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Comms and engagement

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Publishing guidelines


Publications

All publications should follow the [AEC visual identity](#) and [writing style](#) for consistent and effective communication. The AEC's visual identity is not designed to be rigid, but to present a consistent approach and style so AEC communication is recognisable and trusted. Style, messaging and tone are all vital for good communication.

Publications checklist

When developing a publication, consider the following:

- What is the purpose?
- Who is your target audience?
- Is it a printed or online product, or both?
- What are the [accessibility requirements](#)?
- Does it need an [authorisation statement](#)?
- Does it require an [ISBN or ISSN](#)?
- Does it need a [copyright statement](#)?
- Does it need to be tabled in Parliament?
- Do the photos have signed [consent/talent release forms](#)?

Your [state/territory internal communication network representative](#) or your [communication account manager](#)  can give you advice and support to ensure your communication is on message and adheres to the AEC visual identity.

Products

AEC products include items such as banners, merchandise and signage.

Generally, the AEC does not use promotional items and merchandise as marketing and communication tools.

For more information contact the [production and design team](#) .

Templates

Corporate Microsoft Office templates support a consistent, professional image for the AEC and a suite of document types are available from within Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. For more information see [AEC corporate templates](#).



All Microsoft Office templates have been designed to follow the AEC visual identity. The templates are reviewed regularly to improve their searchability and meet Australian Government standards (i.e. accessibility). If you need to create a document that does not fit within the existing templates, contact the [production and design team](#) .

Copyright

Material produced by the AEC constitutes Crown copyright. If someone not employed by the AEC is needed to produce the publication, it is important to think about copyright first.

In line with the Australian Government's Open Access and Licensing Framework (AusGOAL), the AEC should apply the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (Licence) to all material produced by the AEC where appropriate with the exception of:

- the Commonwealth Coat of Arms
- AEC's logos
- AEC's maps
- content supplied by third parties
- confidential or private information
- other proprietary material such as campaign advertising.

For advice on copyright, contact the [Commercial Law and Procurement section \(CLP\)](#) .


Attribution

Where the AEC applies the Licence to a publication, the following wording must be included:

© Commonwealth of Australia [insert year].

Unless otherwise noted, the AEC has applied the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (Licence) to this publication with the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the AEC's logos, and content supplied by third parties. Use of material subject to the Licence must not assert or imply any connection with, or endorsement by, the AEC unless with express prior written permission.

The Australian Electoral Commission asserts the right of recognition as author of the original material. The publication should be attributed as [insert publication title].

Where it is not appropriate to apply the Licence, talk to [Commercial Law and Procurement](#)  about the type of licence and attribution appropriate for the publication.

For more information see [AusGOAL](#) or contact the [production and design team](#) .

National Library Legal Deposits

AEC publications must have an international standard book number (ISBN) or international standard serial number (ISSN) and are subject to Legal Deposit requirements.

Legal Deposit requires all Australian publishers (including government departments) to deliver a copy of 'library material' to the National Library of Australia within one month of publication. This includes the best print copy (hard cover rather than soft cover) and electronic copies.

The production and design team is responsible for allocating ISBN and ISSN numbers and for Legal Deposit of any published AEC document, including books, periodicals, annual reports, handbooks, maps, posters, programs, brochures and pamphlets.

For more information contact the [production and design team](#) .

Tabling of ministerial reports

Mandatory arrangements for tabling reports in the Australian Parliament include securing the Minister's clearance of any tabling and media statements, managing other requirements such as providing the appropriate number of copies, and meeting printing guidelines and timing deadlines. All reports are under embargo until they are tabled in Parliament.

For more information see the [Prime Minister and Cabinet Guidelines](#).

Authorisation statement

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) and the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984* (Referendum Act) require certain advertisements to be authorised. The authorisation is a statement asserting that a specific person of a specified street address 'authorised' the advertisement. The authorisation must also include the name and address of the printer (except for newspaper or magazine advertisements – see below).

The AEC strives to be a model authoriser of any products that could be considered an electoral advertisement, including paid advertising, pamphlets, brochures, publications, videos, handbills, posters and notices. If the product contains electoral matter, which most AEC election-time material does, it should be authorised.

Always seek written approval from the delegate before the product is published or produced.

What needs to be authorised

Not all materials need to be authorised. For an election, only those printed products that contain 'electoral matter' and online electoral advertisements that are intended to affect voting in an election require authorisation. Note the Electoral Act deems some printed products to contain 'electoral matter' simply if the product mentions specific words or phrases, including 'the election', 'the Government', or a current or former member of Parliament. This extended definition does not apply to online advertisements or online videos.

