduced with enrolment functions transferred to Queensland. This has meant that the AEC no longer locally provides services which would address the quality of the Territory's electoral roll or promote voter participation in remote areas. AEC national enrolment programs do not operate in remote communities due to unreliable postal services.

During the reporting year, the AEC's NT office was funded for a pilot program to train electoral awareness officers in Galiwinku initially, followed by Milingimbi and Ramingining. The program is funded for six months.

In June 2018, jointly with the AEC, a project commenced with Tangentyere Council to improve the roll accuracy for electors living in Alice Springs town camps. The objective of the strategy is to improve the quality of the electoral roll by including, where possible, the town camp street addresses in the AEC maintained Roll Management System (RMANS). Once updated, a full review of residents in town camps will be undertaken to improve the roll accuracy prior to the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution.

ENROLMENT STATISTICS: 2017-2018

Table 3: Enrolment transactions – additions, deletions and transfers to the NT roll

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Enrolment at start of financial year	129,878	128,172	132,618	136,833
Transfers within NT				
Transfers between divisions	8,622	11,214	9,434	11,276
Changes within divisions	3,741	4,500	4,823	4,808
Amendments to elector details	4,237	2,937	2,497	4,790
Plus - additions to the roll				
New enrolments	4,267	5,069	4,869	3,948
Re-enrolments	1,483	2,208	2,225	1,177
Re-instatements	75	19	118	98
Interstate transfers to NT	7,155	10,334	7,552	8,222
Total additions	+12,980	+17,630	+14,764	+13,445
Less - deletions to the roll				
Removals by objection	4,126	1,402	1,286	885
Deaths	903	811	919	834
Duplications	225	58	518	166
Cancellations	46	50	12	18
Interstate transfers from NT	9,386	11,223	7,814	10,735
Total deletions	-14,686	-13,544	-10,549	-12,638
Net adjustments	8			
Enrolment at close of financial year	128,172	132,618	136,833	137,639

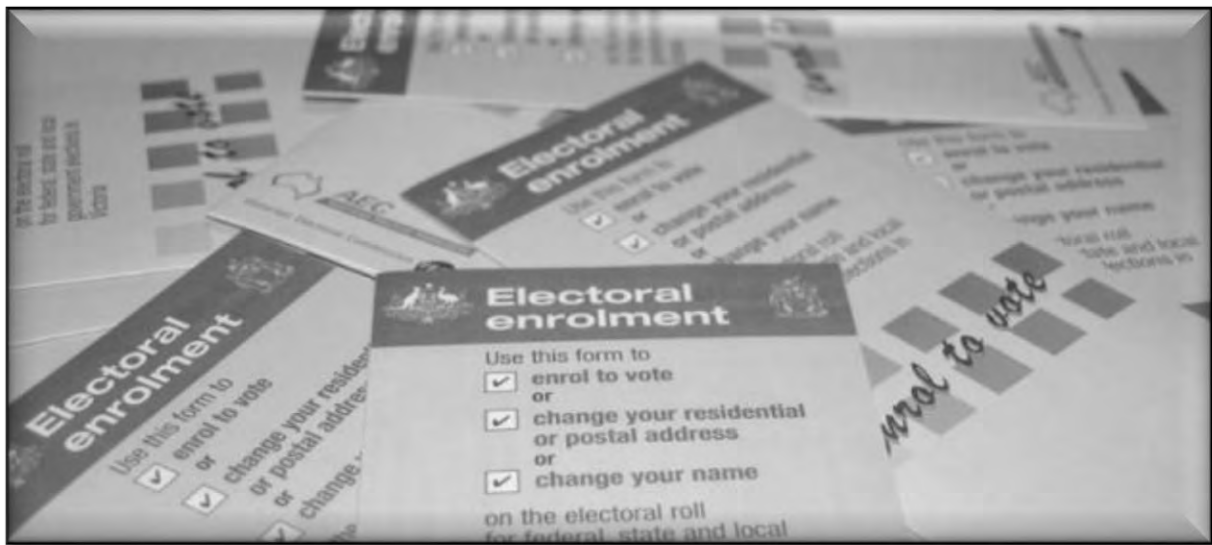
Notes:

- **New enrolments** - all electors who enrolled for the first time.
- **Re-enrolments** - re-enrolling electors who previously had been enrolled.
- **Re-instatements** - the re-statement 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** - transfers of enrolment to a Northern Territory address from interstate.
- **Interstate transfers from NT** - electors previously enrolled in the Northern Territory transferring their enrolment to another jurisdiction.
- **Transfers within NT** - electors notifying a change of address to another Northern Territory LA division or within same division. Transfers within NT do not alter total enrolment.
- **Amendments** - 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.
- **Duplications** - 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.
- **Cancellations** - removals of individuals from the electoral roll who have not maintained their eligibility status for enrolment under the *Electoral Act*.
- **Adjustments** - variations to statistics arising from processing amendments.

Table 4: Enrolment by NT Legislative Assembly division - 30 June 2018

Division		Division		Division	
Arafura	4,624	Drysdale	5,718	Nhulunbuy	5,626
Araluen	6,390	Fannie Bay	5,813	Nightcliff	5,301
Arnhem	4,915	Fong Lim	5,458	Port Darwin	5,559
Barkly	4,842	Goyder	5,512	Sanderson	5,489
Blain	5,786	Johnston	5,099	Spillett	5,562
Braitling	6,996	Karama	5,271	Stuart	5,125
Brennan	5,338	Katherine	5,993	Wanguri	5,785
Casuarina	5,372	Namatjira	5,074	Total	137,639
Daly	5,329	Nelson	5,444		

It has become evident, from recent data in urban areas, that the AEC's FDEU program is capturing movement of electors where mail is delivered to the residence and reflecting this on the electoral roll. However, as the AEC has severely reduced its activities outside these urban areas, there is no ongoing electoral field program to maintain the electoral roll in remote areas and provide much needed electoral education. Other than the AEC undertaking activities in Galiwinku, Milingimbi and Ramingining, no future electoral field work is scheduled in remote areas.



REVIEWS OF REPRESENTATION BY COUNCILS

Local government in the Northern Territory comprises five municipal councils, nine regional councils, two community government councils and one shire council.

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

- Review its structure with respect to electoral representation once in every four year term
- consult with the NTEC during the process
- complete the review 12 months before the next general election.

Where changes are approved by the Minister for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) - responsible for local government, the NTEC is to liaise with the AEC and have any new boundaries loaded into RMANS.

Table 5: Changes made to NT councils as a result of representations reviews

Council	Description of changes
Alice Springs, Central Desert, East Arnhem, Katherine, Litchfield, MacDonnell, West Daly	No changes
Barkly	Requested change in the name of the Yapurkalangu ward to Kuwarrangu ward. This change was made.
Belyuen	DHCD recommended a decrease in the number of members from eight to five members. This change was made.
Coomalie	The council requested a change in council's structure from six wards with one member each to three wards with two members each. This change was made.
Darwin	No change but the council noted a possible future request for a boundary extension to include the Berrimah Farm development.
Palmerston	The council requested an increase in the number of members (excluding the Mayor) from six to eight. The DHCD supported an increase to seven. This change was made and took effect for the council in the 2018 City of Palmerston election. The council also requested an extension of council's boundaries to include land in the Pinelands, Elrundie, Berrimah Farm, Holtze, and Howard Springs areas. The request was declined.
Roper Gulf	The council requested an increase in the number of members in the Numbulwar Numburindi ward from one to two. This change was made.
Tiwi Islands	The council requested no changes. However, DHCD recommended merging the Wurankuwu ward and Nguiu ward. This was also recommended by the NTEC and This change was made.
Victoria Daly	No change but the council noted a possible future request for a boundary extension to include the Douglas Daly area and Lajamanu.
Wagait	The council requested a reduction in the number of members from seven to five. This change was made.
West Arnhem	The council requested no change. However, DHCD recommended a more equal distribution of members across council's wards. The outcome was an additional member in Maningrida ward and one less member in Barrah ward.

SUPPLY OF ELECTORAL ROLL DATA

In accordance with the JRA, roll data was extracted from RMANS for the following:

- monthly updates for roll changes for supply to independent members of the NT Legislative Assembly and registered parties
- Alice Springs and Darwin jury lists
- the 2017 NT Council elections
- the 2018 City of Palmerston general election
- enrolment drives during the NT show circuit and defence expos
- BreastScreenNT (on request).

ELECTIONS

OBJECTIVE

Conduct elections that are impartial, efficient, transparent and in accordance with the law.

LEGISLATION

Electoral Act

There were no legislative amendments to the *Electoral Act* during the reporting period.

On November 2017, the Department of the Chief Minister released a 'Consultation Discussion Paper - Electoral Reforms in the Northern Territory'. Many of the reforms were recommended in the Commission's 2016 Territory election report, with additional changes also proposed. As well as submitting a response to the discussion paper, the NTEC attended a number of public forums and meetings to provide background and input into topics of discussion.

Local Government Act and Local Government (Electoral) Regulations

There were no legislative amendments to the *Local Government Act* or Local Government (Electoral) Regulations during the reporting period.

ELECTION INNOVATIONS

Following the 2016 Territory election a review was conducted into electoral systems, procedures and practices used in the election. As a result of the review a number of innovations were developed and put in place for the 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election:

- Online training materials for election staff were enhanced.
- Online postal vote applications were available through the NTEC website, providing electors with the ability to complete and lodge their applications electronically.
- Electronic mark-off was used at all voting centres following the successful rollout Territory wide, during the 2016 Territory election. Electronic mark-off facilitates the accurate and timely issuing of votes, identifies potential multiple voters in real time, provides a management tracking tool, and alleviates the need to scan certified lists after the election for non-voter and multi voter follow-up.
- Electronic tablets were used to provide how-to-vote videos in several languages to ensure consistent and impartial messages were provided to electors seeking assistance when voting. Tablets were also used to provide digital training for staff employed as local assistants in remote areas.
- Electors' email and mobile phone details were utilised to improve timely transmission of key election messages via email and SMS as part of a communications strategy.
- Service Level Agreements (SLA) were negotiated with each council that detailed costs for the preparation and conduct of each council election. These included the functions and responsibilities of the NTEC along with the agreed provision of council resources.
- The publication of an election charter to improve transparency which outlined the model used for determining election costs to councils, how it was administered and key performance indicators.

NT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

During the year, no casual vacancies occurred in the NT Legislative Assembly.

NT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

2017 NT Council elections - 26 August

During 2016-2017, significant planning was undertaken to ensure election readiness. Extensive liaison occurred with all councils to ensure election charters and detailed service level agreements were in place with all councils.

The 2015 legislative change that removed the eligibility criteria for postal and early voting has seen Territory electors clearly embrace the option of convenience voting. Since then, the number of electors voting before election day has increased significantly. At this election, a total of 43,311 early votes (37 per cent of the total votes issued for the election) were cast across six early voting centres; including, 2,366 cast on the Saturday before election day. This is an increase of 30,043 (226 per cent) compared with the 2012 LG general elections.

There was also a 24 per cent increase in the number of postal votes counted compared to the 2012 LG general elections with a total of 4,577 postal votes issued and 2,614 admitted to the count.

Total enrolment for the 2017 NT Council elections at the close of roll was 105,762 electors. A total of 63,639 voted at the election; resulting in a 60 per cent turnout rate for this election. The following table compares this with voter turnout at other recent major electoral events.

Table 6: 2017 NT Council elections – voter turnout (compared to other events)

2017 NT Council elections	2016 Territory election	2016 Federal election (NT)	2012 LG general elections
60%	74%	79%	70%

Approximately 42,123 electors (40 per cent) were identified as failing to vote in this election. Of these, 24,146 (57 per cent) resided in remote areas or provided valid and sufficient reasons prior to or during the election period. The City of Darwin and Litchfield Council chose to pursue non-voters, which the NTEC conducted on their behalf.

Once election day voting centres closed, first preference votes were immediately counted with the results displayed on the Commission's website. Following these counts on election night, all ballot papers were entered into EasyCount software to determine the final results using the proportional representation (single transferable vote) system. All results were posted on the NTEC's website after final receipt of postal votes at 12:00 noon on Friday, 1 September 2017.

2018 City of Palmerston election – 24 March

On 13 July 2017, the Minister for Housing and Community Development under section 96 of the *Local Government Act*, and with reference to regulation 57 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations, extended the time for holding the next periodic general election for the City of Palmerston to 17 March 2018.

An election charter and detailed service level agreement were developed for the City of Palmerston along with the 16 other NT councils during the general election preparations in 2016-2017. However a revised cost estimate due to the extension of the election was sent to the council in January 2018.

On the 16 March 2018, under section 42 of the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations, the City of Palmerston election was adjourned to 24 March 2018 due to the cyclone warning issued for Cyclone Marcus, which was predicated to hit the greater Darwin region on 17 March 2018.

Early voting services were again well used by voters for the City of Palmerston election with locations at Palmerston Shopping Centre and the NTEC offices in Darwin and Alice Springs. As a result of the postponement of the election, due to Cyclone Marcus, an additional three days of early voting was provided and a further 855 votes were cast during this period.

