SENIOR LEADERSHIP & BOARD RISK PROFILE

Updated 28/07/2023

Summary of action – current state

ID	Risk	Summary of current action	Rating	Trend	Last modified
1	Loss of trust in the electoral system	Focus and key trigger point is on GE, and processes being robust and well managed. Cross public sector official partnerships are active in sharing information on activities, and working collectively on preparations including tabletop exercises and scenarios. Staff have increased and advice and personnel available to support preventing, responding and recovering from challenges is now in place. Our communications strategy to address dessimination of incorrect information is in place.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
2	Failing to build and maintain trusting relationships with Māori	In addition to significant volume of activities in operations, progressing both Kaupapa Māori voting places, and relationships and strategic partnerships on the ground, we continue to build and relationships with Māori at national/senior levels. We also continue to develop Ngā Maihi and support capability uplift in the Commission.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
3	Being unable to respond sufficiently to a major disruptive event, including a pandemic	During this period the board approved changes to the incident management approach of the Commisison – these changes are being engaged on with the business. We are finalising design of our escalation reporting during GE, the GE taskforce, which will ensure clear understanding across the commission on communication channels. A review of Business Continuity Plans is underway. Tabletop simulations with our security and emergency officials has looked at our ability during the election to respond to certain significant events.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
4	Inability to deliver successfully or meet expectations due to insufficient funding	A number of pressures, particularly inflationary and staff costs remain on our radar as they may impact on our baseline. Budget for 23/24 approved since last risk profile. The budget for 23/24 is for a net deficit of $11.3m which leaves reserves of $2.2m. New process through ELT for any changes requiring increases in fund against allocated budget.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
5	Commission's reputation for neutrality is jeopardised by 'politicisation' and pressure from key stakeholders	We continue to provide support to MOJ with advice on the operational implications of policy proposals and seek input from the Board on what if any substantive formal comments the Commission makes on proposals. IRP delivered interim report in June 2023. There has also, in line with expectations, been increased activity in this space in the news as GE draws closer. Consistent messaging and communications embedded in enquiries and voting place training for the GE period.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
6	Critical supplier leaves the market or is operationally compromised	Steps increasing procurement capability has been progressing. This includes supplier management plans for critical suppliers being developed or under development. This risk is stable on prior period, but still significant as due to the tumultuous economic climate, labour market pressures and ongoing supply chain issues.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
7	Failing to deliver on strategic objectives	A number of pressures at a key delivery point: balancing preparing for elections, building capability, increased cost pressures and being asked to trade off future to deliver the immediate. The last quarter saw the recruitment of key roles which will help the Commission to keep an eye on longer term objectives whilst under delivery pressure. Approval for the plan for developing the 10 year strategy roadmap was received and work is slowly starting with environmental scanning pieces. Recruitment for a principal advisor strategy underway.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
8	Failing to prevent or respond adequately to a cyber security incident	We are working closely with NCSC in the run up to the election. Work in the quarter includes: developing a cyber security dashboard and finalising cyber security team. Deep dive on risk planned	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
9	Critical system failure at a critical time	We are developing an item of work to create a roadmap of future systems work that may be required to avert this risk in the long term. We are mitigating this through comprehensive Certification and accreditation checks on our key systems. Election readiness testing across critical systems has progressed in line with programme planning.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23
10	Failing to deliver on a critical legislative and/or regulatory change	Watching brief: alert for regulatory changes which may impact our ability to deliver. Have been providing support to IRP.	(green)	⇨	28/07/23
11	Failing to meet obligations to implement robust health, safety and wellbeing practices	New HSW lead now in place. Presently operationally focused on supporting GE HSW processes.	(yellow)	⇨	28/07/23

Summary of action – current state

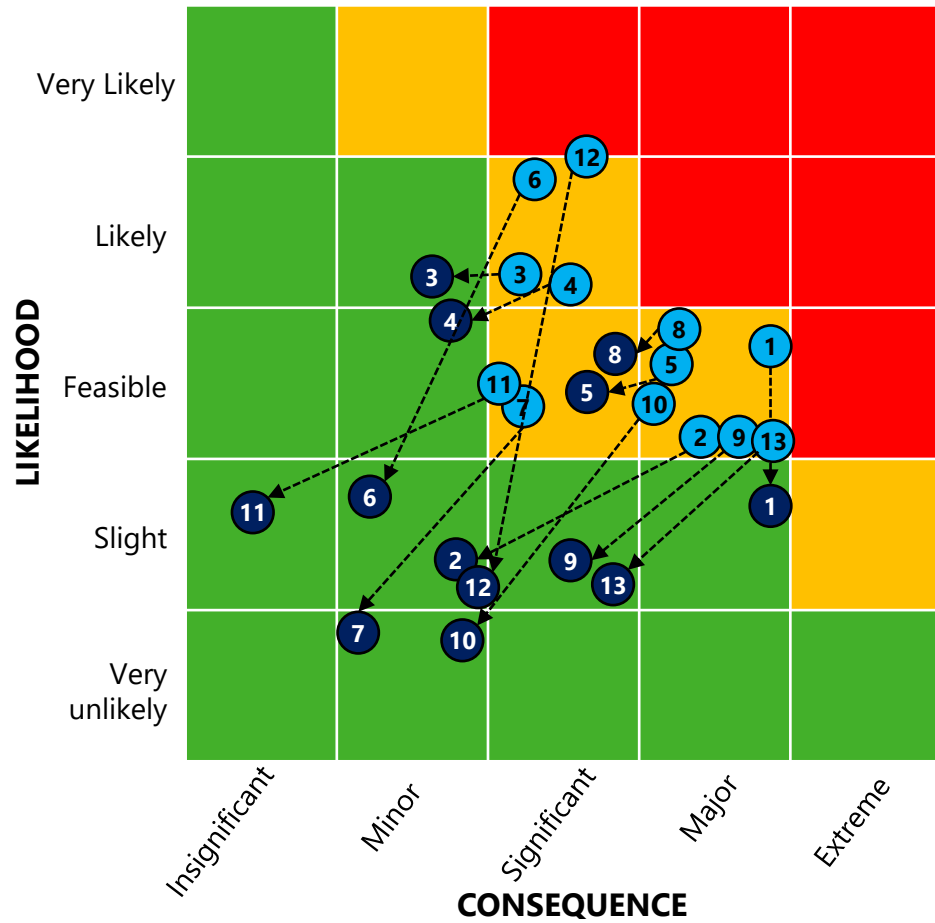| ID	Risk	Summary of current action	Rating	Trend	Last modified
12	Over-reliance on core staff results in critical points of failure	Heavy recruitment during this period, both against our TOM and to fill GE roles.		⇨	27/07/23
13	Failing to understand and/or connect with the wider environment results in unforeseen consequences and/or limits our resilience	Extensive operational relationships in run up to GE supporting our delivery and system connections.		⇨	27/07/23

