

This report covers the main activities undertaken by the group/business unit for the period. It excludes the GE2023 Programme or by-elections which are reported on through separate channels.

## **Progress against the strategic priorities**

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### ***Building our capability***

An initial cultural analysis for the Target Operating Model (TOM) programme's culture workstream has been recently completed and will be updated to include the data from this year's engagement survey, which closes on 12 October. This work will inform how the Commission will move to a more consistent culture that will drive operational alignment and support increased engagement. A paper with findings and recommendations will be presented to the Board meeting on 9 November 2022.

The programme continues to work closely as we transition the implementation of the regional review work to the business. The Regional Review Project is finishing up its last deliverables – the closing out of offices is complete as of 30 September and updating process maps and documentation will be completed in mid-October. On 9 November the Board will be provided an update on the implementation of regional review and the handover to BAU.

The Stage-gate Strategic Review of the TOM programme has been undertaken and considered by the TOM Steering Committee and will be presented to ELT for discussion at their 4 October meeting.

The second workshop of Senior Leadership Group members was undertaken on 20 September to further develop future operating arrangements and introduce the group to Ngā Maihihioterā – Our Māori Strategic Plan. This session's outcome was development of draft terms of reference for the Executive Leadership Team and a charter for the Senior Leadership Group.

A revised Delegations Policy was approved by the Board on 14 September. This latest version includes a comprehensive set of delegations for electoral matters. All delegations holders have been asked to sign a new Instrument of Delegation form.

### ***Preparing for the future***

Initial discovery work has commenced on the development of a roadmap to develop and /or replace the Commission's key systems for administering enrolment and electoral events.

The policy framework has been updated and will be taken to ELT for review in early October.

Work commenced to create policy repositories in Teams to replace the current Corporate Policy Manual on ECHO. These Teams repositories will include:

- a set of PDFs of policies and procedures for staff to access and read from ECHO. Most of these documents will be in the new policy template
- a set of master policy documents, to make future updating easier
- an archive of retired policies.

The next step is to work with ELT to identify priorities for policy revision and develop a realistic first 180-day plan for policy review and development, given capacity constraints and other priorities. See issue below.

### **Other progress**

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- Working with Procurement to finalise print advisor and print panel contracts.
- The PMO Manager position has gone live and work continues getting the co-ordinator positions ready to go to market.

### **Issues under management**

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- Given other priorities and demands there appears to be limited capacity within the organisation to undertake necessary policy revision. We will need to prioritise our policy revision and set realistic plans for this work.
- It has taken longer than anticipated to extend contracts with our print advisor and print panel due to reduced capacity in the Procurement Team. We have contacted these suppliers to ensure there will be no impact on service delivery.

### **Risks**

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- Nil

### **Other news**

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- Nil

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## **Progress against the strategic priorities**

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### ***Building our capability***

#### *Finance, Procurement and Property*

- With the departure of the Senior Procurement Advisor, two new procurement resources have started during September. Day to day procurement work is being supported as well as forward looking planning.

#### *Information Technology*

- Negotiation of a Master Services Agreement with Catalyst continues and is on track to be completed by 30 November 2022.

#### *People and Culture*

- Invitations to the Have your Say 2022 engagement survey were sent out. Employees have until 12 October to complete this.
- Negotiating LMS agreement with Learning Works including the support contract
- Implementing the Remuneration and Performance Round. Developed the Draft Remuneration Spreadsheet to be approved by the CEO with the letters to go out to People Managers for review during the week beginning 3 October. Any changes will be processed in the 12 October 2022 Payroll with most changes backdated to 1 July 2022.

