



**Electoral Commission**  
*Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri*

**Briefing to the Incoming Minister**  
**October 2005**

**Contents**

Who we are and what we do .....	2
Vision, guiding principles and strategic goals.....	3
Areas of concern and external factors.....	5
Structure of electoral administration is problematic .....	5
Independence of Electoral Commission is vital .....	5
Timing of legislative change is very tight.....	5
Levels of political participation are trending down.....	5
Inadequate knowledge base of reasons for declining participation.....	5
Issues that will need Ministerial consideration in the next six months .....	6
A single electoral agency and fundamental review of electoral law is overdue .....	6
Education and information on all electoral systems used in New Zealand needs to be unified under one agency .....	6
Encouraging electoral participation is currently nobody's statutory role .....	6
Citizenship education is gaining attention but needs strong support and guidance.....	7
Bid for additional funding for educational resources and professional training in upcoming budget round.....	7

**Appendices**

Memorandum of Understanding 2005/06 .....	8
Strategic Plan 2004-2011.....	34

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## Who we are and what we do

1. The Electoral Commission is one of three agencies with a role in electoral administration. The roles of the Electoral Commission, as set out in the Electoral Act, and reflected as outputs in the Memorandum of Understanding are:
  - Application of the provisions of the Electoral Act 1993 relating to political parties, which covers registration of parties and of logos, receipt of annual donation returns, receipt of election expense returns
  - Promotion of public awareness of electoral matters
  - Allocation of election broadcasting time and funds in accordance with the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1989 (prior to each general election)
  - Provision of advice on electoral matters, to Ministers, Parliament and Select Committees
  - Publicity in connection with a general election
  
2. The Electoral Commission is an Independent Crown Entity which was established by section 4 of the Electoral Act 1993 and came into being in 1994. Section 7 of the Act states that the Commission acts independently and shall not be responsible to any Minister of the Crown. The Commission reports annually to parliament through an Annual Report (The report for 2004/05 will be presented to you shortly for tabling).
  
3. The relationship between the Commission and the Minister of Justice is governed by an annual Memorandum of Understanding which includes an annual Statement of Objectives. Ministerial Expectations for the Electoral Commission were agreed in 1998. The Electoral Commission reports quarterly to the Minister and Ministry and operates a 'no surprises' policy. A copy of the current MoU is appended, and your attention is drawn in particular to the Statement of Objectives for the current year set out on page 23.
  
4. The four Electoral Commissioners set policy and fulfil a governance role. They are:
  - The President, who must be a current or retired judge: Hon Justice Tony Ellis
  - The Secretary for Justice, ex officio: Ms Belinda Clark
  - The Chief Judge of the Maori Land Courts, ex officio: Chief Judge Joe Williams
  - The Chief Executive, who is appointed to the full-time job by the Governor General: Dr Helena Catt
  
5. For the purposes of allocation of broadcasting time and money at the 2005 general election two additional commissioners were appointed for a 12-month term:
  - Representative of the Government: Hon David Caygill
  - Representative of the Opposition parties: Mr John Isles

6. The staff of the Electoral Commission are:
  - Chief Executive: Helena Catt
  - Communications Manager: Peter Northcote
  - Senior Legal Adviser: Geoff Barnett
  - Office Manager: Lorraine Biggs
  
7. The annual budget for the Electoral Commission has been \$734,000 (excl GST) since the 2000/01 year. In an election year an additional budget has been provided for the election MMP-related information campaign; \$1 million (excl GST) in 2005. The amount of money made available by Parliament for allocation to registered political parties for allocation for election broadcast advertising was \$3,212,000 (incl GST).

### **Vision, guiding principles and strategic goals**

8. A strategic plan for 2004 to 2011 was agreed in 2004. The main points are summarised below, and a copy is appended.
  
9. The Electoral Commission's vision is that New Zealand's electoral framework and processes are widely used, understood, trusted and valued.
  
10. Activities designed to achieve our vision are grounded in the international research literature, particularly from political science and social marketing. Key concepts used include:
  - social capital theory (Putnam)
  - theories of insufficient reward for voting and its habitual nature (Franklin)
  - political efficacy (explained shortly)
  - individual behavioural change model (pre-contemplation / contemplation / preparation / action / reinforcement) (Andreassen)
  - population behaviour change model which requires appropriate policy and institutional design, the building of community action and individual skills, and a supportive social environment for a population to adopt and maintain a desired behaviour (Ottawa Charter for Public Health)
  
11. Political efficacy is a person's self-belief in their own ability to understand politics, its relevance to their life, confidence that politicians listen, and in the power of their voice and vote to make a difference. To make a significant impact on the extent to which people use, understand, trust and value our electoral framework and processes we have to persuade them that politics matters to them and that they can make a difference: and so increase levels of political efficacy. Increasing political participation and levels of

effective voting (where a valid vote has the best chance of achieving the outcome desired by voters) requires improving knowledge, motivation and behaviours. This work on efficacy needs to happen outside of the election period, and is at its most effective when it gives people a positive experience of the power of their own voice or vote in civic affairs – a particular focus of our schools focused work.

12. In all of our work we adhere to the Guiding Principles of Electoral Administration which specify:

- independence
- neutrality
- service to voters, candidates and parties
- professionalism
- responsibility and accountability.

13. Our other core values are:

- recognition of obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi
- creativity
- an ethic of care
- responsiveness
- being outcome focussed
- public service.

14. In meeting our statutory guardianship obligations we:

- Enhance the quality of democracy by making electoral matters relevant for all people and providing information and education to enable people to be electorally effective.
- Encourage others to promote active, informed social participation focussed on electoral matters.
- Assist political parties to meet their statutory requirements and entitlements.
- Work collegially with other electoral entities, parliament and government to ensure a seamless service to our users.

15. In order to live up to our values and progress towards our mission and address our strategic issues, we have identified four broad strategic goals to guide our annual planning over the next five years:

- Internal administrative systems that support our vision.
- An established education role that focuses upon realising our vision.
- High levels of credibility with our stakeholders.
- Positive evolution of New Zealand's electoral administration.

## **Areas of concern and external factors**

16. The following describe the main factors which the Electoral Commission has to take into account when planning and making decisions.

### **17. Structure of electoral administration is problematic**

The current three agency structure is recognised as having some problems such as causing confusion for people who use our services; and making some co-ordination difficult. There are also issues due to the differences in structure and role. The Taskforce on Electoral Administration recommended in 2001 that a single agency be formed. The select committee review of the 2002 general election suggested that this issue be considered as part of a fundamental review.

### **18. Independence of Electoral Commission is vital**

Our work has to be, and be perceived to be, independent of political control. The ways in which independence is understood and guaranteed has a significant impact on how we operate. We need to be part of all discussions on this issue.

### **19. Timing of legislative change is very tight**

Legislation prescribes our role and details of how we perform certain tasks. Any change to the structure of electoral administration would involve legislative change. There is agreement that any significant change would need to be completed a year before a general election is to be held. Therefore the available time for discussion and legislation is tight within a three year election cycle.