Risks
Current rating
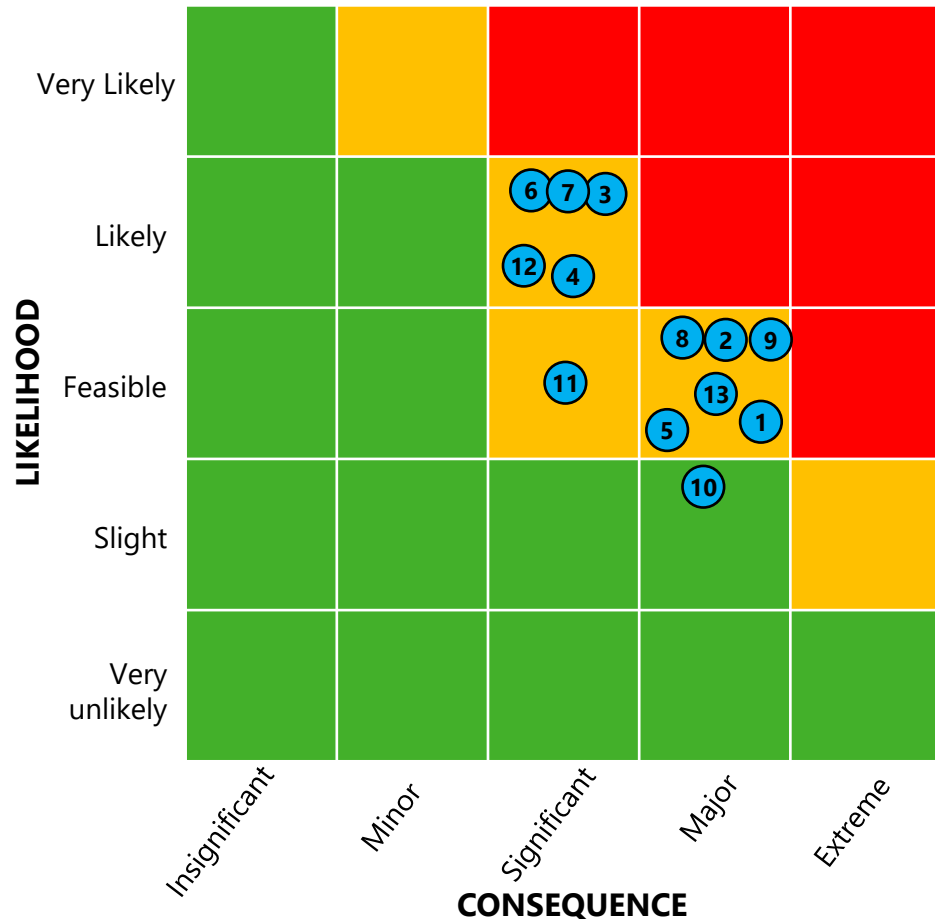
"Taking into account the mitigations and contingency we have in place, what is our level of risk right now?"

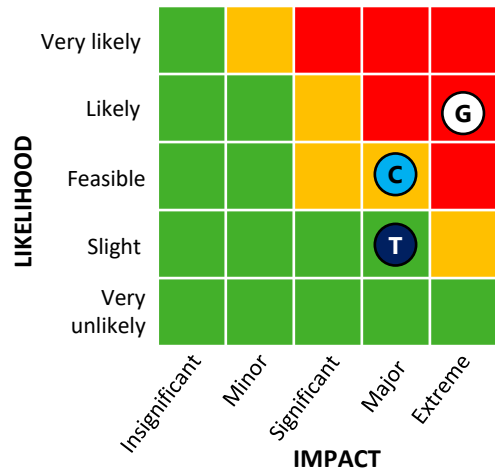| ID	Risk
1	Loss of trust in the electoral system
2	Failing to build and maintain trusting relationships with Māori
3	Being unable to respond sufficiently to a major disruptive event, including a pandemic
4	Inability to deliver successfully or meet expectations due to insufficient funding
5	Commission's reputation for neutrality is jeopardised by 'politicisation' and pressure from key stakeholders
6	Critical supplier fails to deliver
7	Failing to deliver on strategic objectives
8	Failing to prevent or respond adequately to a cyber security incident
9	Critical system failure at a critical time
10	Failing to successfully implement critical legislative and/or regulatory change
11	Failing to meet obligations to implement robust health, safety and wellbeing practices
12	Over-reliance on core staff results in critical points of failure
13	Failing to understand and/or connect with the wider environment results in unforeseen consequences and/or limits our resilience

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Risks
Target rating

"Where are we aiming to get to in order to manage this risk effectively?"

ID	Risk
1	Loss of trust in the electoral system
2	Failing to build and maintain trusting relationships with Māori
3	Being unable to respond sufficiently to a major disruptive event, including a pandemic
4	Inability to deliver successfully or meet expectations due to insufficient funding
5	Commission's reputation for neutrality is jeopardised by 'politicisation' and pressure from key stakeholders
6	Critical supplier fails to deliver
7	Failing to deliver on strategic objectives
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9	Critical system failure at a critical time
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11	Failing to meet obligations to implement robust health, safety and wellbeing practices
12	Over-reliance on core staff results in critical points of failure
13	Failing to understand and/or connect with the wider environment results in unforeseen consequences and/or limits our resilience

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1. Loss of trust in the electoral system

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely
IMPACT (horizontal axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme

Status Tracking

First identified
01 Feb 2021

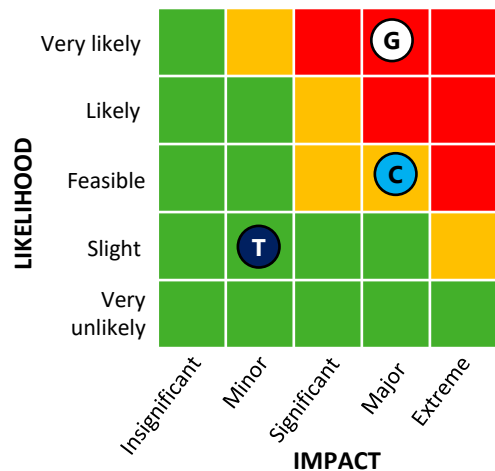**Last updated**
24/7/23

Trend stable

Consequences	Loss of confidence, low voter turnout, voter disengagement, people do not trust the voting process, aggravation of voters and issues motivated groups, unbalanced promotion of issues and opinions and ideologies, scrutiny, reputational damage, strain on capability, capacity and resources. Threats to electoral officials.

Drivers/Threats	- Increasingly complex global and domestic threat environment - Issues motivated groups/individuals/ foreign players - Lack of social media awareness/forums/media etc - Lack of engagement with media - Lack of connectedness to wider public sector - Continued downward participation in local body elections - Generalised anti-government sentiment may become focused on election events - Political party agenda - Corruption of politician(s) - Targeted campaign to cause mistrust in system	- Lack of controlled message or reach - Failure to engage with all demographics - Wider belief in conspiracy theories - How COVID-19 is managed and perceived to be managed within the electoral process - Current court cases and debate creates a perception of reduced transparency undermining public confidence - Expectations of the Commission about what our role is in helping to increase compliance/transparency of party activity and 'resolving' mis/disinformation about political debate

Current Mitigations	- A framework to guide implementation of measures across the organisation 'Always on' communications, with clear and accurate messaging and information for voters ~~Assumption that we will be standing up an~~ external risk and security (whole of government) support network ~~again~~ for GE23 - Communications and information targeted at building trust in the system - Dedicated staff oversee EC social media / manage media - Commission arrive at a clear view of its role and communicate that to parties and the public - Regional security resources and police liaison in place supporting wider security and integrity outcomes for GE23.	- Consistent and regular communication with parties and candidates - Proactive communication and liaison with social media platforms - Engagement and involvement in cross-sector programmes aimed at common threats (e.g. misinformation) - Proactive work to engage with communities - Transparency around processes and systems - Supporting and encouraging community ownership (e.g. appoint people from within the community) - Work with international EMBs ~~Learnings from by-election (s)~~ ~~Early engagement and planning with NZ Police~~ - Communications strategy to address dissemination of incorrect information

Further mitigations	- Programme of work to identify key risks in more detail and implement changes prior to GE2023- progressing - Further education programmes/further engagement- progressing - Market research and subsequent implementation of change (including doing more re trust and confidence in non-election years) - Additional resourcing to support implementation of the trust framework- progressing

Responsible Manager	Mark Lawson	
Contingency	Communication and disruption protocols	Relationships and connections with National Security System

Previous state	Current state
A second security advisor resource secured. Internal and external security groups established. Key decisions about allocation of resources to support integrity and security of the voting place made. Good progression toward future mitigations	- Regional security resources secured and July start of policy liaison within EC - Good progress on risk driven analysis and planning progressing with system partners.

