

Strategic Plan

2017 – 2020

DEMOCRACY DELIVERED

Contents

> Background	Page 4
> Executive Summary	Page 5
> Purpose and vision	Page 6
> Our environment	Page 7
> Our work and our stakeholders	Page 8
> Our organisational culture	Page 10
> Our 3 year work plan	Page 12
> Strategy in action and roadmap	Page 15

I am pleased to present
the NSW Electoral
Commission's Strategic
Plan for 2017 to 2020,
which defines our strategic
agenda and roadmap for
the next 3 years.

The New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC) is justly proud of the election-related activities we have undertaken over many years. Having said this, we recognise that democratic processes and institutions around the world are facing a range of challenges. We need to ensure the people of New South Wales continue to maintain their trust and confidence in our electoral system.

With our very active workload, much of the NSWEC's day-to-day activity is necessarily focussed on operational delivery. To create this Strategic Plan, the leadership group took time out to reflect on and debate key issues and priorities for the coming years and identify opportunities for us to make improvements in the way we work.

This involved thinking about broad issues that affect the whole of the organisation, rather than individual teams or functions, and coming up with a shared strategic roadmap.

Responding to global and national trends in voter engagement, we have focused on ways to build broader understanding of the privilege of voting, and to make it easy for eligible voters to cast their votes. We are also looking to build on existing initiatives to make it easier for political participants – candidates, parties, third-party campaigners, donors and lobbyists – to comply with their obligations. This includes designing services and communications from a customer-focus, to give people what they need when they need it, including through digital platforms,

and greater collaboration with other Electoral Commissions. Internally, we have identified ways to build our efficiency and effectiveness, including comprehensively reviewing our business systems.

Our organisational restructure has set us up to work in new ways and have strategic conversations across all areas, to build on our strengths and bring fresh and innovative approaches into the organisation. Across the NSWEC we will hold ourselves accountable for achieving the goals we have set and for the values and behaviours we have identified.

This Strategic Plan is intended as a living document, to inform our annual work programs, the way we develop initiatives and projects and the way we structure our individual performance plans. It will sit at the centre of our leadership conversations and set the agenda for teams across the organisation.

I look forward to working with our accomplished team as the NSWEC strives to achieve these outcomes for the people of New South Wales.



John Schmidt

NSW Electoral Commissioner
June 2017

Background to this plan

In 2016-17, the NSWEC began a transformation program focused on working in a more streamlined and unified way across our services. The work of eight former branches is now run by four Divisions:

- Elections and Enrolment
- Funding, Disclosure and Compliance
- Information Services
- Corporate

We centralised some critical functions (such as communications and information services) to help us work more effectively and give everyone who interacts with us an improved and seamless experience.

All our teams are united by our responsibility to the people of New South Wales to ensure we deliver democratic processes efficiently,

with integrity and with a focus on our customers.

The planning process was an opportunity to reflect on how we can do this together most effectively. A central idea from our discussions was the need to *make it easier* for everyone to interact with us and the democratic process, and this is reflected in our goals.

In developing this plan, we identified that our services are many and varied from elections, through to compliance, regulation, supporting transparency of political funding and lobbyists, and investigating and enforcing breaches of legislation.

All, however, are connected by the same goals and the same outcome: **democracy delivered.**

Executive summary

The first part of the plan sets out our high level strategic intent: Purpose, Vision and Objective.

The second part considers some major challenges in our environment and how we will address them, including:

- > global and local changes in the way people engage with democracy and politics;
- > changes in the technology and communications environment;
- > anticipated new electoral legislation; and
- > funding and resourcing challenges and the need to operate more efficiently.

We consider these challenges in thinking about how we work with our stakeholders.

The third part defines our strong culture, represented in our values and a set of behaviours developed by our staff.

The fourth part of the plan sets three improvement goals under three strategic themes:

- > Goals 1 and 2 are outward looking;
- > Goal 3 focusses on how we can work better internally to support our external services and engagement.

These goals have been designed around our customer, stakeholder, legal and business requirements and all Divisions contribute to their success.