Online advertisements and online videos should be authorised if the AEC has paid to have the advertisement or video appear. Video recordings, such as those seen at cinemas or produced on DVDs, should also be authorised.

The authorisation statement must be placed at the end of the product.

Merchandise such as stickers, T-shirts, lapel buttons and badges, pens, pencils, and/or balloons do not need to be authorised – see s. 328(3)(b) of the Electoral Act. Letters and cards that bear the name and address of the sender and do not contain a representation of a ballot paper are also exempt from authorisation – see s. 328(3)(c) of the Electoral Act.

For a referendum, printed products that relate to a referendum and are intended to affect the result of a referendum should be authorised. Note the Referendum Act does not have the same extended definition of 'electoral matter' as the Electoral Act.

The same rules as an election apply to referendum-related video recordings and online advertisements and online videos.

Referendum-related stickers, T-shirts, lapel buttons and badges, pens, pencils, and/or balloons do not need to be authorised.

Who authorises AEC electoral products/advertisements?

Most products are authorised by either the Electoral Commissioner (EC) or an Australian Electoral Officer (AEO).

If the person authorising the electoral advertisement or product holds a statutory position, such as the EC or AEO, always use the position title rather than the name of the person in the position. In the instance that an Assistant Commissioner authorises a product, their name not their title must be used.

National Office

Advertisements and products should be authorised by the Electoral Commissioner if they are high profile or for an electoral event. Use the Electoral Commissioner title rather than name in the authorisation, as follows:

Authorised by the Electoral Commissioner, 50 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra ACT.

Assistant Commissioners can also authorise advertisements and products but by name only, not title:

Authorised by Joe Happyblogs, 50 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra ACT.

State and territory office

The Australian Electoral Officer (by title) can authorise electoral products for use in their state or territory only:

*Authorised by [title or name], [Building], [Street address],
[Suburb] [State].*

Printing

On a printed product, the authorisation needs to also include the name and place of business of the printer.

External printing

Where a product is being produced by an external printer, other than a newspaper, the Electoral Act requires that the name and place of business of the printer must appear at the end of the electoral advertisement or product.

Printed by [insert business name], [Street address], [Suburb] [State].

Internal printing

When producing an electoral product that will only be available for staff to print internally (i.e. using the MFD), the following authorisation line is to be used:

Authorised and printed by the Electoral Commissioner, 50 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra ACT.

Reprints

Authorisation approval should be renewed for all reprinted products.

AEOs can authorise local reprints of National Office products, but the authorisation must be updated to reflect who has authorised it and the printer's business address.

Newspaper or magazine advertising

Where a newspaper or magazine includes the address of the printer, the authorisation line is only required to include the name and the full street address of the person who has authorised the advertisement. The authorisation statement must appear at the end of the advertisement.

The word 'Advertisement' in letters not smaller than 10 point also needs to appear as a headline to the advertisement. If the advertisement runs to more than one page, the word 'Advertisement' must appear at the top of each page.

It is an offence not to authorise electoral advertising (s. 331 of the Electoral Act).

Videos and online advertisements

The authorisation must appear at the end of the video or online advertisement and include the name and the full street address of the person who authorised the advertisement.

The authorisation must also appear on the back cover of the DVD.

For more information see the [Electoral Law Authorisation Guidelines](#) or contact the [Legal Services section](#) .

Website publishing

Web publishing is centralised at the AEC. Information, Communication and Technology Branch is responsible for the technical services to make content available on the [AEC website](#) and the [intranet](#). It also provides advice on compliance with web standards. Business areas are responsible for providing timely and accurate information.

AEC website

The AEC website is the AEC's key public communication channel. Its aim is for electors to 'self-serve' through the provision of accurate and up-to-date information and services.


For all website publishing services, please contact your [communication account manager](#).

AEC intranet

The AEC intranet is the authoritative first point of call for all AEC internal communications. It is managed by the internal communication team.


The internal communication team is made up of skilled writers, editors and producers of online content. The team has oversight of the agency-wide internal communication strategy and internal communication content and publishing schedules. As the primary AEC internal communication channel, the internal communication team's role is to ensure intranet content is:

- consistent with other internal communication
- reliable, trusted and authoritative
- edited for style, accuracy and quality
- timely, efficient, and well targeted using the best communication methods
- accessible, and easy to find and navigate
- consistent with the AEC internal communication policies, procedures and strategies.

To update your state/territory, branch or section intranet information, contact your [state/territory internal communication network representative or your communication account manager](#) .

