

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**

---

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

#### *Procurement*

- Procurement training collateral under development including supplier relationship management and contract management toolkit
- Continuing to make progress in negotiating a Master Services Agreement with Catalyst with an expectation this will be completed by 30 November 2022.

#### *Organisational development*

- Exemption memo seeking CE approval for a 2-year extension to the LearningWorks contract is being prepared.
- Preparing for the next engagement survey (“Have Your Say 2022”) to be rolled out at the end of September
- Interventions in Ask Your Team to manage and monitor progress for business unit actions were asked to be updated in anticipation of the 2022 engagement survey.

#### *Remuneration review*

- Continued work for implementing the Remuneration and Performance adjustments. Discussions with PSC and MoJ regarding the remuneration approach for changes effective 1 July 2022 have taken place in August with feedback from PSC expected in the next week.

#### *Health, safety and wellbeing*

- A paper on the status of the Health and Safety Management System implementation was presented to the Board at the August Board meeting.

#### *Sustainability*

- A meeting is being held on 7 September to restart the sustainability work for the Commission.

#### *Print*

- Print advisor contract under negotiation to ensure continuity of advice and expertise for the Commission’s printing needs, including a back-up to the print advisor to manage key person risk.
- 11x print supplier contracts in process of drafting to ensure continuity of printing services particularly of critical election products

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

Refer to GE2023 programme reporting

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

### *Property*

- Property project will commence soon and will start with support from an external agency to help deliver some quick wins for National Office. The scope of the property project will be defined over the next few weeks. The wider property work includes:
  - Six closed ROE offices in the process of being readied to hand back to the landlords by 30 September –
    - Tauranga and New Plymouth - final clean arranged with Spotless before handing keys to landlord
    - Palmerston North and Masterton both have equipment and supplies still in them. Arrangements being worked on with ECE to clear
    - Greymouth - remaining furniture being removed early September so final clean can be completed
    - Invercargill – quotes to complete the make good requested from the landlord
  - 2 ROE offices have their leases expiring on 31 Jan (Christchurch has a 6-month ROR available) and 28 Feb (Whangarei - no ROR available). Decisions to be made by ECE on when to either commence looking for new premises or to ask landlords to extend the leases.
  - 4 ROE offices remain on month-by-month leases (Hamilton, Gisborne, Napier and Dunedin). Decisions to be made by ECE on whether these sites are still fit for purpose and if not when to commence looking for new premises. If they remain suitable then discussions to be held with the landlords to extend for a 3-year term.

### *FMIS*

- FMIS is still on track for 1 October 2022 go live but with a reduced scope
- Penetration testing and certification and accreditation processes on FMIS continuing. IT continues to support the business and Walker Scott with the implementation.

### *Information Technology*

- Presented the data sovereignty report to the Data Stewardship Group in August.
- Completed an information management maturity assessment with the help of teams across the Commission. This is a preparatory step before the Archives New Zealand audit in October.

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

- To improve procurement planning and processing across the Commission to enable early engagement, Procurement and Finance representation will join business unit budget discussions.
- DCEs of both Enterprise Services and Operations are meeting regularly to ensure we are across the work of both groups and look for opportunities to build relationships across the groups.

## **Other progress**

---

### *Procurement*

- 3 Film Production Services contract extensions (National Park Studios, Teacup Productions and Unreal Films) signed by all parties.
- New MSA, six Service Agreements and one ongoing Statement of Work with NZ Post signed by both parties.

- Procurement Plan for the purchase of PPE for the 2023 GE under action with VS.
- Allied Security contract for security guards for electoral events contract extension under action with VS.
- The Contact Centre Services contract expires in October with no renewals available under it. Work is under way with ECE to request an exemption from going out to market until after the 2023 election.
- Suite of updated procurement templates under development.
- Support provided in drafting exemption memos for key or critical services for which tender planning has been deferred.
- Continuing support to business in drafting fit-for-purpose procurement and contract documents.

#### *Finance*

- Monthly meetings with SMT members to discuss their July financial results completed.