### **20. Levels of political participation are trending down**

Turnout at the 2005 general election was higher than in 2002 but lower than in all other general elections since 1978. As well as overall levels of decline, there are particular groups within society where interest in politics, understanding of the system and participation are significantly lower than for the general population. In particular Maori, young people and Pacific peoples have lower levels of engagement. We do not have good information on the level of political engagement amongst other sections of society and thus do not know who else we should target. Research suggests that before we can interest people in information and education about how the electoral system works, we first have to encourage their engagement with the political system.

### **21. Inadequate knowledge base of reasons for declining participation**

There is little good, research based, information available on levels of political engagement in New Zealand society and reasons why engagement is low amongst some sections of society. We need this information to confidently design and deliver effective education campaigns. Quality research is expensive and current budgets do not allow the Electoral Commission to commission significant research projects.

## **Issues that will need Ministerial consideration in the next six months**

*Outstanding from the Justice and Electoral Committee (JEC) review of the 2002 general election*

### **22. A single electoral agency and fundamental review of electoral law is overdue**

As noted above, past select committee reviews of the general election have proposed that a single electoral agency replace the existing three agencies. If any change were to be made in time for the next scheduled general election then the process of determining the details of that change and the institutional structure for the new agency would need to start as soon as possible. The JEC report recommended this change as part of a 'fundamental review of the law relating to parliamentary elections'. Again, timing is tight if such a review is to occur and changes be in place before necessary planning for a 2008 election begins.

*Issues raised in the Justice and Electoral Committee (JEC) Inquiry into the 2004 Local Authority Elections*

### **23. Education and information on all electoral systems used in New Zealand needs to be unified under one agency**

At present the Electoral Commission's education and information role is restricted to the general election. In 2004 education on STV, used in some local body elections and all DHBs, was provided by the Department of Internal Affairs. The JEC Inquiry recommended, by majority, that 'the Government should fund a single agency to be responsible for education and information on all electoral systems used in New Zealand.' The Electoral Commission's submission recommended that we take on this role. As the next local body elections are in October 2007 and planning for the education campaign starts over a year before the elections, legislative changes and resourcing would need to be made by mid 2006.

### **24. Encouraging electoral participation is currently nobody's statutory role**

At present no agency has a statutory role in encouraging electoral participation. The issue of low turnout was discussed in relation to local body elections. Turnout at general elections is also declining. The JEC Inquiry recommended that 'The Government should fund a single electoral agency to be responsible for improving voter turnout and awareness in general and local elections.' The Electoral Commission thinks that it is best placed to take on this role as part of its existing education and information role.

**25. Citizenship education is gaining attention but needs strong support and guidance**

In August of this year both the review of local body elections and the review of the constitution recommended that citizenship education be added to the school curriculum. The Electoral Commission has an active interest in citizenship education as part of our education role. The Report of the Constitutional Arrangements Committee recommended that in order 'To foster greater understanding of our constitutional arrangements ... increased effort should be made to improve civics and citizenship education in schools...' The Local Authority Elections Inquiry, by majority, recommended that 'the Ministry of Education should be encouraged to strengthen the place of citizenship education in the curriculum and make more teaching resources available for this purpose.' All strands of the compulsory school curriculum are currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Education with revised statements due to be sent for consultation in 2006. The Commission has been closely involved with this process.

*Other Issues*

**26. Bid for additional funding for educational resources and professional training in upcoming budget round**

The Electoral Commission has indicated to the Ministry of Justice that it will submit a bid for extra funding in the 2006/07 year for citizenship education resources. Teacher professional development in citizenship education is needed to encourage greater and better teaching on citizenship broadly and electoral matters specifically. Excellent educational resources, created based on educational benchmarks and best practice are also needed.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**BETWEEN**

**THE CROWN**

**AND**

**THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

**FOR THE 2005/06 YEAR**



## 1 PARTIES TO THE MEMORANDUM

1.1 This Memorandum of Understanding is made this                    day of                    2005

**BETWEEN**                    the **MINISTER OF JUSTICE** (the “Minister”), acting on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen in right of New Zealand (the “Crown”);

**AND**                            the **ELECTORAL COMMISSION** (“the Commission”), being a Crown entity established by the Electoral Act 1993,

who acknowledge as follows:

## 2 INTERPRETATION

2.1 (a) In this Memorandum of Understanding, unless the context otherwise requires:

References to reporting requirements under, and provisions of, the Public Finance Act 1989 refer to those provisions in place prior to the enactment of the Public Finance Amendment Act 2004 and the Crown Entities Act 2004 (cf. section 198 of the Crown Entities Act 2004),

“Act” means the Electoral Act 1993,

“The Commission” means the Electoral Commission,

“Estimates” means the statement of proposed expenses and liabilities to be incurred by the Crown, or the Crown’s proposed expenditure of public money, prepared in accordance with section 9 of the Public Finance Act 1989,

“Forecast Financial Statements” means the Statement of Forecast Financial Performance, Statement of Forecast Financial Position, and Forecast Statement of Cash flows,

“Memorandum of Understanding” means this Memorandum of Understanding as it may be amended from time to time, and “Memorandum” has a corresponding meaning,

“Minister” means the Minister of Justice or any other member of the Executive Council authorised to act on behalf of the Minister of Justice,

“Ministry” means the Ministry of Justice,

“Next financial year” means the financial year immediately following the relevant year,

“Outcome” means the impact on, or the consequences for, the community of the outputs or activities of the Commission,

“Outputs” means the goods or services that are produced by the Commission,

“Parties” means the Minister and the Commission,

“Professional manner” means in accordance with the Guiding Principles of Electoral Administration (see Annex 1 to the First Schedule),

“Public money” has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Public Finance Act 1989,

“Relevant year” means the period of twelve months commencing on 1 July 2005 and ending on 30 June 2006,

“Statement of Intent” means the Commission’s Statement of Intent for the next financial year, and at least the next two financial years, as required by the Crown Entities Act 2004, and

“Working day” means a day on which banks are open for business in Wellington other than for the period commencing on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December in any year and ending with the 15<sup>th</sup> day of January in the following year; and

- (b) Anything required to be done or paid on a day which is not a working day shall be done or paid on the next working day.

### **3 BACKGROUND TO THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

3.1 The Parties acknowledge that the principal functions of the Commission are to carry out such duties as are prescribed in the Electoral Act 1993 as follows:

- (a) To carry out such duties as are prescribed in Part IV of the Electoral Act 1993 in relation to the registration of political parties and political party logos;
- (b) To supervise political parties' compliance with the financial disclosure requirements of the Electoral Act 1993;
- (c) To carry out such duties in relation to Parliamentary election programmes as are prescribed by Part VI of the Broadcasting Act 1989;
- (d) To supervise political parties' compliance with the requirements of the Electoral Act 1993 relating to the filing of returns of election expenses;
- (e) To promote public awareness of electoral matters by means of the conduct of education and information programmes or by other means; and
- (f) To consider and report to the Minister, or to the House of Representatives, on electoral matters referred to the Commission by the Minister or by the House of Representatives.