Table 7: 2018 City of Palmerston election – early votes issued (compared to other CoP events)

2018 City of Palmerston election	2015 by-election	2013 by-election	2012 LG general elections
7,467	2,519	1,161	1,100

These figures show a 679 per cent increase in early voting from the 2012 general election, where electors were required to meet eligibility criteria. For the first time, more votes were cast at early voting centres than at the six election day voting centres combined for this election.

There was also a 251 per cent increase in the number of postal votes counted compared to the 2012 LG general elections with a total of 1,117 postal votes issued and 803 votes admitted to the count.

Total enrolment for the City of Palmerston at the close of roll was 21,261 electors. At total of 13,668 voted at the election; resulting in a 64 per cent turnout rate for this election. The following table compares this with voter turnout at previous City of Palmerston events,

Table 8: 2018 City of Palmerston election – voter turnout (compared to other CoP events)

2018 City of Palmerston election	2015 by-election	2013 by-election	2012 LG general elections
64%	55%	61%	77%

Approximately 6,457 electors (30 per cent) were identified as failing to vote in this election, with a further 630 (3 per cent) providing a valid and sufficient reason prior to or during the election period. City of Palmerston has chosen to pursue non-voters for this election, which the NTEC will conduct on their behalf from July 2018.

Once again, the first preference votes were counted immediately after election day voting centres closed, with the results displayed on the Commission’s website. Following these counts, all ballot papers were entered into EasyCount software to determine the final results. All results were posted on the NTEC’s website after final receipt of postal votes at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, 3 April 2018.

NT LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY-ELECTIONS

Changes to the *Local Government Act*, enacted 23 April 2015, allows councils to conduct their own by-elections if a vacancy becomes available, or appoint an alternative provider. During the reporting year, there were three council vacancies, and the NTEC was appointed to conduct all three by-elections.

Table 9: Summary of NT Local Government by-elections conducted during 2017-2018

Council	Ward	Election day	Number of vacancies	Number of nominations	Contest
West Daly Regional Council	Thamarrurr Pindi Pindi ward	23.11.2017	1	1	Uncontested
MacDonnell Regional Council	Luritja Pintubi ward	01.12.2017	1	3	Contested
Tiwi Islands Regional Council	Pirlangimpi ward	15.02.2018	1	1	Uncontested

West Daly Regional Council (WDRC) by-election: Thamarrurr Pindi Pindi ward

On 21 September 2017, the council CEO advised the NTEC of a councillor vacancy in the Thamarrurr Pindi Pindi ward.

Table 10: Election milestones - WDRC by-election: Thamarrurr Pindi Pindi ward

Close of electoral roll	5:00 pm, Wednesday 8 November 2017	Number enrolled: 1,536
Close of nominations	12:00 noon, Friday 10 November 2017	Number of nominations received: 1
Election declared	Friday 10 November 2017	
Election costs	\$793	

As the number of nominations was the same as the number of vacancies, no election was held, and Mark Martin was declared duly elected.

MacDonnell Regional Council (MRC) by-election: Luritja Pintubi ward

On 30 October 2017, the council CEO advised the NTEC of a councillor vacancy in the Luritja Pintubi ward.

Table 11: Election milestones - MRC by-election: Luritja Pintubi ward

Close of electoral roll	5:00 pm, Wednesday 15 November 2017	Number enrolled: 968
Close of nominations	12:00 noon, Friday 17 November 2017	Number of nominations received: 3
Election declared	Friday 8 December 2017	
Election costs	\$2,064	

As there were more nominations than vacancies, an election was held. Candidates contesting the by-election were:

- BARKU, Giselle
- **McDONALD, Dalton (elected)**
- TURNER, Audrey

Table 12: Election services – MRC by-election: Luritja Pintubi ward

Postal voting	Monday 20 November to Wednesday 29 November 2017 Return deadline 12:00 noon, Thursday 7 December 2017		
Early voting	Monday 27 November to Thursday 30 November 2017 Alice Springs (MyVote Central and MacDonnell Regional Council)		
Mobile voting	Monday 27 November to Friday 1 December Alice Springs (renal unit and hospital), Haasts Bluff, Kintore, Mt Liebig, Papunya		
Election day	Friday 1 December Alice Springs (MyVote Central and MacDonnell Regional Council)		
Electors voting	Formal: 369	Informal: 6	Total: 375 (38.7%)

Table 13: Results by voting centre - MRC by-election: Luritja Pintubi ward

Voting centre	Audrey TURNER	Giselle BARKU	Dalton MCDONALD	Formal	Informal	Total
Alice Springs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile Team: Haasts Bluff	4	14	25	43	1	44
Mobile Team: Kintore	21	74	37	132	3	135
Mobile Team: Mt Liebig	60	7	13	80	0	80
Mobile Team: Papunya	7	16	86	109	2	111
Mobile Team: Alice Springs 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alice Springs: Early voting centre	4	0	1	5	0	5
Total	96	111	162	369	6	375
	26.0%	30.1%	43.9%	98.4%	1.6%	38.7%

Table 14: Distribution of preferences - MRC by-election: Luritja Pintubi ward

Total formal ballot papers: 369 To be elected: 1 Quota: 369						
----- + 1 = 185						
1 + 1						
	Audrey TURNER	Giselle BARKU	Dalton MCDONALD	Exhausted	Total	Remarks
1st preference votes	96	111	162	0	369	
excluded	0	52	44	0	96	TURNER excluded
progressive	0	163	206	0	369	McDONALD elected

Tiwi Islands Regional Council (TIRC) by-election: Pirlangimpi ward

On 30 November 2017, the council CEO advised the NTEC of a councillor vacancy in the Pirlangimpi ward.

Table 15: Election milestones - TIRC by-election: Pirlangimpi ward

Close of electoral roll	5:00 pm, Wednesday 31 January 2018	Number enrolled: 276
Close of nominations	12:00 noon, Friday 2 February 2018	Number of nominations received: 1
Election declared	Friday 2 February 2018	
Election costs	\$793	

As the number of nominations was the same as the number of vacancies, no election was held, and Mary Dunn was declared duly elected.

FEE-FOR-SERVICE ELECTIONS

Section 309(1) (h) of the *Electoral Act* allows for a payment to provide electoral goods and services to persons or organisations, using information or material in its possession or expertise acquired in the exercise of its functions.

Fee-for-service (FFS) elections are conducted for government, non-government and community agencies and organisations that require decisions to be made by ballot. This includes enterprise agreements (EAs), the selection of office holders and plebiscites.

These elections are charged at commercial rates i.e. direct costs plus a 35 per cent management fee. The management fee is not charged when conducting elections for Northern Territory Government agencies.

Table 16: Fee-for-service elections conducted 2017-2018

Date	Ballot	Number of electors		% Turnout
		# Voters	# Votes Rec'd	
10 Nov 2017	Danila Dilba Health Service	Ballot not required		
10 Nov 2017	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia	40	40	100.0

Table 17: Enterprise agreement ballots conducted 2017-2018

Date	Enterprise Agreement (EA)	Number of electors		% Turnout
		# Voters	# Votes Rec'd	
10 Jul 2017	St John Ambulance Australia	173	83	47.9
11 Dec 2017	Jacana Energy	67	48	71.6
14 Dec 2017	NTPS General	11,980	5,575	46.5
18 Dec 2017	City of Darwin	364	253	69.5
27 Mar 2018	City Of Darwin	343	235	68.5
1 Jun 2018	City of Darwin	353	243	68.8
29 Jun 2018	NTPS Teachers & Assistant Teachers	3,203	1,357	42.3

Table 18: Revenue earned FFS and EAs 2011-2012 to 2017-2018

2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
3,034	0	67,346*	7,336	9,095	5,274	25,603

*Includes the conduct of two postal NTPS enterprise agreements

ASSISTANCE FOR INTER-JURISDICTION ELECTIONS

The NTEC offices in Alice Springs and Darwin provide voting services, on request, for interstate and New Zealand electors visiting the Northern Territory.

Inter-jurisdictional support was provided for the following events:

Table 19: Early voting services for inter-jurisdiction elections

Jurisdiction	Election date	Election type
New Zealand	23 September 2017	general election
Victoria	17 November 2017	by-election
Queensland	26 November 2017	general election
Tasmania	3 March 2018	general election
South Australia	17 March 2018	general election
Western Australia	17 March 2018	by-election
Tasmania	4 May 2018	general election
Western Australia	21 June 2018	by-election

PARTY REGISTRATION

Currently there are six political parties registered in the Northern Territory. During the reporting year an application to change the name of the Country Liberals (Northern Territory) to Country Liberal Party was received in October 2017 and granted.

Table 20: Registered political parties in the Northern Territory

Political party	Date of registration
1 Territory Party	18 November 2015
Australian Labor Party NT (ALP)	18 April 2005
Citizens Electoral Council (NT Division)	6 March 2013
Country Liberal Party* (CLP)	20 October 2017
Shooters and Fishers Party	27 February 2015
The Greens	23 March 2005

*First registered 30 March 2005 as the Northern Territory Country Liberals

DISCLOSURE AND COMPLIANCE REVIEW

A compliance review was conducted by accounting firm BDO (NT) for political disclosure returns submitted for the 2016-2017 financial year. The findings of this review indicated that there have been improvements in the accuracy of political party and branch returns when compared to previous reporting years. However, the compliance report noted that there are still some concerns on how some political parties compile the information included in their returns (as listed in BDO's report).

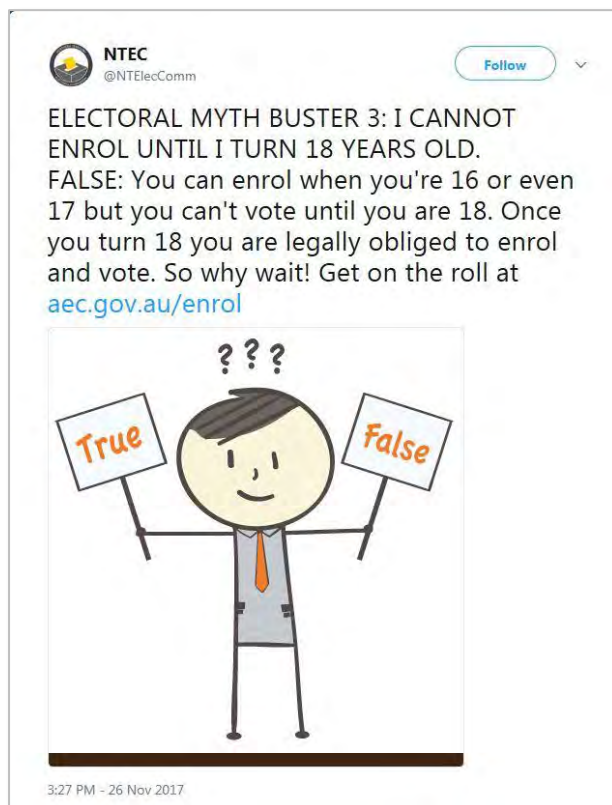
PUBLIC AWARENESS

OBJECTIVE

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

ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS

A brand building campaign continued throughout 2017-2018 via social media channels Facebook and Twitter. The posts included general information about voting, enrolment, democracy and elections, promotion of parliamentary and education sessions, electoral fast facts and 'myth busters,' and special celebrations and events such as National Sorry Day and NT Youth Week.



PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR THE 2017 NT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The public awareness campaign for the 2017 NT Council elections included enrolment and voting information (early, postal, remote and election day) disseminated across television, radio, social media, councils, LGANT, the DHCD, as well as print and digital platforms. The public awareness campaign began in May 2017 and intensified from July until election day on Saturday 26 August.

Advertising

Three advertisements were developed for airing on television, radio, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter:

- enrol and close of roll (15 secs)
- early and formal voting (15 secs)
- election day and formal voting (30 secs).

These advertisements were adapted from those produced for the 2016 Territory election campaign. This ensured branding consistency and minimised development costs. The videos used in television advertising were also available on the NTEC website, NTEC's YouTube channel and were heavily promoted through social media. The audio versions of these advertisements were interpreted into nine Aboriginal languages and aired across Indigenous radio stations appropriate to the different language groups.

Statutory print advertising providing specific voting information was published in the Centralian Advocate, Tennant and District Times, Katherine Times, the NT Rural Weekly, and NT News. General print advertising promoting enrolment and providing election information appeared in the Centralian Advocate, NT News, NT Rural Weekly and Off the Leash magazine. The online promotion of these ads also took place with Alice Springs News online, NT Rural Weekly, and Off the Leash.

There was also an extensive digital marketing campaign about enrolment, postal and early voting, election day and formal voting that ran from 7 June through to election day. The table below provides some of the user engagement outcomes from the digital media campaign.

Table 21: 2017 NT Council elections: Digital marketing campaign statistics

Digital media marketing reach	Number of website views during the election period	Number of users engaged	Total number of clicks to NTEC website	Click through rate	Number of online enrolment applications
137,980	401,000	38,046	3,370	2.44% <i>industry success standard is 1%</i>	75

Further advertising was provided in the form of posters promoting enrolment, nominations and voting which councils put on display in their offices and local areas. Supplementary customised posters, providing dates and times of mobile voting were sent to the relevant community schools, stores, police stations, resource and health centres with a request to distribute the posters as widely as possible.