### ***Preparing for an election***

#### *Information Technology*

- Work on defining technical requirements for MEO changes continues
- Work on implementing a solution for concurrent by-elections in MIKE
- Facilitated input from Voting Services RMs and RAs to inform the development of employment agreements and SnapHire
- Supporting preparations for the VS GE Simulation

### ***Preparing for the future***

#### *Administration*

- Team Leader, Administration role currently advertised. Closes 12 October 2022

#### *Finance, Procurement and Property*

- Finance is preparing for a high-level financial reforecasting exercise to take place in late October. The objective of the reforecast will be to identify expected material under and over-spends versus budget for the current financial year. Information regarding this will be sent to the organisation during the week beginning 3 October.
- Work has started on developing a procurement pipeline of work over the coming three years and longer. The development of the pipeline will enable us to better understand and plan work and capacity / resourcing requirements.

- We are setting up further opportunities for the development of cultural competence across the Commission through language training, and we are also exploring other appropriate interventions.
- 5 of the 6 ROE offices that were closed in August have been handed back to the landlord ahead of the 30 September lease expiry. The remaining office, Palmerston North, still requires make good to be completed – the building manager is securing a builder to do this work for the Commission.
- The Dunedin ROE office landlord has invoked the 3 months' notice clause on the month-by-month lease with the building to be handed back by 31 December. Working with ECE to ensure the office furniture, files, etc are removed to allow the office to be handed back to the landlord.
- We are expecting the Hamilton ROE office landlord to invoke the 2 months' notice clause on the month-by-month lease shortly as he has a new tenant wanting to sign a long-term lease.

#### *People and Culture*

- A refresh of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy is underway with a draft policy due to go out for consultation soon. A small group provided initial feedback on a draft by 30 September 2022. We received a great response to this request for initial feedback.
- Continued support to the Operating Model Refresh and SnapHire implementation work.

#### *Information Technology*

- Digital Governance Group met to review topics of secure storage of files, Wi-Fi authentication methods and improving security for remote access
- Working with Communications and CERT around cyber smart week and follow-up conversations.
- Working with People and Culture to update IT position descriptions.

#### *FMIS Project*

- The Security Risk Assessment certificate for FMIS has been signed off. Cutover tasks to the new system have been completed. FMIS went live on 1 October 2022 with the reduced scope.
- Training for Approvers has been completed. Additional sessions have been planned for the first week of October
- Post go-live support agreement with WalkerScott has been signed and is effective 1 October 2022 for a 3-year period.

#### ***Building relationships and understanding***

- Working with Voting Services on procurement for PPE for the 2023 GE and also the extension of the contracts for security guards, secure overnight storage, and hi-vis vests.
- Working with ECE on the out-of-contract extension for Contact Centre Services (0800) with Telnet. Draft extension and approval memo with ECE to review and get approval for the cost increases Telnet have asked for.
- People and Culture have set up regular meetings with the Comms team to be more proactive on internal communications.

## Other progress

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### *Information Technology*

- The Catalyst workplan continues to be reviewed with particular focus going into work relating to Voting, Enrolment and Recruitment application prioritisation and identification of GE critical work.

### *People and Culture*

- External Totara Learning Management System training with Catalyst has been delivered for the core Tupu LMS/L&D group.

## Issues under management

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- Recruiting high quality staff remains difficult in current job market. The following roles have been advertised more than once:
  - Cyber Security position
  - Senior Systems Administrator
  - Principal Advisor, Capability and Organisational Development
  - Advisor Learning and Development
  - Coordinator, People and Culture.
- The roles that have been identified and budgeted under the Capability Uplift Project is outsourced to develop the position descriptions to speed up our ability to run the recruitment process.
- Our time to recruit is too long and therefore we are losing good candidates. This is being investigated and reviewed to bring about improvements.

## Risks

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### **Illness within our teams**

**IF** employees come into the office sick **THEN** this could cause the wider spread of illness across the Commission and key public facing roles such as the administration team may be short staff resulting in reception not being manned.

### **Work exceeds internal capability and capacity to deliver**

**IF** there are not enough internal resources available from a capacity and capability perspective **THEN** the technology assets required for GE2023 will not be delivered to sufficient quality in a timely and cost-effective manner that meets the needs of the general election.

