

# 2024 STATE GENERAL ELECTION **SERVICE PLAN**



**Electoral Commission**  
QUEENSLAND

## Acknowledgment of Country

*The Electoral Commission of Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country and their connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.*

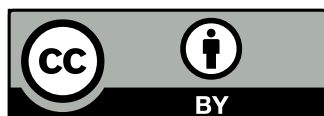
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# Contents

01	FOREWORD.....	1
02	THE ECQ'S ROLE.....	2
03	PRINCIPLES FOR ELECTION PLANNING AND DELIVERY .....	3
04	WHAT MAKES A GOOD ELECTION?.....	6
05	IMPROVEMENTS TO ELECTION PLANNING AND DELIVERY .....	7
06	ELECTION TIMETABLE.....	8
07	TRUSTED TO DELIVER QUEENSLAND ELECTIONS.....	10
08	INCREASE ELECTORAL AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION .....	16
09	ELECTION READINESS .....	20
10	PROMOTE AND ENFORCE COMPLIANCE .....	25

# 01

# FOREWORD

The 2024 State general election will be held on Saturday, 26 October 2024. The writ is due to be issued on Tuesday, 1 October 2024, in accordance with the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*.

The State general election is the second major electoral event conducted by the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) in 2024, following the local government elections held in March.

Elections are complex events with a justifiably high level of expectations from the community, candidates and parties, and commensurate attention from the media. As always, the ECQ will make every effort to meet these expectations.

This Service Plan outlines the services that the ECQ will provide for the election, and the wide range of supporting activities that are being undertaken to ensure the election is transparent, democratic, and meets the needs of all Queenslanders.

The ECQ has undertaken an operational review following the local government elections in March, and incorporated the lessons learned into project planning for the State general election.

Service delivery will be geared towards increased capacity for early and election day voting to ensure adequate resources are available and services can be adjusted to accommodate voter behaviour.

The ECQ has also further reflected on the elements that make a good election, and the needs of our various stakeholder groups, to inform several principles which underpin our approach to election planning and delivery.

We will continue to critically reflect and refine these principles into the future, and keep them at the centre of our approach to election planning and delivery.

**Pat Vidgen PSM FGIA**

Electoral Commissioner of Queensland

# 02

## THE ECQ'S ROLE

The ECQ is an independent statutory authority responsible for the impartial conduct of Queensland State, local government and industrial elections, as well as the support of periodic redistributions of electoral boundaries.

### **The ECQ's functions include:**

- the preparation, planning and delivery of State, local government and industrial elections in an accessible, fair and transparent manner
- promotion of public awareness of electoral matters by conducting education and information programs and in other ways
- the regulation of electoral funding and disclosure requirements and promotion of compliance activities, and
- maintaining equitable representation through the periodic review of State electoral boundaries by the Queensland Redistribution Commission.

The ECQ will deliver services for the 2024 State general election as prescribed by the *Electoral Act 1992*.

# 03

## PRINCIPLES FOR ELECTION PLANNING AND DELIVERY

The ECQ's [Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#) sets out the following four strategic objectives for the organisation:

01

Trusted to deliver Queensland elections



02

Increase electoral awareness and participation



03

Maintain election readiness



04

Promote and enforce compliance with electoral laws



In planning the 2024 State general election, the ECQ has applied the following principles, which are informed by the Strategic Plan:

### Design voting services that promote opportunities to participate

Voting services will be tailored to community needs, maximising opportunities for all Queenslanders to participate being the key consideration. A variety of voting channels, and convenient opening hours and locations will support voter choice. To the extent possible, polling places will be strategically located and accessible.

### Ensure the integrity of elections and public trust in the ECQ

The integrity of electoral processes will be safeguarded through measures including securing ballot papers during voting and counting, and ensuring scrutineers appointed by candidates are able to be present at all places they are entitled to be under the *Electoral Act*. Proactive communications will be delivered through a variety of channels to publish factual, accessible information about electoral processes to counter and raise awareness of potential misinformation and disinformation.

### Use data and analysis to inform planning and service delivery

Population data and statistics from previous elections will be used to support decision making on the location of polling places. Voting rates will be monitored against forecasts during the early voting period to enable dynamic adjustments to the elector service and resourcing model prior to election day if required.

### Protect and secure information systems and data

Critical election systems will be protected, and mitigations put in place to reduce the risk of interruption from a cyber security event. Information and data is classified and managed in accordance with the Queensland Government's *Information Security Classification Framework*, including sensitive information such as silent electors' details.

### Promote awareness and encourage participation

A proactive and comprehensive advertising and awareness-raising program will be delivered across multiple channels, promoting key information and election updates to support participation in the election. Direct communications will be delivered to electors through distribution of the Voter Information Card, emails and SMS alerts to support quick and efficient voting at polling places.

### Apply a voter compliance approach that promotes participation in future elections

Compliance communication strategies and enforcement programs will be informed by analysis of data and trends and targeted to increase elector participation, particularly in communities with previously low turnout rates.

**Build a skilled, diverse and flexible workforce**

A comprehensive recruitment exercise will be used to identify suitable Returning Officers and seek expressions of interest for temporary election staff roles. High quality training and support will be provided to Returning Officers and other election staff. The staffing model for the election will allow for the flexible allocation of staff to meet voter demand.

**Ensure the performance and stability of critical election systems**

System integrity testing, assurance and rehearsal activities will be undertaken prior to the election. Technology will be monitored and regularly upgraded through sustained ongoing management.

**Evaluate and report on election delivery to promote transparency and drive continuous improvement**

Outcomes from the election will be publicly reported through the conduct of a formal evaluation and release of a report following the conclusion of the event. Outcomes of the election will be measured, including identifying areas of success and improvement for future events.

**Build productive relationships with key partners and suppliers**

Key partners and suppliers for the State general election will be engaged to promote effective and efficient delivery of electoral services, such as through distribution of electoral materials by Australia Post and printing of ballot papers, postal votes and Voter Information Cards by print providers.