3.2 The Parties note that:

- (a) in respect to the 2005/06 year, the outputs produced are to be provided with the specific goal or "outcome" of "maintaining trust in Government through improved confidence in, and understanding of, the administration of the parliamentary electoral process"; and
- (b) The Commission's activities are primarily funded by an appropriation of public money by an Act of Parliament and the practice is to include this appropriation in Vote Justice.

3.3 The Minister is the Minister responsible under sections 2(1) and 9(2A) of the Public Finance Act 1989 for:

- (a) Vote Justice;
- (b) the Ministry of Justice (being the Government department responsible under the Public Finance Act 1989 for the administration of Vote Justice); and
- (c) the financial performance of the Commission.

- 3.4 The Minister acknowledges that:
- (a) the Commission is required to act independently in carrying out its statutory functions and exercising its statutory powers; and
  - (b) nothing in this Memorandum shall affect the requirement under section 7 of the Electoral Act 1993 that, except as otherwise provided in the Electoral Act 1993 or in any other Act, the Commission, in the performance of its statutory functions, shall not be responsible to the Minister or to any other Minister of the Crown, but shall act independently.
- 3.5 The Commission acknowledges that the Minister has appointed the Ministry to:
- (a) advise the Minister on issues arising from the Minister's responsibilities in relation to the Commission;
  - (b) monitor the delivery by the Commission of the outputs specified in the Statement of Objectives in accordance with the performance standards and measures specified in the First Schedule to this Memorandum; and
  - (c) consult with the Commission on the information specified in the Fourth Schedule to this Memorandum.

The Ministry agrees to support the Commission by providing appropriate advice, assistance, and information on matters relating to the Commission's operations.

#### **4 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS MEMORANDUM**

- 4.1 The purpose of this Memorandum is to record, in a way that is not legally enforceable, the Parties' understanding of certain matters that affect the relationship between the Crown and the Commission, in particular:
- (a) the Commission's Statement of Objectives, required pursuant to section 41(2)(e) of the Public Finance Act 1989, specifying the classes of outputs to be produced by the Commission during the relevant year;
  - (b) the performance expectations relating to the classes of outputs to be produced by the Commission during the relevant year;
  - (c) the process for amending the Commission's Statement of Objectives;
  - (d) the amount that has been included in the Estimates for the relevant year as an appropriation under Vote Justice to fund the activities of the Commission for that year;

- (e) the requirements for the Commission providing to the Ministry information held by the Commission to enable the Minister and the Ministry to meet their responsibilities in respect of the Commission and Vote Justice, in particular under the Public Finance Act 1989; and
- (f) other matters relevant to the relationship between the Minister and the Commission.

## **5 TERM**

- 5.1 The term of this Memorandum shall commence on 1 July 2005 and end on 30 June 2006. If, for any reason, a new Memorandum is not completed by the Parties before the commencement of the next financial year, the Parties shall continue to operate under the terms of this Memorandum. No payment relating to the next financial year, however, can be made which is not the subject of an agreement.

## **6 VARIATIONS TO THIS MEMORANDUM**

- 6.1 This Memorandum may be amended at any time during its term by agreement in writing between the Minister and the Commission. If either party proposes to amend this Memorandum, then that party shall give to the other party reasonable notice of the proposed amendment and the reasons for the proposed amendment.
- 6.2 Any amendments to this Memorandum must be in writing and signed by both Parties.

## **7 THE COMMISSION'S STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

- 7.1 The Commission's Statement of Objectives for the relevant year is set out in the First Schedule to this Memorandum. The Minister acknowledges that the Commission has the statutory power to determine its Statement of Objectives and that the Commission has consulted the Minister about them.

## **8 AMENDMENT OF THE STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 The Commission may, from time to time, amend its Statement of Objectives if it decides that it is appropriate to do so. The Commission agrees, however, that it will consult the Minister about any amendment it proposes. The Commission may, after consulting the Minister about any such amendment, provide the Minister with a copy of the amended Statement of Objectives and that amendment shall thereafter be the Commission's Statement of Objectives for the remainder of the relevant year.

## **9 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 9.1 The anticipated outputs for the Commission for the 2005/06 financial year will comply with the:
- (a) Electoral Act 1993 and the Broadcasting Act 1989;
  - (b) Guiding Principles of Electoral Administration (see Annex 1 to the First Schedule); and
  - (c) objectives as detailed in the First Schedule to this Memorandum.
- 9.2 The Commission acknowledges that its budgeted expenditure for carrying out its Statement of Objectives is based on the performance indicators for quantity, quality, and timeliness for the classes of outputs to be produced by the Commission during the relevant year, as specified in the First Schedule.
- 9.3 The Commission will prepare its operating budget for the year on the basis of prudent financial management.

- 9.4 The Commission will use its best endeavours to ensure that:
- (a) it does not incur a net operating deficit for the year; and
  - (b) the total actual expenditure for the outputs produced by it, within the relevant year, is within budget.
- 9.5 The Commission agrees to notify the Minister if it proposes to:
- (a) incur a net operating deficit for the year;
  - (b) use accumulated funds for significant capital items or to fund operational activities; or
  - (c) use its depreciation reserve for any purpose other than replacement of assets for which depreciation has been claimed.
- 9.6 A copy of the Commission's Forecast Financial Statements is appended as the Second Schedule.

## 10 FUNDING

- 10.1 (a) The Crown has, on the basis of the Commission's Statement of Objectives, established its baseline projections and included the amount specified in paragraph 1(a) of the Third Schedule in the Estimates for the relevant year under Vote Justice as an appropriation or appropriations for the Commission.
- (b) The amount specified in paragraph 1(b) of the Third Schedule is to be paid by the Ministry of Justice to the Commission by the instalments specified in paragraph 2 of the Third Schedule. Such instalments are to be paid to the Commission's bank account(s) referred to in paragraph 3 of the Third Schedule.
- 10.2 The Parties will consult concerning the action that should be taken if either or both of them consider at any time during the relevant year that the amount specified in paragraph 1(a) of the Third Schedule is inadequate for the Commission to meet its statutory obligations.

## 11 COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING PROTOCOL

### *Quarterly Performance Reports*

- 11.1 The Commission will forward to the Minister quarterly reports for the relevant year to date as specified in the Fourth Schedule.
- 11.2 Both Parties acknowledge that the:
- (a) final quarterly report to cover the full year to date, due by 27 July 2006 (the 12-month Report), is distinct from the Annual Report referred to in paragraph 11.6 below; and
  - (b) information provided in the 12-month Report may change as a result of the Commission's end of year audit report.