### **Large amount of change occurring**

**IF** the large amount of organisational and process change occurring at the Commission is not well managed and supported **THEN** Enterprise Services' ability to deliver key services to the Commission may be impacted.

## People management

Area	Detail
TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two IT staff in the unit have annual leave balances of 25 days or more. Plans are in place to reduce. This is the same as last month.</li> <li>TOIL balance for the whole IT team is 93 hours. This is a reduction of 8 hours since last month. Staff are aware that this should (where possible) be taken before reward or annual leave.</li> <li>Two members of the Finance, Property and Procurement have leave in excess of 25 days. A leave plan has been discussed and agreed with them.</li> <li>Only one employee in the P&amp;C team has more than 22 days of annual leave entitlement. One employee has 4 days of TOIL because of Tauranga By-Election work.</li> </ul>
Staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IT Team ideas channel continues to provide new areas of innovation. Staff are also taking on training and development opportunities.</li> </ul>

## Other news

Recruitment for the following 10 roles is underway for the Enterprise Services team:

Team	Roles
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cyber Security Analyst</li> <li>Systems Administrator</li> <li>Senior Systems Administrator</li> <li>Architect – <i>New this month</i></li> <li>Technical Analyst – <i>New this month</i></li> <li>Technical Writer – <i>New this month</i></li> </ul>
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal Advisor, Capability and Organisational Development</li> <li>Advisor Learning and Development</li> <li>Coordinator, People and Culture.</li> </ul>
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team Leader Administration – <i>New this month</i></li> </ul>

Since August we have filled the Advisor People and Culture and they are due to start 17 October 2022.

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## **Progress against the strategic priorities**

### ***Building our capability***

- Three team members registered for the Government Law Conference which includes updates on public law remedies, judicial review, contracts and procurement.
- Two team members attended legalwise seminar re IT contracts.

### ***Preparing for an election***

- Continuing to work with Ministry of Justice on other legislative change this term including changes to the MEO, Parliament Bill, donations and loans for parties and candidates, regulated period and overseas voter eligibility. Regulations amendments scheduled to come into force 1 October 2022.
- Continuing to provide support to the Election Access Fund project, including input on applicant guidance, the formal eligibility notice, and internal policy documents.
- Updating collateral including handbooks, online guidance, candidate nomination form, and advisory opinion templates to reflect new rules for 2023 and better meet accessibility standards.
- Ongoing work regarding procurement and lease approvals including security services, FMIS, seek.

### ***Preparing for the future***

- Participating in the TOM programme steering group, GE steering groups, GE Programme Board, data stewardship group, and by-election working group.
- Board paper prepared for October meeting on the broadcasting allocation process and timetable.
- Updated party registration policy was approved by the Board. Party registration handbook and application form updated.
- Review of PIA for data platform and updates to privacy and security statement re new section 112A Stats NZ access to enrolment information.
- Input into archives audit.

### ***Building relationships and understanding***

- New provisions for Stats NZ accessing roll data came into force in September. We are working with Stats NZ to implement the new arrangements.
- Continuing meeting weekly with Ministry of Justice Policy team on legislative change and other electoral work.
- Party secretary update provided in September.
- Advice to party re donations rules and fundraising.
- Support to Independent Electoral Review Panel including working on information requests and preliminary work on Commission's submission to the Panel.

## Other progress

- Dean continues to lead IRT including updates to guidance and policies with the shift to Green.

### *Advisory opinions*

Six advisory opinion requests received in September.