In municipal areas, large eight metre and four metre banners were erected promoting the close of the electoral roll, early voting and election day. These were placed in the following locations:

- Alice Springs – Todd Mall
- Alice Springs – Larapinta Drive
- Katherine – Katherine Terrace south end
- Katherine – Katherine Terrace north end
- Berry Springs waste depot
- Howard Springs waste depot
- Humpty Doo waste depot
- Stuart Highway (Coonawarra)
- Trower Road overpass
- Gardens Oval

Social media

The implementation of information and advertising campaigns using social media networks remains an effective way to engage with the public and the NTEC has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. A total of 360 posts (180 Facebook, 180 Twitter) were circulated during the campaign period.

Email and SMS

Email and SMS was used to directly contact those electors who provided their contact details on their enrolment. A total of 32,554 emails were sent during the election period with the following messaging:

- early voting centre locations and operating times and dates
- remote mobile voting locations and operating times and dates
- election day voting centre locations
- election deferral information for City of Palmerston electors.

Two rounds of SMS messaging were also sent, for a total of 26,240 texts. Information regarding remote voting locations and operating times and dates were sent to those electors who did not receive the information via email, but had provided a mobile telephone number. A reminder SMS was also sent on election day to all electors in Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek, who had not yet voted early or by post.

Website

The 2017 NT Council elections website was launched in early June 2017 and provided comprehensive information for candidates and voters; including, information about all remote, early and election day voting centres, candidate details and explanations of how votes are counted. Election results were displayed and updated on a dedicated results page.

On election day, the website received 34,120 hits from 21,378 visitors.

2017 NT show circuit

Throughout July 2017, stalls were set up for the Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek shows. Staff promoted enrolment, the 2017 NT Council elections and general electoral awareness.

Interviews

The Electoral Commissioner promoted enrolment, early and election day voting through 39 interviews with Northern Territory media; including, ABC Darwin and Alice Springs, Channel Nine, Territory FM, MIX104.9, Aboriginal Broadcasting Network, CAAMA radio and the NT News.

Newsletter

An election newsletter was emailed regularly to stakeholders including councils, candidates and media, beginning 5 May with the final newsletter emailed on 27 August. In total, 12 newsletters and five supplementary emails were sent during this period. The newsletters were also available on the NTEC website with links shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Call centre

A call centre was established on Wednesday 2 August and continued until Monday 28 August. Staff assisted electors with a variety of election enquiries during this period which came via telephone and email. The enquiries included applying for postal votes, enrolment and close of roll information, early and election day voting centre locations and non-voter excuses.

PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR THE 2018 CITY OF PALMERSTON ELECTION

Campaign

The public awareness campaign for the City of Palmerston election began in February 2018 across television, radio, social media, print and digital platforms, and continued up until election day on Saturday 24 March.

Advertising

The same three advertisements used in the 2017 NT Council elections were re-developed and aired on television and radio. These advertisements were also available on the NTEC website, NTEC's YouTube channel and were promoted through social media.

Statutory print advertising, providing specific voting information, was published in the NT News and the Palmerston Sun.

There was also a digital marketing campaign using NEWS Xtend that ran for six weeks from 2 February until 17 March. The marketing campaign used the 15 second television video ads and appeared on both desktops and mobile phones.

The Electoral Commissioner also promoted enrolment and voting through several interviews including ABC radio and television, Channel 9, MIX104.9 and Territory FM.

Large four and eight metre banners, advertising the relevant phases of the election, were placed at the (City of Palmerston owned) Pinelands roadside banner site, as well as at voting centres; including, Bakewell Primary School, Driver Primary School, Durack Pre-School, MacKillop Catholic College, and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. A-frame signs, displaying various enrolment and voting messages, were placed at the Oasis and Palmerston shopping centres throughout the election.

Social media

Social media was again used to provide information and publicise advertising campaigns. A total of 24 Facebook posts (including four 'push advertisements') and 20 Twitter posts, specifically for the 2018 City of Palmerston election, were circulated during the campaign period.

Email and SMS

A total of 27,856 emails and 18,475 SMS were used to contact City of Palmerston electors throughout the election period. Those electors who had provided their email or mobile telephone details were sent the following electoral messages regarding the election:

- close of electoral roll
- early voting centre locations and operating times and dates
- election adjourned (due to Cyclone Marcus)
- election day voting centre locations (24 March)

Website

The 2018 City of Palmerston website was launched in December 2017 and provided comprehensive information for candidates and voters; including, information about all early and election day voting centres, candidate details and explanations on how votes are counted. Election results were displayed and updated on a dedicated results page.

On election day the website received 5,977 hits from 3,980 visitors.

Newsletter

Seven election newsletters were emailed to stakeholders including City of Palmerston, candidates and the media from 27 February, with the final newsletter emailed on 27 March. The newsletters were also available on the NTEC website with links shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Other promotional activities

The NTEC promoted the City of Palmerston election at the 'Welcome to the Top End Defence Expo' held at the Darwin Convention Centre on 10 February. The focus of the promotion was on updating enrolment as the expo was three days out from the close of the electoral roll. The election was also promoted during 'O' Week at Charles Darwin University on 19 February.

EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

In the last financial year, work began on reviewing and re-developing the electoral education sessions offered by the NT Electoral Commission. There is now a full suite of school level education programs that are directly linked to the curriculum for the following classes:

- Years 3 and 4
- Years 5 and 6
- Year 7
- Years 8, 9 and 10
- Stage 1 and 2 Legal Studies (Years 10, 11 and 12)

There is also a specific program tailored to Year 11 and 12 students as future voters, and a targeted program for Aboriginal students in remote schools. The NTEC also promotes its services to conduct student representative council or house captain elections for schools, or to provide equipment for these elections (ballot boxes and voting screens). Over 2017-2018, five school elections involving over 1,300 voters were conducted by the NTEC, and five other schools were supplied with voting materials to run their own elections.

Education programs are also delivered to adult groups on request and a customised program for adults who have English as a second language (ESL) has been developed and conducted a number of times.

All of the new programs, for school students and adult groups, include resources that are available for teachers on the NTEC website.

Table 22 shows the numbers of participants in the NTEC's electoral education programs for 2017-2018. (The table does not include engagement statistics, e.g. show circuit, expos etc.)

Table 22: Electoral education sessions 2016-2017 and 2017-2018

Group	Number of sessions 2016-2017	Number of participants 2016-2017	Number of sessions 2017-2018	Number of participants 2017-2018
Darwin/Palmerston/rural area schools	64	2,435	84	3,013
Regional schools	10	376	3	111
Remote schools	2	37	8	192
Adult groups	1	28	4	75
ESL adult groups	5	114	6	170
NTEC managed school elections	3	773	5	1,314
Democracy Dash	1	41	2	165
Total	86	3,804	112	5,040

The next stage of the re-development of electoral education programs is to train staff members in Alice Springs to deliver these new programs (including school based elections) to schools and community groups in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

Democracy Dash – NT Youth Week event

Democracy Dash was held for a second year, again as part of NT Youth Week, on 12 April 2018. This now annual event is open to school students across Years 9 – 12 to enhance their learning of civics (middle school) and Legal Studies (senior school), with a particular emphasis on democracy.

In this scavenger hunt type event, students compete in teams of 8-10, each accompanied by a teacher, and visit a number of Darwin CBD based organisations whose work contributes to one or more of the four main elements of democracy: rights and freedoms, rule of law, majority rule and democratic elections. At each stop, students must complete an activity to learn more about the organisation and its role in a democracy.

This year the total number of organisations were reduced to ten, to ensure all student teams had a good chance of finishing the 'dash' in the time allocated. The participating organisations were:

- ABC
- Amnesty International
- City of Darwin
- NAAJA
- NT Anti-Discrimination Commission
- NT Courts
- NT Electoral Commission
- NT Legal Aid Commission
- NT Legislative Assembly (Parliamentary Education Services)
- NT Police (Community Youth Engagement)

Democracy Dash was held for a second time this year where eight teams from three schools participated and total of 77 students took part in the race. This is an increase from the inaugural event in 2017 which had 41 participants. All schools said they were keen to participate again next year with one school saying they planned to incorporate the event into their civics teaching.

A \$500 NT Youth Week grant was secured and used to cover the transport costs of the participating schools.

Democracy Dash – Darwin High School

Darwin High school has a large number of legal studies students across Years 10 – 12. They were interested in participating in Democracy Dash as part of NT Youth Week, but the cost of providing relief teachers for the required number of attending teachers proved prohibitive. Instead, the legal studies teachers asked if a modified Democracy Dash could be held at the school. The NTEC agreed to trial it, and a Democracy Dash was held at Darwin High School on 25 May 2018.

Seven other organisations, as well as the NTEC, participated:

- Amnesty International
- City of Darwin
- Darwin Community Legal Service
- Melaleuca Refugee Centre
- NT Legal Aid
- NT Legislative Assembly (Parliamentary Education Services)
- NT Police (Community Youth Engagement)

A ninth stop, 'Democracy Corner', was created for the event with a series of activities to learn about democracy in general. This was an idea suggested by a participating teacher in the 2018 NT Youth Week event in the formal feedback that was sought from both teachers and students.

In total, 88 students and teachers (from legal studies classes and the senior intensive English unit) were involved in the Darwin High School Democracy Dash. The legal studies teachers have requested the event be held at their school again next year.

WEBSITE

The NTEC website provides information about the core business areas of enrolment, elections, voter awareness and corporate governance. There is also a Facebook feed and an 'email us a question' function on the landing page.

A dedicated website is developed for all general elections, as it was for the 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election, and for all by-elections, of which there has been three in the reporting period. These pages provide relevant information about online enrolment, candidate information, voting centre locations and times, counting information and results, employment opportunities and election newsletters.

One of the 2016-2017 public awareness targets was to review the structure and content of the general NTEC website as an initial step towards the end goal of creating a new, more functional and user-friendly website. Over this financial year, staff participated in a website review process which determined that the agency's main priority was to change to a website platform that is easier to use and manage. The current platform, SharePoint, requires specialised technical support that is not readily available in the NT. The other priority identified was improved functionality overall, especially when viewed on mobile devices.

Transition to a new website, hosted by Squiz Matrix, is expected to be finalised in the second half of 2018. The transition will also include a re-branding of the agency.

RESEARCH AND ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

Outcomes from the 2016 Territory election and the 2017 NT Council elections show the electoral participation rate of Territorians continues to be lower than that of the general Australian public, and alarmingly low for Aboriginal Territorians. As well as consistently low voter turnout rates for Aboriginal electors, there is also evidence showing inadequate electoral knowledge, higher informality rates, lower enrolment rates and poor electoral roll accuracy in remote areas.

From July 2017, the AEC reduced the staffing levels in its NT office and transferred the administration of enrolment programs for the Territory to Queensland. This has greatly reduced the capacity for the AEC to conduct its regular enrolment activities in the NT, and in remote areas in particular. This, accompanied with the degree of disengagement of Aboriginal electors, has prompted the NTEC to research how it can develop an ongoing remote electoral education and engagement strategy.

Any development in this area would require strategic partnerships with regional councils, local authorities, other government agencies and Aboriginal organisations. The Commission has analysed evidence from past elections (voter turnout and informality rates are some indicators) to identify those communities with the highest elector disengagement, and therefore those areas of highest need.

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- 2016-2017 Annual Report - tabled in parliament 21 November 2017
- 2017 NT Council election newsletters – 12 sent to stakeholders including councils, candidates and media
- 2017 NT Council elections – 16 individual council reports (for the councils only)
- 2018 City of Palmerston election newsletters – seven sent to stakeholders including councils, candidates and media
- 2018 City of Palmerston election report
- Submission to political donations inquiry
- Submission to the consultation discussion paper – Electoral Reforms in the Northern Territory
- Submission to Electoral Voting Information Paper.