#### *Information Technology*

- Continuing to support the implementation of the new Applicant Recruitment Tracking System. Certification & Accreditation assurance activities are underway with penetration testing to be arranged.
- Local Body Election Project - IT continues to support the LBE project. Upcoming work this month includes support for Special Votes Secure Portal.
- The Catalyst workplan is being reviewed with particular focus going into EMS/ ERSA and Mike prioritisation and identification of GE critical work.

### **Issues under management**

---

- Recruiting high quality staff remains difficult in current job market. The following roles have been advertised more than once:
  - Cyber Security role
  - Senior Systems Administrator
  - Advisor Learning and Development
  - Advisor People and Culture
  - Coordinator People and Culture
- IT candidates are asking for 20% to 25% above the banded rates used by the Commission - in one case there was a \$28k difference for the cyber security analyst
- The roles that have been identified and budgeted under the Capability Uplift project need resourcing to develop the position descriptions and support hiring managers in the recruitment process.
- The Senior Advisor Procurement has resigned but we have 2 contractors starting in September/October to ensure we have procurement support across the Commission while we recruit for permanent procurement roles.

### **Risks**

---

#### **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. The internal resources include:

- Systems analysis
- Senior technical engineers including devices, Azure
- Cyber security
- Information management
- Process improvement
- Enterprise architecture
- Senior systems administrators
- Administration support.

**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**

TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two people in Finance, Property and Procurement have leave in excess of 25 days. A leave plan has been discussed and agreed with them.</li> <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 101 hours. This is a reduction of 30 hours since last month. Staff are aware that this should (where possible) be taken before reward or annual leave.</li> <li>• Only one employee in the P&amp;C team has more than 22 days of annual leave entitlement. 10 Days of TOIL spread over two employees were granted for the Tauranga By-Election – 5 days remain to be taken.</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> <li>• We continue to work the AskYourTeam actions.</li> </ul>

**Other news**

---

There is significant recruitment activity in the Enterprise Services team as follows:

- People and Culture is currently recruiting for 4 roles:
  - Principal Advisor, Capability and Organisational Development
  - Advisor Learning and Development
  - Advisor People and Culture
  - Coordinator, People and Culture.
- Information Technology are currently recruiting for 3 roles:
  - Cyber Security Analyst
  - Systems Administrator
  - Senior Systems Administrator

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**

---

### *Building our capability*

Nothing to report this month.

### *Preparing for an election*

- Regulations amendments approved by Cabinet and scheduled to come into force 1 October 2022. 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.
- Ongoing work regarding delegations, procurement and lease approvals including extension to Catalyst Agreements, BJ Ball and GETP procurement
- 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, candidate nomination form, and advisory opinion templates to reflect new rules and better meet accessibility standards
- Advice provided to Prime Minister on indicative timetables for 2023 General Election

### *Preparing for the future*

- Participating in the TOM steering group, GE steering groups, GE programme board, data stewardship group, and by-election working group
- Completed legal review of new and updated enrolment correspondence
- Work on updating party registration policy for Board approval; subject to approval we will also update the party registration form

### *Building relationships and understanding*

- Data and Statistics Bill passed on 8 August 2022 – working with Stats NZ on implementing new section 112A which comes into force in September
- Continuing meeting weekly with Ministry of Justice Policy team on legislative change and other electoral work
- Providing information to DIA re our dictation voting service
- Support to Independent Electoral Review Panel including working on information requests, comments on the draft consultation paper, and preliminary work on Commission's submission to the Panel

## **Other progress**

---

- Dean continues to lead IRT

### *Advisory opinions*

Three advisory opinion requests received in August.