**Support candidates and political parties to understand and meet their compliance responsibilities**

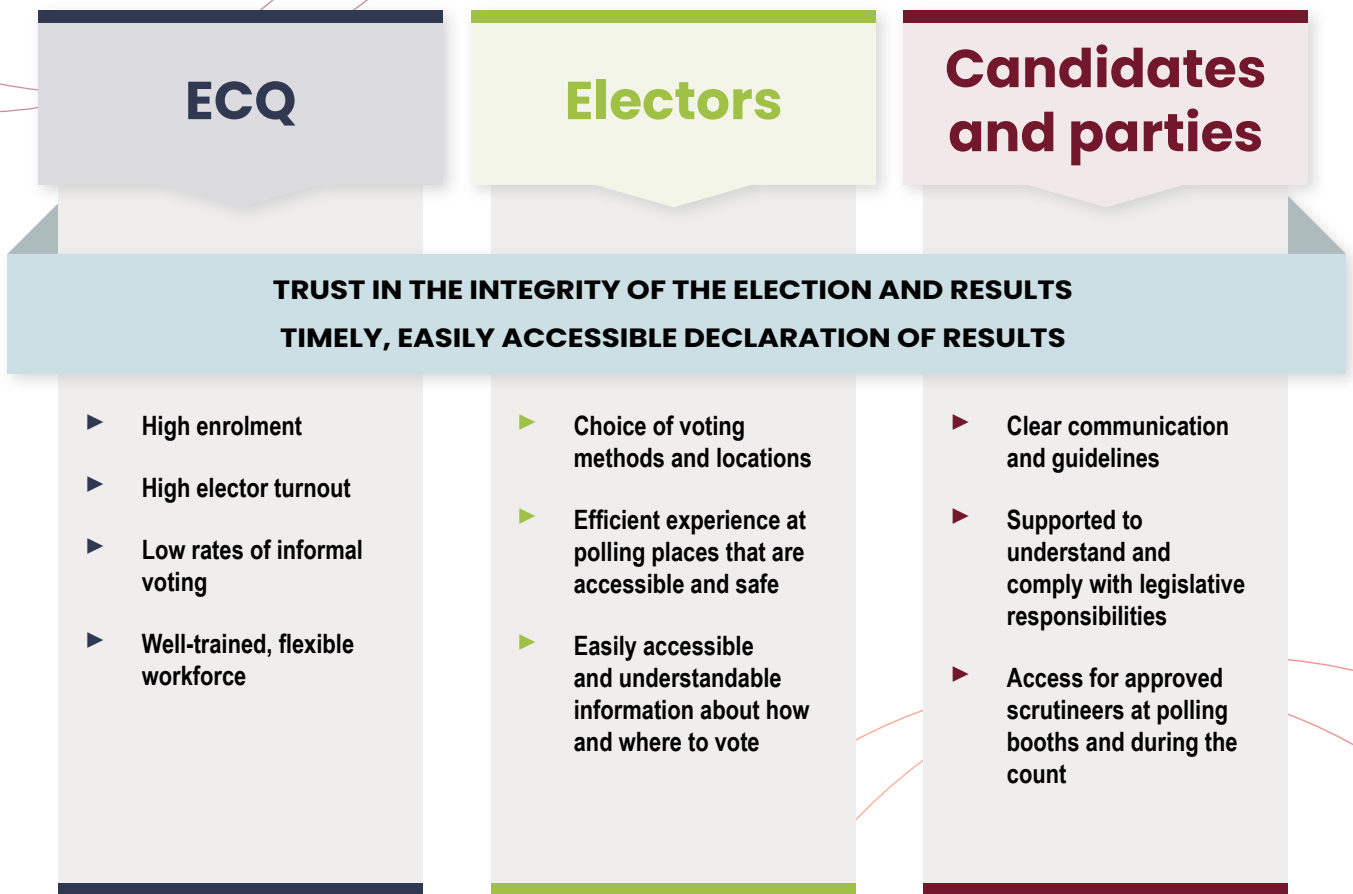
Up-to-date and accurate information and educational material including fact sheets, web content and webinars will be produced and distributed to candidates, registered political parties and other electoral participants. The regulatory framework will support and promote voluntary compliance, with action pursued as necessary in cases of non-compliance.



# 04

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD ELECTION?

Expectations and needs vary between different election stakeholders. A good election should aim to satisfy the needs of each group.



# 05

## IMPROVEMENTS TO ELECTION PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Planning for the October 2024 State general election has incorporated the experiences and findings from the review of the March 2024 local government elections.

The ECQ has implemented process and planning improvements aimed at enhancing the voter experience at the 2024 State general election. These improvements include:

- Revising expected voting forecasts across in-person voting channels and increasing planned capacity at early voting centres and election day polling booths to service a range of potential demand.
- Expanding early voting opening hours, with polling to be conducted from 8am to 6pm at all early voting centres operating during the two-week early voting period (excluding the weekend).
- Increasing the total election workforce, with an expansion of the total number of temporary election staff from approximately 8,000 positions at the local government elections to around 15,000 positions for the State general election.
- Raising the minimum staffing requirements for polling places, with additional issuing officers and queue controller duties to be carried out at early voting centres and election day polling booths that are expected to take more than 500 ballots.
- Expanding training provided to frontline election staff to enhance consistency of service provision at voting channels and locations across Queensland.
- Reviewing early voting centre and election day polling booth locations to address issues identified and feedback received on specific polling places used at the local government elections.
- Updating the resource allocation methodology, including revising formulas used to predict demand and workload for frontline officers working in polling places, and materials.
- Promoting the availability of early voting options and their expanded operating hours, including through advertising and direct elector communications, to better distribute electoral service demand across the voting period.
- Enhancing real-time data monitoring and associated resource allocation processes, to facilitate ongoing monitoring and review of voting trends against forecasts to inform any required changes to the service model during the early voting period.
- Purchasing over 4,000 additional laptops and associated equipment for the ePollbook functions to allow for additional staff to mark off electors more efficiently.

