

This report covers the main activities undertaken by the group/business unit for the period. It excludes the GE23 Programme or by-elections, which are reported on through separate channels.

Progress against the strategic priorities

Nga Maihi continue to strengthen the capability and resilience of colleagues and business units to incorporate Te Ao Māori successfully in their respective environments. MEO and GE2023 retain much of our efforts in translation work, engagement opportunities, planning and relationship building. We continue to support our colleagues in activities and work below.

Building our capability

Democracy Matters Induction Workshops – Planning and Mihi Whakatau
EC Capability Uplift Regional Visit – Ōtautahi
EC Capability Uplift Planning Regional Visit – Rotorua
EC Capability Uplift Planning Regional Visit – Waikato Hauraki
Logistics & Supplies Managers Training (Mihi Whakatau) – Ōtautahi
Te reo Māori & tikanga support - Voting Services Brochures
Development & Launch of ECHO/SharePoint space – Comms/ L&D

Preparing for an election

Kaupapa Māori Voting Places (Across the country)
Translations MEO Campaign
Translations GE2023 Campaign
MEO Brochure Recordings for Website
Te Ahunga mai o te Kōwhiringa Pōti Māori – Collaboration, Planning and Presentation
Legal Services translation support

Preparing for the future

Strategy, Governance & Development Hui - Te Whanganui a Tara
Staff Training programme development

Building relationships and understanding

Voting Services – Engagement support with Tangata Whenua - North, East, West and South
Iwi Chairs Forum Partnership to support the General Election 2023 & Māori Electoral Option Campaign
Te Pae Herenga o Tamaki Partnership Collective initial meetings to establish MOU
Mindanao Young Leaders Programme Visit/interview – One of the participants, Eduard, is working on a project focusing on indigenous participation in electoral processes in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Mindanao – specifically “Limited participation and representation of indigenous communities in decision-making processes in Bangsamoro”. Eduard met with and interviewed Nga Maihi Team
Te Reo Guidance for vision / hearing procedures - ELT/P&C
MEO Contracted Group meetings – Whakatane

Other progress

The development of our translation work into regional dialects continues to improve. We are delighted with the authentic quality and prompt service we are receiving from our kaimahi in MEO work. We look forward to continuing this momentum in future general elections as our capability and processes become the standard.

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Building our capability

This month, we welcomed Karen Stewart, Manger Property and Procurement and Steph Davidson, Principal Advisor Enterprise Services, completing the recruitment of the new Enterprise Services Leadership Team. As it beds in, the focus is now on building a cohesive, high performing leadership team with its recent away day aimed at establishing connection and common purpose across Enterprise Services.

Several system improvements and upgrades were rolled out this month; with the FMIS Solver Budgeting and Forecasting tool to enable better financial insights, a number of module changes with an EMS major release and a Mike OS upgrade seeing improved system performance.

Policy, procedure and process reviews underway across Enterprise Services include; Consultation and progressing of the TOIL Guidelines, approval of the new Procurement Policy and Procurement Procedures and the establishment of working groups focused on the Commission's Workplace Bullying & Harassment Prevention, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Remuneration & Reward Policies. The Finance team are also considering The Commission's processes and procedures for managing FY24 funding initiatives over and above budget to ensure surplus funds are managed appropriately.

People and Culture are looking forward to enhanced capability in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing and Recruitment functions, with the recent addition of Steve Scannell, Recruitment & Talent Lead and Corey Burgess, Health, Safety & Wellbeing lead to the team.

This month saw the rollout of two new learning and development initiatives, Management Essentials - a one-day induction to leadership at the Commission and the Integrity Framework learning module on Tupu.

Preparing for an election

Enterprise Services is leading a number of initiatives to address security risks with a particular focus on National Office, at pace, in the lead up to GE23, including rollout of ID Cards, changes to our reception configuration and visitor management. This work is supported by a staff awareness campaign that commenced the week of 6 June. Deloitte Cyber Security deep dive is ongoing to enhance the Commission's cyber preparedness.