PUBLIC AWARENESS TARGETS FOR 2018-2019

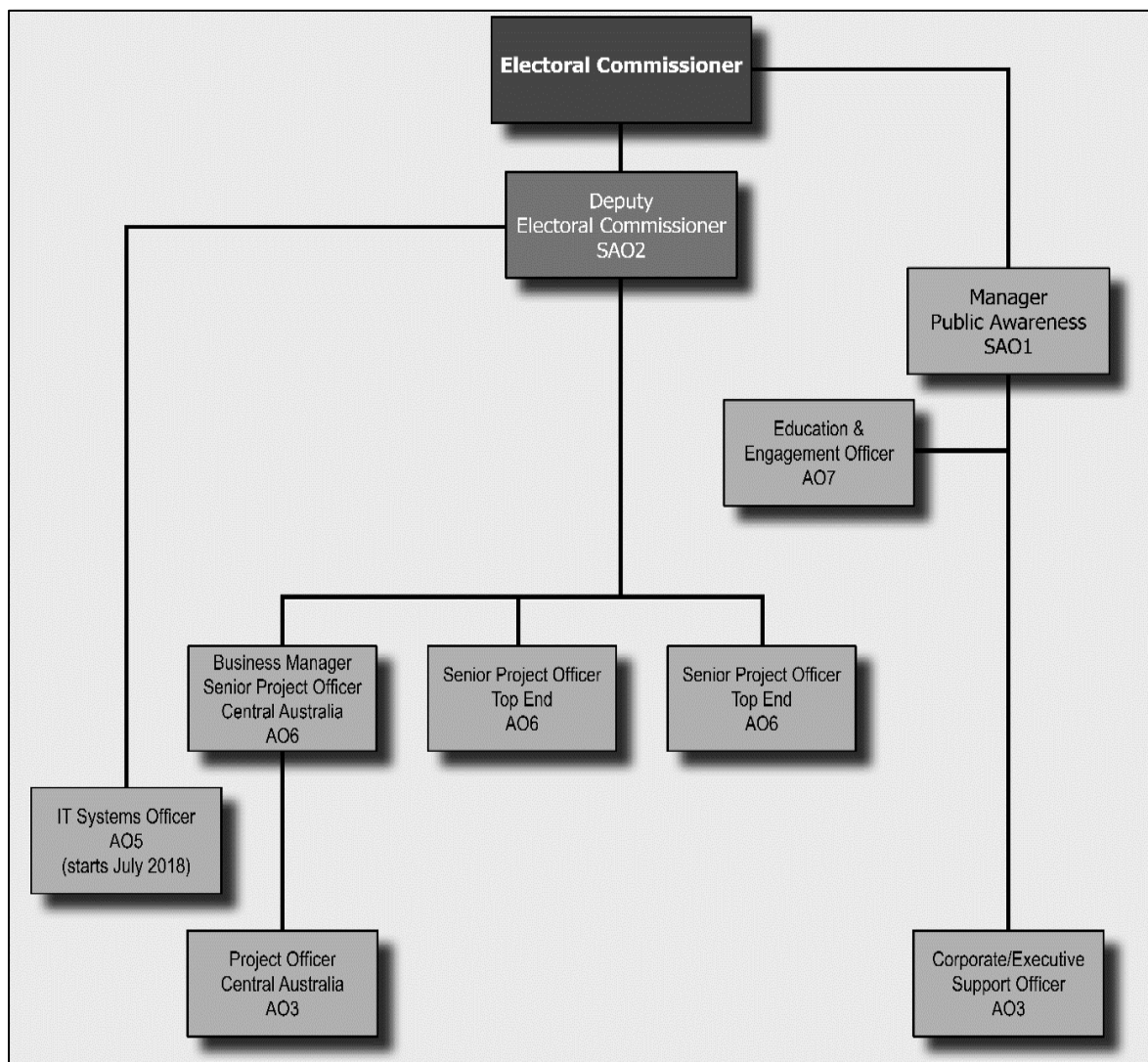
- Provide secretariat support and deliver a public awareness campaign for the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution (commencing February 2019).
- Expand education and engagement with schools and community groups, including increasing the number of school visits and school-based elections.
- Expand education and engagement with schools and community groups in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.
- Continuation and expansion of Democracy Dash, as both as a NT Youth Week and school based event.
- Targeted enrolment activities for senior school students aged 16 years and older.
- Develop a remote electoral education and engagement strategy, including partnerships with other organisations, to facilitate enrolment and a stronger understanding of democratic rights and responsibilities amongst people in remote areas.
- Progress the development of a new website including a re-branding of the agency.
- Complete and table the 2017 NT Council Elections Report.
- Complete and table the 2017-2018 Annual Report.

CORPORATE

OBJECTIVE

An operating environment that features continuous improvement, is open and supportive of staff, promotes professional growth, mutual respect and recognition of achievements.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE (AS AT 30 JUNE 2018)



Darwin office

The Darwin office has a full-time staff complement of seven with three positions filled through contracts. This is a decrease from the previous reporting year when there were ten full time staff in the Darwin office with four on contracts.

Secondments, specialist electoral staff and casual employees are required for major elections. A number of contract and casual staff were recruited for the 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election.

A specialist IT project officer has been on a long-term contract to re-develop, maintain and enhance the election management system used by the agency. This officer was contracted for the duration of the reporting year. Recruitment for a new IT Systems Officer (AO5) was finalised in June 2018, with the successful applicant starting in late July 2018 (increasing the Darwin office numbers to eight staff). This newly created position is intended to reduce the demand for the specialist support.

Alice Springs office (MyVote Central)

The Alice Springs office has two staff members (one permanent and one contracted) with additional staffing resources provided for major elections. The business manager functions of the agency are managed by the Alice Springs office.

Table 23: Core staff profiles 2014 – 2017 as at 30 June 2018

Designation	Number of staff at 30 June				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Executive Contract Officer 3	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Administrative Officer 2	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Administrative Officer 1	4	2	2	2	1
Administrative Officer 7	0	0	0	1	1
Administrative Officer 6	5	6	5	4	3
Administrative Officer 5	0	0	1	0	0
Administrative Officer 4	1	1	1	1	0
Administrative Officer 3	2	1	2	2	2
Administrative Officer 2	0	1	0	0	0
Administrative Officer 1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	14 FTE	13 FTE	13 FTE	12 FTE	9 FTE

Business management

There are two positions that are responsible for the business management functions of the agency. These positions manage in-house human resource activities and financial matters; including, budgeting and reporting, procurement, IT and general office services. With the introduction of an IT systems officer, the agency's IT functions will henceforth be managed by this new role.

Assistance from other NT government agencies for business management functions is mainly provided by:

- the Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS) for ITC, payroll, procurement, property and recruitment support
- the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) for HR issues
- the Department of Treasury and Finance for financial matters.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION

Staff members from both offices have attended a number of development opportunities in 2017-2018 including:

- ECANZ and Electoral Regulation Research Network conferences
- ANZSOG Advancing Leadership
- Public Sector Management course
- Machinery of Government
- Women's Leadership Symposium
- Community Legal Educators' network professional development workshop
- The Emotionally Intelligent Communicator
- Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying for Managers and Supervisors
- Future of Work in the Public Sector
- Managing Employees' Fitness for Work
- TIMS training
- Fire warden training
- TIGER training (in-house training of election management system).

In addition, post-election de-briefing sessions were conducted following the 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election. These reviewed election performances against the KPIs in the service charter, determined future delivery models and recognised staff and agency achievements.

STAFFING FOR 2017-2018 ELECTORAL EVENTS

Following a successful recruitment campaign for casual electoral officials for the 2016 Territory election, similar efforts were not required for the 2017 NT Council elections. The numbers of staff used for major events of 2017-2018 were:

- 34 positions for the show circuit and expos
- 275 positions for the 2017 NT Council elections
- 71 positions for the 2017 City of Palmerston election

As at 30 June 2018, the numbers of casual staff registered with the agency was 624 people.

Training for casual electoral staff

An online training system is used for all voting centre staff. Content for the web-based training was developed in-house and delivered using a software package sourced from the digital media organisation, Cre8ive. It contained modules for each position category and included multiple choice questions designed to test each participant's understanding of the electoral process.

In addition to online training, face-to-face training was provided to staff in certain positions to further assist them in their duties. This training focused on using eLAPPS (including troubleshooting), the proportional representation voting system, vote counting processes and ballot paper security procedures.

Local assistants employed through remote voting teams were required to watch a seven-minute video on their role and responsibilities in delivering an impartial service to voters.

EMPLOYEE EXPENSES

In 2017-2018, employee expenses were approximately \$2.199 million, which is 53.9 per cent of the total expenditure for the year.

Ongoing employee expenses are met from the annual appropriation; separate arrangements are made for staff employed for by-elections, project work and secondments. In the years of major elections, additional staff expenses are met from election budgets. For the major electoral events of this reporting year, 2017 NT Council elections and the 2018 City of Palmerston election, contract and casual staff employed for these events were paid for by the councils as part of their total election costs.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION

The Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand (ECANZ) is a consultative council of electoral commission from the electoral authorities of the Commonwealth, states and territories and New Zealand. The council met three times in 2017-2018 with the NT Electoral Commissioner attending all meetings. Matters discussed at these meetings included the development of a national internet voting system, strategies to improve voter participation and cyber security amongst other issues.

AGENCY MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Report under Section 18 of the Public Sector Employment and Management Act

DCIS and OCPE provide advice on the application of HR legislation, instructions, guidelines and the implementation of the relevant HR policies, practices, terms and conditions under NTG employment terms and conditions.

Annual reporting is required to the Commissioner for Public Employment in relation to compliance with the prescribed NTPS principles of human resource management.

Equal opportunity

All appointments to positions are made in accordance with merit principles and, for election casuals, following review of any previous assessments recorded in the election management system.

All staff, including temporarily employed office casuals and electoral officials, are required to sign an undertaking that they are not a member of a political party or active in political affairs, and that they will retain this status during the period of their employment.

Equity and diversity

Staff are recruited based on their capacity to communicate and interact with the many and diverse communities of the Northern Territory and deal sensitively and respectfully with issues presented by gender, language, ethnicity, disadvantage or any physical or other impairment. Election positions for both urban and remote locations are filled on the basis of the ability to deal with all voters fairly, courteously and without discrimination.

Freedom of information (FOI) requests

There were no FOI requests to the Commission in 2017-2018.

Work Health and Safety (WHS)

The *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act* sets out the national WHS obligations for employers and employees and stipulates duties of care on employers and employees in relation to WHS.

The Commission assesses accommodation, travel arrangements and electoral programs to ensure compliance and stipulates written adherence to voting premises' requirements to responsible officers with reminders of the stipulations in face-to-face training sessions.

No reportable safety issues were recorded during the year.

Insurance reporting

Over the course of 2017-2018, no self-insurance claims were made.

Mitigation strategies were in place to reduce the insurable risk arising from agency operations. The agency complies with instructions as set out in the 'Accounting and Property Manual', which contains sections relating to insurance and litigation matters.

Drivers of Commission vehicles are required to operate according to guidelines set out in the 'NT Fleet handbook'.

Records management

The Commission has been overdue in fully migrating to digital record management and the TRM system. However, during 2017-2018 the agency worked diligently with DCIS and a private information management service to ensure a smooth transition to digital records, including the new standardised business classification scheme (BCS).

Starting in July 2018, all NTEC staff will be trained in TRMS and all records will be transferred across to the new configuration. A new records disposal schedule will also be place. By the end of 2018-2019, the agency expects to be fully compliant with the archives and records management provisions prescribed in Part 9 of the *Information Act*.

Election Service Charter

The Commission outlined its broad goals and aims for the conduct of the 2017 NT Council elections in a service charter that defined the service level commitments to stakeholders. It included the key performance indicators that were used to evaluate election outcomes and provided a basis for determining recommendations to improve electoral practises.

Service charters aim to demonstrate the Commission's accountability and enhance operational transparency. They should also assist stakeholders (voters, candidates, councils and the media) with their election preparations and determine their expectations of, and interactions with, the Commission.

A service charter was also developed for the 2018 City of Palmerston election.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

The 2017 NT Council elections were conducted for 16 of the 17 councils in August 2017, with the City of Palmerston election held in March 2018. SLAs were negotiated with each council that documented electoral services to be provided, resources that councils would provide and the estimated cost of the election.

AUDITS

The Auditor-General's office conducted two audits, the Agency Compliance Audit in April and the Financial Audit at the end of the financial year. There were no material matters to report arising from these audits.

2015-2019 CORPORATE PLAN

The 2015-2019 Corporate Plan was released on 1 July 2015. A summary of the objectives, strategies and performance measures for the four core business areas is provided below. There is ongoing redevelopment of procedures and systems to assist in providing better services in elections and to provide enhanced reporting and monitoring abilities.

Enrolment

Contribute to the maintenance and security of a joint roll of eligible Northern Territory electors.

Strategies	Performance measures
Maintain an efficient and effective joint electoral roll with the AEC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ An increase in the number of eligible electors correctly enrolled in the Territory.▪ Number of enrolment transactions and other information collected from enrolment activities.▪ Percentage of requests where accurate roll data was provided in a timely manner.▪ Level of compliance with commitments detailed in service level agreements with the AEC.▪ Timely and thorough redistribution data requests to the AEC.▪ Redistribution data, that is quality assured, loaded into the national roll management database (RMANS).
Undertake regular research to identify activities to complement Continuous Roll Update (CRU) and Federal Direct Enrolment Update (FDEU).	
Develop and implement enrolment stimulation activities and initiatives and participate in joint programs and workshops with the AEC.	
Monitor enrolment performance in terms of completeness, accuracy and the timely update of the electoral roll.	
Provide support to Redistribution Committees and effect changes following final boundary determinations from the Committee and other sources.	
Provide roll data within legislative requirements.	

Elections

Conduct elections that are impartial, efficient, transparent and in accordance with the law.

Strategies	Performance measures
Provide best practice in conducting government and non-government elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of disputed returns upheld due to administrative error. ▪ Percentage of elections not conducted within statutory or required deadlines. ▪ Cost of elections (actual v estimate). ▪ Voter participation and informality rates. ▪ Feedback received from client surveys on elections conducted. ▪ Election based management system meets business requirements.
Develop and maintain election policies, procedures and processes.	
Enhance our knowledge of the needs of our diverse client base to customise electoral services.	
Develop, review and maintain an election based management system.	