These measures align with the key principles for delivery of the election and objectives of the ECQ's Strategic Plan.

# 06

## ELECTION TIMETABLE

State general election dates are set in accordance with provisions of the *Constitution of Queensland*, the *Electoral Act* and the writ for the election. These dates will be finalised upon issuing of the writ for the election by the Governor of Queensland. At that time, a full election timetable will be published on the ECQ website.

Under section 84 of the *Electoral Act*, the writ will set out the dates for the:

- close of the electoral roll
- cut-off for candidates to nominate for election
- polling day, and
- day by which the ECQ must return the writ.

### Key milestones

#### Tuesday, 1 October 2024

#### Issue of the writ

Under section 19C of the *Constitution of Queensland*, the Governor must dissolve the Legislative Assembly and issue a writ for a general election 26 days before the normal polling day. For the 2024 State general election, the normal polling day is Saturday, 26 October 2024 and the normal dissolution day is Tuesday, 1 October 2024<sup>1</sup>.

#### Monday, 14 October 2024 (7pm)

#### Postal vote applications close

Under section 119 of the *Electoral Act*, postal vote applications must be received no later than 7pm on the day that is 12 days before election day, which will be Monday, 14 October 2024. For the 2024 State general election, postal vote applications can be submitted online through the ECQ website, by telephone or on the approved application form until the legislated deadline. Applications received after this date cannot be accepted.

#### Monday, 14 to Friday, 25 October 2024

#### Early voting

The early voting period will commence on Monday, 14 October 2024 and continue until 6pm Friday, 25 October 2024 (excluding the weekend) in accordance with sections 99A and 112 of the *Electoral Act*. Detailed information about operating hours and locations will be published on the ECQ website following the issue of the writ. Opening hours have been expanded from 8am to 6pm each weekday to increase convenience for electors.

<sup>1</sup> Under section 84(2) of the *Electoral Act*, the day of the issue of the writ and polling day are both included in the specified number of days.

**Saturday, 26 October 2024**

**Election day**

Under section 19B(1) of the *Constitution of Queensland*, election day will be on Saturday, 26 October 2024. All polling booths will be open from 8am to 6pm. Detailed information about polling booth locations will be published on the ECQ website following the issue of the writ.

**Tuesday, 5 November 2024 (6pm)**

**Deadline for return of postal votes**

The deadline for return of postal votes is set at the 10th day after election day under section 125(2)(d) of the *Electoral Act*. Postal votes must be received by the ECQ no later than 6pm on Tuesday, 5 November 2024 to be included in the count.

**Return of the writ**

The ECQ must declare all the results and return the writ to the Governor of Queensland with the names of the 93 successful candidates that will constitute the 58th Parliament of Queensland. The date for return of the writ will be specified in the writ and, under section 84(1)(e) of the *Electoral Act*, must not be more than 84 days after the issue of the writ, which will be Tuesday, 24 December 2024.

# 07

## TRUSTED TO DELIVER QUEENSLAND ELECTIONS

The ECQ delivers a range of services to ensure all eligible Queenslanders can enrol to vote, cast a formal ballot, and have confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

Findings on electoral service design resulting from evaluations of the 2020 State general election and the 2024 local government elections have guided planning for the delivery of the 2024 State general election.

The ECQ will remain responsive to emerging trends during the election period and will implement changes to the service delivery model and other election arrangements if required. Any such changes will be openly and transparently communicated through a variety of channels.

In line with the Strategic Plan, the ECQ has applied the following strategies in planning the 2024 State general election:

- Design electoral services to suit the needs of Queensland's diverse communities.
- Deliver elections that promote opportunities for electoral participation by all Queenslanders.
- Use data analysis and research to inform the planning and delivery of electoral services.
- Continue to implement and refine cyber security measures to ensure information technology systems and arrangements are responsive to the contemporary threat environment and protect capabilities of critical infrastructure.