Preparing for the future

During May, ELT approved a refreshed Business Continuity approach and framework aimed at building the Commission's resilience to business disruption in variety of areas. While a detailed work programme is currently being finalised, key upcoming deliverables will include the development of the Electoral Commission's incident management framework and National Incident Management Plan, building capability through training and exercising, and the rollout of business continuity planning support and direction to all teams.

Other progress

Procurement for the 0800 Information Services begun on 15 May with the ROI release on GETS, with stage one ROI closing on 6 June. The evaluation panel, including an external panel member from Stats NZ will meet late June to consider responses and the shortlisted Recommendation Report will be approved by the CEO as delegated by the Board at the April Board meeting. The RFP will be released to the shortlisted providers on 2 October, closing 3 November.

Issues under management

- The effectiveness of the Commission's security controls and general security awareness remain an ongoing and pressing risk. While work is underway to remediate issues identified at pace, security awareness should remain front of mind for all leaders at the commission.
- Recruitment remains an ongoing challenge given labour market conditions.

Other news

This month, Enterprise Services welcomed the following new starters:

Paul Abad: Assistant Accountant

Steph Davidson: Principal Advisor Enterprise Services

Melanie Duff: Administration Support Officer – Casual

Grier Rollinson: Admin Support Officer – Casual

Ashish Sharma: Systems Administrator IT

Karen Stewart: Manager property and Procurement

It is exciting seeing how much our teams are growing, and we look forward to the next round of recruitment as the Finance and IT Teams are in the final stages of recruitment of the permanent Senior Finance Business Partner and Finance Business Partner (positions currently filled by contractors), Infrastructure Managers and two Solution Architects. However, the teams continue to face recruitment challenges with the tight labour market and are still actively recruitment for the following positions: Procurement Advisor, Executive Assistant to the DCE, Administration Officer and Senior Systems Analyst.

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Progress against the strategic priorities

Preparing for an election

- The team provided support to the Board in finalising the broadcasting allocation decision in meetings on 1 and 8 May. Following deliberation, the decision was released on 12 May. The team have been responding to enquiries from parties on using the allocation ahead of the start of the payment of invoices from 1 June.
- We provided advice and support on a variety of operational deliverables including advice on the Māori electoral option, voting age changes, and voting services.
- Finalising the individual candidate nomination form.
- Finalising resources and content with Communications in preparation for the launch of the Candidate Hub on elections.nz including the four new videos for candidates.
- Working with the ASA, BSA and media council on the who does what video
- Reviewing the media kit.
- Reviewing extracts of the PIMS.
- Taking the nominations policy and procedure to the steering group.

Preparing for the future

- The team collected annual returns from political parties and released their audited reports on 8 May.
- Four parties did not submit their returns by the due date. Letters were sent to these parties informing them of their obligations under the Electoral Act.
- Participating in the GE steering group, GE Programme Board, the working group on risk and security, stakeholder engagement plan, Data and Information management Committee.
- Work continued in supporting the Ministry of Justice on legislation to reduce the voting age for local elections.
- Reviewing drafting instructions for the Statutes Amendment Bill amendment to the Electoral Act re loans.
- The team provided support to the Board in anticipation of judicial review against the broadcasting allocation filed by the NZ Outdoors & Freedom Party, liaising with Crown Law and preparing an affidavit on behalf of Karl.

Building relationships and understanding

- Natalie and Dean presented the third party promoter briefing on 18 May.
- Continued to process applications for registration from third parties.
- Work continues in preparing for the broadcasters and publishers briefing.
- Continuing to support information requests and presentations to the Independent Panel reviewing electoral law.

- Assisting with the Australian Parliamentary delegation
- Kristina and Natalie attended the ECANZ F&D Community of Practice on 23 May.

Other progress

Advisory opinions

We received 101 advisory requests in May. All were responded to within the 5 working day timeframe. Requests from MPs are increasing as we approach the start of the regulated period. We sought advice from the Parliamentary Service on the process for a List MP to change their designated electorate and geographic indicator.