Public awareness

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

Strategies	Performance measures
Conduct targeted advertising/publicity campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number and effectiveness of advertising/publicity campaigns. ▪ Number of schools visited and students attending sessions. ▪ Level of elector participation and satisfaction. ▪ Level and nature of informality. ▪ Number and nature of transactions logged on the NTEC website. ▪ Number of reports and publications produced (actual v targeted).
Develop and deliver electoral education and information programs and services.	
Maintain and improve school based education programs	
Conduct electoral research to improve service and participation at electoral events.	
Coordinate the NTEC's public reporting.	
Undertake public awareness strategic planning for the 2016 LA general election and the 2017 NT Council elections.	
Develop and implement a revised advertising campaign.	

Corporate

An operating environment that features continuous improvement, is open and supportive of staff, promotes professional growth, mutual respect and recognition of achievements.

Strategies	Performance measures
Review and change the organisational structure to better meet the strategic challenges of the NTEC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of policies reviewed to ensure they meet current business and public sector requirements. ▪ Number of system enhancements made (actual vs targeted). ▪ Improved staff responses in future staff surveys. ▪ Level of participation in staff development opportunities. ▪ Number of events held to celebrate staff achievements.
Document and implement policies and procedures that uphold the business requirements of the NTEC, the Northern Territory Public Service and relevant legislation.	
Maintain and enhance IT systems, an agency website and infrastructure that maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission's activities.	
Foster the professional development and expertise of staff.	
Recognise and celebrate the contribution of individuals and the team.	

NTEC OFFICE PREMISES

Darwin

When not required for major elections, the Commission's conference room (the Boyd Room) is available to other government agencies for training and workshop purposes. During 2017-2018 the Boyd Room was used on eleven occasions by the Department of Health and Territory Families.

Two other workspaces were utilised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for a five week period during October 2017, for the conduct of the same-sex marriage survey.

Quotes have been sought to remove an internal wall to make a large enough space for all permanent staff to be located at the same end of the premises. This will also include moving the Boyd Room to the opposite end, which will be re-arranged into large working areas to facilitate demands during election periods. These changes are proposed to better integrate staff and support a more inclusive working environment, especially outside major elections.

Alice Springs

MyVote Central was established in Alice Springs in mid-2009 and is managed by the NTEC under a memorandum of understanding with the AEC to provide a one-stop shop for enrolment, elections and electoral education. The office has been located in its current site at the Yeperenye Shopping Centre since May 2015 and had a minor fit out to provide more work space in April 2018.

MyVote Central also has a medium sized conference room that is available for use by other agencies at no cost. During 2017-2018, Territory Families used the room on 19 occasions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Provision of services by DCIS and external ICT provider(s)

ICT support is provided by ICT Services, a division of DCIS, with responsibility for day-to-day ICT matters currently resting with the Business Manager. However, with the introduction of an IT systems officer, the agency's IT functions will soon be managed by this role.

Whole of government contracts determine providers for most telecommunications, hardware, generic software and helpdesk support. Specific agency hardware and software requirements are assessed on an 'as need' basis. Procurement of such items is carefully considered, as uncontracted purchases are not supported by NTG or covered by established safeguards and procedures.

Hardware

No additional hardware was undertaken in the reporting year. However, unused desktops, monitors and laptops from both offices were returned to DCIS as part of a cost savings exercise. In total the following items were returned:

- seven desktop computers (six from Darwin, one from Alice Springs)
- twelve monitors (nine from Darwin, three from Alice Springs)
- one laptop (from Darwin)

Telephone handsets were also reviewed with excess equipment returned to DCIS to decrease ICT costs. The Darwin office returned seven executive handsets and one standard handset. Finalisation for the return of hardware from the Alice Springs office had not occurred before the end of the reporting year; however, it is expected that two or three standard handsets will be returned.

A multi-function device was disposed of when the repair costs became too high. It was not replaced.

Software

Minor adjustments were made to eLAPPS software (an electronic voter mark-off system) prior to the 2018 City of Palmerston election. The improvements were to enhance search functions identified at the 2017 NT Council elections. These changes were made under the three-year contract with F1 Solutions.

Significant enhancements were made to TIGER, the Commission's election management system, throughout 2017-2018. These included improvements made prior to the two major electoral events, maintenance during these election periods, post-election developments and to ensure compliance with the *Electoral Act*.

These tasks were undertaken by the system's designer on a contracted arrangement.

COST SAVINGS REVIEW

In addition to the abovementioned cost savings actions involving IT hardware, the agency reviewed all its expenses to find options for reductions. Other cost savings measures that were implemented include:

- downsized the agency's fleet vehicle
- cancelled all satellite telephone and dongle accounts (to be temporarily re-activated during election periods)
- cancelled Australia post personal delivery service
- cancelled newspaper delivery service
- cancelled plant rental and maintenance contract
- other office amenities and stationery cost savings measures

NOTE: some will not commence until the new financial year

TARGETS 2018-2019

- Finalise reporting for 2017 NT Council elections, including 2018 City of Palmerston election.
- Review the organisational structure of the agency.
- Full transition to electronic records management, using the new standardised BCS.
- Reconfigure the Darwin office premises to create a more inclusive working environment.
- Document procedures in the election management system.
- Implement changes to the *Electoral Act* arising from the 2016 Election Report and Inquiry into Political Donations
- Conduct the 2019 NT Legislative Assembly redistribution

FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

NTEC funding arrangements

The NTEC is funded through an annual appropriation from Treasury. Additional revenue is received by the Commission through the charging of a 15 per cent corporate overhead for conducting council by-elections and 35 per cent corporate overhead for fee-for-service elections. An annual contribution of \$15,000 is received from the AEC for the Alice Springs joint office initiative.

Funding for specific events is undertaken as follows:

- NT Legislative Assembly elections and by-elections – through a Treasurer’s Advance (TA). Traditionally the Commission received reimbursement through a TA after the election occurred and when all expenses had been received. In recent years, only the difference between advance funding and final actual costs is recouped through a TA
- local government by-elections – from individual councils with a 15 per cent corporate overhead applied
- LA boundary redistributions – through a Treasurer’s Advance
- major initiatives, e.g. business specific software developments approved by Cabinet, are met by a Treasurer’s Advance
- fee-for-service elections – conducted at NTEC commercial rates including a 35 per cent corporate overhead
- NTPS enterprise agreement (EA) ballots – funding provided by the department on a marginal cost recovery basis.

In a non-election year major outgoing expenditure is attributed to staffing, property, IT, DCIS Free of Charge (FOC) notional expenses, and payments to the AEC for maintenance of the NT electoral roll under the joint roll arrangement (JRA). The annual appropriation budget supports:

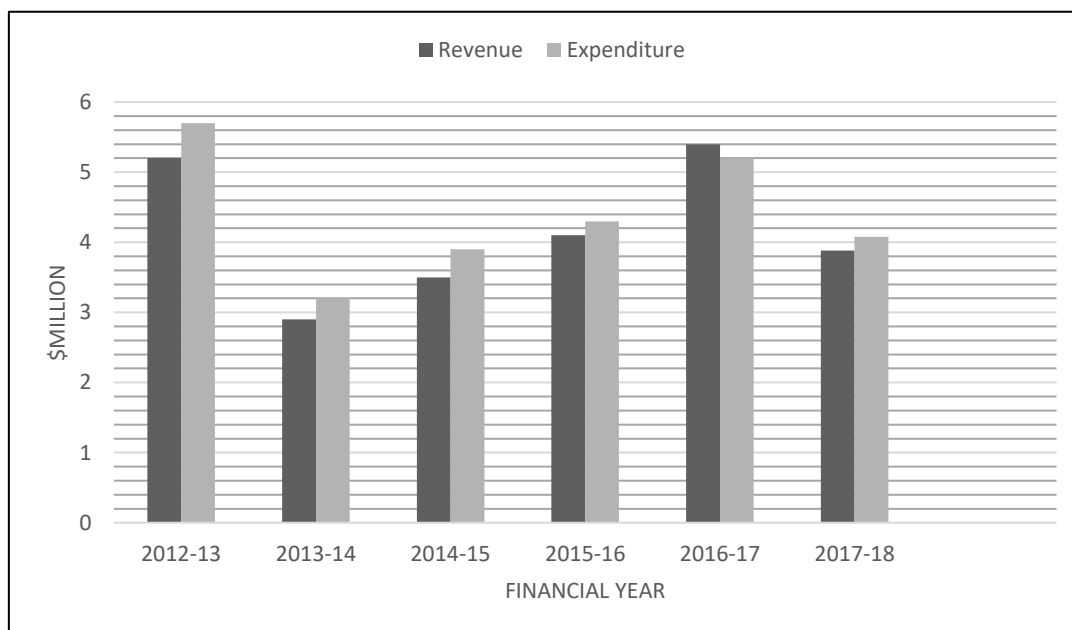
- the head office (Darwin) and MyVote Central (Alice Springs)
- salaries for staff and one executive contract officer
- enrolment, election, public awareness and corporate governance functions
- the payment of approximately \$0.128 million for annual JRA costs.

Historical revenue and expenditure variations

The following graph shows revenue and expenditure fluctuations over the last four financial years. Peaks can be explained as follows:

- 2014-2015 – the conduct of the QR14 enrolment program and the commencement of the 2015 redistribution of electoral boundaries
- 2015-2016 – finalisation of the 2015 redistribution, pre-NTLA election expenditure
- 2016-2017 – the conduct of the 2016 NT Legislative Assembly election
- 2017-2018 – the conduct of the 2017 NT Council elections, including the 2018 City of Palmerston election.

Graph 1: NTEC revenue versus expenditure – financial years 2013-2014 to 2017-2018



2017-2018 outcomes

The NTEC’s appropriation for 2017-2018 was \$1.359 million. The 2017-2018 budget was later augmented by a Treasurer’s Advance of \$0.573 million due to recognised baseline funding issues and a carry-over for the 2017 NT Council elections.

Total actual expenditure for the 2017-2018 financial year amounted to \$4.079 million. Included in this was \$2.199 million in staff costs, \$1.221 million for administrative expenses and \$0.659 million for goods and services received free of charge (the latter funded through DCIS).

The agency operated at a \$0.075 million deficit (which does not include depreciation).

NT Council elections expenditure – costs to councils

In December 2015, NTEC provided all councils with preliminary estimates of their individual costs for the 2017 NT Council elections (including the City of Palmerston). Councils were charged the full marginal cost of the elections, with no corporate overhead, and the overall estimate of the general election totalled \$1.72 million.

Unlike the previous two local government general elections, the 2017 NT Council elections were conducted in the dry season which significantly reduced the costs as remote communities in the Top End could be accessed by vehicle rather than by plane or helicopter. The total cost of the 2012 local government general election was \$2.3 million, however, councils only contributed \$1.1 million, with the balance funded by the NT Government. With the councils now responsible for the full costs of their elections, the estimates of the 2017 election costs were a considerable increase to councils.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) were negotiated with each council individually outlining the minimum requirements between the NTEC and councils. Councils had the option to offset costs by supplying resources where possible such as staff, premises and vehicles, which were included in the SLAs. Following the close of nominations, a total revised cost of \$1.59 million was reached. This reduced amount included savings made due to offsets agreed upon in the SLAs, as well as some council wards not going to poll as a result of uncontested elections.

The total cost of \$1.59 million was allocated or apportioned using two methods:

- 1) Direct costs – the cost is based on a price per unit (e.g. per voter) or a quote from a supplier, and applies specifically to the council (for examples costs of premises)
- 2) Apportioned cost – the overall cost Territory wide is apportioned across all councils by the number of enrolled voters in each council area. For example, the number of enrolled voters in the Alice Springs Town Council area was 12,584 at the close of rolls, with a total NT enrolment of 125,831. The Alice Springs Town Council was therefore apportioned 10% of the Territory wide costs.

Final council invoicing was provided to the individual councils in September following the declaration of results, with all councils paying in October.