### Key indicators of success

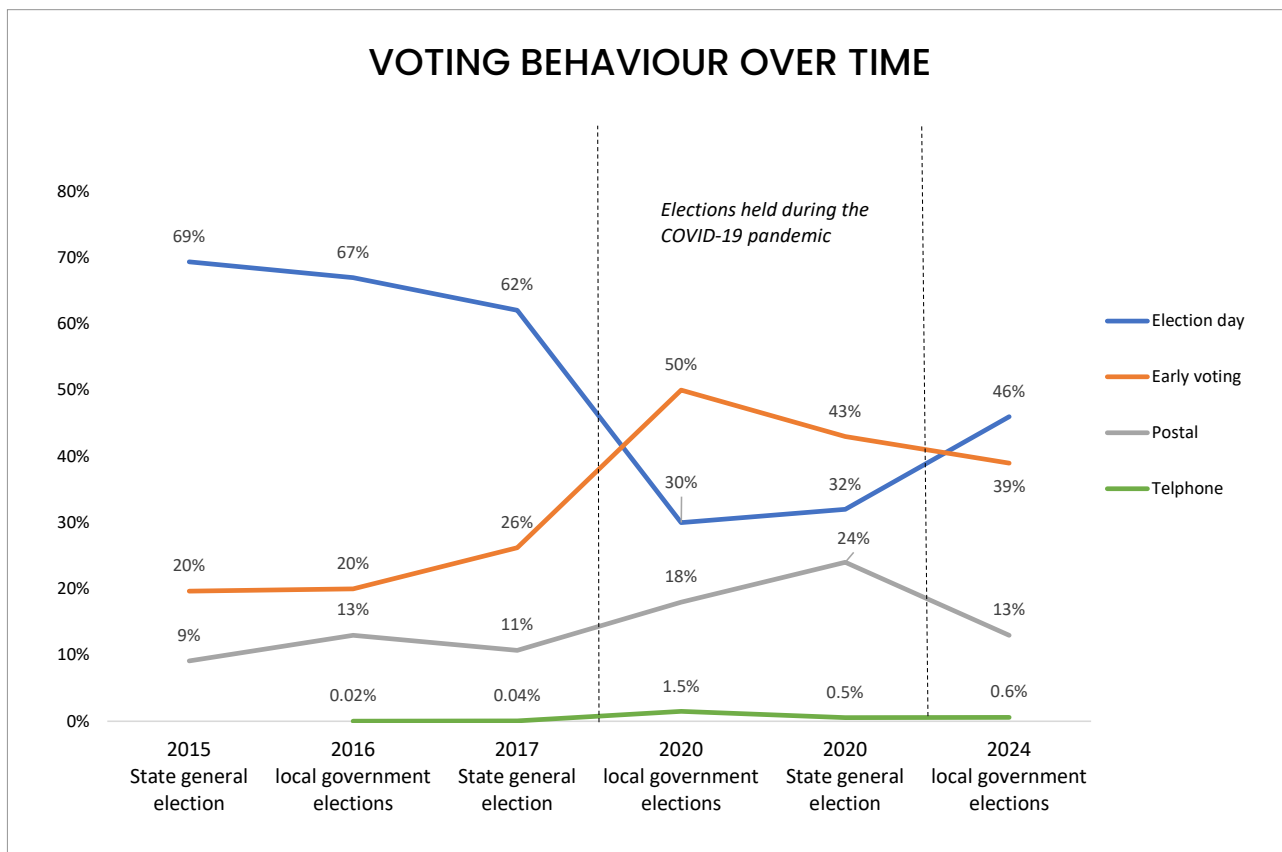
Continued high levels of confidence in the integrity of elections in Queensland.

Satisfaction of electors and stakeholders in the delivery of electoral services as measured by post-election surveys.

Successful implementation of targeted business improvements following 2024 local government elections including revised staffing model and increased staffing levels, implementation of queue controlling, and expansion of voting hours.

## DESIGN VOTING SERVICES THAT PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

There was a shift back toward election day voting at the March 2024 local government elections, with approximately 46 per cent of votes cast on election day, following a significant decline in election day voting during the COVID-19 pandemic. The below graph demonstrates the voting trends over the last six major elections in Queensland.



To ensure voters have the maximum opportunity to vote using their preferred method, service delivery will be planned to accommodate turnout percentages of 45 per cent election day voting, 45 per cent early voting, 15 per cent postal voting and 5 per cent via other channels.

This increased capacity will ensure there is additional scope to cater for changes in demand during early voting or on election day. The expanded forecast turnout percentages will also ensure the supply of ballot papers is increased at individual polling booths.

Additionally, the ECQ has reviewed early voting centre and election day polling booth locations to address issues identified and feedback received regarding specific polling places that were used for the local government elections. Where practicable, polling place locations have been assessed and changed to improve accessibility.

Electors can cast their vote at any polling place, including those situated outside the electorate where they are enrolled.

The ECQ's service centre will be in operation throughout the election period to provide advice and support to electors, and is the ECQ's preferred method of receiving and addressing citizen queries in a timely and consistent way. The service centre will be delivered in partnership with Smart Service Queensland allowing service capacity to be scaled up in periods of high demand.

Services provided through the service centre by telephone will include:

- responses to general enquiries and complaints
- enrolment information and advice
- postal voting and electoral visitor applications
- telephone voting registration, and
- information and advice about available voting services based on the individual's circumstances.

Enquiries can be directed to 1300 881 665 or by email to [ecq@ecq.qld.gov.au](mailto:ecq@ecq.qld.gov.au).

### Voting options

#### EARLY VOTING

Early voting will be offered during the two-week early voting period from Monday, 14 October to Friday, 25 October 2024. There will be around 200 early voting centres available statewide, and the location and operating hours of early voting centres will be published on the ECQ website following the issue of the writ.

Early voting hours will be expanded, opening from 8am to 6pm to offer electors a greater opportunity to participate before election day.

#### POSTAL VOTING

Any elector may apply for a postal vote and have their voting materials, including their ballot paper, a declaration envelope and reply-paid envelope, mailed to them. The postal vote must be completed before 6pm on election day and received by the ECQ no later than 10 days after election day.

The ECQ encourages electors to apply directly to the ECQ for a postal vote, either online via the [ECQ website](#), by applying over the phone, or by returning the application form to the ECQ. Those electors registered as special postal voters, including silent electors, will have their voting materials mailed out automatically.

#### TELEPHONE VOTING

Electronically assisted (telephone) voting is a service available to members of the community who have limited voting options available to them. This includes people who cannot vote without assistance due to an impairment, an insufficient level of literacy or who live over 20 kilometres from a polling booth.

Electors who are interstate or overseas at the time of the election are able to access telephone voting at this election, as well as having the option to apply for a postal vote. The telephone voting process is subject to a range of controls to preserve the integrity of the vote registration process and the secrecy of the ballot.

## ELECTION DAY VOTING

Voting on election day, Saturday, 26 October 2024, will be available between 8am and 6pm at polling booths across Queensland. There will be over 1,000 polling booths established for the elections, with locations published on the ECQ website and searchable using the 'Find my polling booth' functionality which assists electors to locate their nearest polling place.

## DECLARED INSTITUTION VOTING

The ECQ will deliver mobile polling to high-care residents of registered aged care facilities. This service allows residents at certain locations to cast a ballot when ordinarily they would have difficulties attending a polling place. It should be noted only residents are eligible to vote at these mobile polling places and voting will not be made available for staff or visitors.