### *Statement of Intent*

- 11.3 The Commission will meet the requirements of the Crown Entities Act 2004, and any additional requirements agreed with the Ministry, to ensure the timely and accurate preparation of the Commission's Statement of Intent and its provision to the Minister.
- 11.4 The Ministry will assist the Commission by providing appropriate advice, assistance and information on the preparation of the Commission's Statement of Intent.
- 11.5 The Minister will lay a copy of the Commission's Statement of Intent before the House of Representatives in accordance with section 149 of the Crown Entities Act 2004. The Commission will provide the Minister with sufficient copies of the Statement of Intent to meet the requirements of the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

### *Annual Report*

- 11.6 The Commission will, as soon as practicable after the end of the relevant year, forward to the Minister a report of its operations during that year (the Annual Report) which shall include (in accordance with section 44 of the Public Finance Act 1989):
- (a) its financial statements (including a Statement of Service Performance by the Commission during the relevant year, as compared with the classes of outputs specified in the Statement of Objectives appended as the First Schedule);
  - (b) disclosure of certain payments in respect of members, committee members, and employees, as required by section 152 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 (cf. section 198(3)(b) of that Act);
  - (c) the Audit report for the relevant year; and



(d) a statement of responsibility.

11.7 The Minister will lay a copy of the Commission's Annual Report for the relevant year before the House of Representatives in accordance with section 44A of the Public Finance Act 1989. The Commission will provide the Minister with sufficient copies of the Annual Report in the format prescribed by the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

#### *Audit Management Issues*

11.8 The Commission agrees to bring to the Minister's notice, as soon as practicable, any serious matter drawn to its attention by its auditors. Further, the Commission agrees to provide a copy of its Auditor's final Management letter to the Minister and the Ministry, no later than two weeks after it has been considered by the Commission.

#### *Other Information*

11.9 The Commission will:

- (a) within ten working days of the receipt of a request from the Minister (unless otherwise agreed), provide the Ministry with information relevant to the Commission's responsibilities to enable the preparation of Ministerial briefings and draft speech notes in relation to the Commission;
- (b) promptly supply the Ministry with information relevant to the Commission's responsibilities to enable the Minister to respond to Written Parliamentary Questions relating to the Commission. Responses to Oral Questions are required in the Minister's office by 12.30pm on the day they are lodged. The Commission acknowledges that it will be required to respond to Oral Questions within a very short time frame and will use its best endeavours to do so; and
- (c) within ten working days of the receipt of a request from the Minister (unless otherwise agreed), provide the Ministry with information relevant to the Commission's responsibilities to enable the Minister to deal with Ministerial correspondence relating to the Commission and to deal with Select Committee inquiries relating to the Commission.

11.10 Correspondence to the Minister concerning the operational responsibilities of the Commission will be referred to the Commission for direct reply. When this occurs, the Minister's office will advise the correspondent that the letter has been referred to the Commission for reply.

11.11 The Minister acknowledges that it may not always be appropriate or legally possible for full details of matters in the Commission's knowledge to be disclosed to the Minister.

## **12 OBLIGATIONS IN RELATION TO THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR**

- 12.1 The Commission will provide for the Minister, by **31 May 2006**, its:
- (a) draft Statement of Objectives;
  - (b) draft Forecast Financial Statements; and
  - (c) draft final Statement of Intent (as required by section 146(2) of the Crown Entities Act 2004)
- for the next financial year.
- 12.2 The Parties will, as soon as practicable after the Minister has received the draft documents set out in clause 12.1, consult on these documents.
- 12.3 In accordance with the yearly Estimates process, the Commission agrees to provide information on any changes which may be required to its outputs, in time for any changes to be reflected in the Estimates documentation.
- 12.4 The Ministry will advise the Commission if it anticipates that the amount or amounts which will be included in the Estimates for the next financial year as an appropriation or appropriations to fund the activities of the Commission will significantly change from the amount included in the Estimates for the relevant year.
- 12.5 The Ministry will, to the best of its ability, advise the Commission of the dates for the commencement of the Budget cycle in good time for the Commission to make meaningful representations regarding its budget.
- 12.6 The Ministry will advise the Commission of the outcome of any Budget bid it may make as soon as it practically can, subject to its obligation to maintain the secrecy of Budget information.

## **13 MUTUAL COOPERATION AND DISPUTES**

### *Mutual Cooperation*

- 13.1 The Parties will:
- (a) consult each other whenever it may be appropriate, but not less than four times during the year concerning:
    - (i) the matters covered by this Memorandum,
    - (ii) the Commission's quarterly reports, including the need to undertake 'risk' reporting, and
    - (iii) other matters of common interest; and

- (b) use their best endeavours to ensure that staff of, and any consultants engaged by, the Ministry or the Commission:
  - (i) cooperate in good faith with one another, and
  - (ii) are available at all reasonable times during normal business hours to consult and assist each other.

#### *The Minister and the Commission*

- 13.2 The Commission acknowledges the importance of keeping the Minister reasonably informed of the Commission's activities for the purposes of:
- (a) financial accountability; and
  - (b) keeping the Minister fully briefed on important matters in the public interest relating to the Commission's activities.
- 13.3 The Parties agree that if either one of them wishes to discuss any matters covered by this Memorandum, the Parties will use their best endeavours to meet for that purpose.

#### *Disputes*

- 13.4 If, despite **paragraph 13.1**, any issue or dispute arises between the Minister and the Commission concerning this Memorandum or any matters covered by this Memorandum (including any issues concerning the achievement of the Commission's Statement of Objectives or the Forecast Financial Statements), the Parties will use their best endeavours to resolve that dispute promptly.
- 13.5 If the Ministry and the Commission are not able to resolve the dispute promptly, then the Parties shall agree on a written summary or, failing agreement on this, prepare separate written summaries, setting out the matter in dispute, the issues involved and the reason or reasons for the dispute not having been resolved and forward the summary or summaries (as the case may be) to the Minister.
- 13.6 The Minister and the President of the Commission shall meet as soon as practicable after the receipt by the Minister of the summary or summaries in order to resolve the dispute.

## **14 MISCELLANEOUS**

#### *Accounts*

- 14.1 The accounts for the Commission (and the quarterly financial reporting) shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It is acknowledged, however, that the information supplied in the quarterly reports are management accounts that have not been audited.

### *Confidentiality*

14.2 The Parties shall keep confidential all confidential or commercially sensitive information referred to by, or provided by or under, this Memorandum unless:

- (a) required by law to disclose that information (e.g. pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982);
- (b) that information is publicly available; or
- (c) both Parties agree to the disclosure of that information.

14.3 The Parties shall consult before complying with any legal obligation (and in particular, any obligation under the Official Information Act 1982) to disclose any confidential or commercially sensitive information referred to by, or provided by or under, this Memorandum.

### *No restriction of legislative powers or obligations*

14.4 Nothing in this Memorandum shall limit the Parties' powers or obligations under any legislation and, in particular:

the power of the Commission to determine how to exercise its functions and powers under the Electoral Act 1993;

the power of the Minister to require information from the Commission under section 45B of the Public Finance Act 1989;

the power of the Secretary to the Treasury to require information from the Commission to prepare the Estimates (and Supplementary Estimates) under section 29A of the Public Finance Act 1989.