Official Information Act requests responded to in May

We responded to five OIA requests in May. Both were within the 20 working day timeframe.

Requestor	Topic	Response Time
Withheld under s 9(2)(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What level of resourcing has been put aside to communicate the Māori Electoral option to Aotearoa and Māori? (human resources and \$amount) over what period of time 2. Please forward a full communications strategy for communicating this significant change for Māori, including all \$ amounts, target populations and areas. 3. What medium/s are being used to communicate this change in law to Māori 4. Please forward full plan of the roll out of this new law, including timelines, \$ amounts, target populations and areas. 5. How many extra staff have been employed to support with the roll out of this law? 6. What training are staff given to roll out this new law? 7. What methods other than physical copy that requires posting are available for Māori to switch rolls? 	19WD
Withheld under s 9(2)(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many people are currently on the unpublished electoral roll? • How many people were on the unpublished electoral roll at the time of the 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2020 general elections? • What are the top five occupations of those on the unpublished electoral roll? • What are the top five reasons people give, when going onto the unpublished electoral roll? 	7WD
Withheld under s 9(2)(a)	I would like a list of everyone that voted for the following parties, during the 2020 election: Labour Party, Green Party, Māori Party, The Opportunities Party (TOP) and Social Credit party	16WD

<div>Withheld under s.9(2)(a)</div> <div></div>	<p>Regarding the master roll, RNZ requests release in full and in fully searchable format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of all and any rules that relate to the master roll, including over accessing it, using it and disseminating it • Copies of records or similar of any entity or individual that has ACCESSED the master roll at any time since access became possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Including identification of that entity or individual ○ Including the date/s of any and all access 	14WD
<div>Withheld under s.9(2)</div> <div></div>	<p>In accordance with the purpose of the Official Information Act 1982 I herein request copies of all other submitted Nomination forms and proof of deposit being with the Electoral Commission at the midnight tonight</p> <p>With due particularity please supply all/ each and every item of documentary information you hold on The New Zealand Labour Party Inc. Minister of Justice Hon Kiri Allan and National Party's Dana Fitzpatrick</p>	13WD

Parliamentary questions responded to in May

We responded to no parliamentary questions in May.

Issues under management

- Nothing to report

Other news

- Job listing shared for Fixed Term Advisor Legal position.

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Progress against the strategic priorities

Building our capability

- Enrolment has completed a number of recruitments in May. An Enrolment Support Officer has been appointed in Lower Hutt, and Senior Enrolment Officer in Christchurch, and a fixed term Enrolment Officer in Auckland.
- Recruitment for a Senior Administrative Assistant (looking after the Directors Enrolment and Strategic Engagement and Partnerships) is underway. Shortlisting has been completed and interviews are planned for the week beginning 6 June.
- The Lower Hutt enrolment team has completed a team building day. The day was facilitated by People and Culture and was a successful day.
- Enrolment has met with the data team in Strategy, Governance and Development to look at potential improvements for our data dashboards.
- Enrolment leaders and staff are preparing for the end of year PDP discussions.
- The Enrolment Leadership Team held a two-day hui in May, with the focus being our work programme for the next 6 months and working on ourselves as a team and as leaders, to continue our development as a high-performing team.
- Four fixed term Project Support Officers have been appointed and have begun work with the Voting Services national office team.
- The CE Manager for the Central region is now on board and the Advisor – SEP has been confirmed and will start in July.

Organisational communications

The communications team continue to work across the organisation and externally to provide support, advice and guidance for our people.

This month, this has included New Zealand Sign Language Week, Samoan Language Week, SnapHire phase two, induction, Pink Shirt Day, continuous work to develop and support the organisation's culture and Senior Leadership Group and celebrating successes across the organisation.

We have developed content for staff regarding changes to Tupu, TOIL consultation for SLG, Community Engagement framework go live, provided talking points for Karl for the LGNZ conference and continued to strengthen our communications channels.