Online standards and best practice


The AEC is subject to Australian Government standards, including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) for accessibility.

For more information about web accessibility or how to make a document more accessible contact the [web team](#)  or see the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) or information at the [Digital Transformation Agency](#).

Advertising and media

Campaign advertising

National campaign advertising covers enrolment, voter services and formality. Disclosure, Assurance and Engagement Branch is responsible for developing and placing campaign advertising in appropriate media channels.

Visual elements from the campaign, including the 'paper people' imagery and the tagline *Your vote will help shape Australia*, cannot be used outside the election period and should not be used without liaison with the Media & External Communication Section. Enquiries should be directed to [campaign advertising](#) .

Non-campaign advertising

Non-campaign advertising can cover a range of issues, usually at the state or local level. Non-campaign advertising must align with the relevant communication plan and must be placed through the Australian Government's media placement agency for non-campaign advertising.

State-based advertising

At election time, templates for a suite of state-based advertisements are developed by National Office. These are provided to state offices to complete with local detail and must be placed through the Australian Government's media placement agency over the course of the election.

Enquiries should be directed to [campaign advertising](#) ✉.

Recruitment advertising

The AEC uses a single whole-of-government composite recruitment advertisement for all positions placed in national and/or metropolitan print media. Please contact [recruitment](#) ✉ for more information.

Media

The [Media Liaison Policy and Procedures](#) explain the AEC's policy for dealing with the media, including staff authorised to handle media enquiries and procedures for other staff if contacted by the media.

All AEC staff should be familiar with the policy and follow the procedures when dealing with the media.

For more information contact the [AEC media team](#) ✉.

Social media

The [Social Media Policy](#) provides procedures and protocols when using social media. The policy covers protocols for both organisational and personal use. Only authorised staff, specifically trained in using social media in the AEC are permitted to communicate on behalf of the AEC through social media.

For more information contact the [AEC media team](#) ✉.

Photography

The AEC's focus is on quality in everything it does. Images published both internally and externally must portray the AEC as a professional and capable agency.

Quality can be achieved with the right experience, training and equipment, or through the services of a professional.

When taking photographs, staff are advised to:

- ensure image resolution is as high as possible and in JPEG format
- avoid images that are blurry, dark, or over exposed
- avoid images that portray people in an unflattering or negative way
- avoid images that show people wearing inappropriate clothing, visible logos, political messages or brand names
- ensure images are politically neutral and follow the AEC's visual identity and style.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist in planning, taking and managing AEC photographs either by an AEC staff member or a professional photographer.

Photography and privacy


The AEC is bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*, (Privacy Act) including the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

Photography and recordkeeping

AEC staff must take reasonable steps to appropriately store and protect a person's personal information and image.

Talent release consent form

Consent (talent release) forms are legally binding contracts that grant the Commonwealth the right to use and publish a person's photograph and/or videoed image(s) in any medium.

The [AEC \(talent release\) consent form](#)  is provided in PDF format and can be pre-filled before taking it to an event or activity. It is best practice to take a photo of the person with their consent form so they can be matched to their paper form (see storing the consent form and digital files below).

AEC staff can pre-fill the following fields:

- Event Name: be as descriptive as possible and include a location, for example 'Aust. Day Citizenship Ceremony, Forest Lake, QLD'
- Event Date: the date of the event or activity
- Photographer/Recorder: the full name of the photographer
- AEC Reference: this can be a TRIM file number or procurement number

It is mandatory for a person signing the consent form to sign and date the form.

It is optional for a person to provide their email address and/or phone number.

Storing the consent form and digital files

Consent forms must be digitally scanned and saved with the digital copy of the photograph, video or audio recording. Consent forms must also be filed on the appropriate TRIM file.

It is the photographer's responsibility to ensure that the consent form can be linked back to the person in the photo. This can be done in a few ways:

- Write a brief description of the person on the back of the consent form (i.e. male wearing red t-shirt and green shorts). When back in the office print a copy of the photo and attach it to the consent form so you have a visual record of the person along with their consent.
- Take a photo of the person holding their consent form and include this photo on the TRIM file.
- Include the person's name in the metadata.

Photography metadata

Where technically possible, the metadata should be stored in the photo (see [technical requirements](#)).