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2. Failing to build and maintain trusting relationships with Māori

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely
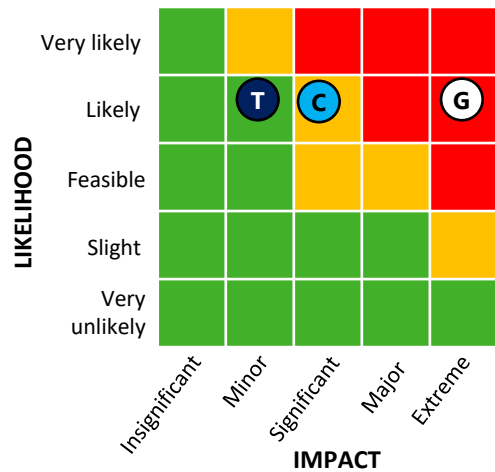
IMPACT (horizontal axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme

Consequences	Relationships with Māori: access to services issues, public criticism, criticism from Māori, Treaty cases brought against the Commission re access issues.	
Drivers/Threats	• Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations are not met • Commission fails to establish relationships with iwi/hapu • Damage to existing relationships and loss of trust, impact on future ability to build relationships • Needs of Māori not understood or reflected in Commission's approach or services • Debate surrounding Māori Wards during LBEs contributes to mistrust or suspicion regarding elections • Profile likely to increase as issues arise in Select Committee	• Myths within some parts of Māoridom are enduring • Belief that regulatory compliance administered inequitably/unfairly • Decline in levels of turnout of Māori • Inability to attract culturally competent staff • Changes to regional structure fail to focus sufficiently on outcomes for, or partnerships with Māori • Media reporting on Māori Electoral Option • If Councils fail to inform people in the way they'd like (re Māori wards) then there may be a stronger voice for EC to do this work
Current Mitigations	• Identified as a strategic priority and the need to build more capability is reflected in the operating model refresh • 'Strategic Comms plan • Strategy based on long-term, consistent relationships • Community engagement activity • Work to develop strategic relationships • Senior Manager Māori being closely involved in the development of day-to-day operational policy and planning. • Work to consider the impact of Māori data sovereignty on the Commission	• Participation strategy • Co-build and design of voting and engagement services • Continuing the external governance arrangements involving key representatives (and specialists) from support agencies • Providing information about services to parties and candidates • Providing information and engaging on MEO • Relationships with Māori media • Review and respond to internal support for Māori staff including addressing capacity and pay gaps • Directing people to information about Māori wards and addressing concerns (note but is also underlining the main issues re MEO)
Further mitigations	• Securing funding to implement strategic comms plan • Increase capability to embed best practice community engagement and co-design of services • Electoral Panel Review – has a focus on services to Māori and is an opportunity to strengthen relationships	• Further work to build relationships with Māori at national/senior levels- progressing • Build on relationships with Māori media • Representation in governance/advisory • Engagement with Iwi during design of any future changes to MEO
Responsible Manager	• Hone Matthews	
Contingency		

Status Tracking

First identified
01 Feb 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Previous state	Current state
Regional dialects being used where possible in MEO and GE campaigns Relationship developed with Iwi Chair's forum Positive reporting on MEO campaign- high interest from Māori media Election approach to working with Maori is well advanced	In addition to significant volume of activities in operations, progressing both Kaupapa Māori voting places, and relationships and strategic partnerships on the ground, we continue to build and relationships with Māori at national/senior levels. In the last 3 months we have also continue to develop Ngā Maihi, and support capability uplift in the Commission.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION
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3. Being unable to respond sufficiently to major disruptive events:
including pandemics, earthquakes, cyber attacks, floods, terrorist attacks, infrastructure failures etc
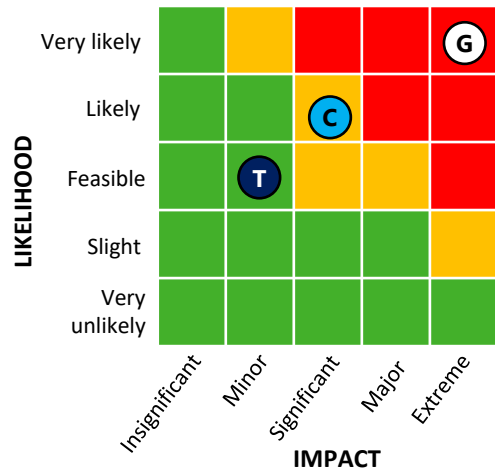

	Consequences	Unable to meet statutory objectives and stakeholder expectations (NZ Public, Government, political parties, international and employees). For example, the electoral roll becomes aged, unable to pay staff, staff welfare is compromised, public enquiries are unanswered, electoral events are cancelled or postponed.	
	Drivers/Threats	• Not having the necessary legislative and regulatory power to enable a response • Lack of focus/resourcing on business continuity • Over reliance on WFH (no permanently nominated BCP site) • We don't have COVID contingency funding • MoJ indicated they are not willing to co-ordinate a contingency workforce to help mitigate risk for GE23 • Uncertainty about COVID – difficult to plan and prepare when the environment is changing rapidly (and appears to be improving)	• Long lead times to prepare for an event • Presently the IRT team is only stood up as required, infrequent rehearsals and no ongoing owner • BCP plans are event focused • Under resourced permanent presence in the non-IT Security area. • Implications of COVID on our ability to resource (staff) the election • COVID – creating barriers because our approach is not aligned with public perception • More difficult to obtain secondees to support GE23
	Current Mitigations	• The Incident Response Team, which is working effectively. • A staff vaccination policy has been developed and staff have been consulted • Work has commenced on identifying preparations and funding for an election where COVID remains an issue • A specific business continuity plan is being developed covering the next 6 months as part of the Omicron mitigation response • SIMS training for Incident Response Team	• Existing relationships with wider government sector • Simulations/exercises in business continuity for the GE • Remote working established as a norm and being enhanced • 2 strategic priorities support this end (Capability/Preparing for a GE) • Testing for the updated BCP scheduled for Sept 22 • Make a case for additional COVID funding • Contact with Whanau Ora re their response, making use of their network • Testing our planning assumptions
	Further Mitigations	• Legislative changes to support recovery • Regular testing and simulation of BCP scenarios • Build BCP considerations into projects • Secure further resource to support BCP and generate more focus	• Contingency resources/succession planning, including seeking the support of other agencies to help us (e.g. MoJ) • Expand the frequency and types of scenarios • Physical BCP sites nominated and set up • Enhanced pre-prepared comms
	Responsible Manager	• Lucy Hickman	
	Contingency	• Seek assistance from wider government agencies • Work with vendors and partners – facilities and systems	• Enhanced pre-prepared comms

Status Tracking

First identified
01 Feb 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Previous state

Resource secured for BCP focus. New manager for IRT identified. With key roles coming on Board, we need to team up more closely to manage a cross cutting risk. Time to broaden gaze beyond Covid 19

Current state

Board approved changes to the incident management approach - changes are being engaged on with the business. We are finalising design of GE escalation and governance - GE taskforce, which will ensure clear understanding communication channels. Review of Business Continuity Plans is underway. Tabletop simulations with our security and emergency officials has looked at our ability during the election to respond to certain significant events.