## REMOTE EVENT MANAGEMENT

Mobile polling services will be delivered to residents in remote communities within the Cook electorate. Voting for electors residing on islands in the Torres Strait will consist of static early voting and election day booths on Thursday Island and an election day booth on Horn Island, while 15 outer islands will be visited by teams of election officials throughout the early voting period, enabling them to cast their vote in their local community. Mobile polling teams will also travel to other remote areas of the Cook electorate to provide in-community voting services.

## ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF ELECTIONS AND PUBLIC TRUST IN THE ECQ

### Misinformation and disinformation

As Queensland's trusted elections provider, the ECQ takes electoral integrity extremely seriously. To counter misinformation and disinformation, the ECQ has taken a proactive approach to ensuring factual information about electoral processes is accessible to Queenslanders via the ECQ website and the ECQ's social media channels.

The [Election Facts web page](#), created for the 2024 local government elections, will be expanded and improved for the State general election, offering a central point of truth on questions of electoral administration.

The ECQ's [Election Facts register](#) will be updated progressively during election delivery to mitigate any misinformation or disinformation that may be circulating in the community. A paid awareness campaign delivered through multiple channels including television, digital, social media, print and radio, will proactively support public awareness of instances of misinformation and disinformation, and encourage electors to confirm information they read and hear.

Additionally, advertisements will run on First Nations radio, radio stations broadcasting in six languages other than English and advertisements across Asian Community News Weekly channels (social media including WeChat and newspaper).

An animation is also under development, which will provide greater detail on how to identify misinformation and disinformation. This video will be hosted on the Election Facts web page and promoted via social media posts and community and stakeholder engagement kits.

The Australian Government's Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce will also support the ECQ in monitoring threats of potential interference at the State election, and the ECQ will liaise with the taskforce on a regular basis to understand and adapt to the current threat environment.



## Ballot paper security and counting

The ECQ maintains a chain of custody of all ballot paper movements across Queensland. This includes hand-to-hand delivery through our logistics partner and electoral officials from printing through to allocation, vote exchange and return to the ECQ. Ballot papers, including those in ballot boxes, are secured in lockable storage in Returning Officers' offices and early voting centres throughout the election period.

After the close of polls at 6pm on election day, Saturday, 26 October 2024, a preliminary count will be conducted in polling booths and Returning Officers' offices, and the results progressively published on the ECQ website. In accordance with the *Electoral Act*, these preliminary results are not official and the ECQ is unable to declare the election based on the outcome of these counts.

The official count will commence under the control of the Returning Officers from the Sunday after election day. The results website will be continually updated as counting progresses with the completion of official counts and addition of returned postal votes.

The ECQ has published a video titled [Counting the votes in Queensland elections](#) which explains the counting process.

Candidates may also select scrutineers to be present at polling booths and during the count. A scrutineer is appointed by the candidate giving notice to the Returning Officer using the [form](#) available from the ECQ website.

While all election day votes, early votes and scrutinised postal votes received up until election day will be counted on election night, a large proportion of postal votes will potentially impact the declaration of individual seats, as the Returning Officers may need to wait the legislated 10 days for the return of postal votes before finalising results. This is particularly relevant to any contest where a distribution of preferences is required to determine a result.

## Recounts and the Court of Disputed Returns

A recount is an official count of some or all votes in an election which is conducted in accordance with Queensland's electoral laws.

In accordance with section 130 of the *Electoral Act*, at any time before an election is officially declared, or a matter is referred to the Court of Disputed Returns, the ECQ may direct the Returning Officer or another member of its staff to conduct a recount of some or all ballot papers for the election.

A recount may be conducted based on a request from an external party or based on advice from ECQ staff. The ECQ will only consider a request for a recount that is received in writing, and that contains sufficient information for the Electoral Commissioner to determine whether a recount should be undertaken.

Where there are sufficient grounds to support the conclusion that a recount would increase confidence in the outcome of a vote count, a recount will be recommended to the Electoral Commissioner. Considerations can include factors such as extremely close margins between candidates or if a procedural issue is encountered during a vote count, which calls into question the integrity of that count.

The election of a candidate may be disputed by an application to the Court of Disputed Returns. An application must be filed with the Supreme Court registry within seven days after the return of the writ for the election.

## USE DATA AND ANALYSIS TO INFORM PLANNING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

In response to the review of the 2024 local government elections, the ECQ has increased resourcing of its internal data capability and will review, enhance and refine real-time reporting, monitoring and analysis of election data for the October 2024 State general election.

The ECQ will emphasise monitoring and analysis of voting rates against forecasts during the early voting period to allow any necessary changes to the elector service and resourcing model to be implemented prior to election day if required. Additional resources are in place to improve the timeliness and accuracy of the data used for these activities.

## PROTECT AND SECURE INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DATA

Monitoring of the election systems and their underlying technology platforms provides additional assurances and coverage for performance and security.

The ECQ is supported by the Queensland Government Cyber Security Unit, in particular its Security Operations Centre service, providing security monitoring of the ECQ's environment.

# 08

## INCREASE ELECTORAL AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

Public awareness of upcoming electoral events, including electors' rights and obligations to vote, is vital to ensure all voters are enfranchised and supported to participate in elections. The ECQ undertakes a range of communication, awareness and engagement activities aimed both toward target groups and the broader community.

The ECQ's Strategic Plan includes several strategies designed to improve the awareness of voters and support increased participation in elections:

- Design and deliver strategic communication campaigns informed by stakeholder collaboration, data and research insights and using a consumer-centred approach.
- Deliver communication and engagement activities that help electors, candidates and political parties understand their electoral rights and responsibilities.
- Administer a non-voter compliance program that promotes participation in future elections.

### Key indicators of success

Increased elector participation in elections, including in communities with previously low turnout rates.

Decrease in unintentional informal votes in elections, including in communities with previously high informality rates.

Improved effectiveness of the ECQ's strategic communication campaigns.

Successful implementation of targeted business improvements to encourage more voters toward using early voting.