Three issues of The Electoral Connection newsletter were produced during May and readership is steady, with around 200 people reading it each fortnight. Fortnightly All Staff Meeting attendance has stayed consistently over 100 attendees.

Work to ensure teams have the tools they need to do their jobs is ongoing and includes the development of many posters, brochures, EasyVote packs, talking points and more.

Preparing for an election

Māori Electoral Option

The Commission's 0800 information services provider, Telnet, continues to attend public requests on our behalf. There are 3 dedicated Te Reo speakers assisting with MEO. As at 30 May, there were 851 email interactions and 2,380 phone calls received during the MEO campaign. The top 3 requests have been changing details, sending packs and new enrolment enquiries.

ROE42A data extract has been completed and 20,067 text messages were sent out on the 15th May to Dormant electors on the Māori roll. This reminded them to visit Vote.nz by 13th July if they want to change roll for this year's election.

Various messages throughout the EnrolOnline process have been reviewed. These updates will be rolled out in the next MIKE release before the Change Freeze kicks in.

Enrolment has completed telephone calls and emails to Māori electors potentially affected by the Auckland flooding and Cyclone Gabrielle. This included electors on council "red" and "yellow" sticker lists. The calls were well received, and we were able to assist a number of affected electors.

The current phase of the Māori Electoral Option public information and education programme, to raise awareness that you have until 13 July to change rolls if you want to, continues until 25 June. It then moves to a new phase to let people know that time is running out if they want to change rolls for this year's general election.

New digital and printed resources in regional dialects were created and published online. These are available for both internal and external stakeholders to use.

Production of new content with media partners was underway in May. This includes new video and television content in partnership with Tāmāti Rimene-Sproat, TVNZ and Whakaata Māori. Radio announcers are delivering messages about the Option to rangatahi on Mai FM and new video content to be shared across their digital channels has been filmed and is progressing in post-production. These will be available for the Commission to share when they go live in mid-June.

Work is underway to identify how paid activity can help to support awareness of our community engagement presence in communities affected by the cyclone.

Recruitment for General Election positions with SEP are now live, all locations for temporary staff have been identified and around 15 MEO staff will rollover into the General Election.

General Update:

Enrolment:

- The fit-out of enrolment processing centres is underway, and nearly complete. All three centres have the necessary furniture and IT cabling completed. The set up of desktop computers, printers and scanners is well advanced.
- Recruitment for enrolment processing centres is on track. Numbers are looking good for Auckland and Christchurch, but Wellington is getting additional focus from PersolKelly.

- Enrolment has led the development of an audit process for the computer based Special Vote Declaration audit (an audit to ensure that the process is operational and that the “system” is making the correct vote qualification decisions). Enrolment has led this work because the process is centred around MIKE.
- The Dress-Rehearsal for production of the enrolment update packs has been completed. Minor issues were picked up, all of which have been resolved.
- Recruitment interviews for Team leaders for the scaled-up enrolment processing teams, enrolment support team and the Customer services team for GE23 have begun.

Voting Services:

- A programme of visits by the Board to meet with regional operations teams is underway. The purpose is to provide assurance on the Commission’s election readiness at different stages of its preparation e.g. the process to secure appropriate voting places. The programme also provides an opportunity for the Board to hear about the challenges within each region and the steps being taken to address them.
- Voting Services hosted a weeklong training in Christchurch on movement of voting materials between electorates and inside headquarters. The purpose of the training is to simulate the logistics of materials preparing for the GE.

General Election:

- The DCE Ops had presented to ELT regarding the oversight arrangement for GE2023 and presented the structure of the proposed General Election Delivery Taskforce (GEDT). The GEDT’s function is to support the overall delivery of GE2023 by allowing Regional Managers and broader teams to come together in a forum to raise any critical issues and mitigate any real time risks as well as escalating issues to ELT.

Preparing for the future

Manager Business Enablement has held a contract performance review meeting with Blue Star Printing Services in May. No additional risk was identified, and the next review will be in mid-July to track progress to GE2023 delivery. Now we are receiving weekly report to have a visibility of all printing jobs requested by the Commission.