### *Official Information Act requests responded to in September*

Requestor	Topic	Response Time
Individual	Documentation that sets out our organisation's salary bands and the jobs falling within them, any new bands, and policy regarding placement within bands.	21WD
Individual	Non-RealMe alternatives for government functions	5WD
Candidate	Documents relating to referrals the Commission has made to NZ Police	5WD

### *Parliamentary questions*

Requestor	Question	Date of Response
David Seymour MP	How many executive or managerial roles existed within departments, agencies and entities for which the Minister is responsible, if any, in September 2017 and in September 2022, and if any did exist, what were the titles and pay scales for these roles in September 2017 and in September 2022?	19/9/2022

### *Party administration and compliance*

- The Board approved the deregistration of the Tea Party, at the party's request.
- Progressing DemocracyNZ's application to register as a political party, with Board decision due in October.
- Change of party secretary for Social Credit and Outdoors and Freedom. Inductions provided.
- 11 candidates filed their donations and expenditure returns for the Tauranga by-election by the deadline. The remaining candidate has since filed his return.

## Issues under management

- Awaiting detailed judgment of the High Court in the second SFO case re donations in which 3 defendants have been found guilty. SFO have sought leave to appeal re: NZ First Foundation case. The Minister has approved the introduction of an SOP to the Electoral Amendment Bill to clarify the meaning of party donation and to introduce a new offence for failure to transmit a donation.

## Risks

No new or significantly changed risks.

## People management

TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 people in the team have leave balances of more than 25 days. Leave plans for the Christmas period are under discussion.</li></ul>
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Staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are no outstanding or overdue tasks remaining. Staff survey underway.</li></ul>
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment underway for fixed-term role budgeted for. Applications close 4 October.</li></ul>

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## **Progress against the strategic priorities**

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### ***Building our capability***

#### *Internal Communications*

- The team are working to brief ELT on internal communications at the Commission and support DCE's in their communications requirements
- Internal communications have continued to support culture and wellbeing across the organisation, with a focus on Te Wiki o te reo Māori, Suffrage Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, and the upcoming Cyber Safe Awareness Week, alongside changes to COVID settings
- There has been a lot of support across the organisation to communicate the Engagement Survey, Remuneration, FMIS, and ongoing support to embed change. Upcoming work includes property and functional alignment within business groups
- There were 3,500 visits to ECHO in September. The top news stories were 'Spring is here! keeping well at work', 'Summer office close down period' and 'regional review decision announced'. The most visited pages were our structure, vacancies and employee lifecycle.

#### *Regional Review Implementation Plan*

Following the implementation of the new regional structure on 22 August, an implementation plan was developed to articulate further work to be completed in the medium term (to December 2022) and the longer term (from January 2023 onward) to further realise the benefits from the Regional Review. A Board paper was prepared to note the plan, target state for each stream and the associated risks and mitigations.

#### *Overseas Voting Unit*

An offer has been made to the successful candidate for the Overseas Operations Manager role in the overseas voting unit. Once the candidate signs the paperwork an announcement will be made. The intention of this new role is to help de-risk the overseas vote processing function for GE2023 by creating a 'field manager' role, supported by National Office (i.e. akin to the model that is used for electorates).

### ***Preparing for an election***

#### *Local Body Elections*

The project continued to meet milestones, and the post-election review is underway. The three centralised enrolment processing centres are fully operational and currently focusing on meeting Local Body Election demand. As of 3 October, 341,300 forms have been processed in total, which consisted of 59% online forms and 41% paper forms. The processing activities will be concluded on 13 October. Community engagement teams continue delivering a full programme of work to support community events, meetings, and council briefings leading to the election day on 8 October. There are many activities planned for post Local Body Election to build up the momentum for upcoming elections.

Kantar Public provided their post-campaign research on the local election update campaign. It found the campaign had good recognition and Orange Guy continues to be positively received. It also identifies a continued need to support younger voters who had lower awareness of the update pack and when the local elections are held. Kantar Public has held two briefings with the Electoral Commission and its advertising agency, FCB NZ, to discuss findings in the research report.

#### *Always on*

Online enrolment continues to be supported with *always on* advertising to reach people who need to enrol or update their details. This activity targets people who have moved house or recently become eligible to enrol to vote. A new media schedule for always on activity to continue in the fourth quarter has been agreed.

#### *Election Access Fund communications*

After consultation on the Election Access Fund (EAF) closed on August 12, responses were collated, and a summary sent to respondents. The survey responses also informed the candidate application guidelines and the EAF policy.