## PROMOTE AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

### Strategic communications

#### ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

In the lead-up to and during the election, a statewide advertising campaign will be delivered using a mix of channels such as television, radio, digital, social media, out-of-home and print advertising. This campaign will be guided by an engagement strategy that targets a range of audience groups to ensure as many Queenslanders as possible are reached.

## 08 INCREASE ELECTORAL AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

The ECQ will also deliver a proactive media and social media program promoting key information and election updates to support Queenslanders' participation.

In accordance with the recommendations from the evaluation of the local government elections, the ECQ will promote the availability of early voting options and their expanded operating hours through advertising and direct elector communications. The goal of these communications is to more evenly distribute electoral service demand across the voting period.

### ELECTOR COMMUNICATIONS

The Voter Information Card is intended to help electors to vote quickly and efficiently. Election officials at the polling booth can scan the barcode on the front of the Voter Information Card to mark electors off the roll and issue them with their ballot paper. The Voter Information Card also provides key information such as the election date, details of the individual's electorate and links to polling place locations.

The ECQ will mail a Voter Information Card directly to the postal address of all eligible Queensland electors (excluding special postal voters) before the commencement of early voting.

The Voter Information Card mailout will be supplemented by the issue of an electronic version of the card to electors who have recorded an email address on the electoral roll, and an SMS alert to be sent at the start of early voting and on election day to electors who have recorded their mobile number on the electoral roll. Providing digital alternatives to the hard copy Voter Information Card helps ensure the ECQ's awareness program is continuing to evolve with public expectations.

### ONLINE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The ECQ website is a user-centred and accessible platform that provides information about the electoral system and voting in Queensland. The ECQ's voter survey following the 2024 local government elections found satisfaction with the ECQ website had increased since 2020, with 73 per cent of respondents advising they were satisfied. The most common reason for electors to access the website was to find the location of polling places.

The ECQ website will provide a range of information for Queensland electors and election participants about the conduct of the elections, including key dates, available voting options and election services, online candidate nominations, a polling place search service and online postal vote application functionality. Following the close of polling, the election results website will display real-time election results.

## Engagement activities

### ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY

Many Queenslanders face barriers in accessibility when voting. In addition to telephone voting, the ECQ offers a range of services to ensure all Queensland voters have equitable opportunities to have their say at elections and participate in public life as enshrined by the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

Disability access is a key consideration in the selection of polling places and their locations. Accessibility information will be available on the ECQ website following the publication of details of polling place locations.

Other accessibility services offered by the ECQ include:

- Translation and interpreter services are available for people with English as a second language.

## 08 INCREASE ELECTORAL AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

- Voters can request a person join them should they need help with casting their ballot. This person can act as an interpreter, read and explain the ballot paper instructions, complete the ballot paper according to the voter's instructions and place the ballot paper in the ballot box.
- Voters can request assistance to vote from their car if the polling place is not accessible to them by calling the polling place staff (contact information will be printed on a sign at each location).
- Voters with high care needs living in aged care facilities may be able to vote at the institution where they live or at their bedside.

The *Multilingual Guide to Voting* provides voting information in 25 languages other than English and is available at all polling places and from the ECQ website. For the State general election, informational posters will be produced and displayed in all polling places providing a QR code to link directly to the guide during the voting process.

In addition, an *Easy Read Guide to Voting* will be produced to assist in explaining the voting process, ways to vote (including eligibility criteria), and services available to voters requiring assistance.

### CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT

The ECQ works closely with candidates and political parties to facilitate the nomination process and support compliance with legislative obligations. The ECQ produces a range of resources, including handbooks, fact sheets and guides to explain the endorsement, nomination and disclosure requirements, which are available on the ECQ website.

The ECQ has published a series of webinars and presentations available on YouTube providing an overview of each stage of the election process such as nominations, the different voting options available, funding and disclosure requirements, as well as the requirements for campaign volunteers and scrutineers.

### FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The ECQ is focused on delivering culturally inclusive elections that encourage electoral participation. The ECQ developed a [First Nations Engagement Strategy](#) to guide enhanced engagement with First Nations communities, improvements to the delivery of culturally appropriate electoral services and increased cultural awareness for ECQ staff.

The ECQ's First Nations Engagement Officer will assist with the remote event management service delivery model and support the ECQ to respond to the needs of First Nations Queenslanders leading up to, and during, the 2024 State general election.

## APPLY A VOTER COMPLIANCE APPROACH THAT PROMOTES PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE ELECTIONS

In Queensland it is compulsory to vote at all State and local government elections and by-elections. Following the 2024 State general election, the ECQ will commence a non-voter program to contact enrolled electors who, according to election mark-off records, did not vote in the election.

If an enrolled elector fails to vote despite the options available, the ECQ is obliged to consider enforcement action. These electors will, in the first instance, be sent an apparent failure to vote notice. This notice provides the opportunity for the elector to either provide a valid excuse for not voting, advise that they did vote, or pay a half penalty unit. If the elector does not respond to the notice, a fine of a full penalty unit (currently valued at \$161.30 as of 1 July 2024) may be sent.

## 08 INCREASE ELECTORAL AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

Electors are encouraged to contact the ECQ for advice or information to help them navigate the process at any time. If the ECQ is unable to resolve the matter, including where contact cannot be made, the elector may be referred to the State Penalties Enforcement Registry.

By law, electors cannot vote more than once at Queensland electoral events. As part of its regulatory functions, the ECQ is obliged to enforce electoral law, including against electors who vote more than once at an election.

To meet its regulatory responsibilities and to maintain its reputation as a trusted electoral management body, it is in the public interest for the ECQ to decide on and commence any action related to an apparent multi-vote as soon as practicable after the electoral event.

At the conclusion of each electoral event, should the ECQ become aware of an elector potentially voting more than once, correspondence will be sent to the elector, offering their right of reply to the allegation.

The ECQ will assess if an elector who has been sent correspondence has provided sufficient evidence to the fact they have not voted more than once, or alternatively, that it was done unintentionally. The ECQ has discretion over what action may be taken and the result may include no direct action, a warning letter, or prosecution.