The 0800 Information Services procurement process kicked off on GETS on 15 May. As at 31 May, there were 28 entities downloaded the Registration of Interest (ROI). This process will close on 6 June, and one question has been received so far. The ROI process is expected to complete by end of June.

Building relationships and understanding

Manager Business Enablement has been working with P&C to request extending the contract of De-escalation training (for community engagement and customer services teams) to the end of September. This will allow staff who join EC after July to receive the training.

- Enrolment is contributing to the Judicial Recount document developed and managed by Legal & Policy
- The Commission’s partnership agreement with MEC is steadily progressing and the document is nearing completion.

- Director SEP met with Ministry for Pacific Peoples and discussed a range of options for collaboration, have agreed to progress to a partnership agreement.
- Director SEP has met with UNICEF to discuss options on connecting with their youth ambassador work. This will progress in June.
- SEP and Voting Services jointly facilitated a 'whiteboard' session with the Office for Disability Issues (a branch of Whaikaha) where we discussed a range of options for more accessible voting places and engagement with disability communities. Further hui are planned for the DPO Collective and Deaf Aotearoa in June.

Implementation of Strategic communications and engagement strategy

Stakeholder engagement plans for our six priority audience groups are largely complete. A stakeholder Teams group as the next phase for reporting our stakeholder engagement. A letter to help stakeholder leads reach out to key stakeholder and introduce / reintroduce themselves has been drafted for review.

Op-eds penned for the Chief Electoral Officer and Board Chair have been reviewed again and are awaiting sign off.

Election Access Fund communications

An email was sent to disability and political party stakeholders to update them on the Fund and point them to resources to share. There has been good engagement and sharing of information about the Fund by disability groups. Posters have been printed to send to key stakeholders.

Advertising for the Election Access Fund is ongoing including on social media. Media placement includes radio, digital, and community newspapers throughout the country.

Election integrity communications

A communications plan for electoral integrity outlining our communications activity to maintain trust and confidence in the electoral process was discussed and endorsed with the Board. This work is aligned with activity led by the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer on integrity, security and trust and confidence in the election.

Editing work is underway on videos from the voting place walkthrough, which was filmed in early May in Wellington. The videos will help to demystify the voting experience for first time voters. The video covers what to expect when you get to a voting place and how to vote. A collection of still photos were also taken for external and internal use and are now published on the elections.nz: Image gallery | Elections

A new page titled, Facts about New Zealand elections addressing common misconceptions has been developed with input from legal and policy and voting services and will be published on the website in early June. This page will be a place where we can address any inaccurate information we see in the lead up to the election. It will also be the source for proactive social media posts around electoral integrity.

Media

Media coverage of the Māori Electoral Option in May focused on the changes in roll numbers, with media noting that more people were changing to the Māori roll than the general roll. There was also a focus on the efforts of the Commission to connect with people living in areas impacted by recent weather events who might have had to move house. The main media outlets running stories on the Option are the Herald, Radio Waatea, and regional papers including the Gisborne Herald and Wairoa Star.

Election coverage is well underway and political polls, potential coalition arrangements, the Budget and the cost of living, were all big stories in May.

Election stories that touched on the role of the Commission include regular updates on how much parties are receiving in donations. Stories are based on the donations disclosed on elections.nz.

The use of AI technology to generate content for election advertising was the topic of much debate, as well as the potential for the technology to be used for the spread of misinformation. We had high numbers of media enquiries on this topic and used the opportunity to clarify the role of the Commission in overseeing election advertising.

TVNZ ran a story questioning the use of PersolKelly as a recruitment agency for a small number of specialist roles. The agency is at the centre of a dispute with a group of former Census workers.

The Herald has reported that NZ Outdoors & Freedom Party, Freedoms NZ and Vision NZ are mounting a legal challenge to the broadcasting allocation.

Social media

Social media posts about the Māori Electoral Option continue to attract both positive and negative comments, which are being moderated and responded to where appropriate.