The application guidelines have been written and are now with the alternate format providers to be translated into audio, braille, large print NZSL and a summary into Easy Read. An A5 handbook is being created to support the applicant guidelines and will be distributed to key stakeholders (political parties, disability organisations) when the fund is open. This information will also be published on the elections.nz website.

A separate document has been drafted to offer guidance on becoming a candidate (the nomination process, rules around donations and advertising etc). The guidance is a simplified version of the current candidate handbooks to make the information accessible and will be produced in alternate formats. The guidance has been reviewed by Legal and Policy and is at a final draft stage.

A press release has been drafted for when the fund opens, and information is being prepared for our 0800 service provider and website. The launch of the EAF is dependent on the completion of the application guidelines in alternate formats as requested by the Steering Committee. Target to complete this work is 31 October.

A campaign is prepared to raise awareness of the Fund once it's open. Creative concepts are being considered and the EC is working with an agency that specialises in communications for disabled people to ensure it meets the audience's needs.

#### *Māori Electoral Option*

The MEO project team is continuing to plan for a 31 March 2023 implementation date. Overall status is amber due to uncertainty about the outcome of the legislative process, which may not be known until mid-December, and the short timeframe for delivery. MIKE system requirements have been drafted in September with input from IT, Legal, Voting Services and ECE; requirements will be provided to Catalyst for review and sizing in early October. Work within ECE is ongoing to identify areas where MEO requirements and delivery will overlap with GE2023, and an initial meeting has been held with NZ Post on mailout requirements for both projects.

A Board paper was prepared to present the MEO Narrative-on-a-page, articulating the Commission's approach to preparing for and delivering the MEO2023. An approval was sought to include the one-pager as part of a briefing from the Chief Electoral Officer to the Minister of Justice.

The communications team continues to support the work of the Māori Electoral Option project team. It was identified that work needed to start on a communications strategy for a public information campaign now, so a contactor has been brought in to help with this work.

The strategy will focus on key messages for different legislative scenarios and identify when and how we should engage with Māori. The contactor will also start work on developing a creative approach for a public information campaign that can be used in either 2023 or 2024.

Recruitment for a Business Analyst and a Project Lead – Partnerships and Contracts (fixed term roles) is planned during October.

### ***Preparing for the future***

#### *ECE business improvement programme*

The programme timeframe has been re-baselined to reflect resource availability in the regions.

Good progress on initiatives in conjunction with GE23, MEO23 and LBE. Key highlights were:

- Roll cleanse process: Scope and timeframe were approved to improve the process and report on the roll cleanse activities. Analysis work is planned to complete by the end of October.
- Data integrity measures initiative aims to articulate critical measures for integrity assurance at a strategic level. The Discovery report and recommendations will be reviewed in October.
- Unpublished process requirements: in good progress of testing requirements to the MIKE system, to clarify gaps if any.
- Overseas elector process: Discovery report has been approved, and the recommendations will be incorporated into the GE23 enrolment campaign.
- Māori Macrons: Macrons development is near completion in MIKE. Meetings were held to discuss the timeframe for development in ERSA. The tentative development time is in December 2022, followed by a release date in February 2023.
- Correspondence review has been completed, with generic EC contact details, signature, and contents of 28 letters updated.

#### *Telnet contract*

The CEO has approved the memo seeking an extension of the current contract to June 2024. ECE is currently working with the procurement team to settle the new pricing schedule and contract variations. The planning for the full RFP processing will start in October.