# ELECTION READINESS

For the October 2024 State general election, the ECQ will deliver a suite of voter services that are responsive to local community needs and that maximise opportunities for electoral participation by all Queenslanders.

The ECQ has undertaken an operational review of priority issues identified following the 2024 local government elections, and incorporated the lessons learned into project planning for the State general election.

The ECQ has applied the following strategies to ensure readiness to deliver the State general election:

- Build a skilled, diverse and flexible workforce with a commitment to continual improvement and innovation.
- Ensure critical election systems remain stable, secure and fit-for-purpose through scheduled programs of testing, assurance and performance monitoring.
- Undertake regular evaluations of election delivery to implement identified and approved improvements.
- Undertake ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and suppliers.

## Key indicators of success

Election rehearsals that demonstrate electoral processes and systems are operating effectively.

An engaged and capable workforce that reflects the diversity in Queensland and is able to deliver our services.

Current and appropriate critical election systems assurance framework in place as measured by rigorous system integrity testing.

Business improvements following the independent review of the 2024 local government elections including the polling place resourcing model.

## BUILD A SKILLED, DIVERSE AND FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE

### Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers

Returning Officers are employed to deliver the elections for each of the 93 state electorates. A comprehensive, statewide process was undertaken to recruit Returning Officers for both the 2024 local government and State general elections.

## 09 ELECTION READINESS

The 93 Returning Officers recruited to deliver the 2024 State general election are experienced, with the majority having worked to deliver the 2024 local government elections. All Returning Officers receive several days of face-to-face training, including online training, to enable them to deliver the election in their respective electorates.

The responsibilities of Returning Officers include:

- managing election venues for their electorate, including the Returning Officer's office, early voting centres and election day polling booths
- ensuring the conduct of the election complies with legislative requirements and the ECQ's policies and procedures
- overseeing and managing the conduct of voting across their electorate, including maintaining the security of ballot papers
- managing the counting of votes and declaration of results
- recruiting and managing temporary election staff and training relevant polling booth staff
- accepting candidate nominations and ensuring compliance with legislative requirements
- engaging with candidates and appointed scrutineers during the election period to keep them updated about election delivery, and
- distributing election materials to polling places and packing and returning election materials to the ECQ's warehouse.

A team of dedicated and experienced officers will provide real-time support and instruction to Returning Officers and other temporary election staff.

### **Temporary election staff**

Temporary election staff are vital to ensuring the smooth administration of election facilities and services, including the set-up and dismantling of booths, issuing of ballot papers, marking voters off the electoral roll and counting the millions of ballot papers to finalise the election. The ECQ rapidly increases its staffing base for elections to include thousands of temporary staff across Queensland.

Following the review of the 2024 local government elections, the ECQ will expand the total number of temporary election staff from approximately 8,000 positions to around 15,000 positions for the State general election, reducing queue times and ensuring all electors can cast their vote efficiently via their preferred voting channel.

To further assist with reducing wait times, additional polling place staff will be required to carry out queue controller duties, previously only undertaken at elections held during the COVID-19 pandemic for the purposes of monitoring social distancing requirements. For the 2024 State general election, this function will ensure electors are in the correct queue and support those who may need assistance such as older Queenslanders, people with disability, or those in advanced stages of pregnancy.

The ECQ has also reviewed the assumptions underpinning staffing requirements and increased the minimum number of staff for polling places. This means that additional issuing officers will be employed, and queue controlling will be implemented at both early voting centres and election day polling booths.

In response to the review of the local government elections, the ECQ is expanding training provided to frontline election staff, to enhance consistency of service provision at voting channels and locations across Queensland.



The ECQ commenced an expression of interest process for temporary election staff in July 2024, which will continue until the election is delivered. The ECQ will actively promote employment opportunities through several channels including targeted social media promotion and direct contact to previous election staff.

### **ECQ Head Office**

The ECQ's ongoing establishment consists of almost 100 staff located in the Brisbane CBD and the ECQ's warehouse facility. These staff plan, prepare and oversee the delivery of Queensland elections through a structured program of work involving the development and execution of over 40 individual project plans under the oversight of the ECQ's Election Delivery Board.

Following the review of the local government elections, the Election Delivery Board has been focused on threats, opportunities, and managing risks across all election delivery projects. Program administration teams across the ECQ provide regular risk reports to support discussion about risks that have been treated, those that are emerging, and those that have been realised.

Election projects and processes being managed from the ECQ's head office include:

- identifying and securing venues for early voting centres, election day polling booths and Returning Officers' offices
- recruiting and training Returning Officers and temporary election staff
- preparing and delivering information and educational resources to candidates, political parties and other electoral participants
- monitoring and enforcing compliance with funding and disclosure requirements
- developing and delivering advertising and awareness campaigns to increase elector awareness of misinformation and disinformation, election delivery and voting options
- processing candidate nominations
- acquiring, configuring, testing and deploying ICT equipment required to deliver the elections
- approving how-to-vote cards
- printing and distributing ballot papers and purchasing and distributing materials required for election delivery
- planning and delivering voter services including postal voting, telephone voting services, mobile polling and other voting services, and
- conducting post-election reviews and surveys to analyse and inform improvements to service delivery.

### **ENSURE THE PERFORMANCE AND STABILITY OF CRITICAL ELECTION SYSTEMS**

The ECQ's Election Management System is the primary system used to support the administrative processes necessary for election delivery. It provides the ECQ functionality to manage:

- polling booths and early voting centres
- temporary election staff recruitment
- candidate nominations
- electoral roll information, including elector look-up and mark-off
- ballot paper controls

## 09 ELECTION READINESS

- telephone voting
- online voter services including postal vote applications, and
- results monitoring and declaration management.