*Official Information Act requests responded to in August*

<b>Requestor</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Response Time</b>
Individual	Number of electoral roll records, including duplicates and deceased electors	14WD
Individual	Request for a copy of any Privacy Impact Assessment for collection and use of personal information	16WD
Individual	Use of cameras with automatic number plate recognition	11WD
Academic	Number of electoral breaches referred to New Zealand Police in last 5 years and whether the EC will take any further action in the New Zealand First Foundation case	18WD

*Parliamentary questions*

<b>Requestor</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Date of Response</b>
Simeon Brown	For each of the Core Crown Agencies/Departments the Minister is responsible for, if any, how many vehicles have been purchased, if any, by each Crown Agency or Department since 2 December 2020 to present day, and what is the detailed breakdown of the types of those vehicles, with the data broken down by how many are battery electric vehicles, how many are plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and how many of them do not come under either of the two previous categories?	8 August 2022

*Party administration and compliance*

- Preparations made for upcoming list vacancy for Rt Hon Trevor Mallard MP
- Progressing DemocracyNZ's application to register as a political party, including advertising for submissions as part of public consultation process
- Change of party secretary for The Opportunities Party (TOP)

**Issues under management**

- Implications of decision in SFO case and legislative change. 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>• 3 people in the team have leave balances of more than 25 days. Leave plans are under discussion.</li> </ul>
Staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no outstanding or overdue tasks remaining.</li> </ul>
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment underway for fixed-term role budgeted for</li> </ul>

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**

---

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

- A revised Delegations Policy was circulated to ELT for final feedback ahead of it going to the Board's 14 September meeting for approval. This revision includes an expanded electoral matters delegation schedule.
- A Delegations Procedures document has been drafted.
- Work commenced on a review of the Policy Framework and Policy Template.
- A policies repository is being set up in Teams. This will replace the current Corporate Policies Manual in ECHO. This change will enable revised policies to be retired more easily and ensure all staff can access the latest version of all corporate policies.
  
- The Target Operating Model programme has moved to amber status this month; due primarily to delays to deliverables meeting planned timelines and having limited programme resource. Programme resourcing constraints have impacted the completion of the strategic review and the capability baseline review, which are behind schedule. Replanning is proposed to occur, and resource will be focused on these areas to return the programme to green status.
  
- The TOM steering committee has welcomed Lucy Hickman, DCE to the steering committee from the 15 September session.
  
- The first workshop of Senior Leadership Group members was undertaken to establish future operating arrangements. This session's outcome was the development of material for draft terms of reference for the Executive Leadership Team and the new Senior Leadership Group.
  
- A SLG second workshop is scheduled to be held on 20 September. The focus will be on completing the review of governance arrangements, behavior and the Māori strategy (Nga Maihi.) The team are working with Hone Matthews to ensure the workshop for the SLG achieves the best outcomes for all parties.
  
- Uplifting the Commission's capability is occurring at a slower rate than forecast. Without intervention, the Commission will not meet the capability uplift it has budgeted for on schedule. The TOM Programme Steering Committee has been provided with a series of short-term actions and recommendations for remedying this.
  
- Terms of reference for the capability baseline review have been completed. The baseline review was commissioned by the TOM steering committee chair following the presentation to the investment committee. Current recruitment rates are tracking behind forecast, creating pressure points in the organisation. The team have scheduled a session to brief Lucy Hickman on the Capability uplift program on 8 September.

- Procurement of a design consultant for National Office property redesign has been completed. We have briefed Lucy Hickman, DCE, Enterprise services as the sponsor of the work. The TOM programme will assist with convening the initial working group to progress the redesign of the National office of which Lucy will lead.
- Target Operating Model members are participating in the review and reset of the engagement survey questions to ensure it supports/aligns with any proposed culture initiatives.
- As of 22 August, the changes from the review of the regional presence came into effect: six offices in Tauranga, New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Masterton, Greymouth and Invercargill are no longer open to the public and the work that took place in those offices has been shifted. Enrolment Processing teams now work out of processing centres in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland, and Community Engagement in the hubs in Whangārei, Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, Gisborne, Wellington and Christchurch. Embedding the transition of this work is currently underway.

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

- Karl has asked Carol to scope and advise on the development of a roadmap to develop and/or replace the Commission key systems for administering enrolment and electoral events.