### ***Building relationships and understanding***

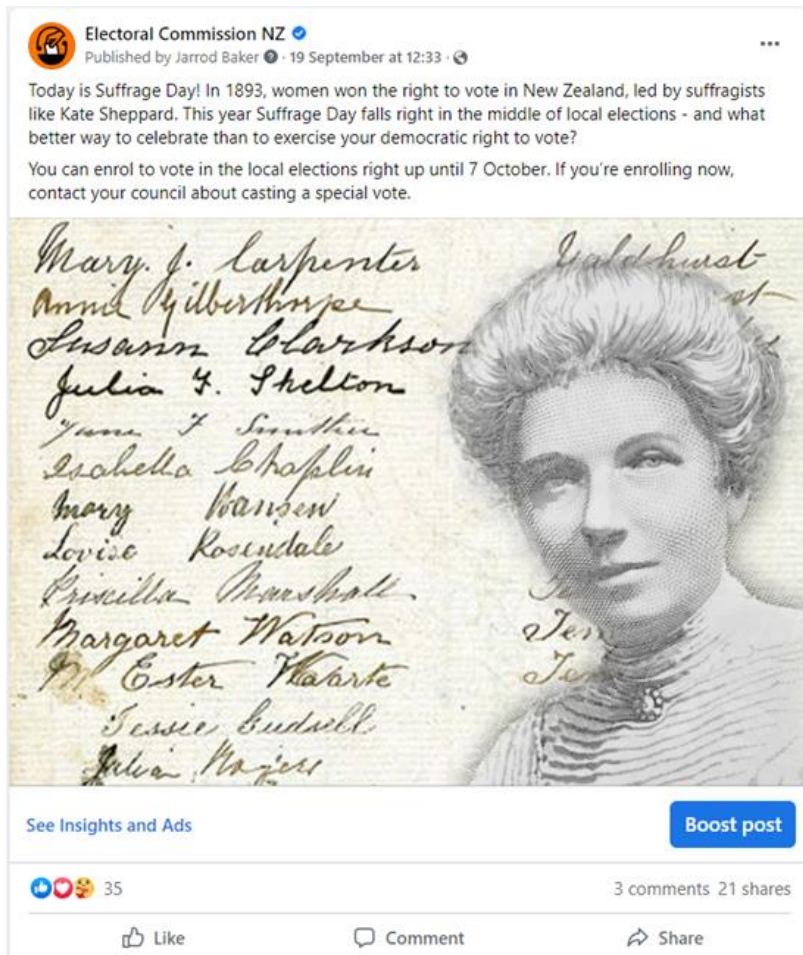
#### *Overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy*

Good progress is being made on the Overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy. The Strategy was approved by the Board earlier this year. A contractor from Senate SHJ is working with the communications team to socialise the Strategy with the Executive Leadership Team and wider business, to explain to people how they can use the strategy in their work, and to finalise an implementation plan.

## Social media

Social media comments and messages reduced after the completion of the local elections enrolment update campaign.

Our most successful post (on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) celebrated Suffrage Day on 19 September.



Almost all inbound enquiries or comments related to voting in the local elections. Much of these revealed some confusion about the Commission's role in local elections. Common questions related to enrolment, election advertising or candidate conduct, and complaints or questions about late delivery of voting papers.

Several conversations or comments on Twitter related to the turnout and conduct of the local elections. These included calls for the Commission to take over the running of local elections, for local elections to be conducted in-person or online, discussions about whether the ratepayer roll should continue and people expressing a level of confusion about the "permanent resident" criteria.

We received complaints that FACT Aotearoa, a local lobby group, were using Orange Guy's likeness on website and social media posts intended to influence people's local election voting decisions. We contacted them by email and asked if they could change or remove this image, and they were happy to comply.

### *Media*

Coverage of the local elections and the candidates standing for election has been a priority for media during September. Most days, we field 2 to 3 queries from journalists looking for information on the elections. We explain how elections are run and point them to the best person to go to with their query, which is usually the electoral officer for their local council.

Early indications of a low turnout in the local elections prompted debate about how the elections are run, and whether changes could be made to drive up turnout. This coverage has included calls for a move away from postal voting to online or in-person voting, and for the Electoral Commission to take over running of the local elections.