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4. Inability to deliver successfully or meet expectations due to insufficient funding

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely

IMPACT (horizontal axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme

Markers: G (Very likely / Extreme), C (Likely / Significant), T (Feasible / Minor)

Status Tracking

First identified
01 Feb 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

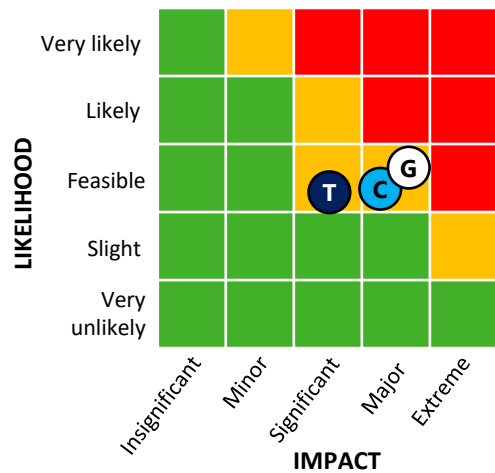|		
Consequences	Inability to deliver a trusted election to an expected high standard leading to reduced confidence in the system. Can't meet expectations. Impact on resourcing required to support funding bids. Our planning assumptions need to be over-ridden by action. Complaints during critical periods increase which ties up resources. If turnout is lower in 2023 then there will be questions asked about the Commission's performance (which may be linked to the issue of funding and how money was spent)	
Drivers/Threats	• Commission's business is poorly understood or perceptions we are 'cost plus' • Poor quality financial planning and management information • Focus on Stats NZ Budget increases places spotlight on Commission's funding	• State of the economy • Competing ministerial priorities and cost pressures • Late policy reforms which are not (fully) funded • Unresolved cost pressures (e.g. systems, policy changes…)
Current Mitigations	• Working closely with MoJ and Treasury around advice to Ministers and responding to any queries • Managing through a period of uncertainty including close scrutiny of existing budgets and expenditure and regular (re)-evaluation of assumptions • Funding project with Ministry of Justice co-investment and active involvement on the project team- Remove? • Re-evaluate how we deliver services to some targeted stakeholders groups given a leaner budget than the preferred or scaled options.	• Early and ongoing engagement with the Minister of Justice • Submission of robust funding bid in Budget 2022. • Ensuring that when we re-set internal budgets to align with available funding that we evaluate risk and our ability to meet expectations. • Developing better processes to help manage the risk of failing to utilise our funding on critical priorities in a timely way. • Communication with key stakeholders where we believe there is risk that we may not (fully) meet their expectations- progressing
Further Mitigations	• Seek an improvement to the Commission's longer-term funding model off the back of the Budget 2022 bid • Having longer-term funding pressures mapped out (e.g. systems)	• Contingency around COVID funding- NA- remove • Funding for security- decision made within operating- remove
Responsible Manager	• Karl Le Quesne	
Contingency		

Previous state	Current state
Ministers advised of service levels and funding pressures. Continuing to manage tradeoffs within baseline. Reserves are low and well below Board reserves policy.	A number of pressures, particularly inflationary and staff costs remain on our radar as they may impact on our baseline. Budget for 23/24 approved since last risk profile. The budget for 23/24 is for a net deficit of $11.3m which leaves reserves of $2.2m. New process through ELT for any changes requiring increases in fund against allocated budget.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION
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5. Commission's reputation for neutrality is jeopardised by 'politicisation' and pressure from key stakeholders

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely

IMPACT (horizontal axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme

Status Tracking	
First identified 14 Jun 2021	
Last updated 27/03/2023	
Trend stable	

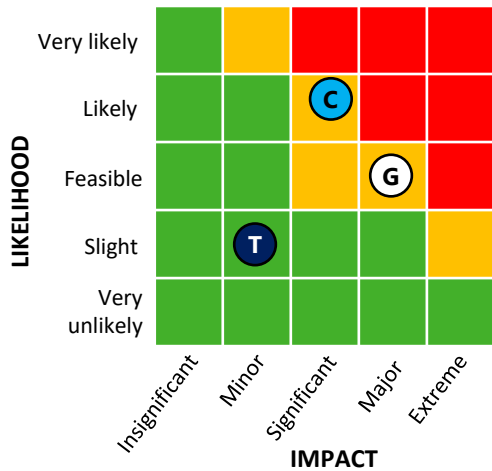|		
Consequences	Loss of confidence of parties. Harder for Commission to undertake its role as a referee including additional challenges, re-work etc. Potentially, public confidence could be dented if our impartiality is under threat.	
Drivers/Threats	• Policy issues become politicised and focus on the Commission itself rather than the substantive issue on hand • Inconsistency with compliance and decision-making. • Not seen as being even-handed • Political debate about costs of elections • Balancing a need to be neutral with the wishes of the actors • Lack of consensus on the reforms • Proposed legislative changes which polarise opinion	- Our advice can be used in political debate - Less respect of the 'referee' - Our role when we are involved in litigation and retaining a perception of neutrality - Debate about the role of the Commission as part of the Law Review could flow into expectations of us before we have different roles/powers (e.g. misinformation)
Current Mitigations	• We communicate a consistent message to all parties at all times • Demonstrate fairness in all activities with parties/candidates ("play a straight bat") • Our staff understand what being neutral means and follow professional practices in dealings with parties • Developing our submissions to the Independent Review Panel	• Code of conduct sets out neutrality requirements • Co-lateral (e.g. guidelines) for candidates • Decisions that may contain risk are escalated • Media engagement protocols/process (incl social media) • 'Election Protocols for engagement between MOJ, EC and Ministers developed, led by MoJ (moved from future mitigations)
Further Mitigations	• Escalate	• Protocols for engaging with parties/politicians/candidates • Promoting the right stories about what the Commission does – in progress
Responsible Manager	• Kristina	
Contingency		

Previous state	Current state
As we move into pre election period, scrutiny and rhetoric will increase that could impact this area. Mitigations have continued to develop included an emphasis on political neutrality for our own staff, the beginning of communications that outline the different aspects of the election and protocols in place with MoJ	IRP delivered interim report in June 2023. There has also, in line with expectations, been increased activity in this space in the news as GE draws closer. Consistent messaging and communications embedded in enquiries and voting place training for the GE period.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

6. Critical supplier leaves the market or is operationally compromised

Risk matrix: LIKELIHOOD (Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely) vs IMPACT (Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme). C plotted at Likely/Significant, G plotted at Feasible/Major, T plotted at Slight/Significant.