### **Other progress**

---

- A minor review of the Commission's business plan is underway. A key input to this is information gathered at the recent planning prioritisation workshop facilitated by the Programme Director.
- A paper on fraud prevention and fraud controls was developed for 14 September Board meeting.
- Continued to work with Ministry of Justice to finalise a paper to joint Ministers to establish a multi-year appropriation.
- The Tauranga by election report has been started and will be completed by the end of this month.

### **Issues under management**

---

- Nil

### **Risks**

---

- Nil

### **Other news**

---

- Two Senior PMs started in the Programme. One to support Enterprise Services, and the other to support the Recruitment Process Redesign project, legislative changes and provide lite PM support to Legal & Policy.



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**

---

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

#### *Internal communications*

- Members of the group continue to be busy supporting internal communications, including preparing information for the CEO's fortnightly all-staff meetings and email updates.
- The arrival of new DCEs and the next steps in the regional review and other TOM projects also continue to require internal communications support.

#### *Voting Services – recruitment*

- Recruitment is underway for a Manager, Overseas Operations to run the Overseas Vote Processing Unit.

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

#### *Enrolment update campaign for the 2022 local elections*

- The local elections enrolment update campaign ended on 12 August. New radio and social media content was added to the end of the campaign to help Māori understand how their roll choice may impact who they can vote for in the local elections. 500 voters and non-voters were surveyed in mid-August to measure the effectiveness of the campaign and to provide further insights about voter understanding and engagement. A report on the survey's findings is due in mid-September.
- A post-campaign media performance report is being prepared to measure reach and effectiveness of each media channel used for the campaign.

#### *Māori Electoral Option*

- Staff from across the Commission continue to participate in the Māori Electoral Option project team. The team continued with planning to move to a continuous option from March 2023.
- The outcome of the parliamentary process is now expected to be known in mid-December.

#### *Election Access Fund*

- Consultation on the Election Access Fund was supported with communications to stakeholders and the public. Disability organisations were encouraged to share the Commission's social media posts about the consultation with their communities. Consultation closed on 14 August. Feedback on the Fund has been collated and will be shared with almost 100 organisations and individuals who had their say during consultation.

### ***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. Targeted messages are delivered through online channels and drives people to the website [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) to enrol or update their details online. A

media performance report will be prepared when the current media schedule concludes at the end of September.

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

The Voting Services Team has been involved as part of initial work led by Legal and Policy to identify which previous recommendations for legislative change ought to be considered as part of advice from the Commission to the Independent Review Panel.

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

#### *Trust and confidence*

- Communications and Education participated in a workshop with Mark Lawson and Kate Hannah, Director of the Disinformation Project, Te Pūnaha Matatini, to further understand what drives and influences misinformation and explore effective communications interventions.
- Work is underway 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.

#### *Social media*

- Social media advertising was undertaken on Facebook and Instagram to promote consultation on the Election Access Fund, and the recruitment of Electorate Managers.
- This advertising was successful in terms of attracting responses and applications – but it also attracted many negative comments, requiring significant community management.
- Comments on the Election Access Fund included:
  - Positive/supportive comments, in favour of the concept of the fund
  - Negative comments, questioning the need for the fund
  - Discriminatory comments often targeting members of Parliament or the Government in general
  - Comments questioning the integrity of New Zealand's elections.
- Comments on the Electorate Manager advertising included:
  - People expressing interest in the roles, or tagging their friends
  - People questioning why Electorate Managers were required to be vaccinated against COVID-19, and/or posting/linking to vaccine misinformation
  - Posts supporting or against specific parties, candidates or members of Parliament, either directly or euphemistically
  - Comments questioning the integrity or New Zealand's elections.
- We'll be preparing a report based on this experience to feed into our ongoing trust and integrity work, as it's likely that further social media advertising will encounter similar issues.