The final part of the plan identifies critical milestones for the next three years and how, at a practical level, we will put this plan into action in our day-to-day work.

The next three years will bring a fresh set of challenges. By clearly defining and addressing them we look forward to continuing to deliver a trusted, respected set of end-to-end electoral and democratic services.



DEMOCRACY DELIVERED

Our purpose is to deliver trusted and independent systems, processes, oversight and engagement that support democracy in New South Wales.

Our vision is to maintain confidence in the integrity of the democratic process and make it easy for people to understand and participate.

What we do

Our work spans all parts of the democratic process in New South Wales and includes:

- running independent and accessible elections for the voters of NSW to participate in and choose their governments;
- providing trusted and clear processes for political participants (including candidates, parties, elected members, donors, third-party campaigners and lobbyists) to comply with their legal obligations, and regulating their compliance;
- supporting transparency by overseeing and publishing political donation and expenditure disclosures and registers of political parties, candidates agents, third-party campaigners and political lobbyists;
- communicating with and engaging the public, to make it easier for people to understand and participate in the democratic process;
- advising on and advocating for improvements to legislation; and
- investigating possible offences and enforcing electoral laws.

Responding to our environment

Over the next few years we face changes and challenges in our operating environment. They present both risks and opportunities for our business. In the planning process, we identified major issues affecting us and used them to set strategic goals. This table summarises key risks and opportunities and how we plan to address them by setting three goals.

Trend

1. Political

Volatility and fragmentation in global politics and changing conversations between citizens and governments.

Declining voter turnout, even in compulsory voting systems.

2. Communications

Public increasingly expect to get what they want quickly through their preferred channels and devices including digital and social media, but also increasingly face communications overload.

3. Technology

Increased digitisation, capacity for data analytics and expectations around it and increased use of artificial intelligence.

Visibility and public impact of technology failures.

Cybersecurity challenges.

4. Legislative

Changes in electoral legislation.

5. Resource challenges

Drive for efficiency: "more with less".

Changing demographics of our workforce.

New election providers.

Risk

Loss of public confidence in democratic processes and institutions and voter disengagement.

Communications clutter and less reliable sources make it difficult to get cut-through for important messages.

Digitisation for the sake of it without identified benefit.
Increased external analysis of published data.
Service interruption.
Loss of public confidence.

People fail to comply with requirements because they don't understand them.

Impact on services and ability to attract an election workforce.
Challenges in balancing permanency with flexibility.
Loss of business to other providers.

Opportunity

Build confidence in the democratic process, by engaging people around voting and making it easy to understand and use all of our services.

In doing so, strengthen our positioning as trusted, independent and authoritative, and as an effective regulator.

Become more customer-centric and integrated in how we design and deliver our services and activities.

Design our information channels to build visibility and understanding of our messaging and respond to public questions and conversations – talking with, not just at.

Digitise external services where we can, to provide faster, simpler engagement and better service.

Identify and implement internal digital and process efficiencies so we can work more effectively.

Improve how we capture and use data and insights and use these to support improvements.

Ensure our technology processes and systems are streamlined, robust and address business continuity.

Using improved communications platforms, deliver easier ways to meet compliance obligations.

Take opportunities to increase awareness and advocate for improvements to legislation.

Share resources and build collaborations across jurisdictions, including with other electoral commissions.

Strengthen our resourcing model. Create efficiencies through streamlined, repeatable processes.

Focus on building workforce capabilities and expertise. Make it easy for potential staff to find and appreciate opportunities to work at elections.

Focus on business development and reinforce our reputation for delivery excellence.



Our work

Who we are here for

We are here to serve the people of New South Wales.