Taking photos at electoral and other events

When an AEC staff person, or a person representing the AEC, takes photographs of members of the public during an event or activity, staff are advised:

- not to take film or photography of items in a ballot paper secure zone
- to follow the [election media guide](#)
- particularly in respect of the rights of voters, polling officials, scrutineers and members of the public in a polling place who do not want to be filmed
- not to film a person voting where their ballot paper selections can be identified
- to apply best practice in meeting the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 by gaining the consent of any person where their identity is clear and obvious through the use of the consent form
- to ensure the parent or guardian signs a consent form if the identity of the subject is an individual under 18 years old
- to ensure all forms and images are securely stored and used only for the purposes of AEC related work
- to seek permission from the relevant DRO if taking photographs in or around a polling place on election day
- to display the polling place sign
- to notify electors of photography occurring at a polling place
- to wear a badge to identify yourself as an AEC staff person and photographer.

Taking photos internally

Generally, AEC staff are not required to sign consent forms if photos are intended for internal corporate use on the intranet or internal documents, such as a group photo at an internal function. In these cases, email permission is sufficient.


However, if the purpose is for external use, such as an annual report or the AEC website, then consent must be gained from the person being photographed using the [AEC consent form](#) .

Photo captions

Photos or graphics may require captions if they contain information, people, places or items of interest. Pictures that are only design features don't usually require captions.


Captions should be short and descriptive, but not replicate information in the image. Refer to 'who, what, when, how, why'. For example, 'A picture of the award ceremony' is less effective than, 'Mr Smith, school principal awarded Georgia Knight an achievement medal at the History Challenge in Perth'.

Using professional photography services

When procuring a professional photographer, staff must consider the following:

Procurement


The [AEC's procurement procedures](#) provide AEC staff with guidance on how to conduct procurements in accordance with the relevant legislative and procurement policy framework. It is strongly advised that a contract or work order be established for any photographic services provided to the AEC.

If you would like advice or assistance in arranging photography on behalf of the AEC, please contact the [production and design team](#) .

Intellectual property

As copyright is automatically assigned to (external) photographers in Australia, it is important to establish the AEC as the copyright owner as part of the agreed contract or work order with the supplier.

Professional models

Professional models are often used in photo or video shoots and usually require a fee. All models participating in a photo shoot should be natural looking and represent the general population or target audience. They must wear appropriate clothing – for example, no singlets or revealing clothing or visible logos, political messages or brand names. All professional models must sign the AEC's [consent form](#) .

Technical requirements

The following requirements must be included in a contract, work order or photography brief when working with a professional supplier.

Format

- High resolution digital images to be supplied on DVD or hard drive.
- Two resolutions are required: high resolution and low resolution. Low resolution files should be no smaller than A6. High resolution should be no smaller than A3 size at 300 dpi.
- Images should not be cropped or obviously edited.
- File format: jpeg, RGB.

Metadata

Metadata must be saved in the photo. The metadata contains information such as the date, description, talent release information, talent names, and photographer. The photographer has the software to insert the metadata as part of the post production of the images.

The photographer is responsible for ensuring that the following metadata is populated in both the low and high res images of the final mastered images.

Metadata required:

- Creator fields: Photographer's details
- Date created field: Date of photograph
- City, state, sub-location fields: Photograph location
- Description field: Names of all individuals and position in photo
- Rights usage terms field: Talent release form signed and obtained
- Keyword: key words to help categorise the content of the photograph, for example youth, election day, voting, assisted voting, minority etc.

For more information contact the [production and design team](#) .

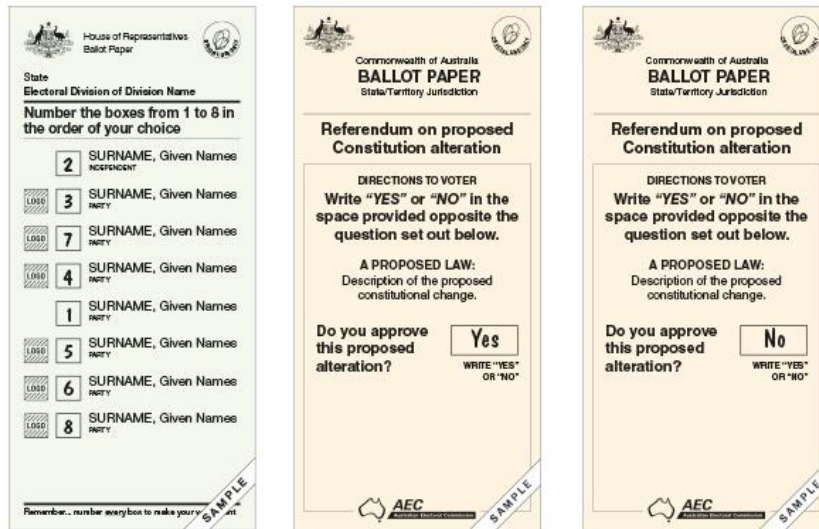
Ballot papers

Sample ballot papers have been created to assist with explaining the formality requirements to an external audience for House of Representatives, Senate and Referendum ballot papers.