Table 24: 2017 NT Council elections: Percentage of voters used to calculate apportioned costs

Council	Enrolment	%
Alice Springs Town Council	12,584	10.0
Barkly Regional Council	4261	3.4
Belyuen Community Government Council	NA	NA
Central Desert Regional Council	2654	2.1
City of Darwin	47,788	38.0
City of Palmerston	19,231	15.3
Coomalie Community Government Council	609	0.5
East Arnhem Regional Council	5,784	4.6
Katherine Town Council	4,938	3.9
Litchfield Council	11,526	9.2
MacDonnell Regional Council	3,481	2.8
Roper Gulf Regional Council	3,881	3.1
Tiwi Islands Regional Council	1,612	1.3
Victoria Daly Regional Council	1,714	1.4
Wagait Shire Council	294	0.2
West Arnhem Regional Council	3,734	3.0
West Daly Regional Council	1,740	1.4
TOTAL	125,831	100%

Table 25: 2017 NT Council elections: Estimate and final costs by council

Council	2016 estimate	2017 final cost	Difference (+/-)
Alice Springs Town Council	\$181,862	\$170,202	\$11,660
Barkly Regional Council	\$96,780	\$77,257	\$19,523
Belyuen Community Government Council	\$7,738	\$3,706	\$4,032
Central Desert Regional Council	\$60,507	\$41,832	\$18,675
City of Darwin	\$433,929	\$450,632	-\$16,703
City of Palmerston*	\$208,395	\$241,462	-\$33,067
Coomalie Community Government Council	\$18,705	\$14,693	\$4,012
East Arnhem Regional Council	\$122,779	\$104,357	\$18,422
Katherine Town Council	\$80,849	\$93,046	-\$12,197
Litchfield Council	\$137,273	\$136,710	\$563
MacDonnell Regional Council	\$58,514	\$42,030	\$16,484
Roper Gulf Regional Council	\$82,217	\$68,190	\$14,027
Tiwi Islands Regional Council	\$34,878	\$29,480	\$5,398
Victoria Daly Regional Council	\$54,799	\$23,055	\$31,744
Wagait Shire Council	\$7,222	\$7,739	-\$517
West Arnhem Regional Council	\$97,436	\$64,814	\$32,622
West Daly Regional Council	\$36,296	\$24,564	\$11,732
TOTAL	\$1,720,179	\$1,593,775	\$126,404

* Increase in final cost includes expenses incurred due to adjournment of election for Cyclone Marcus (\$16,329)

Table 26: 2017 NT Council elections: Breakdown of total costs

Expense Type	\$
Staffing	\$558,662
Voting centres	\$64,320
Mobile voting	\$215,185
Public awareness	\$372,126
IT	\$20,277
Postage/stationery/printing/other	\$363,205
TOTAL	\$1,593,775

Revenue from local government by-elections and fee-for-service elections

Changes to the *Local Government Act* in 2015, allows councils to conduct their own by-elections if a vacancy becomes available, or appoint an alternative provider. During the reporting year, there were three council vacancies, and the NTEC was appointed to conduct all three by-elections; this generated \$3,650 in revenue. This includes the election costs plus a 15 per cent corporate overhead. An additional \$25,603 was received for conducting fee-for-service elections.

Table 27: Revenue from NT Local Government by-elections conducted 2017-2018

Date	By-election	Revenue
23.11.2017	West Daly Regional Council – Thamarrurr Pindi Pindi ward	\$793
01.12.2017	MacDonnell Regional Council – Luritja Pintubi ward	\$2,064
15.02.2018	Tiwi Islands Regional Council – Pirlangimpi ward	\$793
Total		\$3,650

Table 28: Revenue from fee-for-service elections and EAs conducted 2017-2018

Date	Ballot	Revenue
10.07.2017	St John's Ambulance Australia EA	\$275
10.11.2017	Danila Dilba Health Service	\$468
10.11.2017	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia	\$554
11.12.2017	Jacana Energy EA	\$162
14.12.2017	NTPS General EA	\$18,102
18.12.2017	City of Darwin EA	\$594
27.03.2018	City of Darwin EA	\$594
01.06.2018	City of Darwin EA	\$1,204
29.06.2018	NTPS Teachers and Assistant Teachers EA	\$3,650
Total		\$25,603

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OVERVIEW

For the year ended 30 June 2018

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) provides an independent service to the people of the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, municipal and regional councils (mandated) and other organisations (by appointment).

Key responsibilities include:

- Contributing to the maintenance of the Northern Territory electoral roll
- Managing parliamentary and non-parliamentary elections including local government and fee for service elections
- Delivering public electoral awareness and education programs
- Providing advice and reports relating to electoral matters to the Legislative Assembly
- Conducting electoral research
- Providing support to the Redistribution Committees which redistribute electoral boundaries.

Financial performance

The NTEC's income for 2017-2018 was increased to \$3.884 million as a result of the conduct of the 2017 NT Council elections. Expenses incurred for the year were \$4.079 million. The end result was an operating loss of \$0.196 million.

The expenditure budget is due to the 2017 NT Council elections which were held on 28 August 2017 as well as the deferred 2018 City of Palmerston election in March. The major expenditure items were:

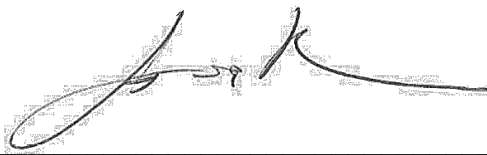
- Employee expenses for the 2017 NT Council elections and 2018 City of Palmerston election
- Costs associated with both elections such as remote voting, public awareness campaigns and premises hire.

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 2018 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.



Iain LOGANATHAN
Electoral Commissioner - Accountable Officer
30 August 2018



Blake HARTMAN
Business Manager - Senior Project Officer
30 August 2018

NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT
For the year ended 30 June 2018

	Note	2018 \$000	2017 \$000
INCOME			
Taxation revenue			
Grants and subsidies revenue			
Current		14	14
Capital			
Appropriation			
Output		1932	4372
Commonwealth			
Sales of goods and services ^(a)		1278	357
Interest revenue			
Goods and services received free of charge	4	659	707
Gain on disposal of assets			
Other income			
TOTAL INCOME	3	3884	5450
EXPENSES			
Employee expenses		2199	2602
Administrative expenses			
Purchases of goods and services	5	1090	1785
Repairs and maintenance		4	2
Depreciation and amortisation	9	127	161
Other administrative expenses ¹		659	707
Grants and subsidies expenses			
Current			
Capital			
Community service obligations			
Interest expenses	16		
TOTAL EXPENSES	3	4079	5258
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)		(196)	192
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Items that will not be reclassified to net surplus/deficit			
Changes in accounting policies			
Correction of prior period errors			
Changes in asset revaluation surplus			68
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			68
COMPREHENSIVE RESULT		(196)	260

¹ Includes DCIS service charges.

^(a) Local Government General election is funded by each respective council on a marginal cost recovery model

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

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2018**

	Note	2018	2017
		\$000	\$000
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and deposits	7	254	250
Receivables	8	26	96
Inventories			
Advances and investments			
Prepayments			
Other assets			
Total current assets		280	346
Non-current assets			
Receivables			
Advances and investments			
Property, plant and equipment	9, 10	550	677
Intangibles			
Biological assets			
Heritage and cultural assets			
Prepayments			
Other assets			
Total non-current assets		550	677
TOTAL ASSETS		830	1023
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Deposits held			
Payables	11	21	16
Borrowings and advances			
Provisions	12	198	201
Other liabilities			
Total current liabilities		220	217
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings and advances			
Provisions			
Other liabilities			
Total non-current liabilities		220	217
TOTAL LIABILITIES		220	217
NET ASSETS		610	806
EQUITY			
Capital		2057	2057
Reserves	14	68	68
Accumulated funds		-1515	-1319
TOTAL EQUITY		610	806

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

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
For the year ended 30 June 2018

	Note	Equity at 1 July	Comprehensive result	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners	Equity at 30 June
		\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
2017-2018					
Accumulated funds					
Changes in accounting policy		-1319	-196 ⁽¹⁾		-1515
Correction of prior period errors					
Transfers from reserves					
Other movements directly to equity					
		-1319	-196		-1515
<Reserves> ^(c)	14	68			
Capital – transactions with owners					
Equity injections		2057			2057
Capital appropriation					
Equity transfers in					
Other equity injections					
Specific purpose payments					
National partnership payments					
Commonwealth – capital					
Equity withdrawals					
Capital withdrawal					
Equity transfers out					
		2057			2057
Total equity at end of financial year		806	-196		610
2016-2017					
Accumulated funds					
Changes in accounting policy		-1511	192		-1319
Correction of prior period errors					
Transfers from reserves					
Other movements directly to equity					
		-1511	192		-1319
<Reserves> ^(c)	14		68		68
Capital – transactions with owners					
Equity injections		2057			2057
Capital appropriation					
Equity transfers in					
Other equity injections					
Specific purpose payments					
National partnership payments					
Commonwealth – capital					
Equity withdrawals					
Capital withdrawal					
Equity transfers out					
		2057			2057
Total equity at end of financial year		546	260		806

The statement of changes in equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
For the year ended 30 June 2018

	Note	2018	2017
		\$000	\$000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Operating receipts			
Taxes received			
Grants and subsidies received			
Current		14	14
Capital			
Appropriation			
Output		1932	4372
Commonwealth			
Receipts from sales of goods and services		1482	436
Interest received			
Total operating receipts		3428	4822
Operating payments			
Payments to employees		-2204	-2607
Payments for goods and services		-1220	-2092
Grants and subsidies paid			
Current			
Capital			
Community service obligations			
Interest paid			
Total operating payments		-3424	-4699
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	15	4	125
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Investing receipts			
Proceeds from asset sales			
Repayment of advances			
Sales of investments			
Total investing receipts			
Investing payments			
Purchases of assets		0	194
Advances and investing payments			
Total investing payments		0	194
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities		0	-194
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Financing receipts			
Proceeds of borrowings			
Deposits received			
Equity injections			
Capital appropriation			
Commonwealth appropriation			
Other equity injections			
Total financing receipts			
Financing payments			
Repayment of borrowings			
Finance lease payments			
Equity withdrawals			
Total financing payments			
Net cash from/(used in) financing activities			
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		4	-71
Cash at beginning of financial year		250	321
CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	7	254	250

The cash flow statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

NORTHERN TERRITORY ELECTORAL COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 30 June 2018

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1. OBJECTIVES AND FUNDING

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

The agency is predominantly funded and therefore dependent, on the receipt of Parliamentary appropriations. The financial statements encompass all funds through which the agency controls resources to carry on its functions and deliver outputs. For reporting purposes, outputs delivered by the agency are summarised into several output groups. Note 3 provides summarised financial information in the form of a comprehensive operating statement by the output group.

For the conduct of Legislative Assembly elections, a Treasurer's Advance is generally sought at the conclusion of the event. For a Local Government General Election, councils are charged the margin cost and have the option to pay prior or after the event. For local government by-elections councils are charged a 15 per cent corporate overhead in addition to the marginal cost and invoiced after the event. The financial statements encompass all funds through which the agency controls resources to carry on its functions and deliver outputs.

2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Statement of compliance

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 should 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.

b) Basis of accounting

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.

Standards and interpretations effective from 2017-2018

The following new and revised accounting standards and interpretations were effective for the first time in 2017-2018:

AASB 2016-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure Initiative: Amendments to AASB 107

This standard applies to the not-for-profit sector for the first time in 2017-2018. The accounting amendment AASB 2016-2 requires the disclosure of information that enable users of financial statements to evaluate changes in liabilities arising from financing activities.

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to the current reporting periods, but are considered to have no impact on public sector reporting.

Standards and Interpretations issued but not yet effective

On the date of authorisation of the financial statements, the following standards and interpretations were in issue but are not yet effective and are expected to have a potential impact on future reporting periods:

AASB 16 Leases

AASB 16 Leases is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019 and will be reported in these financial statements for the first time in 2019-2020. When the standard is effective it will supersede AASB 117 Leases and requires the majority of leases to be recognised on the balance sheet.

For lessees with operating leases, a right-of-use asset will now be included in the balance sheet together with a lease liability for all leases with a term of 12 months or more, unless the underlying assets are of low value. The comprehensive operating statement will no longer report operating lease rental payments. Instead a depreciation expense will be recognised relating to the right-to-use asset and interest expense relating to the lease liability.

For lessors, the finance and operating lease distinction remains largely unchanged. For finance leases, the lessor recognises a receivable equal to the net investment in the lease. Lease receipts from operating leases are recognised as income either on a straight-line basis or another systematic basis where appropriate.

Consequently, it is expected that approximately \$0 million in operating lease commitments will be required to be recognised in the balance sheet through a lease liability and corresponding right to use asset from 2019-2020 in accordance with AASB 16 Leases. In the comprehensive income statement, the operating lease expense will be replaced with a depreciation expense, relating to the right to use asset and interest expense, relating to the lease liability. These cannot be quantified at this time.

AASB 1058 Income for not-for-profit entities and AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers

AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities and AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers are effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019 and will be reported in these financial statements for the first time in 2019-2020.

Under the new AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities, revenue from grants and donations will be recognised when any associated performance obligation to provide goods or services is satisfied, and not immediately upon receipt as currently occurs. Consequently, more liabilities will be recognised in the balance sheet after adoption of this standard.

AASB 1058 clarifies and simplifies income-recognition requirements that apply to not-for-profit entities in conjunction with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers.

While the full impacts are yet to be determined, potential impacts identified include:

- Grants received to construct or acquire a non-financial asset will be recognised as a liability, and subsequently recognised as revenue as the performance obligations under the grant are satisfied. At present, such grants are recognised as revenue on receipt
- Grants with an enforceable agreement and sufficiently specific performance obligations will be recognised as revenue progressively as the associated performance obligations are satisfied. At present, such grants are recognised as revenue on receipt
- Grants that have an enforceable agreement but no specific performance obligations but have restrictions on the timing of expenditure will also continue to be recognised on receipt as time restriction on the use of funds is not sufficiently specific to create a performance obligation
- Grants that are not enforceable and/or not sufficiently specific will not qualify for deferral, and continue to be recognised as revenue as soon as they are controlled.

AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors

AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019 and will be reported in these financial statements for the first time in 2019-2020.

AASB 1059 addresses the accounting for arrangements that involve an operator providing public services related to a service concession asset on behalf of a public sector grantor for a specified period of time and managing at least some of those services.

Where a transaction meets the definition of a service concession arrangement, a service concession asset and liability will be recognised on the balance sheet and valued in accordance with the new standard.