Who we engage

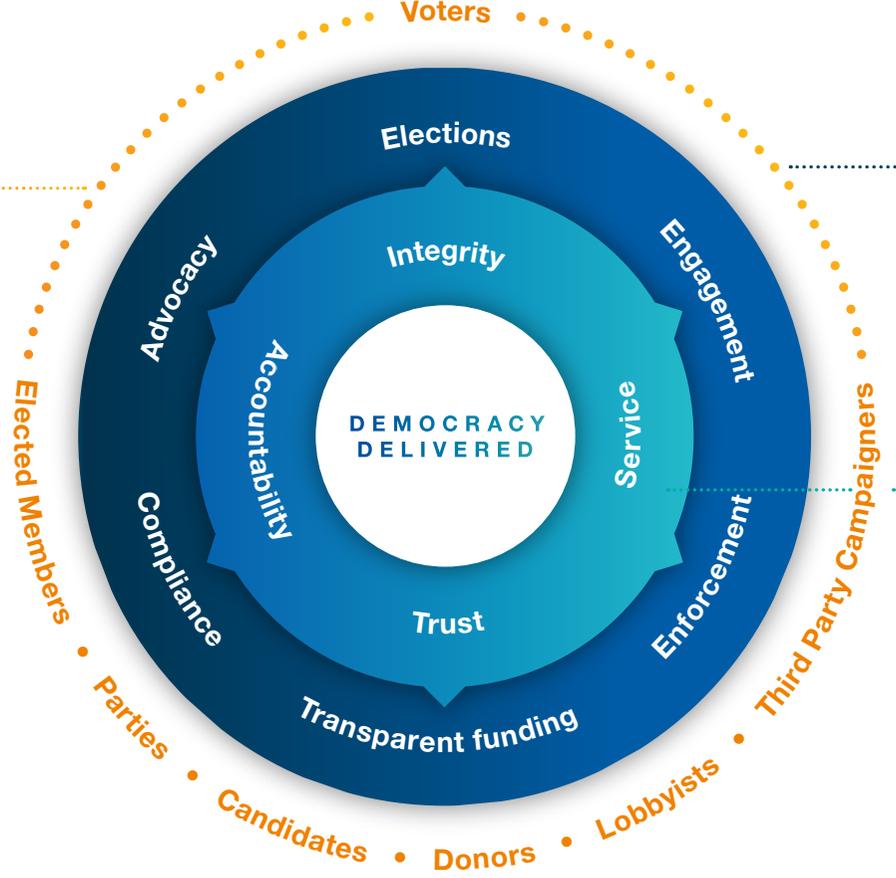
We seek to ensure that voters and political participants understand what they need to do to play their part in the democratic process and can simply and seamlessly navigate through our services to meet their obligations.



The people of NSW



Voters



What we do

Each of these services is part of our end-to-end democratic process, delivered collaboratively by teams across the NSWEC.

How we do it

We bring the values of integrity, trust, service and accountability to the democratic process.

Our stakeholders

Role	Who	How they interact with the democratic and election process	How we interact with them
1. Beneficiaries	People of NSW	Our democracy is here to serve the people of NSW. They look to NSWEC for advice on how to participate and assurance on how election processes are regulated.	We provide trusted and independent systems, processes and oversight of the democratic process, and seek to make it easy for them to understand and participate.
2. Participants	Voters now+next (Includes under 18s, special needs, culturally and linguistically diverse, Indigenous and other communities).	Participate in the voting process and look to us for guidance how to do so.	We encourage them to participate.
	Non-voters	Choose not to participate.	
	Parties, Candidates, Party agents, Elected members, Third party campaigners	Serve the people of NSW.	We provide guidance/support to ensure they comply with their obligation. We enforce compliance where needed.
3. Reviewers	Lobbyists, Donors	Participate in the broader political process. Fulfil their disclosure obligations through us.	
	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	Inquires into and reports on electoral laws and practices and spending and public funding of political parties. Looks only at issues referred by a House or Minister. (Cannot consider electoral boundaries and distribution of electorates).	We follow their guidance, make submissions and implement requirements.
	Electoral Districts Commissioners	Determine redistributions of electoral boundaries.	
	Three-Member Electoral Commission	Special guidance; reviews process issues.	
4. Connectors	Courts and Judiciary	Resolve disputes.	We apply their findings.
	Community Organisations, NGOs, Peak Bodies, Reference Groups	Public interface.	We work with them to connect us and our information with the people of NSW.
	Media	Public interface.	
5. Clients	State Parliament Upper House, Lower House	Commission and fund election processes.	We provide services to them including end-to-end election processes and compliance and review processes.
	Local Councils		
6. Collaborators	Other electoral clients – universities, NGOs, unions, private companies	Purchase election services from us.	
	Other electoral commissions	Collaborate; share knowledge; use our services (e.g. iVote).	We work with them where needed to share knowledge, collaborate on services and gain insights.
	NSW Government Departments	Collaborate; share data (restricted); share knowledge.	
	Academics, students	Collaborate; share knowledge; analyse us.	
7. Suppliers	Venues, Services, Infrastructure	Provide services to support our processes.	We procure their services or, where appropriate, partner with them.