Consequences	Unable to receive critical goods or services from provider(s) at key times impacts provision or quality of Commission's services (e.g. logistics and delivery, materials during a by-election, system failure) Responding to this adds to our cost pressures

| Drivers/Threats | • Limited options in the domestic market, particularly in 'sunset' industries (e.g. printing, post)
• Supply chain issues, in particular as a result of COVID-19 with an overseas dependency – availability and timeframes
• Ongoing business viability of suppliers
• Ability for our existing suppliers to survive and for us to adapt to a different supplier market
• Insufficient investment in our procurement capability | • Ongoing market conditions caused by COVID-19 and unknown impact on providers
• Lack of understanding of risks at critical times and/or lack of response/mitigation
• Competition from suppliers from other agencies e.g. Census or Local Authorities
• Specific issues in global supply chains relating to EC business in particular (but not limited to) IT products and paper.
• Impact of Ukraine war on supply chains |

| Current Mitigations | • Mapping out critical requirements and dependencies for the GE
• Where critical risks exist in relation to specific suppliers, identify what plans and mitigations these suppliers have in place. Managing risk through good quality procurement processes and ongoing contract management and relationships with providers
• Early engagement with providers to exercise contract right of renewal including a review of suppliers ongoing capability
• Leveraging other govt support (e.g. IRD for Catalyst contract) | • Early issue of RFP if no contract right of renewal where contracts are due to expire during current cycle
• Robust planning of logistics and supplies requirements
• Early procurement and delivery schedules
• Consider back up options or plans (alternative supply chains) where there is limited local capability – contingency planning
• Improve contract and supplier meetings and feed risks back for updating |

| Further Mitigations | | |

| Responsible Manager | • Lucy Hickman | |

| Contingency | • Develop alternative strategies for obtaining goods and services where required | |

Status Tracking

First identified
14 Jun 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Previous state	Current state
• No one has left the market, however Cyclone Gabriel highlighted the fragility of the postal system. We have formed a permanent procurement team we are recruiting into. Still need to look at the supply chain to see if they are operationally compromised. We have stated our contract management plans	• Steps increasing procurement capability has been progressing. This includes supplier management plans for critical suppliers being developed or under development. This risk is stable on prior period, but still significant as due to the tumultuous economic climate, labour market pressures and ongoing supply chain issues.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

11

7. Failing to deliver on strategic objectives

LIKELIHOOD / **IMPACT** risk matrix showing markers: C (Likely / Significant), G (Likely / Extreme), T (Very unlikely / Minor)

Status Tracking
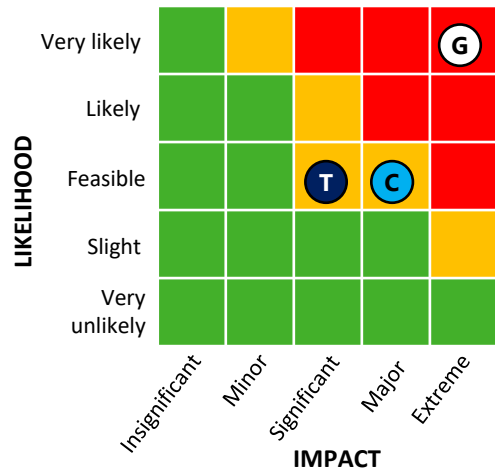
First identified
14 Jun 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Consequences	Fail to deliver the election. Fail to deliver to a standard that meets expectations. Staff morale reduces/potential burnout. Loss of good will. Lost productivity. Uncertainty around accountabilities and role. Could lose staff. Not breaking out of 3-year cycle focus.	
Drivers/Threats	• GE 23 takes focus from any strategic activity • Poorly executed organisational change • Work programme unrealistic or unachievable • Strategic direction not well understood or scoped • Other priorities take over that are unplanned (e.g. by-elections, new legislation) • Funding/resourcing limitations • Increased expectations that we will absorb costs in baseline	• Scope creep • Staff get derailed on lower priorities/pet issues • Lack of cohesion across the organisation and focus on priorities • Can't attract calibre of staff we need • Over-reliance on a small group of SMEs • Staff turnover • Lack of capacity and funding to think and plan for the longer-term (i.e. not being fully funded for this work)
Current Mitigations	• Strategic plan agreed, including the strategic priorities • Ensuring the business plan, work programmes and other strategies (eg ISSP) are aligned with the strategic priorities • Reprioritisation and re-planning work • Additional staff identified to help with the mahi	• Planning for 10 year strategy development – cross Commission approach • Monitoring implementation of the strategic plan through work programmes • Seeking stronger programme management disciplines from earlier • Planning for earlier election readiness and minimisation of late changes
Further Mitigations	• Communication of strategic plan/priorities to staff – 'keep the strategy in front of people'	Apply consolidation strategy/priorities when making decisions (eg trade-offs)
Responsible Manager	• Karl Le Quesne	
Contingency		

Previous state	Current state
• Several positions in market to support this area. Early plannning work under way	The last quarter saw the recruitment of key roles which will help the Commission to keep an eye on longer term objectives whilst under delivery pressure. Approval for the plan for developing the 10 year strategy roadmap was received and work is slowly starting with environmental scanning pieces. Recruitment for a principal advisor strategy underway.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

12

8. Failing to prevent or respond adequately to a cyber security incident

LIKELIHOOD (Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely) vs **IMPACT** (Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme)

Status Tracking

First identified
14 Jun 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Consequences	Inability to deliver election events, disruption to operations, disruption to corporate services, direct harm to NZ voters (e.g., data breach), reputational damage and/or financial damage.	
Drivers/Threats	• Motives include nation stage agenda, financial gain, notoriety, revenge, ideology, curiosity or causing collateral damage when the target is another organisation. • Attacks can be targeted to specific organisations or more generally across millions of targets. • Recent well-publicised successful attacks have resulted in payouts to attackers (e.g. Colonial Pipeline Texas netted $11m USD) which may increase motivation and number of attacks.	• Threat actors range in sophistication some examples are: nation stage actors, cyber-criminals, malicious insiders, cyber terrorists, hacktivists, inadvertent insiders and attention seekers. • The barriers to becoming a successful threat actor are lowering with Ransomware software being freely available. • Lack of assistance in legislation to support a response
Current Mitigations	• Structured improvement of controls (technology, human, supply chain management) to enable us to continually improve our ability to identify, prevent and respond to cyber security incidents. • Resourcing focused on cyber security issues. • Draft enterprise-wide information systems strategic plan (ISSP) Phishing, training, SMT focus and leadership to inform staff. • Cloudflare DDoS protection. • Developing playbooks for incident types	• ~~Funding in FY21/22 budget for control improvements including resources, software and process improvements.~~ • Certifying and accrediting GE critical systems. • Links to NCSC and acting upon security bulletins. • Patching applications, infrastructure regularly and quickly. • Pentesting applications and infrastructure annually. • Third party supply chain audits.
Further Mitigations	• In the process of improving authentication/authorisation at the Commission to reduce ability for attackers to harvest credentials. • Implementing extra monitoring software to improve our ability to detect and prevent incidents • Larger Cyber Security awareness campaigns	• Improving our ability to respond to cyber security incidents by investigating the use of 3rd parties for large-scale incidents • Improving C&A process efficiency so more apps can be included. • Leveraging deeper NCSC capability / solutions. • Enhanced pre-prepared comms • Develop a dashboard and improve how we report against it to determine mitigations and current state • DR for manual failover during critical result entry
Responsible Manager	• James (Chief Information Security Officer)	
Contingency	• Restoring systems and data from backups. • Manual workarounds at GE time (e.g. if DDoS protections fail). • Notify relevant Government bodies	• NCSC forensic expertise and assistance. • Preparing to work with business on BAU contingency plans – no system availability scenario.