Other stories of interest in September include coverage of an amendment to the Electoral Amendment Bill which would change the definition of a party donation, and the release of a consultation document on electoral laws by the Independent Electoral Review. Journalists have also been following the fortunes of the Tauranga and Hamilton West MPs and whether there could be a by-election in their seats. The cost of a possible by-election if Paul Eagle wins the Wellington mayoralty has also been noted.

A selection of stories is attached in Appendix A.

### *Trust and Confidence*

Work continues to develop website and social media content that will provide more transparency about key processes, such as how votes are counted, to help public understanding of important steps in the electoral process.

### *Supporting Māori participation*

Peter Potaka recently screened a draft-version film to Karl, Anusha and Hone showing members of communities and EC staff describing how there have been barriers to voting for Māori voters because of the nature of the system. The film maker is Tony Sutorius, Unreal Films.

At this stage the intended use of the film is (at least) during training for Electorate Managers and to be shown to wider groups of EC staff. The aim is to start to break down barriers and to encourage staff to come together to support improvements to services for Māori, understanding need from the perspective of the voter.

Next steps include screening to the Board and conversation across the wider organisation (including all of the Operational Teams and Hone) to determine common organisational goals and a collective approach, where we harness our resources at a local level.

## **Other progress**

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Nil

## Issues under management

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Nil

## Risks

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Nothing new to add

## People management

TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three staff have over 25 days of annual leave with C&amp;E. Leave plans are being put in place to ensure we can support the staff to refresh both pre-Christmas and during Christmas period with longer periods of leave.</li><li>• There are some leave balances over 25 days, but these are actively being managed and have leave plans in place.</li></ul>
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## Other news

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- Communications and Education have successfully recruited two positions during the month. Lise Hutcheon commenced 29 September, to prepare a communications strategy for the Māori electoral option public information campaign in conjunction with the project team.
- Hanna Jackson accepted our offer for the position of Senior Advisor Digital. Hannah commences on the 9 January 2023
- Recruitment is underway for a Coordinator with interviews set for next week. A further three roles, a Senior Stakeholder Advisor and two Senior Advisors, are ready for the request to recruit process with PDs and Adverts completed.
- Recruitment of two fixed-term positions within the Voting Services team is nearing completion, one for a Project Support Officer and the other for a temporary Project Leader to support the Overseas function.
- Recruitment process for Business Analysts, Project Leader, Project Coordinator, Administrative Support Officer will start in October.
- Recruitment underway for the Enrolment processing officers and the Enrolment support staff required for the Lower Hutt based enrolment processing centre.
- Community engagement recruitment has been successful with Rotorua, Christchurch, and Lower Hutt now filling their vacancies pending contract return. Whangarei and Auckland still ongoing as are the Manager Community engagement roles for Auckland and Central.
- Continued successful engagement alongside local councils, supporting candidate meeting, and enrolment messages. We have had a successful collaboration with the far North District councils with supporting them on the mobile voting unit in remote locations in Hokianga, mid and far north.
- Christchurch office – the newly formed, Enrolment Processing Centre and the Community engagement teams hosted a visit from the DCEs and Karl, which was enjoyed by all. Other office visits are being planned to meet all staff in the regional teams.
- New regional footprint is starting to settle, with regular communications implemented to ensure open lines for feedback and encourage discussion.

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### ***Building our capability***

The SGD group is being established, with its first team meeting held on 15 September to discuss working and reporting arrangements. Filling vacancies remains a key priority, particularly the three positions in the International Team and the Accountability Advisor. A fuller needs assessment will be undertaken to ensure that vacancies are positioned in the right way to deliver what is needed for the group.

The DCE Strategy, Governance and Development is working with the Chief Electoral Advisor and Programme Director to map out our risk and assurance and reporting 'landscape'.

The Principal Advisor Governance is meeting one-on-one with ELT members to help them build a clear schedule of Board and ELT papers, to give greater time to prepare items and to better coordinate meeting agendas so no last-minute papers are required.