Other critical election systems that support election delivery include the Electronic Disclosure System (used for disclosure of gifts, donations, loans and electoral expenditure), the election results website and a new 'Find my polling booth' public interface.

The review of the 2024 local government elections found the ECQ had focused on the stability of the Election Management System, and the system was election ready. However, the ECQ continues to undertake assurance activities to ensure the security, stability and readiness of its election systems prior to the 2024 State general election.

Activities undertaken include:

- business continuity planning workshops
- incident response readiness and tabletop scenarios
- system performance and load capacity testing
- website application penetration testing
- end-to-end system testing, and
- user verification of system alignment to business processes through detailed election rehearsals.

All ICT equipment needed to support election delivery is centrally purchased and deployed to Returning Officers to equip early voting centres and election day polling booths with the technology required to deliver election services. Returning Officers also have access to a dedicated ICT help desk service to support the deployment of these technologies.

The ECQ configures and distributes an 'Office in a Box' to all Returning Officers, including communications equipment, computers, ePollbooks, screens, barcode readers and printers. Approximately 9,000 laptops will also be configured for use in polling booths and early voting centres.

## EVALUATE AND REPORT ON ELECTION DELIVERY TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY AND DRIVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Post-election evaluation and reporting activities provide a range of metrics that help inform and improve future delivery of electoral services. The independent review of the 2024 local government elections, conducted by Nous Group, has been valuable for the ECQ to identify both positive outcomes from the elections, as well as areas for improvement at the State general election.

Following the 2024 State general election, the ECQ will complete several evaluation projects including a review of informal ballot papers, a voter satisfaction survey, and an independent review of the election. These activities will help the ECQ identify areas for improvement for future elections.

An overview of the delivery of the election, including relevant findings from the evaluation projects, will be outlined in a report to be published in the months following the election. This evaluation and reporting process forms part of the ECQ's commitment to transparency and supporting public understanding of the conduct of the elections.

## **BUILD PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY PARTNERS AND SUPPLIERS**

Successful election delivery relies on contracts and relationship management with suppliers, who become critical partners in event planning. Australia Post is a key partner and will deliver millions of Voter Information Cards and postal ballots to Queensland electors, and expeditiously return completed postal ballots to Returning Officers.

Other partners include major print houses to produce ballot papers and postal ballots in secure environments and within strict timeframes, transport providers contracted to ensure the on-time delivery of all election materials to every part of Queensland, and others who support the digital environment and provide the resources and materials required to deliver a statewide event to around 3.7 million Queenslanders.

To secure approximately 1,400 venues statewide, the ECQ is liaising with metro and regional commercial real estate agents, community groups, the Department of Education, councils, Brisbane City Hall management and other service providers. Tenancy of these venues varies from one day to 12 months and each relationship requires specific attention to ensure leases, hire agreements, utilities and cleaning are executed appropriately.

These partnerships are critical, and the ECQ enjoys positive contractual relationships with suppliers, working together to plan and execute the details of election delivery.

# 10

## PROMOTE AND ENFORCE COMPLIANCE

In August 2024, the ECQ published its compliance approach for the 2024 State general election including a statement of the ECQ's commitments and expectations on the ECQ website.

These documents provide electoral participants (particularly candidates) and other stakeholders with a clear understanding of the types of matters which the ECQ will be actively monitoring during the election, including compliance with political donation caps, signage regulations and proper authorisation of election material.

The ECQ has also finalised its proactive compliance plan for the State general election. Candidates and parties may be contacted by the ECQ to address discrepancies or other issues at any time in the years following an election event.

The ECQ's Strategic Plan outlines that the ECQ will:

- Provide information, education and support about funding and disclosure requirements to electoral participants to assist them to voluntarily comply with their obligations.
- Maintain a risk-based approach to compliance and the enforcement of electoral laws using data analysis capabilities.
- Undertake targeted compliance reviews and investigations to detect non-compliance with funding and disclosure requirements and respond accordingly.

### Key indicators of success

Increased proportion of returns, including election summary returns, submitted on a voluntary basis within required timeframes.

Increases in gift and expenditure disclosures (or amended disclosures) available to the public due to compliance activities.

Increased number of compliance reviews completed for major quadrennial elections compared to the previous quadrennial elections.

## SUPPORT CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTIES UNDERSTAND AND MEET THEIR COMPLIANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

### Electoral expenditure disclosure and donations

The ECQ is preparing to help election participants and political parties maximise their compliance with electoral laws during the upcoming State general election.

Candidates and parties are subject to a range of regulatory requirements set out in the *Electoral Act*, including:

- caps and disclosure requirements on electoral expenditure, political donations, and other gifts and loans
- a requirement for all candidates, registered political parties and registered third parties to operate a dedicated State campaign bank account, in which campaign expenditure must be transacted
- record keeping obligations, and
- the number and size of election signs that may be displayed, and the timing of their placement at early voting centres and election day polling booths.

The ECQ's approach to compliance is grounded in first ensuring all affected stakeholders are provided enough information to comply with the legislation. A series of fact sheets and handbooks are published on the ECQ website, and a selection of webinars, videos and presentations are available on the ECQ's YouTube channel.

### How-to-vote cards

Material that could represent a ballot paper, lists the names of candidates indicating an order of voting preference or otherwise directs or encourages the making of a preference vote is known as a 'how-to-vote card'. Any how-to-vote cards that are to be distributed on election day must be submitted to the ECQ for approval and must comply with sections 182 and 183 of the *Electoral Act*.

How-to-vote cards must be submitted for approval by the ECQ prior to 5pm on Friday, 18 October 2024. How-to-vote cards that are rejected may be resubmitted up to 5pm on Wednesday, 23 October 2024.

If, on election day, a member of the ECQ's staff reasonably suspects an unapproved how-to-vote card is being distributed, they may require the card to be produced for inspection, resulting in possible confiscation. Information on submitting compliant how-to-vote cards is available on the [ECQ website](#).



**Electoral Commission**  
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