Previous state	Current state
We have just recruited a cyber security specialist and in tandem are exploring relationships with a third- party cyber security support. Have started conversations with NCSC around support and approach to GE 2023.	We are working closely with NCSC in the run up to the election. Developing a cyber security dashboard and finalising cyber security team Deep dive on risk planned

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9. Critical system failure at a critical time

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely

IMPACT (horizontal axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme

Risk positions on matrix: G (Likely / Major), C (Feasible / Major), T (Slight / Significant)

Status Tracking

First identified
14 Jun 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Consequences	Lose currency of critical systems leading to operational issues or failures. Systems run out of support. Inefficiencies, manual work-arounds. Loss of staff due to frustration with aged or inadequate tools. Slow delivery and lack of collaboration through technology.	
Drivers/Threats	• Insufficient funding • Lack of adequate resources • Lack of strategy/innovation • Reliance on end of life technology • Failure of legacy systems • (Lack of) readiness of our GE2023 BCP and resourcing to support it	• Commission has competing priorities with a finite pool of resource to deliver • Vendor performance does not meet expectations • Reliance on a single small local vendor for key systems • Impact of a tight labour market on ability of vendors to support the Commission in a timely way
Current Mitigations	• Enterprise-wide Information Systems Strategic Plan includes feedback and input from business units across the Commission • Future services strategy work planned this year should help flesh out future requirements and risks in technology space • Continued investment in staff and training • Continued process improvement e.g. DGG, Security, Programme Management etc • MSA agreement with Catalyst has now been agreed and part of the agreement requires regular disaster procedures and regular testing	• Working towards the concept of co-design between IT and the business units • Election Ready Technology initiatives being actively worked on • Roadmap of future requirements of critical systems • Good forward planning with vendors to mitigate the risk that services are delayed • C&A on key systems • testing currently on track for election readiness systems
Further Mitigations	• Go to market when appropriate for alternative vendors – less reliance on one vendor • System lifecycle plan for all major EC technology requirements	• Funding to match ISSP aspirations • Reprioritise to find additional resourcing for GE2023 BCP work
Responsible Manager	• Lucy Hickman	
Contingency	• Fall back to full or partial manual processes • Purchase point solutions	• Hire in additional expert consultants and technical specialists

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Previous state

We are mitigating this through comprehensive Certification and accreditation checks on our key systems. Catalyst MSA in place. *Key contract in place.*

Current state

Election readiness testing across critical systems has progressed in line with programme planning.

10. Failing to successfully implement critical legislative and/or regulatory change

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely

IMPACT (horizontal axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme
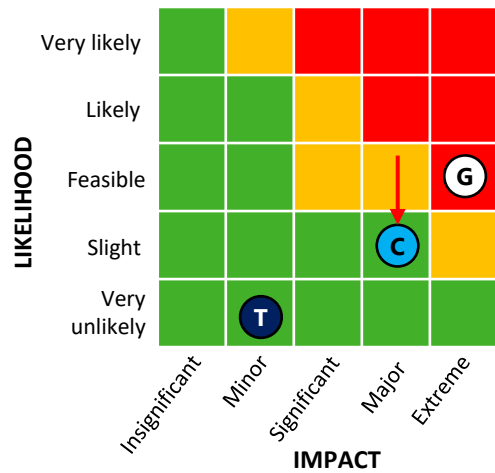
Status Tracking

First identified
14 Jun 2021

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend decreasing

Consequences	What we implement fails to deliver on requirements. Reputation. Stakeholder dissatisfaction/perceptions. Compliance issues. Lower confidence in results. Failures within the system itself. Loss of political trust. Intent wouldn't be delivered upon. Enquiry.	
Drivers/Threats	• Limited notice of pending changes from MoJ • Late confirmation of legislation • Particularly challenging if it relies on changes to electronic systems	• Lack of funding • Short implementation timeframes • Insufficient detailed analysis of operational implications during planning • (Sometimes rapidly) changing nature of the proposed amendments • Use of existing resources means it's hard to focus on this as a priority
Current Mitigations	• Work closely with MoJ to get early notice of possible changes to enable appropriate response and advice of implications	
Further Mitigations	• Start detailed analysis when advice of possible change is known including detailed design work (if possible) • Be prepared to de-scope or halt other work • Re-prioritise so that additional resource can be provided for this work	• Work with suppliers to provide early indications of possible changes and requirement • Undertake a risk assessment and advise Minister of these, if possible, including scope/costs and timeframes where applicable
Responsible Manager	• Anusha Guler	
Contingency		

Previous state	Current state
MEO launch successful. While some future changes are signalled, there is no immediate risk. Note: this can change quickly in our environment and risk rating will shift in response	Watching brief: alert for regulatory changes which may impact our ability to deliver. Have been providing support to IRP.

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11. Failing to meet obligations to implement robust health, safety and wellbeing practices

LIKELIHOOD / IMPACT risk matrix with markers G (Likely / Significant), C (Feasible / Significant), T (Slight / Insignificant)
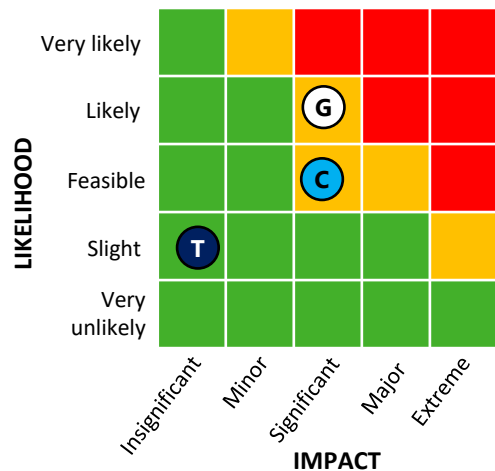
Status Tracking

First identified
13 July 21

Last updated
27/03/23

Trend stable

Consequences	Significant negative impact on one or more staff, visitor and/or member of the public, compliance and litigation, adverse media coverage	
Drivers/Threats	• Poor understanding of health and safety obligations and failure to implement fit for purpose policies, tools and standards • Systems and processes are in place but are disparate and not completely fit for purpose • Poor culture around safety • Failure to respond to identified issues and threats	• Low levels of funding available to support this work • Tight labour market impacts our ability to assist our staff • Enquiries response staff may be impacted by more difficult complainants (including any public-facing staff) • Obligations under H&S legislation
Current Mitigations	• Awareness of H and S obligations and implementation of actions to respond to these obligations during COVID, e.g. mental health and well being • Training for senior managers to help them understand obligationsFocus on messages that resonate with staff and reflect the environment they're working in (incl mental wellbeing) • Work around unpublished roll and employees of the Commission • Updated and implemented a broader flexible working policy • Using the IRT on an ongoing basis • Refocus on values as a refreshed wellbeing approach	• Health and Safety is an element of our values (under Manaakitanga) and is recognised as an important part of the 'building our capability' strategic priority • Made H&S a standing item in the ELT agenda • Threat Assessment work prior to electoral eventsRegular staff Engagement survey
Further Mitigations	• Lead and lag indicators established and managers held more accountable for results • Board opportunities to see real-life health and safety risks on the ground • Dedicated Health and Safety budget	• Better reporting • Additional focus on health, safety and wellbeing in induction processes and in training • Better risk identification and well-managed mitigations • Deepening our staff engagement efforts through comms, culture, information • Ensuring work is organised in a way that controls risk
Responsible Manager	• Lucy Hickman	
Contingency		

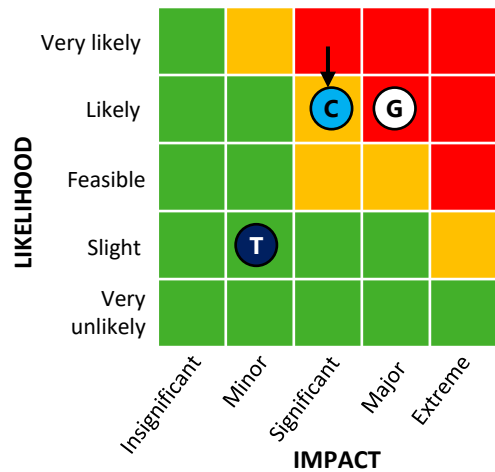| Previous state	Current state
• Policy approved. Further work will occur during election prep	• New HSW lead now in place. Presently operationally focused on supporting GE HSW processes.