### ***Preparing for the future***

#### **Election Access Fund: Te Tomokanga – Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga**

The Election Access Fund is on track to receive applications in October, and a panel is being established to consider the applications. The fund is on track to open on 31 October.

The team has developed operational policies and detailed guidance for applicants in collaboration with the Legal and Policy, Communications and Education, and Finance teams. These documents were also informed by survey responses and meetings with political party secretaries.

The "How to apply to the Election Access Fund" guide has been sent for translation into Te Reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language, large print, Braille and audio. A shorter guidance document is being translated for Easy Read consumers.

The team continues to work on tools for administering the fund, including the application form, funding agreement and standard operating procedures. Design is also underway on the communications campaign to raise awareness of the open fund.

Four community members have been selected for the Applications Panel. All are disabled people with extensive community experience and one has Tikanga Māori expertise. This group will make recommendations to the Commission on approval of fund applications.

A progress update was provided to Minister Allan on 2 September and this was shared with interested colleagues.



## Data and insights

The data platform project continues to progress well. The first drafts of enrolment dashboards are with testers throughout ECE, and the Privacy Impact Assessment has been approved.

We will begin importing EMS data in the next couple of weeks once test data from the simulation is fully entered. Additionally, insights and dashboards are being produced to support initiatives in TSR (transaction status review) processing and Māori engagement.

We are working with IT to determine our short-term and long-term support needs.

## **Other progress**

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### **International liaison**

We have continued to support the Tokelau Chief Electoral Officer in the review of the Tokelau electoral laws and associated resources for electoral officials and voters. We will have an advisor on the ground for two weeks in September to work with the senior officials on the rules and manuals.

The Commonwealth Elections network has confirmed the conference to be held in Wellington on the week 7-11 November. There will be eleven Commonwealth election management bodies (EMB) from the Pacific invited and five non-Commonwealth countries. The Manager, International will be jointly co-facilitating this conference. The theme of the conference will be absentee voting. We have confirmed a visit to the National Library for the He Tohu tour for the participants on the first day of the program.

### **International Electoral Assistance programmes (MFAT-funded)**

We continue progressing with MFAT:

- The new Pacific Regional programme in partnership with UNDP, is still underway and we hope to launch this at the Commonwealth conference in November if it can be completed in time.

### *Fiji*

To date the writ has not been issued and we await the date along with the rest of Fiji. The Manager, International recently assisted with the induction of our technical advisor (TA) for the election period which went well and gave our team a good oversight of the planning so far for the election, they came away with a lot of reading material and are all looking forward to returning when the writ is issued.

Our trainer is now back in Fiji and assisting with QA of some training and supporting the refresher training of trainers for the divisions as we keep the teams motivated while awaiting the issue of the writ.

There will be further deployments in October to support the Commission and the Deputy Supervisor of Elections.

### *Papua New Guinea*

All seats have now been declared and most people have been paid for their roles in the election. We are working on our new temporary hires and supplies system, which is still in the testing phase. We hope to have this introduced for the local level government elections next year.

Our team will travel to PNG for the review of the election with the date potentially end of November / early December and will combine this with a trip to Bougainville to meet with the team there.

### *Tonga*

The Manager, International and one of the TAs are travelling to Tonga for the first time since 2019 and will be meeting with the Electoral Commission of the Kingdom of Tonga to discuss our programme of support and begin work on some of the areas identified. They will be there for a week for the initial visit.

### **Recruitment – International team**

We have re-advertised for our vacant position of Support Officer and have an offer out to the preferred candidate. If accepted, they will start at the end of October.

The part time programme manager role has also been advertised and we have an offer out to the preferred candidate.

### **Issues under management**

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nil

### **Risks**

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nil

### **People management**

TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two staff have TOIL and discussions will be had with both staff member to ensure it is taken.</li><li>• No staff have excess annual leave balances.</li></ul>
Staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An SGD action plan will be developed, to be informed by the results of the 2022 Engagement Survey.</li></ul>

### **Other news**

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nil