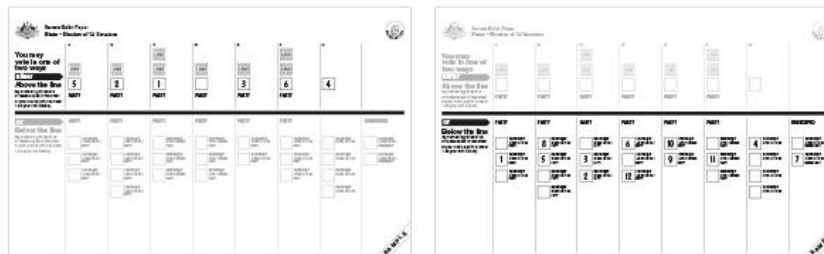
For consistency, and to ensure impartiality, only the following sample ballot papers are to be used in AEC products. Include the words 'Sample ballot paper/s' underneath the ballot papers.

No other sample ballot papers should be created.

Contact the [production and design team](#)  for more information.




Ballot papers



Senate ballot papers

Stationery

Word templates for stationery, such as letterheads, minutes and faxes, are in the templates folder in Microsoft Word. All Word templates have been designed to follow the AEC visual identity and should not be altered. For new templates, contact the [production and design team](#) .

Business card and name badge ordering

Requests for business cards and/or name badges must be made using the AEC's stationery and office supplies provider, [Complete Office Supplies Pty Ltd \(COS\)](#).

When ordering business cards or name badges, through [Complete Office Supplies Pty Ltd \(COS\)](#), type the word 'Business' in the search field. The templates for the business cards and name badges are a set design which comply with AEC style and cannot be altered.

All questions about this information should be directed through [The AEC Service Centre](#)



Insert name
Title

Phone +61 0 0000 0000

Mobile +61 000 000 000

Email insertlongname@aec.gov.au

aec.gov.au

AEC business cards

Signature block

All email signature blocks must follow the AEC corporate style. Signature blocks include name, title, and contact details and should be current and accurate. Contact details should include your AEC telephone and extension numbers, but may also include a work mobile number, if relevant.

Instructions for setting up your signature block are available [\[link\]](#).

Signature blocks are part of AEC corporate stationery and must not be personalised with different colours, fonts, graphics, images or key messages outside the AEC visual identity.

Name | Job title

Section name | Branch name

Australian Electoral Commission

T: XX XXXX XXXX | X: XXXXXX | M: XXXX XXX XXX



Make sure you're **enrolled to vote**.
Visit www.aec.gov.au

Office signage

The AEC has offices throughout Australia, with various signage requirements from reception to shop frontage and external signs.

Signage should contain the AEC logo and the Australian Government crest. Office signage should also include:

- opening hours
- phone number
- URL: www.aec.gov.au.

Avoid including the electoral division name on building signs. Consider environmental factors when installing signage such as how the door opens, visibility of the signage.

Contact the [National Property Unit](#)  for more information on signage.

AEC display frames

A framing system has been developed for quality and consistent display of AEC posters and photographs in AEC office foyers or public spaces to promote and strengthen the AEC brand.

The frames are 'quickslip', which allow imagery to be interchanged quickly and easily. Use approved AEC quickslip display frames only.

Quickslip display frames are provided as part of a National Property Unit organised fitout, although they may be ordered separately. The number of frames provided by the National Property Unit depends on the size of the office. The A2 frame will be provided for national and state offices only.

Quickslip display frame sizes

387 x 510 mm: holds an A3 size poster or photograph.

540 x 714 mm: holds an A2 size poster or photograph.


Use frames of the same size and orientation on a single wall. Do not hang A2 and A3 frames together.

When ordering additional frames the recommended frame size is A3. If ordering the larger frame, please consider the following:

- the cost of printing a single A2 print can be significantly more than an A3 print
- there are a limited number of suppliers that can print A2
- products suitable to print at A2 size are limited.

AEC posters

Only approved AEC posters can be displayed in office foyer frames. At different times in the election cycle, AEC offices may be required to display a particular image to support a key message.

For more information or assistance please contact the [National Property Unit](#) .

Comments

Acknowledgement of Country

The AEC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, culture and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

My Links

Organisational structure
Corporate directory
Coronavirus info
Dates to remember
AEC Teams sites
Our people profiles

My Apps

AEC Service Centre
Aurion ESS
ObjectiveIM
Media monitoring