The Territory's public-private partnership arrangements are currently under review to determine the applicability of AASB 1059 and the full impact of the new standard.

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods, but are considered to have limited impact on future financial reporting.

c) Reporting entity

The financial statements cover the Department as an individual reporting entity. The NT Electoral Commission ('the Department') is a Northern Territory department established under the *Interpretation Act Administrative Arrangements Order*.

The principal place of business of the Department is: Level 3 TCG Centre, 80 Mitchell Street, Darwin.

d) Agency and territory items

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

Central holding authority

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

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

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

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

e) Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative information for the 2017-2018 financial year has been reclassified to provide consistency with current year disclosures.

f) 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. Figures in the financial statements and notes may not equate due to rounding.

g) Changes in accounting policies

There have been no changes to accounting policies adopted in 2017-2018 as a result of management decisions.

h) Accounting judgments and estimates

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

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

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

i) 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.

j) 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.

3. COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT BY OUTPUT GROUP

	Note	Electoral Services 2018	Electoral Services 2017	Corporate and Governance 2018	Corporate and Governance 2017	Total	
		\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	2018	2017
						\$000	\$000
INCOME							
Taxation revenue							
Grants and subsidies revenue							
Current		14	14	0	0	14	14
Capital							
Appropriation							
Output		1932	4372	0	0	1932	4372
Commonwealth							
Sales of goods and services		1278	357	0	0	1278	357
Interest revenue							
Goods and services received free of charge	4	659	707	0	0	659	707
Gain on disposal of assets							
Other income							
TOTAL INCOME		3884	5450	0	0	3884	5450
EXPENSES							
Employee expenses		2029	2436	170	170	2199	2602
Administrative expenses							
Purchases of goods and services	5	1080	1775	10	10	1090	1785
Repairs and maintenance		4	2	0	0	4	2
Depreciation and amortisation	9,10	127	160	0	0	127	160
Other administrative expenses ¹		659	707	0	0	659	707
Grants and subsidies expenses							
Current							
Capital							
Community service obligations							
Interest expenses	16						
TOTAL EXPENSES		3899	5080	180	180	4079	5258
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)		-15	370	-180	-180	-196	192
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME^(c)							
Items that will not be reclassified to net surplus/deficit							
Changes in accounting policies							
Correction of prior period errors							
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		0	68	0	0	0	68
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		0	68	0	0	0	68
COMPREHENSIVE RESULT		-15	438	-	-180	-196	260

¹ Includes DCIS service charges.

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

Income

Income encompasses both revenue and gains.

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

Grants and other contributions

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

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

Appropriation

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

Commonwealth appropriation follows from the intergovernmental agreement on federal financial relations, resulting in specific purpose payments (SPPs) and national partnership (NP) payments being made by the Commonwealth Treasury to state treasuries, in a manner similar to arrangements for GST payments. These payments are received by the Department of Treasury and Finance on behalf of the Central Holding Authority and then passed on 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.

	2018	2017
	\$000	\$000
4. GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE		
Corporate and information services	659	707
Internal audits and reviews		
	659	707

5. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

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

Goods and services expenses:

Consultants ⁽¹⁾	8	17
Advertising ⁽²⁾	7	69
Marketing and promotion ⁽³⁾	157	250
Document production	53	50
Legal expenses ⁽⁴⁾	0	6
Recruitment ⁽⁵⁾	0	2
Training and study	23	4
Official duty fares	110	36
Travelling allowance	33	35
Agent Services	134	617
Property Management	37	128
	562	1214

⁽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.

Repairs and maintenance expense

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

Interest expense

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

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

	Agency		Agency		Territory		Territory	
	2018	No. of Trans.	2017	No. of Trans.	2018	No. of Trans.	2017	No. of Trans.
	\$000		\$000		\$000		\$000	
Write-offs, postponements and waivers under the <i>Financial Management Act</i>								
Represented by:								
<i>Amounts written off, postponed and waived by Delegates</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Irrecoverable amounts payable to the Territory or an agency written off								
Losses or deficiencies of money written off								
Public property written off								
Waiver or postponement of right to receive or recover money or property								
Total written off, postponed and waived by delegates	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

7. CASH AND DEPOSITS

	2018	2017
	\$000	\$000
Cash on hand	3	3
Cash at bank	251	247
On call or short-term deposits		
	254	250

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

8. RECEIVABLES

Current

Accounts receivable	22	102
Less: allowance for impairment losses	()	()
	22	102
Interest receivables		
GST receivables	4	
Other receivables		-6
Total receivables	26	96

	2018	2017
	\$000	\$000
9. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Plant and equipment		
At fair value	1590	1590
Less: accumulated depreciation	(1040)	(913)
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	550	677

2018 Property, plant and equipment reconciliations

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2017-2018 is set out below:

	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure	Construction (work in progress)	Plant and equipment	Leased property, plant and equipment	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Carrying amount as at 1 July 2017					676		676
Additions							
Disposals							
Depreciation					-127		-127
Additions/disposals from administrative restructuring							
Additions/disposals from asset transfers							
Revaluation increments/decrements							
Impairment losses ^(a)							
Impairment losses reversed ^(a)							
Other movements							
Carrying amount as at 30 June 2018					549		549

9. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (continued)

2017 Property, plant and equipment reconciliations

A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end of 2016-2017 is set out below:

	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure	Construction (work in progress)	Plant and equipment	Leased property, plant and equipment	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Carrying amount as at 1 July 2016					575		575
Additions					194		194
Disposals							
Depreciation					-161		-161
Additions/disposals from administrative restructuring							
Additions/disposals from asset transfers							
Revaluation increments/decrements					68		68
Impairment losses ^(a)							
Impairment losses reversed ^(a)							
Other movements							
Carrying amount as at 30 June 2017					676		676

Acquisitions

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

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

Complex assets

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

Subsequent Additional Costs

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

Construction (work in progress)

As part of the financial management framework, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics is responsible for managing general government capital works projects on a whole of government basis. Therefore appropriation for capital works is provided directly to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics 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.

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.

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

Impairment of Assets

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

Non-current physical and intangible agency assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis or whenever there is indication of impairment. 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 current replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

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

In certain situations, an impairment loss may subsequently be reversed. Where an impairment loss is subsequently reversed, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement as income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the impairment reversal results in an increase in the asset revaluation surplus.

Agency property, plant and equipment assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2018. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

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.

The estimated useful lives for each class of asset are in accordance with the Treasurer's Directions and are determined as follows:

	2018	2017
Plant and equipment	3-6 years	3-6 years
Intangibles	10 years	10 years

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

Assets held for sale

Assets and disposal groups are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered through a sale transaction or a grant agreement rather than continuing use. Assets held for sale consist of those assets that management has determined are available for immediate sale or granting in their present condition and their sale is highly probable within one year from the date of classification.

These assets are measured at the lower of the asset's carrying amount and fair value less costs to sell. These assets are not depreciated. Non-current assets held for sale have been recognised on the face of the financial statements as current assets.

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 lease asset and lease liability equal to the lower of the fair value of the leased property and present value of the minimum lease payments, each determined at the inception of the lease, are recognised.

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 should be recognised as a deduction of the lease expenses over the term of the lease.

10. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

a) Fair value hierarchy

Fair values of non-financial assets categorised by levels of inputs used to compute fair value are:

	Level 1 \$000	Level 2 \$000	Level 3 \$000	Total fair value \$000
2017-2018				
Asset classes^(a)				
Plant And Equipment (Note 9)		550		550
Total				
2016-2017				
Asset classes^(a)				
Plant And Equipment (Note 9)		676		676
Total				

There were no transfers between Level 1 and Levels 2 or 3 during 2017-2018.

b) Valuation techniques and inputs

Valuation techniques used to measure fair value in 2017-2018 are:

	Level 2 techniques ^(b)	Level 3 techniques ^(b)
Asset classes^(a)		
Plant And Equipment	cost	
Buildings		
Infrastructure		

There were no changes in valuation techniques from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.

	2018 \$000	2017 \$000
11. PAYABLES		
Accounts payable	3	6
Accrued expenses	11	
Other payables	7	10
Total payables	21	16

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.

	2018 \$000	2017 \$000
12. PROVISIONS		
Current		
<i>Employee benefits</i>		
Recreation leave	152	154
Leave loading	19	19
Other employee benefits	4	5
<i>Other current provisions</i>		
Other provisions	23	23
	<hr/> 198	<hr/> 201
Non-current		
<i>Employee benefits</i>		
Other employee benefits	0	0
<i>Other non-current provisions</i>		
Other provisions	0	0
	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0
Total Provisions	<hr/> 198	<hr/> 201

The Agency employed 11 employees as at 30 June 2018 (15.28 employees as at 30 June 2017).

Employee benefits

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

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

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

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

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

Superannuation

Employees' superannuation entitlements are provided through the:

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

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

13. COMMITMENTS

Disclosures in relation to capital and other commitments, including lease commitments. Commitments are those contracted as at 30 June where the amount of the future commitment can be reliably measured.

	2018		2017	
	Internal ^(a) \$000	External ^(a) \$000	Internal \$000	External \$000
(i) Other expenditure commitments				
Other non-cancellable expenditure commitments not recognised as liabilities are payable as follows:				
Within one year		181		146
Later than one year and not later than five years				
Later than five years				
		181		146

	2018	2017
	\$000	\$000

14. RESERVES

Asset revaluation surplus

(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

Balance as at 1 July	68	68
Changes in accounting policies		
Correction of prior period errors		
Increment/decrement – land		
Impairment (losses)/reversals – land		
Balance as at 30 June	68	68

2018	2017
\$000	\$000

15. NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

a) Reconciliation of cash

The total of agency 'Cash and deposits' of \$253 886 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

Net surplus/deficit	-196	194
<i>Non-cash items:</i>		
Depreciation and amortisation	127	161
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	70	-54
Decrease/increase in inventories		
Decrease/increase in prepayments		
Decrease/increase in other assets		
Decrease/increase in payables	5	-167
Decrease/increase in provision for employee benefits		
Decrease/increase in other provisions	-2	-9
Decrease/increase in other liabilities		
Net cash from operating activities	4	125

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

k) 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 assets and liabilities are recognised on the balance sheet when the agency becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument. The agency's financial instruments include cash and deposits; receivables; advances; investments loan and placements; payables; advances received; borrowings and derivatives.

Due to the nature of operating activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statutory obligations rather than a contract. Such financial assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments as per AASB 132 Financial Instruments Presentation. These include statutory receivables arising from taxes including GST and penalties.

a) Categorisation of financial instruments

The carrying amounts of the agency's financial assets and liabilities by category are disclosed in the table below.

2017-2018 Categorisation of financial instruments

	Fair value through profit or loss			Financial assets - loans and receivables	Financial assets - available for sale	Financial liabilities - amortised cost	Total
	Held for trading	Designated at fair value	Held to maturity investments				
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Cash and deposits		254					254
Receivables ¹		25					25
Advances							
Investments loans and placements							
Other financial assets							
Interest rate swaps							
Total financial assets		279					279
Deposits held ¹							
Payables ¹		21					21
Advances							
Loans							
Finance lease liabilities							
Interest rate swaps							
Total financial liabilities		21					21

1.Total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts

2016-2017 Categorisation of financial instruments

	Fair value through profit or loss			Financial assets - loans and receivables	Financial assets - available for sale	Financial liabilities - amortised cost	Total
	Held for trading	Designated at fair value	Held to maturity investments				
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Cash and deposits		250					250
Receivables ¹		102					102
Advances							
Investments loans and placements							
Other financial assets							
Interest rate swaps							
Total financial assets		352					352
Deposits held ¹							
Payables ¹		16					16
Advances							
Loans							
Finance lease liabilities							
Interest rate swaps							
Total financial liabilities		16					16

1.Total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts

Classification of financial instruments

AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures requires financial instruments to be classified and disclosed within specific categories depending on their nature and purpose.

Financial assets are classified into the following categories:

- financial assets at fair value through profit or loss
- held-to-maturity investments
- loans and receivables and
- available-for-sale financial assets.

Financial liabilities are classified into the following categories:

- financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL) and
- financial liabilities at amortised cost.

Financial assets or financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss

Financial instruments are classified as at FVTPL when the instrument is either held for trading or is designated as at FVTPL.

An instrument is classified as held for trading if it is:

- acquired or incurred principally for the purpose of selling or repurchasing it in the near term with an intention of making a profit
- part of a portfolio of identified financial instruments that are managed together and for which there is evidence of a recent actual pattern of short-term profit-taking or
- a derivative that is not a financial guarantee contract or a designated and effective hedging instrument.

A financial instrument may be designated as at FVTPL upon initial recognition if:

- such designation eliminates or significantly reduces a measurement or recognition inconsistency that would otherwise arise
- the instrument forms part of a group of financial instruments, which is managed and its performance is evaluated on a fair value basis, in accordance with a documented risk management or investment strategy, and information about the grouping is provided internally on that basis; or
- it forms part of a contract containing one or more embedded derivatives, and AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement permits the contract to be designated as at FVTPL.

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss include deposits held and accounts payable excluding statutory deposits and accrued expenses. Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss include short-term securities and bonds.