Our organisational culture

NSWEC's positive culture is one of our great strengths. As an organisation which needs to deliver on-time and with precision across all activities, our staff are focused on outcomes and we work together to do what's needed to achieve them.

We recognise that values and behaviours are most meaningful when they are clearly critical to an organisation's success and are translated into practical actions. We expect to be held to our values and behaviours – and to hold each other to account – so that they are not just a list of words but come to life in our day-to-day collaborations, how we work and the way we design our systems, processes and products.

By living our values and behaviours, we create the most positive experience for people who interact with us.

This, in turn, builds and maintains our reputation – and brand – as a respected organisation of the highest integrity that is easy to deal with.

We aim to live and breathe the culture we have defined as essential to our success.



Our behaviours

Responsive

We recognise the need to be flexible in dealing with our changing environment, while always meeting our obligations. We look for opportunities to build on ideas and adapt and innovate in how we work, to keep improving our services and enhance the experience people have when dealing with us.

Transparent

To demonstrate our integrity and build trust in our services, we are open with each other and our customers, clients, stakeholders and audiences. This keeps us accountable and creates opportunities for others to work more effectively with us.

Solution focused

We are focused on outcomes and delivering on our shared goals. We move quickly beyond identifying a problem to working out how best to solve it, while keeping our strategic goals top of mind.

Customer-centred

We start by considering the needs of our customers, clients, stakeholders and audiences and find the best way to serve them, while meeting our legal and business requirements. We believe this is essential to make it easy for people to participate in democratic processes.

Collaborative

We look for opportunities to share ideas and knowledge and work as partners internally and externally because we know this is how we get the best results.

Our values

Our core values, which enable public confidence in the democratic process in NSW, are the NSW Public Service Values:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Service
- Trust

Each of these values is expected and non-negotiable and will be translated into our everyday behaviours. For more detail on what they mean in practice, visit www.psc.nsw.gov.au

Our 3-year work plan

To deliver what's required under our legislation while also addressing our future challenges, we have identified three main themes around which we will organise our work:



We have set one main goal for ourselves under each theme. Goals 1 and 2 are outward-facing, with a focus on the products and services we deliver and how we engage our external stakeholders. Goal 3 focuses on how effectively we work inside our organisation to best deliver on our external goals.

Our 3-year work plan outlines:

- > the high level strategies to achieve each goal (what)
- > their objectives (why)
- > the initiatives that we have designed to achieve them (how)

Each initiative will have its own detailed Key Performance Indicators which together contribute to meeting our overall success measures.

1 Customer-focused products and services

GOAL: Deliver seamless end-to-end services for voters and political participants

Strategy (What)	Objective (Why)	Initiatives (How)
1.1 Use insights to drive service improvements	Better understand our customer needs and design services/products that add value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhanced use of data and insights b. Enhanced customer research c. Service improvement roadmap
1.2 Develop customer-focused improvements through new or updated services and tools, including paper to digital	Make all our services easy to use and secure, by leveraging opportunities from new technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Online tools and services b. Election innovations
1.3 Apply service improvements to effectively deliver our business-as-usual electoral and democratic services across all areas	Ensure our services and products are continually improving for the benefit of our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Election delivery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Government 2019 Local Government 2020 By-elections Other clients b. Enhanced compliance c. Managing complaints
1.4 Adapt our services to legislative change	Ensure our services are compliant while retaining focus on customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement electoral legislation changes b. Ongoing legislative compliance