### *Delegation*

14.5 The Commission acknowledges that:

- (a) the statutory powers and functions of the Minister referred to in this Memorandum may be delegated in accordance with the State Sector Act 1988; and
- (b) any other functions and powers of the Minister contained in this Memorandum, except the power to participate in the resolution of disputes set out in clause 13 of this Memorandum, may be delegated by the Minister to such person or persons, or to such class or classes of persons, employed in the Ministry as the Minister may consider appropriate.

### *No Conferral of Benefits*

14.6 Nothing in this Memorandum shall confer any power or benefit on any person except the Commission and the Crown.

*Notices*

14.7 All notices to be given under this Memorandum are to be in writing and delivered by hand, or sent by registered post, or by a reputable courier, or by facsimile transmission.

.....

Hon Rick Barker  
Associate Minister of Justice

.....

Hon Anthony Ellis  
on behalf of the Electoral Commission

**ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

**For the year ending 30 June 2006**

**Vision**

New Zealand's electoral framework and processes are widely used, understood, trusted and valued.

**Organisational Objectives for 2005/06**

- Consolidate our position as the recognised authority for education on electoral matters and information about the electoral system. To be the first port of call for all those seeking information and data about the workings of MMP, the wider electoral context and related debates and practices overseas
- During the election period, competently and professionally deliver election generated obligations and aim for delivery with the other electoral agencies that is seamless to the public. Maximise opportunities to further the strategic goals through use of the election context.
- Ensure that we have the capacity amongst our staff to deal flexibly with the full range of work that we cover. Assess needs and organise staff training and development as required.

Output 1: Application of the provisions of the Electoral Act 1993 relating to political parties

A Register of Political Parties (including party logos) is kept and made available for public inspection. Involved in this process is receiving and considering applications to register or to change registration details and responding to inquiries about the register and process of registration. Statutory requirements relating to political parties also cover disclosure of election expenses and donations

Objectives for 2005/06

- I. Continue to respond to requests and to process applications in a professional manner that adheres to the Guiding Principles of Electoral Administration (see Annex)

Output 2: Promotion of public awareness of electoral matters

Education on electoral matters serves a broad purpose of maintaining public awareness of, and interest in, New Zealand's democratic processes and of delivering resources and programmes that encourage and enable civic, particularly electoral, participation. The range of activities and materials utilised recognises the range of audiences that include parties, journalists, the education sector and politicians as well as voters and recognises the diversity of the electorate and their different levels of interest and prior understanding. One part of education is to promote and facilitate study, discussion, education and communication on New Zealand electoral matters by academics, journalists and other commentators.

Objectives for 2005/06

- I. Plan and implement research based projects aimed at increasing Maori electoral participation
- II. Plan and implement research based projects aimed at increasing electoral participation amongst young people

- III. Plan and implement research based projects aimed at increasing electoral participation amongst Pacific peoples
- IV. Plan and implement research based projects utilising theories on electoral participation, in particular efficacy
- V. Provide easily accessible public information on the 2005 election after the election
- VI. Maximise the value of the election in meeting our strategic goals and vision
- VII. Consolidate the website as the primary source of information
- VIII. Benchmark our education work internationally and share with others our resources, research, expertise and experiences
- IX. Build and maintain a tool that, over time, identifies, describes and measures audiences' electoral participation

Output 3: Allocation of election broadcasting time and funds in accordance with the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1989

Most of the activity takes place once in each election cycle. In the year prior to an expected election, the Commission follows a process of checking and consultation culminating in allocation of broadcast time and money amongst eligible political parties. The Commission processes the payment of allocated money and supervises compliance with Part 6 of the Act. In between these periods the Commission responds to inquiries, maintains all systems in readiness for the next cycle and remains abreast of related debates and processes in other democracies.

Objectives for 2005/06

- I. Continue to carry out all aspects of the administration of these allocations in accordance with the Act and in a professional manner

Output 4: Provision of advice on electoral matters

Advice to the Minister of Justice and Parliament on a range of electoral matters primarily takes the form of providing reports to the Justice and Electoral Committee; participating in the Officials Committee on Electoral Matters; and responding to Ministerial and Parliamentary questions.

Objectives for 2005/06

- I. Continue to respond in a professional manner
- II. Maintain a capacity to respond to questions on all election matters, including practice and debate overseas
- III. Make research results available to the Minister of Justice and Parliament
- IV. Assist in the Justice and Electoral Committee's post election review in a professional manner, utilising research and international benchmark material
- V. Maintain a capacity to participate in any fundamental review that is created in response to the recommendation of the Justice and Electoral Committee's review of the 2002 general election.

Output 5: Publicity in connection with the next general election

Voters should have the information necessary in order to cast an effective vote at a general election. There is a concentrated information campaign immediately preceding each election. In planning the campaign the needs of different audiences are taken into consideration. At all times there is a contingency plan for an information campaign should an early election be called.



Objectives for 2005/06

- I. Deliver an election information campaign that delivers credibly and cost effectively.
- II. Ensure cohesion with activities in output 2 so that the broader education campaign supplements the specific information material for the general election
- III. Maximise the value of the election in meeting strategic goals and vision
- IV. Measure how many people were able to 'cast an effective vote' and the extent to which efficacy had an impact.
- V. Achieve certainty in ongoing funding and timing that more closely relates to the financial realities of conducting a national information campaign
- VI. Monitor and respond to party and media comments on MMP

## Annex - Guiding Principles of Electoral Administration

The Justice and Electoral Committee's *Report on its Inquiry into the 1999 General Election* (I.7C, 2001, pages 18-20) recommended that the Government encourage all electoral agencies and officials to observe the following five electoral principles:

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Scope of the principles</b>
<b>Independence</b>	Electoral agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• must maintain the confidence of voters, candidates, political parties and Parliament in the integrity of the electoral process by being legally and in practice independent of all political parties and interest groups</li> <li>• are not subject to ministerial direction in carrying out their statutory functions, except as provided by law.</li> </ul>
<b>Neutrality</b>	Electoral agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carry out their statutory functions in a politically neutral and non-partisan manner</li> <li>• treat all voters, candidates and political parties fairly and impartially and in accordance with the law.</li> </ul>
<b>Service to voters, candidates and parties</b>	Electoral agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide the highest quality electoral services to all voters, candidates and political parties in accordance with the law</li> <li>• provide electoral services to voters, candidates and political parties in ways which are as simple as possible, consistent with the law and minimise compliance costs</li> <li>• ensure that all sections of the community have ready access to the electoral process in accordance with their needs</li> <li>• provide an effective service to electors on the Māori roll</li> <li>• make easily-understood information about the electoral process available to all sections of the community in accordance with their needs</li> <li>• respond promptly and accurately to requests for information about electoral matters</li> <li>• make information on their activities readily available to the public and the media</li> <li>• have transparent and fair procedures in place to deal promptly with complaints of impropriety.</li> </ul>