Held-to-maturity investments

Non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturity dates that the entity has the positive intent and ability to hold to maturity are classified as held-to-maturity investments. Held-to-maturity investments are recorded at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment, with revenue recognised on an effective yield basis.

Loans and receivables

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market other than those held for trading and available for sale. Loans and receivables exclude statutory receivables.

Available-for-sale financial assets

Available-for-sale financial assets are those non-derivative financial assets, principally equity securities that are designated as available-for-sale or are not classified as any of the three preceding categories. After initial recognition available-for-sale securities are measured at fair value with gains or losses being recognised as a separate component of equity until the investment is derecognised or until the investment is determined to be impaired, at which time the cumulative gain or loss previously reported in equity is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement.

Financial liabilities at amortised cost

Financial instrument liabilities measured at amortised cost include all advances received, finance lease liabilities and borrowings. Amortised cost is calculated using the effective interest method.

Derivatives

The agency enters into a variety of derivative financial instruments to manage its exposure to interest rate risk. The agency does not speculate on trading of derivatives.

Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value on the date a derivative contract is entered in to and are subsequently remeasured at their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement immediately unless the derivative is designated and qualifies as an effective hedging instrument, in which event, the timing of the recognition in the comprehensive operating statement depends on the nature of the hedge relationship. Application of hedge accounting will only be available where specific designation and effectiveness criteria are satisfied.

Netting of swap transactions

The agency, from time to time, may facilitate certain structured finance arrangements, where a legally recognised right to set-off financial assets and liabilities exists, and the Territory intends to settle on a net basis. Where these arrangements occur, the revenues and expenses are offset and the net amount is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement.

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 aging analysis of receivables is presented below.

Internal receivables	Aging of receivables \$000	Aging of impaired receivables \$000	Net receivables \$000
2017-2018			
Not overdue	4		4
Overdue for less than 30 days			
Overdue for 30 to 60 days			
Overdue for more than 60 days			
Total	4		4

Reconciliation of the allowance for impairment losses

Opening	
Written off during the year	
Recovered during the year	
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss	
Total	

2016-2017

Not overdue	0		
Overdue for less than 30 days	0		
Overdue for 30 to 60 days			
Overdue for more than 60 days			
Total	0		

Reconciliation of the allowance for impairment losses

Opening	
Written off during the year	
Recovered during the year	
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss	
Total	

External receivables	Aging of receivables \$000	Aging of impaired receivables \$000	Net receivables \$000
2017-2018			
Not overdue			
Overdue for less than 30 days	18		18
Overdue for 30 to 60 days			
Overdue for more than 60 days			
Total	18		18

Reconciliation of the allowance for impairment losses

Opening		
Written off during the year		
Recovered during the year		
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss		
Total		
2016-2017		
Not overdue	18	18
Overdue for less than 30 days	85	85
Overdue for 30 to 60 days		
Overdue for more than 60 days		
Total	103	103

Reconciliation of the allowance for impairment losses

Opening		
Written off during the year		
Recovered during the year		
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss		
Total		

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.

2018 Maturity analysis for financial assets and liabilities

	Variable interest rate			Fixed interest rate			Non-interest bearing	Total	Weighted average
	Less than a Year	1 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years	Less than a Year	1 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years			
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000			
Assets									
Cash and deposits							254	254	100
Receivables							25	25	100
Advances									
Investment, loans and placements									
Total financial assets							279	279	100
Liabilities									
Deposits held									
Payables							-21	-21	100
Advances									
Loans									
Finance lease liabilities									
Provisions							-198	-198	100
Total financial liabilities							-219	-219	100

2017 Maturity analysis for financial assets and liabilities

	Variable interest rate			Fixed interest rate			Non-interest bearing	Total	Weighted average
	Less than a Year	1 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years	Less than a Year	1 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years			
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000			
Assets									
Cash and deposits							250	250	100
Receivables							102	102	100
Advances									
Investment, loans and placements									
Total financial assets							352	352	100
Liabilities									
Deposits held									
Payables							-16	-16	100
Advances									
Loans									
Finance lease liabilities									
Provisions							-201	-201	100
Total financial liabilities							-217	-217	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 Commission does not hold units in unit trusts.

(iii) Currency risk

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission is not exposed to currency risk as 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

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Fair value measurement of a non-financial asset takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use. The highest and best use takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible and financially feasible.

When measuring fair value, the valuation techniques used maximise the use of relevant observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs. Unobservable inputs are used to the extent that sufficient relevant and reliable observable inputs are not available for similar assets/liabilities.

Observable inputs are publicly available data that are relevant to the characteristics of the assets/liabilities being valued. Observable inputs used by the agency include, but are not limited to, published sales data for land and general office buildings.

Unobservable inputs are data, assumptions and judgments that are not available publicly, but are relevant to the characteristics of the assets/liabilities being valued. Such inputs include internal agency adjustments to observable data to take account of particular and potentially unique characteristics/functionality of assets/liabilities and assessments of physical condition and remaining useful life.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within the following fair value hierarchy based on the inputs used:

Level 1 – inputs are quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;

Level 2 – inputs are inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly; and

Level 3 – inputs are unobservable.

The fair value of financial instruments is determined on the following basis:

- the fair value of cash, deposits, advances, receivables and payables approximates their carrying amount, which is also their amortised cost
- the fair value of derivative financial instruments are derived using current market yields and exchange rates appropriate to the instrument and
- the fair value of other monetary financial assets and liabilities is based on discounting to present value the expected future cash flows by applying current market interest rates for assets and liabilities with similar risk profiles.

For financial instruments measured and disclosed at fair value, the following table groups the instruments based on the level of inputs used.

2018	Total carrying amount	Net fair value level 1	Net fair value level 2	Net fair value level 3	Net fair value total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Financial assets					
Cash and deposits	254	254			254
Receivables	25	25			25
Total financial assets	279	279			279
Financial liabilities					
Payables	-21	-21			-21
Provisions	-198	-198			-198
Total financial liabilities	-219	-219			-219
2017					
	Total carrying amount	Net fair value level 1	Net fair value level 2	Net fair value level 3	Net fair value total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Financial assets					
Cash and deposits	250	250			250
Receivables	103	103			103
Total financial assets	353	353			353
Financial liabilities					
Payables	-16	-16			-16
Provisions	-201	-201			-201
Total financial liabilities	-217	-217			-217

There were no changes in valuation techniques during the period.

17. Related Parties

(i) Related Parties

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission is a government administrative entity and is wholly owned and controlled by the Territory Government. Related parties of the department include:

- the portfolio minister and key management personnel (KMP) because they have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the department directly; and
- spouses, children and dependants who are close family members of the portfolio minister or KMP; and
- all public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of government financial statements; and
- any entities controlled or jointly controlled by KMP's or the portfolio minister or controlled or jointly controlled by their close family members.

(ii) Key Management Personnel (KMP)

Key management personnel of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Commission. These include the Chief Minister and the Electoral Commissioner.

(iii) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The details below excludes the salaries and other benefits of the Chief Minister as the minister's remunerations and allowances are payable by the Department of the Legislative Assembly and consequently disclosed within the Treasurer's annual financial statements.

The aggregate compensation of key management personnel of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission is set out below:

	2017-2018	2016-2017
	\$000	\$000
Short-term benefits	214	204
Long-term benefits	25	21
Termination benefits		
Total	239	225

(iv) Related party transactions:

Transactions with Northern Territory Government controlled entities

The department's primary ongoing source of funding is received from the Central Holding Authority in the form of output and capital appropriation and on-passed Commonwealth national partnership and specific purpose payments.

The following table provides quantitative information about related party transactions entered into during the year with all other Northern Territory Government controlled entities.

2018				
Related Party	Revenue from related parties	Payments to related parties	Amounts owed by related parties	Amounts owed to related parties
	Year	Year	Year	Year
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
<i>All NTG government departments</i>	682	948	4	12

2017				
Related Party	Revenue from related parties	Payments to related parties	Amounts owed by related parties	Amounts owed to related parties
	Year	Year	Year	Year
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000

The department's transactions with other government entities are not individually significant.

Other related party transactions are as follows:

Given the breadth and depth of Territory Government activities, related parties will transact with the Territory Public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public including paying stamp duty and other government fees and charges and therefore these transactions have not been disclosed. No related party transactions in excess of \$10,000 or otherwise considered significant occurred during the reporting period.

18. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

a) Contingent liabilities

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission holds a number of contingent liabilities relating to the 2012 and the 2016 Legislative Assembly General Elections (LAGE). The liabilities relate to leases signed with respective stakeholders regarding polling place locations. Instruments relating to LAGE have since expired however, the liabilities remain current.

The Commission also holds current and on-going liabilities for storage sheds situated in Darwin and Alice Springs, voting software and an agreement with Australia Post.

b) Contingent assets

The Northern Territory Electoral Commission had no contingent assets as at 30 June 2018 or 30 June 2017.

19. EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE

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

20. ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER'S TRUST ACCOUNT

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

Nature of trust money	Opening balance 1 July 2017	Receipts	Payments	Closing balance 30 June 2018
Retention money	0			0

21. BUDGETARY INFORMATION

Comprehensive Operating Statement	2017-2018 Actual	2017-2018 Original budget	Variance	Note
	\$000	\$000	\$000	
INCOME				
Taxation revenue				
Grants and subsidies revenue				
Current	14	0	14	
Capital				
Appropriation				
Output	1932	1359	573	1
Commonwealth				
Sales of goods and services	1278	400	878	4
Interest revenue				
Goods and services received free of charge	659	610	49	
Gain on disposal of assets				
Other income	1	0	1	
TOTAL INCOME	3884	2369	1515	
EXPENSES				
Employee expenses	2199	1367	832	2
Administrative expenses				
Purchases of goods and services	1090	386	704	3
Repairs and maintenance	4	6	-2	
Depreciation and amortisation	127	121	6	
Other administrative expenses	659	610	49	
Grants and subsidies expenses				
Current				
Capital				
Community service obligations				
Interest expenses				
TOTAL EXPENSES	4079	2490	1589	
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	-196	-121	-75	
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Items that will not be reclassified to net surplus/deficit				
Changes in accounting policies		-		
Correction of prior period errors		-		
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		-		
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		-		
COMPREHENSIVE RESULT		-		

Notes: The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than \$100,000, or where multiple significant variances have occurred.

1. Due to agency baseline funding issue and a carry-over request from 2016-2017 not being approved, an additional TA was required.
2. Staffing costs related to 2017 NT Council elections and IT position during the election
3. LG related expenditure related to carry-over request and the adjournment of 2018 City of Palmerston election.
4. Due to the conduct of the 2017 NT Council elections.

Balance Sheet	2017-2018 Actual	2017-2018 Original budget	Variance	Note
	\$000	\$000	\$000	
ASSETS				
Current assets				
Cash and deposits	254	321	-67	
Receivables	26	42	-16	
Inventories				
Advances and investments				
Prepayments				
Other assets				
Total current assets	280	363	-83	
Non-current assets				
Receivables				
Advances and investments				
Property, plant and equipment	550	333	217	
Intangibles				
Biological assets				
Heritage and cultural assets				
Prepayments				
Other assets				
Total non-current assets	550	333	217	
TOTAL ASSETS	830	696	134	
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
Deposits held				
Payables	21	182	-161	1
Borrowings and advances				
Provisions	198	210	-12	
Other liabilities				
Total current liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Borrowings and advances				
Provisions				
Other liabilities				
Total non-current liabilities				
TOTAL LIABILITIES	220	392	-172	
NET ASSETS	610	304	306	
EQUITY				
Capital	2057	2057		
Reserves	68	0	68	
Accumulated funds	-1515	-1753	238	
TOTAL EQUITY	610	304	306	

Notes: The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than \$100 or where multiple significant variances have occurred.

1. Related to the pre-2017 NT Council elections preparation accrued expenditure

Cash Flow Statement	2017-2018 Actual	2017-2018 Original budget	Variance
	\$000	\$000	\$000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Operating receipts			
Taxes received			
Grants and subsidies received			
Current	14	0	14
Capital			
Appropriation			
Output	1932	1359	573
Commonwealth			
Receipts from sales of goods and services	1358	400	958
Interest received			
Total operating receipts	<u>3304</u>	<u>1759</u>	<u>1545</u>
Operating payments			
Payments to employees	2204	1367	837
Payments for goods and services	1086	392	694
Grants and subsidies paid			
Current			
Capital			
Community service obligations			
Interest paid			
Total operating payments	<u>3290</u>	<u>1759</u>	<u>1531</u>
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>14</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Investing receipts			
Proceeds from asset sales			
Repayment of advances			
Sales of investments			
Total investing receipts			
Investing payments			
Purchases of assets			
Advances and investing payments			
Total investing payments			
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities			
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Financing receipts			
Proceeds of borrowings			
Deposits received			
Equity injections			
Capital appropriation			
Commonwealth appropriation			
Other equity injections			
Total financing receipts			
Financing payments			
Repayment of borrowings			
Finance lease payments			
Equity withdrawals			
Total financing payments			
Net cash from/(used in) financing activities			
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	4	0	4
Cash at beginning of financial year	250	250	0
CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	<u>254</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>4</u>