2 Engagement, influence and advocacy

GOAL: Build reach, impact, influence and collaboration with our key stakeholders, to improve our engagement and delivery

Strategy (What)	Objective (Why)	Initiatives (How)
2.1 Build brand and customer engagement	Give audiences a consistent, easy, positive experience across all our activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrated communications and engagement strategy b. User-centred digital presence
2.2 Improve voter participation through easy communications and better, user centred digital services	Enable people to understand and be engaged in the democratic process across their preferred channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Voter/non-voter engagement b. Community engagement
2.3 Promote political participant compliance/ participation through easy to use platforms and engagement	Ensure political participants have a consistent experience across all interactions with NSWEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Political participant engagement
2.4 Build relationships with election clients	Build confidence in our election services to support new and repeat business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Client development strategy b. Service charters and agreements
2.5 Drive policy and legislative improvements	Use our expert knowledge to recommend changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Government and policy engagement strategy and plans
2.6 Build external collaborations	Leverage our external impact by working with collaborative partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. New partner collaborations

SUCCESS: (KPIs)

-  Increased voter turnout
-  Increased stakeholder satisfaction
-  Increase in valid registration, nominations and disclosures
-  Reduction in cost per elector
-  Improved timeliness of count

3

Effectiveness as an organisation

GOAL: Create an efficient business with a strong and positive culture

Strategy (What)

3.1 Strategic alignment: Align plans, projects and performance

3.2 Resources: Resolve and manage our resource constraints

3.3 People and work environment: Attract and retain a talented workforce and build a collaborative workplace

3.4 Efficiency: Deliver our services in more efficient and effective ways

3.5 Technology: Build an integrated infrastructure and technology capability

3.6 Governance: Enhance our governance processes and risk management

Objective (Why)

Ensure all work contributes to our goals and staff understand their role in NSWEC's success

Ensure our structure supports our strategy, our funding enables continuity of staff and knowledge and we leverage our resources through partnering

Build our skill, capacity and ability to collaborate through a motivated and effective workforce with a learning culture and improvements to our supporting systems.

Do more with what we have, including by ensuring best practice workflow management, documented and repeatable processes and capturing our knowledge so it is easily accessed

Align our ICT investment and systems with our strategy, based around a single view of our customers/users

Ensure we properly manage all activities and risks and our information is secure

Initiatives (How)

a. Implement strategic plan across teams, activities, performance agreements

a. Sustainable financial framework and management
b. Organisation restructure/effectiveness
c. Service and resource collaborations
d. Strategic supplier management

a. Culture and environment
b. Strategic workforce management plan
c. Internal communications strategy

a. Efficiency program
b. NSWEC optimal operating model
c. Enterprise portfolio management
d. Centralised knowledge management

a. Streamlined digital infrastructure
b. IT improvement roadmap and plans
c. Customer relationship management

a. Audit and Risk management
b. Governance framework
c. Information security standards

SUCCESS: (KPIs)



Operating within our budget allocation



Improved employee engagement



Increased portfolio and project management maturity



Improved risk maturity

How we will put this strategy into action

To be effective as an organisation, we need to embed our agreed strategy and shared goals into our day-to-day activities, so everyone can see how their own work contributes to our success.

Themes and goals and measures

We have identified three strategic themes that capture the range of our work. Under each we have a defined goal, the specific strategies and initiatives we will use to achieve that goal and indicators of how we will measure success.

Initiatives and our planning processes

We will define the work we need to do in concise Initiative Plans which capture what we set out to do, the areas and activities involved and more detailed key performance indicators.

We will use our business, project and governance systems to do our initiative planning work and manage and report on the detail behind them. This involves identifying detailed actions and performance measures. To ensure our work delivers the intended benefits, we will apply portfolio investment and project management where needed.

Where an initiative covers several areas or projects, we will use their combined outcomes to assess the initiative's success.