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Scope of the principles</b>
<b>Professionalism</b>	Electoral agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are committed to ensuring the integrity of the electoral process in accordance with the law</li> <li>• carry out their statutory functions in a fair, accurate, secure and timely manner</li> <li>• ensure that their members and employees behave in their public and private lives in ways which are consistent with the highest standards of independence and political neutrality</li> <li>• keep electoral legislation under review and report to Parliament on desirable changes to electoral legislation</li> <li>• continually evaluate their provision of electoral services and their internal and external procedures to ensure they are in accordance with the law, are meeting users' needs, are as simple, efficient and effective as possible, and use appropriate information technology</li> <li>• keep up to date with best international democratic electoral practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility and accountability</b>	Electoral agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make efficient and effective use of financial and other resources to carry out their statutory functions</li> <li>• have clear financial and operational responsibilities and accountabilities under appropriate governance structures</li> <li>• set budgets according to objectives and regularly measure performance against objectives</li> <li>• are subject to regular independent auditing of financial and operational performance</li> <li>• provide Parliament with comprehensive, accurate and timely reports on their activities, including their capacity to conduct electoral events and their conduct of electoral events.</li> </ul>

At its meeting on 8 March 2002, the Electoral Commission adopted these principles.

SECOND SCHEDULE

**Electoral Commission Statements of Forecast Financial Performance  
for the year ended 30 June 2006 (excl. GST)**

	\$
<i>Income</i>	
Government grant:	
general business	734,000
for election information	1,048,444
for Maori option information	44,444
Broadcasting grant	0
Other income	34,947
Interest	66,000
<i>Total income</i>	<i>1,927,835</i>
 <i>Expenditure</i>	
Operating costs	344,616
Audit fee	12,075
Depreciation	14,000
Rent	66,446
Leasing	6,300
Personnel	389,699
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>833,136</i>
 Output 5 (election Information)	 1,048,444
Māori option information	44,444
Election broadcasting allocations	2,855,861
Total expenditure	4,781,885
 net surplus / (deficit)	 (\$2,854,050)

### Estimated statement of financial position at 30 June 2006

(Note: Estimates are based on anticipated unaudited results for 2005/06)

	\$
Total current assets	400,035
Total fixed assets	16,626
Total assets	416,661
Total liabilities	416,661

### Estimated statement of cash flows for the year ending 30 June 2006

(Note: Estimates are based on anticipated unaudited results for 2005/06)

	\$
<i>Cash flows from operating activities</i>	
Cash will be provided from:	
Government Grant and other sources	1,826,888
Broadcasting fund	0
Other Revenues	34,947
Interest received	66,000
Net GST	<u>0</u>
	1,927,835
Cash will be applied to:	
Payments to Commissioners and employees	389,700
Payments to suppliers	1,522,326
Net GST paid	0

Allocation of broadcasting fund	<u>2,855,861</u>
	4,767,887
<i>Net cash flows from operating activities</i>	(2,840,052)
<i>Cash flows from investing activities</i>	
Sale of Fixed Assets	0
Purchase of Fixed Assets	<u>0</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in Cash Held	(2,840,052)
Plus Opening Cash Balance	<u>3,229,500</u>
Closing Cash Balance	389,448

## THIRD SCHEDULE

### CROWN FUNDING

- 1 Subject to the signing of this Memorandum, the amount:
- (a) appropriated for payment to the Commission in 2005/06 is \$1.827 million (GST exclusive); and
  - (b) to be paid to the Commission in 2005/06 is \$2.055 million (GST inclusive).
- 2 The instalments to be paid to the Commission are:

<b>Period of payment</b>	<b>Date of payment</b>	<b>Appropriated amount (GST exclusive)</b>	<b>Payment (GST inclusive)</b>
Quarter commencing 1 July 2005	1 July 2005	\$1,296,924	\$1,459,039
Quarter commencing 1 October 2005	1 September 2005	\$219,014	\$246,390
Quarter commencing 1 January 2006	22 December 2005	\$240,950	\$271,069
Quarter commencing 1 April 2006	1 April 2006	\$70,000	\$78,750

- 3 The instalments shall be paid to the Commission's bank account:

WestpacTrust North End Branch

Account No. 03-0539-0185205-00

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## FOURTH SCHEDULE

### QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Commission will forward quarterly to the Minister a set of reports on its financial and non-financial performance for the financial year, as agreed in clause 11.1, by these dates:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Date performance report due</b>
1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005	31 October 2005
1 July 2005 to 31 December 2005	Within five working days of the Commission's first meeting in February 2006
1 July 2005 to 31 March 2006	30 April 2006
1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 (full 2005/06)	27 July 2006

*These reports will include:*

- 1 Advice on the Commission's non-financial performance to date, including:
  - a commentary on actual performance in delivering on the outcomes specified in the First Schedule,
  - a commentary, where applicable, on how the actual performance is impacting on the outcomes; and
  - an explanation of any significant variances from the achievement of the objectives. This explanation should set out the reasons for each variance, how the variance is being managed (e.g. what corrective action is being taken), and the expected future impact (if any) on the achievement of the objectives.
  
- 2 A summary of the Commission's financial performance to date against the Forecast Financial Statements, including:
  - a Statement of Financial Performance;
  - a Statement of Financial Position;
  - a Statement of Cash flows; and
  - an explanation of any significant variances. This explanation should set out the reasons for each variance, how the variance is being managed, and the expected future impact (if any) on the Commission's forecast financial performance and financial position.



Note: This information should also include expenditure undertaken for all income received, from all sources, and provide an assessment of the projected level of operations for the rest of the financial year. This will primarily relate to any anticipated variations in activity or performance for which budget provision has been made. It should also include information to provide assurance that adequate or prudent provision has been made for asset replacement and indicate that provision for depreciation is being used only for the purpose intended.

Where the Commission agrees to change the initial Statement of Objectives and/or Forecast Financial Statements, an explanation of the reasons for the changes should be provided and future reporting should be against both the initial and revised projections. The future reporting should continue to explain significant variances from the revised position.

- 3 Advice on any major issues about the Commission's operation or the government's ownership interests which the Commission considers should be drawn to the attention of the Minister. This should include detailed comment on any immediate or longer-term risks to the effective operation of the Commission, and / or to the Crown. (*Significant issues should also be drawn to the attention of the Minister and the Ministry outside the quarter, if that is considered to be important.*)
- 4 Any significant information arising from the work of Audit New Zealand (including the Audit Management Letter) subsequent to the Commission's consideration of the information.

**ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2005-2011**

## OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

OUR VISION	Is a succinct statement of the overall outcome that we want to contribute to
OUR MISSION	Is a brief description of what we are and how we aim to contribute to achieving our vision
ORGANISATION PROFILE	Provides details of how we were created, how we fit in the broader electoral administration context and who the people are in the organisation
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	Describes the main factors which we have to take account of when planning and making decisions. These are divided into external and internal drivers
KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES	Drawing upon the environmental scan, this section details the main issues that we have to consider when planning
GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION	Details the code of practice that has been adopted by the three electoral agencies
OUR OTHER CORE VALUES	In addition to the guiding principals we have other values which we think are important to the ways in which we operate
OUR STRATEGIC GOALS	Based upon all of the previous sections, the goals are the overarching aims for the next five years, which take account of the environmental scan and seek to address the strategic issues while moving towards the vision and mission. All planning decisions will be assessed against the extent to which they help us in meeting our strategic goals
ANNUAL STATEMENT OF INTENT	Each year we set specific priorities and objectives which will help us to reach our broader goals. These provide some detail on how we will meet our strategic goals. The Statement of Intent is part of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Justice
PERFORMANCE MEASURES	Indicate how we measure the extent to which we have met the objectives in the Statement of Intent
PROJECTS	During the year we undertake a number of projects which are designed to move us towards the achievement of the specific and broader goals and objectives. Proposed projects are checked against the goals before they can go ahead.

In all planning we focus upon achieving outcomes rather than outputs. Outcomes refer to the effect on life or society while outputs refer to services provided by the Commission. For instance an output is the creation of a lesson plan for use in schools and an outcome is a higher level of understanding of electoral matters amongst young people. Outcomes tend to have a longer term focus, are the product of multiple outputs and factors, often from a range of actors and are harder to measure than are outputs.

## OUR VISION

*New Zealand's electoral framework and processes are widely used, understood, trusted and valued*

What does this mean?

**Used** - people participate broadly in politics and specifically in elections, as voters, candidates and members of political parties

**Understood** – people know how all aspects of the electoral processes and framework work and so can, for instance: cast an effective as well as a valid vote; register a party; or fulfil their obligations as a candidate or party official.

**Trusted** – people are confident that the electoral framework is working as it is meant to and provides a fair way of allowing the people to choose their representatives

**Valued** – people attach importance to a democratic system in general and the particular framework and processes used in New Zealand. People respect the democratic rules and treasure a democratic society.

**People** – all people in New Zealand, recognising diversity of current political engagement which encompasses interest, awareness, knowledge and participation. Also recognising that people differ in their political interest and needs and in the ways in which they take in and use information.

## OUR MISSION

The Electoral Commission is an independent component of New Zealand's electoral administration, accountable to parliament.

In meeting our statutory guardianship obligations we:

- Enhance the quality of democracy by making electoral matters relevant for all people and providing information and education to enable people to be electorally effective.
- Encourage others to promote active, informed social participation focussed on electoral matters.
- Assist political parties to meet their statutory requirements and entitlements.
- Work collegially with other electoral entities, parliament and government to ensure a seamless service to our users.

## ORGANISATION PROFILE

The Electoral Commission was established by section 4 of the Electoral Act 1993 and came into being in 1994. Section 7 of the Act states that the Commission acts independently and shall not be responsible to any Minister of the Crown. The Commission reports annually to parliament through an Annual Report.

The Commission is funded through Vote: Justice and the 'responsible minister' is the Minister of Justice, in practice usually an Associate Minister. The relationship between the Commission and the (Associate) Minister of Justice is governed by an annual Memorandum of Understanding which includes an annual Statement of Intent. Ministerial Expectations for the Electoral Commission were agreed in 1998.

The Electoral Commission is one of three agencies with a role in electoral administration. The Electoral Enrolment Centre compiles and maintains electoral rolls and conducts the Maori Electoral Option. It is a self-contained business unit of New Zealand Post Ltd, under contract to the Minister of Justice. The Chief Electoral Office conducts general elections, by-elections and referendums. The office is a division of the Ministry of Justice.

Four people form the Electoral Commission which is assisted by a staff of another four people. The Commissioners are:

The President, who must be a current or retired judge: Hon Justice Tony Ellis

The Secretary for Justice, ex officio: Ms Belinda Clark

The Chief Judge of the Maori Land Courts, ex officio: Chief Judge Joe Williams

The Chief Executive, who is appointed to the full-time job by the Governor General: Dr Helena Catt

The staff of the Electoral Commission are:

Chief Executive: Helena Catt

Communications Manager: Peter Northcote

Senior Legal Adviser: Geoff Barnett

Office Manager: Lorraine Biggs

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

What are the main factors which we have to take account of when planning and making decisions? These are divided into external and internal factors

### **External Drivers**

**Structure of Electoral Administration:** The current three agency structure is recognised as having some problems such as causing confusion for people who use our services; and making some co-ordination difficult. There are also issues due to the differences in structure and role. While the three agencies continue we need to ensure co-ordination and cooperation with the other agencies to minimise the confusion and inconvenience for people who use our services. The Taskforce on Electoral Administration recommended in 2001 that a single agency be formed. The select committee review of the 2002 general election suggested that this issue be considered as part of a fundamental review. Continuing uncertainty over the shape of our future has a major impact on planning decisions.

**The Public Finance (State Sector) Management Bill** redefines some aspects of the Commission's independence. For instance the ways in which the Chief Executive is appointed and the means by which the Chief Executive and the President could be removed from office are changed. There are also increased powers for ministerial retrieval of unspent monies.

**Levels of political participation:** Fewer people voted in the last two elections than had done at previous elections and there has been an overall downward trend in turnout since 1984. As well as overall levels of decline, there are particular groups within society where interest in politics, understanding of the system and participation are significantly lower than for the general population. In particular Maori, young people and Pacific peoples have lower levels of engagement. Demographic trends indicate that these groups are becoming a larger proportion of the population. Research suggests that before we can interest people in information and education about how the electoral system works, we first have to encourage their engagement with the political system.

**Key stakeholders:** We provide a service for political parties, MPs, journalists, teachers, students, academics, as well as for the general public. In planning we have to balance the various needs of these stakeholders and be aware of changing practices, such as the use of new technologies.

**Funding:** The annual dollar amount and the extra money for the election information campaign, provided by government has not changed since the Electoral Commission was created in 1994. During that time some of the costs associated with our work, such as the costs of creating and placing TV advertisements have risen steeply. Extra funding has to be sought in the context of the Justice sector where we have to compete against agencies and projects which are more closely aligned with the core objectives and outcomes of the justice sector. To minimise the impact of declining buying power we have to be vigilant in ensuring efficient spending, make savings and raise revenue wherever possible and take every opportunity to seek and justify an increase in funding.

## **Internal Drivers**

**Size:** Like all small organisations we face issues of capacity in covering the range of activities that are carried out in order to meet our strategic goals. With a small staff everyone needs to be able to undertake a number of different roles. Staff training and development is therefore an important factor in fulfilling our mission.

**Resources:** Our resources, both staff and money, are limited and will continue to be. Decisions over use of resources must be prioritised with the strategic directions and goals firmly in mind

**Organisational culture:** Our culture needs to be aligned with our strategic direction and we need to operate a professional organisation with a positive, user focussed approach. We need to be aware of our prevailing culture, assess its fit with our goals and take actions to change the culture when that becomes necessary. It is easy to become complacent about processes and approach and to assume that existing systems are working. We need to be continually self aware with evaluation and review of our processes and operations.

**Systems and processes:** The routine parts of the work need to be carried out efficiently and effectively. Improved processes will free resources for other activities. We also need to be mindful that all of our actions are open to public scrutiny.