#### *Media*

- The media have been on by-election watch and closely following the controversy involving two electorate MPs. The recently elected National MP for Tauranga Sam Uffindell has been suspended from caucus while an investigation is carried out into his past behaviour. The Hamilton West MP Dr Gaurav Sharma has been expelled from the Labour caucus after a breakdown in relations with his colleagues and is weighing up his future in Parliament. It's yet to be seen if events will trigger a by-election in either electorate.
- The Herald reported this month that a group associated with the protests at Parliament, Voices for Freedom, is encouraging its members to apply for Electorate Manager roles with the

Commission. The story included comment from the CEO on our recruitment process, including the requirement for applicants to declare any political affiliations or conflicts of interest. Voices for Freedom has also encouraged members to stand as candidates in the local elections.

- The Greymouth and Hokitika newspapers carried a story on the closure of the Greymouth offices as part of the regional review. A local mayoral candidate voiced concern about the timing of the closure during the local elections. There was comment in the story from the Electoral Commission assuring locals they could still access services.
- Other stories of interest this month include ongoing coverage of the Labour and National donations trial in Auckland, and the move by the Serious Fraud Office to appeal the High Court decision in the New Zealand First Foundation trial. Coverage of the local elections included a Spinoff article looking at whether the Commission should be more involved in running the local elections.
- A selection of stories is attached in Appendix A.

*Overarching communication and engagement strategy*

- Discussions are being held with Senate SHJ to provide support to embed the overarching communication and engagement strategy across the Commission and to complete work on an implementation plan.

**Other progress**

---

- ‘In the News’ – a weekly round-up of media stories prepared during events – continues to be provided to SMT and the Board on Fridays and be posted on ECHO for all staff.
- Staff have ongoing involvement in organisation-wide initiatives:
  - Membership on the Election Access Fund Steering Group
  - Membership on the Incident Response Team
  - Membership on the Health & Safety Working Group
  - Membership on the Laptop Working Group
  - Membership on the Sustainability Working Group
  - Membership on the Digital Governance Group.

**Risks**

---

Nil

**Risks**

---

Nil

**People management**

TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three Communications and Education team members have annual leave in excess of 25 days. One team member is on leave for September and others have leave plans in place.</li> </ul>
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews have been held to fill two permanent Digital Communications and Education Advisor roles.</li> <li>• Advertisements will be coming out for Principal Advisor – Operations and National Manager – Voting Services</li> </ul>

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**

### *Building our capability*

The new Strategy, Governance and Development (SG&D) group is currently being established.

The new DCE, Leigh Deuchars, starts on 12 September. There are also vacancies and resource gaps that need to be filled. Immediate priorities are:

- roles within the International Team – the International Programme Manager, following Karyl Winter’s appointment to the Manager role as well as two International Support Officers.
- the Accountability Advisor – the role remains vacant.

An SME (Chantelle 9(2)(a)) was appointed to support the Project Manager (Kath Lys) for the Election Access Fund and has now started.

Mark Lawson is currently Acting National Manager Voting Services, with the retirement of 9(2)(a).

In considering resource and budget needs going forward, challenges for this area of the business include:

- having sufficient resources to meet the expectations of key stakeholders, in particular the Board’s expectation that we continue to mature and improve corporate governance and our corresponding need to build the trust of the Board in us
- supporting the needs and aspirations of the organisation going forward, in particular (i) continuous improvement work which falls outside the electoral cycle (e.g. future services planning); and (ii) work which enables the organisation to ‘look outside’ and connect with the wider public sector and the wider community, such as strategic relationships, risk and security planning, environment scanning, beginning to tackle major strategic issues like reliance on the postal system or local body elections.

Our ability to conduct this work is one of the considerations of the re-prioritisation work being led by Emily Redmond. It will of course be part of the initial thinking and planning of the new DCE.

The new Commission leadership arrangements have been implemented, with the first meeting of the new ELT held on 22 August. A working group is discussing the roles, responsibilities and frequency of ELT and the new Senior Leadership Group (SLG). On 17 August the Board commenced its new meeting cycle, returning to a monthly cycle instead of its six-weekly cycle of meetings. The Principal Advisor, Governance has been assigned to record the minutes of ELT meetings, to achieve greater coordination between ELT and the Board’s work programmes.