We will allocate responsibility for delivering each initiative and many will involve collaboration between different Divisions. Our team and individual work and performance plans will reflect this.

Everyone across the NSWEC should be able to see a line of sight between their work and one or more parts of this Strategic Plan.

Putting our values and behaviours into action

We will use our values and behaviours when we design new products and services. For example, new services and communications platforms must be designed from a customer-centred perspective, as well as complying with our Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.

Decision-making and reporting

This plan sets the strategic agenda for the next three years. It will be reviewed each year to ensure it continues to meet our needs. We will identify what we want to achieve in years one, two and three and report on our progress in our Annual Report and other organisational reports.

The Senior Executive Committee will meet regularly to review both strategic and operational progress against this plan.

When new opportunities come up, we will measure them against our strategic goals, identify what we have the capacity to achieve and, if needed, adjust our priorities. We will refer to our strategic goals to decide how to prioritise competing work.

Our initiative reports will track how they performed against detailed Key Performance Indicators and these, taken together, will deliver our top level corporate success measures.

In this way, we will be able to confirm we have achieved what we set out to do.

DEMOCRACY DELIVERED

Our 3-year roadmap

GOAL
1
Deliver seamless, end-to-end services for voters and political participants

- 2017/18**
- > Deliver September 2017 Local Government Elections
 - > Go live with new Roll Management System
 - > Start service roadmap improvements
 - > Start planning the 2019 State General Election
 - > Commence upgrade of iVote

2018/19

- > Deliver March 2019 State Government Election
- > Review and implement new electoral legislation
- > Deliver service improvements
- > Deliver upgrade to iVote

2019/20

- > Prepare for September 2020 Local Government elections
- > Embed data analytics/insights into customer service improvements
- > Implement enhanced online services for political participants

GOAL
2
Build our reach, impact, influence and collaboration with our key stakeholders, to improve our engagement and delivery

- > Deliver new customer-centred communications strategy
- > Deliver updated service charters with election clients
- > Update community action plans

- > Launch new user-centred digital presence
- > Engage new partners in voter engagement collaborations

- > Apply new voter engagement approaches

GOAL
3
Create an efficient business with a strong and positive culture

- > Commence efficiency reviews
- > Upgrade our Performance Development Framework
- > Establish Enterprise Portfolio Management Office
- > Explore options for Human Capital Management System
- > Deliver our long term Information Technology Strategy
- > Transition IT infrastructure to GovDC data centre

- > Continue efficiency reviews and embed findings
- > Implement new funding model
- > Implement new workforce management strategies
- > Relocate our staff to a single workplace
- > Roll out IT strategic plan

- > Continue efficiency reviews and embed findings
- > Integrate and update our information systems
- > Implement new shared services arrangements
- > Achieve Level 2 Portfolio and Project Management maturity
- > Finalise and consolidate NSWEC operating model

Our 3-year strategy

DEMOCRACY DELIVERED

Our purpose

is to deliver **trusted** and **independent** systems, processes, oversight and engagement that support democracy in New South Wales.



Our vision

is to maintain **confidence** in the **integrity** of the democratic process and make it easy for people to understand and participate.

Our success measures

- ✔ Increased voter turnout
- ✔ Increased stakeholder satisfaction
- ✔ Increase in valid registrations, nominations and disclosures
- ✔ Reduction in cost per elector
- ✔ Improved timeliness of count
- ✔ Operating within our budget allocation
- ✔ Improved employee engagement
- ✔ Increased portfolio and project management maturity
- ✔ Improved risk maturity

Our goals

Our behaviours

- Customer-centred
- Collaborative
- Solution-focused
- Transparent
- Responsive



Our values

- Integrity
- Trust
- Service
- Accountability

The NSWEC's work as an agency is overseen by the Electoral Commissioner.

The Commissioner also sits as part of a related three-member NSW Electoral Commission which enforces electoral legislation.

The NSWEC agency reports to the NSW Parliament through its Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.



Strategic Plan

2017 – 2020

DEMOCRACY DELIVERED