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12. Over-reliance on core staff results in critical points of failure

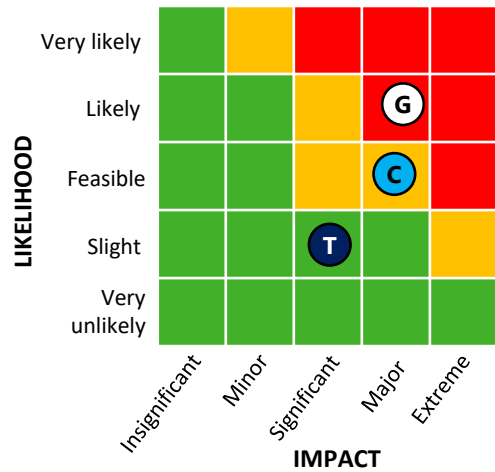**LIKELIHOOD** / **IMPACT** risk matrix (axis labels: Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely / Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme)

Consequences	The organization fails to deliver critical activities or delivers them poorly. Public and/or political criticism as a result of reputational damage. A substantive issue about the integrity of the election (or other, e.g. enrolment) process.	
Drivers/Threats	• Working in silos both within and across teams • Failing to document critical processes • Failing to build knowledge and expertise of staff • Failing to plan for person failure as part of business planning and interventions	• Turnover and the pay restraints
Current Mitigations	• The BCP work has required that back-up plans are identified and documented including cover for critical tasks. • The Operating Model Refresh work has identified critical staff risk and has incorporated this into the organisational changes being implemented • Strategic objective to document all critical GE delivery processes • Identifying back-ups for all key staff during the GE • Remuneration and performance approach for 2021/22 has been implemented	• Building a financial business case and new operational model which explicitly helps to support resilience • Implementing a separate programme management framework for the GE which makes processes and requirements more transparent and requires greater capture of information that can be shared • Recruitment, H&S, BCP, reprioritisation. • Review of GE 2023 critical path to identify critical points of failure and where we may need to have more documentation around process.
Further Mitigations	• Need to identify substitutes • Substitutes are well informed to be able to step in • Capture knowledge to make it readily accessible for others • ELT workshop held to identify key issues. A plan will be developed in the new year including; identifying and documenting key people, processes and roles	• Ways to support critical staff when a crisis arises that they need to deal with • succession planning-including understanding and planning for career pathways • Clear prioritisation and agility around resource use • Investigate targeted retention and reward options • Building more resilience in key functions; work planning, back-ups, on call rosters, supporting staff to manage wellbeing.
Responsible Manager	• All ELT managers	
Contingency		

Status Tracking

First identified
21 Sept 21

Last updated
27/3/23

Trend decreasing

Previous state	Current state
• Key management roles are in place and teams are organising themselves to deliver. Some hard to recruit roles have been filled. Election planning well advanced	• Heavy recruitment during this period, both against our TOM and to fill GE roles.

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13. Failing to understand and/or connect with the wider environment results in unforeseen consequences and/or limits our resilience

LIKELIHOOD (y-axis): Very likely, Likely, Feasible, Slight, Very unlikely
IMPACT (x-axis): Insignificant, Minor, Significant, Major, Extreme

Markers: G (Likely / Major), C (Feasible / Major), T (Slight / Significant)

Status Tracking

First identified
21 Sept 21

Last updated
27/07/23

Trend stable

Consequences	Legislative change has unintended consequences on us and/or catches us unprepared to respond. We are unable to access support of wider sector when a major issue arises. There is an opportunity cost in failing to transition to digital. We are unable to deliver critical services effectively because we haven't kept pace with environmental change. Current specific issues rapidly become problematic (e.g. NZ Post, Local Body Elections, demand for online voting).

Drivers/Threats	• Failing to understand the changing environment and the implications of this on what we do • Legislative change (our own legislation or other legislation which has a flow-on effect) impacts on us and we were not consulted on impacts and/or listened to	• Lack of policy and planning capacity • Lack of understanding of our enquiries/OIAs and what people are saying about the Commission (and any issues)
Current Mitigations	• External work on risk and security for GE2023 • Working closely with MoJ, MoH, DPMC and others during the COVID response • The need to build resilience as an organisation is a key plank of the Commission strategy and is reflected as a main driver in the Capacity Review and Operating Model Refresh • Environmental scanning work • Increasing capability with new SGD group • Comms media monitoring • Stakeholder engagement plan	• Building and fostering external relationships to help the Commission understand its risks and be in a position to respond to these as and when required. • Working with Stats NZ to mitigate risk that there are critical requirements of common print supplier by both agencies (that cannot be met) in 2023. • CEO engagement with external stakeholders • Centralising enquiries for GE2023 and rolling up info within Zendesk to provide a better picture of the environment
Further Mitigations	• Seek to build 'our constituency' further and deeper • Developing a 'resilience framework'	• Recruitment of a role focused on stakeholder management to ensure we are attending to relationships and co-ordinated
Responsible Manager	• Mark Lawson	
Contingency		

Previous state	Current state
Strengthening relationships at a National level with key external agencies e.g. Iwi Chairs network. Greater intelligence from the ground is flowing through. The nature of public debate has become more pejorative and intense which runs the risk of cutting across our work with Māori. Keeping a watching brief on broader environment with our partners	Extensive operational relationships in run up to GE supporting our delivery and system connections.

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VERSION CONTROL

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Date modified	By whom	Reason	Comment
14 June 21	Mark Lawson	Initial draft created – capturing risks identified to date at SMT risk workshop	
13 July 21	Mark Lawson	Adapted following SMT risk workshop 2 – some changes to the naming of risks. Focus of the workshop was on analysing gross and target risks.	One risk removed from workshop 1: *"Staff response to organisational change"* and consolidated into another risk as a driver of "Capacity to deliver on strategic objectives". New risk (11) added *"Failing to meet obligations to prevent or respond to a major health and safety incident"*
20 July 21	Mark Lawson	Adapted following SMT risk workshop 3. Focus of the workshop was on current risk.	Risk owners agreed. Agreed to circulate to SMT to complete current status and finalise draft risk profile.
23 July 21	SMT	Update of current status and content for individual risk treatment plans	
13 Sept 21	SMT	Update of actions taken to help mitigate individual risks (captured in the treatment plans)	
21 Sept 21	Board	Risk workshop undertaken by the Board results in the addition of further risks to the register and some further additions to existing risk treatment plans	Risks 12 *"Over-reliance on core staff results in critical points of failure"* and 13 *"Failing to understand and/or connect with the wider environment results in unforeseen consequences and/or limits our resilience"* added
29 Sept 21	SMT	Circulated to SMT for input and any changes following Board meeting on 21 Sept	Minor changes made
17 Nov 21	SMT	SMT risk review	
01 Feb 22	SMT	SMT risk review	Updates to status. Additional risk added (*"14. Lack of planning and preparedness for key structural changes within the organisation"*). Risk 11 (Health and Safety) redefined to better reflect current situation.