**Embracing electronic delivery:** Changing usage of internet by people seeking information from us will lead to changes in the ways in which we interact with people and deliver information. We need to be aware of changing usage amongst the diversity of our stakeholders and adjust our delivery accordingly.

**Change:** Given the range and impact of internal and external factors, change will be an inevitable component in the coming years for the Electoral Commission. We are initiating change as well as reacting to outside drivers. We must be open to change and embrace the opportunities that it brings while also being aware that people differ in how they perceive and react to change and that change needs to be managed.

## KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

Based on the analysis of our environment, we have identified the following key strategic issues and associated risks that we need to address in our plan

**Independence:** Our work has to be, and be perceived to be, independent of political control. The ways in which independence is understood and guaranteed has a significant impact on how we operate. We need to have the capacity to be part of all discussions on this issue.

**Legislative framework:** Legislation prescribes our role and details of how we perform certain tasks. There are a number of areas where others are considering change and some areas where we want to suggest change. We need to ensure that we have the capacity to participate in these discussions in a useful and effective manner.

**Relationship management:** We need to effectively manage a range of relationships with the other electoral administration agencies, with other government agencies and with our other stakeholders. Bad or ineffective relationships with any of these entities can severely hamper us in meeting our goals.

**Resources:** Staff, time and money are all finite and the resources that we have need to be managed as efficiently as possible to meet our overall goals.

**Capacity to respond to diverse needs:** As a small organisation with a broad role and an effective three year operational cycle, we need to ensure that we have the capacity amongst our staff to deal flexibly with the full range of work that we cover.

**Engagement with Maori, Young people and Pacific peoples:** Levels of political engagement seem to be lower amongst Maori, those under the age of 25 and those who identify as pacific peoples. We need to ensure that we take steps towards changing this situation and that all such projects are designed with involvement from the target group and are based upon best practice and research based information.

**Identifying other target audiences:** We do not have good information on the level of political engagement amongst other sections of society and thus do not know who else we should target. We need research before we can design projects.

**Knowledge base:** There is little good, research based, information available on levels of political engagement in New Zealand society and reasons why engagement is low amongst some sections of society. We need this information to confidently design and deliver effective education campaigns.

**Credibility:** We need to ensure that our education role is widely understood and accepted and the output well received. We want to be the first port of call for information on electoral matters.



## **Guiding Principles of Electoral Administration**

### **Independence:**

- maintain the confidence of voters, candidates, political parties and Parliament in the integrity of the electoral process by being legally and in practice independent of all political parties and interest groups
- we are not subject to ministerial direction in carrying out our statutory functions, except as provided by law.

### **Neutrality:**

carry out our statutory functions in a politically neutral and non-partisan manner  
treat all voters, candidates and political parties fairly and impartially and in accordance with the law.

### **Service to voters, candidates and parties:**

- provide the highest quality electoral services to all voters, candidates and political parties in accordance with the law
- provide electoral services to voters, candidates and political parties in ways which are as simple as possible, consistent with the law and minimise compliance costs
- ensure that all sections of the community have ready access to the electoral process in accordance with their needs
- provide an effective service to electors on the Māori roll
- make easily-understood information about the electoral process available to all sections of the community in accordance with their needs
- respond promptly and accurately to requests for information about electoral matters
- make information on our activities readily available to the public and the media
- have transparent and fair procedures in place to deal promptly with complaints of impropriety.

### **Professionalism:**

- a commitment to ensuring the integrity of the electoral process in accordance with the law
- carry out our statutory functions in a fair, accurate, secure and timely manner
- ensure that our members and employees behave in their public and private lives in ways which are consistent with the highest standards of independence and political neutrality
- keep electoral legislation under review and report to Parliament on desirable changes to electoral legislation
- continually evaluate our provision of electoral services and internal and external procedures to ensure they are in accordance with the law, are meeting users' needs, are as simple, efficient and effective as possible, and use appropriate information technology
- keep up to date with best international democratic electoral practice.

### **Responsibility and accountability:**

- make efficient and effective use of financial and other resources to carry out our statutory functions
- have clear financial and operational responsibilities and accountabilities under appropriate governance structures

- set budgets according to objectives and regularly measure performance against objectives
- have regular independent auditing of financial and operational performance
- provide Parliament with comprehensive, accurate and timely reports on our activities, including our capacity to conduct electoral events and conduct of electoral events.

## **OUR OTHER CORE VALUES**

### **Recognition of obligations under the Treaty to:**

Achieve outcomes that reduce the disparity between Maori and non-Maori in levels of political engagement

Actively protect equal citizenship rights including Maori representation

Act reasonably, honourably and in good faith based on reciprocity which includes making informed decisions on matters affecting the interests of Maori and recognising that Maori are not a homogeneous group.

### **Creativity:**

Being innovative and open to ideas

Sharing ideas for improvement

Asking “why’ we do things the way we do.

### **Ethic of Care:**

Showing respect for individual uniqueness, diversity and privacy

Offering information that we think will be useful, not just waiting to be asked.

### **Responsiveness:**

Being responsive to those who use our services

Being open to different perspectives

Being open to change

Providing information without judging the person asking for it, or their reasons for asking.

### **Outcome focussed:**

We care primarily about outcomes being achieved, not who does the work

We will work with others and share ideas

We are pragmatic in prioritising projects and use of resources.

### **Public Service:**

Providing a high level of service to the public

Being prudent with the use of public money

Being confident about being able to justify our actions.

## **OUR STRATEGIC GOALS**

In order to live up to our values and progress towards our mission and address our strategic issues, we have identified four broad goals to guide our annual planning over the next five years. The goals provide the planning framework. Resources will be focussed on projects which help us to meet these goals. Risks to meeting these goals will be assessed and managed.

### **Goal 1 - Administration that supports our vision**

We will aggressively move to make administration smarter and sharper so as to release resource for core activities that contribute to reaching our vision.

### **Goal 2 - An established education role that focuses upon realising our vision**

We will reframe our education role so that we:

Meet diverse needs

Concentrate on those sections of society where engagement is lowest

Concentrate upon making a difference, in the short or long term

Are recognised as a credible provider

Are recognised as being innovative, working with others and following best practice.

### **Goal 3 - High levels of credibility with our stakeholders**

We will:

Ensure that we build and maintain rich relationships with our stakeholders

Provide services that people want to use, that are relevant and cost effective (for us and them)

Ground our work in the contexts and paradigms of those we are working with.

### **Goal 4 – Positive evolution of electoral administration**

In advocating for our roles and the concept of independence in electoral administration we will:

Engage in debate over issues of electoral administration and structure

Participate positively in rationalisation of New Zealand's electoral administration structures

Maintain the capacity to comment on international electoral administration practice, debates and research

Be vigilant in explaining and defending our education role and the importance of electoral administration independence

Strive to be an example of best practice in public service and electoral administration.

The Statement of Intent contains more specific goals, to be achieved in a year, that work towards these strategic goals