Racism and separatism are ongoing themes in public comments on our pages along with questions around the percentage of Māori blood required to be considered Māori and transphobic commentary around people 'identifying' as Māori. These are reasonably steady in volume, and any comments that breach our terms of use are hidden from public view and not engaged with.

There have been discussions around funding (or lack thereof) for disabled people and the differences in support levels for different types and origins of disabilities in response to paid posts around the Election Access Fund.

We have seen an increase in the number of general questions about advertising – whether it is allowed yet, when it is allowed, where it can be posted, etc. We expect these to increase as we get closer to the election.

Our Facebook reach was up 7% over May compared with April, and our Instagram reach was up 3.1%. (Reach is the number of accounts that saw any content from our Page, or about our Page, including posts, stories, ads, social information, and more. Reach is different from impressions, which may include multiple views of our posts by the same accounts. This metric is estimated.)

In May, we had 70 new Facebook page likes, and 58 new Instagram followers. Overall, we currently have 46,640 Facebook followers, and 2,769 Instagram followers.

Overall, our impressions were up 23.7% in May. Impressions are the number of times our content was displayed to users, including those who don't follow us (e.g. through paid or sponsored posts).

Websites

We continue to support Legal & Policy with the development of the Candidate Hub on elections.nz, which will provide a single clear destination for candidates seeking to contest the 2023 General Election (and any subsequent events). The Hub is due to be launched on 6 June.

Development of a mapping tool to enhance the Careers Website is almost complete with implementation expected in early June.

Discussions continue with IT about a potential reskinning of the election results website. A suggested design has been developed for further conversation with Catalyst.

Other progress

Issues under management

- Leave plans are being developed for enrolment staff with high leave balances

Other news

- Senior Advisor Learning and Development for GE2023, Denise McGrath, started with Business Enablement on 15th May
- Manager Business Enablement completed the CIMS 3 and 4 training in May and is picking up the Incident Controller role from Dean Shirley.
- Enrolment responded to a significant OIA request, **Withheld under s.9(2)(a)**

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Progress against the strategic priorities

Building our capability

- The quarterly Risk Profile was discussed at the May Board meeting which led to the commissioning of 7 areas for further discussion. These are in development.
- The recruitment dashboard is in draft form and will allow People and Culture and Voting Services to report on and manage the recruitment process for BAU and GE.

Preparing for the future

- On 12 May SGD held a workshop day with the Māori advisory team to discuss the groundwork for the Commission's 10-year strategy process, which will commence with Board involvement in July.
- On May 24 SGD had a session with the Senior Leadership Group discussing the approach to our long-term strategy work.
- A policy revision work programme for the period July – December 2023 has been developed for Board consideration.

Building relationships and understanding

- SGD have established links with several all of government networks and communities of practice, including the MoJ information sharing group on misinformation and trust, which commences in June; and are working with IT to address why public sector intranet sites are not available to the Commission. Events included
 - Attending the performance and planning network meeting on business planning and preparing for annual report on 30 May, and hearing about MfE's approach to their climate change systems strategy at the AoG Strategic Futures Group.
- A stakeholder tracking tool and dashboard has been developed for the Strategic Engagement group.

Other progress

- It has been a busy month for the International Business Unit (IBU), with five deployments including two to Fiji, and one each to the Solomon Islands, Samoa and Papua New Guinea.
- Two new applications have been received for the Election Access Fund (EAF), and other potential applicants are being assisted with information and guidance.
- The Certification and Accreditation for Te Kauhanganaroa has been finalised.

Issues under management

- Reporting errors have been identified in the internal Māori Electoral Option (MEO) Tableau dashboard and are being remedied in consultation with an external provider. The errors resulted from an underlying table duplicating entries. Corrections were issued to the media providers and the Iwi Chairs Forum.

Other news

- Kristin Leslie, Manager, Strategy Risk & Assurance, joined the team on 8 May.
- Recruitment is underway for a Senior Advisor Accountability, to join the strategy risk and assurance team.