VERSION CONTROL

Date modified	By whom	Reason	Comment
21 Mar 22	SMT	SMT risk review	Three risks were modified to better reflect the current environment and issues (Risks 1 *"Loss of trust in the electoral system"*, 9 *"Critical system failure at a critical time"*, and 14 *"Insufficient planning and preparedness results in poorly embedded organisational change"* A minor technical change was made the Operational Framework, changing the title of orange risk ratings from "High" to "Medium" to further encourage early reporting of those risks.
03 May 22	SMT	SMT risk review	*Risk 4 "Insufficient funding and/or lack of certainty about funding"* was modified to reflect the fact that there will be funding certainty through the budget by mid May
15 Jun 22	SMT	SMT risk review	*Risk 14 "Insufficient planning results in poorly embedded organisational change"* was modified to reflect the fact that the Commission has now moved from planning into implementation of changes which are now being embedded.
3 Aug 2022	SMT	SMT risk review	Regular evaluation of risk profile and consideration of SMT's recent environmental scan work on the profile as a whole. A number of risk ratings (4) were changed as a result of this review.
07 Sep 22	EMT/SLG	Regular risk review	Risk 11 was modified to include wellbeing – "Failing to meet obligations to implement robust health, safety *and wellbeing* practices"
22 November	Leigh Deuchars	Updated overall risk and risk 17 for circulation	Proposed upward trend in 7,10, 12 and 14 due to current context. 14 changed to red
2 December	ELT	Regular review	Proposed upward trend in 7,10, 12 and 14 due to current context. 14 changed to red
2 December	ELT	Deep dive outcome	Changes to risk 12 to reflect ELT workshop
27 March	ELT	reviewRegular	Changes to risk 10- decreased trend due to implementation of MEO, risk 12- reduced., risk 14 reccommend closing (TBC at Board), note cyber security risk deep dive is needed
24 July	Kristin Leslie	Regular review – Q4 22-23	Minor changes across all risks to reflect quarter, particularly GE 2023 prep activities, risk 14 removed per May board decision.

Terms

- **Threat**
  An unwanted event or act. E.g. Major adverse natural event. These are what we need to **monitor.**

- **Vulnerability**
  The weaknesses in the organisation that might make the consequences more severe.

- **Consequence**
  The effect of a threat on the organisation. E.g. denial of access to voting places etc. These are what we need to understand and be able to **mitigate**.

- **Impact**
  The magnitude/severity of the consequence. E.g. Extreme

- **Likelihood**
  The probability of the threat occurring. E.g. Feasible

- **Risk**
  The uncertainty, created by a threat, for an organisation to be able achieve its objectives. Risk is a combination of impact and likelihood. This is what will help us **prioritise** which **threats** and **consequences** to focus our effort on.

- **Mitigation**
  What we are doing to reduce the likelihood. E.g. monitoring.

- **Contingency**
  What we are doing to reduce the impact. E.g. BCP.

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Definitions

LIKELIHOOD (vertical axis)

	Insignificant	Minor	Significant	Major	Extreme
Very Likely	L	M	C	C	C
Likely	L	L	M	C	C
Feasible	L	L	M	M	C
Slight	L	L	L	L	M
Very unlikely	L	L	L	L	L

CONSEQUENCE

Risk response criteria	
Rating	**Description**
Critical	Immediate: requires management oversight - escalation, improved actions, resources and strategies required to reduce, transfer or control the risk.
Medium	As soon as possible: requires management visibility - reporting via responsible governance channel, improved actions, resources and strategies required to reduce, transfer or control the risk.
Low	Maintain: current actions, resources and strategies to prevent escalation of risk. Can be managed through delegation or in a decentralised way with central oversight.

Risk likelihood criteria	
Descriptor	**Description**
Very likely	The event occurs frequently and will likely occur
Likely	The event has occurred before and will likely occur
Feasible	The event could occur at some time
Slight	The event rarely occurs but could
Very unlikely	The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances and hasn't before

G   Gross – unmitigated risk   C   Current – with current mitigations   T   Target – mitigated risk

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Definitions
consequence ratings

Risk consequences criteria

Factor	Insignificant	Minor	Significant	Major	Extreme
Financial	- Cost overrun <1%	- Cost overrun 1%-3% - Procurement issues	- Cost overrun of 3%-5% - Probity issues	- Cost overrun of 5%-10% - Fraud	- Cost overrun of >10% - Systemic control failure
Trust & Confidence	-Minor disagreements with/between key stakeholders	- Relationship issues between key stakeholders - Minor/ one-off reputational damage - Minor localised disengagement among voters	- Significant one off or ongoing relationship issues - Significant one off or ongoing reputational issues - Contained breach of personal information - Localised disengagement among voters	- Severe breakdown of key relationships - A one-off event or series of events resulting in loss of confidence from one or more key stakeholders and the public - Breach of personal information - Disengagement among voters	- Breakdown of key relationships impacting on the success of the Elections and sustained loss of public trust and confidence - Significant breach of personal information
Safety & security	-First aid treatment, injury or illness requiring treatment -Near miss incident	- Injury or illness impacting the business - Minor disruption to a limited number of locations	- Multiple injuries or widespread illness - Significant near miss - Large scale human disruption (protest)	- Attack from organised Group - Insider misuse of system/information - Public safety issues	- Death or permanent disability injury - Systemic safety and or security failure - Widespread and sustained disruption to an Election event -Loss of 'live' voting papers
Media/ social media	-Minor community issues -One-off negative localised media coverage	- Localised community concerns and disruption - One-off negative national media coverage	- Sustained negative media coverage - Significant localised community concerns	- Sustained adverse national media/ social media coverage - National concern	- Sustained adverse international media/ social media coverage - International concern
Business continuity	-Minor delays and impacts on localised operations -Recovery within 30 minutes during an event	- Delays and impacts on some aspects of national operations - Recovery within 60 minutes during an event - Some external disruption	- Delays and impacts on some aspects of events - Recovery within 6 hours during an event	- Significant external disruption - Recovery taking longer than 6 hours during an event	- Delays and impacts on an Election event as a whole - Recovery taking longer than 24 hours during an event - Significant external disruption
Critical infrastructure failure	-Minor, localised interruption	- Multiple localised interruptions	- Significant one-off event resulting in sustained interruption	- Significant national disruption to one or more aspects of operation	- Systematic failure - Widespread and sustained disruption
Capability	-Minor internal gaps in capability -Some tasks not completed on time or to expectation	- Minor gaps in capability impacting e.g. the public in one location	- Major capability gaps - Some tasks impacted	- Significant capability gaps - Inability to deliver some key tasks	- Significant capability gaps impacting on the delivery of an Election - Inability to deliver a significant number of key tasks
Technology	-Minor/ localized technology interruption	- Minor/ localised ongoing technology interruption - Minor/ weak attack	- Minor national technology interruption - Data security concern	- Major technology interruption impacting on event delivery - Sustained attack	- Significant technology interruption impacting on General Election delivery with long-term impact - Data loss
Political/ Legislative	-Isolated non-compliance with legislation/regulation/ contract	- Breach of contract - Political party scrutiny	- Multiple non-compliance incidents	- Significant breach of legislation/ regulations/ contract	- Litigation - Parliamentary scrutiny

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