### *Preparing for an election*

#### Trust

Following an initial conversation with the Board in May (involving Kate Hannah from the *Disinformation Project*) the following three main objectives were identified:

- proactively build trust in the Commission and the election event
- actively guard against the causes of mistrust leading to consequences for the Commission and the election event
- be prepared to respond to the consequences of mistrust for the Commission and the election event should they occur.

A workshop was held with the Communications Team and Kate Hannah from the *Disinformation Project* in early August considering the main issues facing the Commission for GE2023 and identifying opportunities for a response.

A draft framework setting out how the Commission will be building trust and protecting against mistrust for GE2023 was discussed at ELT and is to be considered by the Board in its September meeting.

### *Preparing for the future*

#### Election Access Fund

The project continues to make good progress despite working to tight timeframes. We are aiming to have the fund ready to receive applications in October 2022.

Consultation with the public on ways the Commission is considering to implement the fund closed on 14 August. 96 submissions were received.

A draft set of guidelines and operational policy paper – setting out an approach that will inform the Commission in implementing the fund – were recently considered by the Steering Committee.

A panel is currently being established to consider applications once the fund goes live. The panel will include representatives from the disability sector (who are currently being sought).

The team also continues to focus on development of the processes and tools that will be required to support the Fund going live (e.g. applications process and financial payments approach / mechanisms).

#### Data Platform Project

The data platform project continues to make good progress.

The back-end data platform capability, in which the data will be 'refined' in ways to support broader use of data across the Commission, is under development. A closer version of the approach that will ultimately be used across the business in future (i.e. including the full back-end platform capability) is being rolled out to a small number of E&CE field staff for testing during local body elections.

We are working with IT and are engaging a provider to undertake a privacy impact assessment. Full certification and accreditation will be completed by the time the Minimum Viable Product goes live in November.

### *Annual report*

A draft of the *2021-22 Annual Report* was provided to the Board in early August.

### *Strategic work*

An environmental scanning exercise was conducted with the Board and ELT in August. Information from the SMT environmental scanning exercise was provided to support this exercise.

### **International work**

We are aware that there has been limited engagement with the SMT about the International team and the work they undertake. As a starting point, Karyl Winter ran an “International Team 101” with the SMT in August.

### **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 2022. There will be 11 Commonwealth EMBs from the Pacific invited and possibly seven non-Commonwealth countries if funding can be sourced. The Manager International will co-facilitate this conference. The theme of the conference will be absentee voting.

### **International Electoral Assistance Programmes (MFAT funded):**

We continue progressing with MFAT:

- Extension of the Fiji programme – this has now been signed for a further eight months.
- 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. We are collaborating with AEC to provide four advisors to be deployed out to the districts during the election, the team was briefed recently and Manager International will be taking them in for a week of induction in early September. Our support in training has continued with a further deployment of our advisor in August where they travelled to several locations around the country to train the field trainers.

### *Papua New Guinea*

Counting has been completed in all but two constituencies and the deadline for return of the writ is early September. However it may need a further extension. We continue to support the TEW system as they endeavour to pay all 44,000 staff for both polling and counting. Our team will travel to PNG for the review of the election with the date yet to be announced.

### *Tonga*

The border opened on 1 August and we hope to arrange a trip in before the end of the year to discuss our work programme.

### *Pacific Regional Programme*

The MFAT lead on this project is now back in place and we have hope to progress this programme soon. He has had discussions with UNDP and Manager International to progress and we are still hopeful of an October start date.

### **Issues under management**

- There are significant gaps in resourcing in the SGD group which need to be filled to continue to deliver and to support building of the new capability and to meet expectations.

### **Risks**

- SGD is unable to meet expectations of key stakeholders (including the Board) due to resource and budget limitations.

### **People management**

TOIL or excess annual leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nil</li></ul>
Staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have supported the transition to return to the office and broader flexible working policies.</li></ul>

### **Other news**

Nil