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**Returning Officer's Report
on the**

proposed

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT
ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015**

Employee Ballot

Prepared For:

(s 22)
Employee Relations Section
People Strategy Branch
Attorney-General's Department
3 – 5 National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

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Background

On 1 June, 2015, Australian Election Company received a request from the Attorney-General's Department for provision of a quotation to perform Employee Ballot services. A Proposal was prepared and submitted on the same day. The Proposal was subsequently accepted. Arrangements were agreed for Australian Election Company to conduct an Enterprise Agreement Employee Ballot applying Electronic Voting technologies. Voting in the Ballot was to be available by Internet and Telephone with Instruction Sheets/Password Advices being emailed to all eligible employees and/or physically mailed to "on leave" eligible employees.

Significant Ballot Dates

Voting Roll received	22 June, 2015
Despatch of hard-copy Instructions/Password Advices	22 June 2015
Despatch of email Instructions/Password Advices	8:55am AEST 26 June, 2015
Opening of Ballot	9:00am AEST 26 June, 2015
Close of Ballot	5:00pm AEST 30 June, 2015
Results of Ballot	5:15pm AEST 30 June, 2015
Declaration of Result	1 July, 2015
Submission of Ballot Report	1 July, 2015

Roll of Voters/Voters List

A certified Eligible Employee Voter Database was sought from the Attorney-General's Department. The Voting Roll was to comprise all employees eligible to vote in respect of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015 Employee Ballot. The database "cut" to develop the Voter Roll was received on 22 June, 2015. It contained 1,742 records. The database comprised AGS number, employee full names, employee email address and postal address and, where available, private email addresses for "on leave" eligible employees.

Subsequent to the receipt of the first database "cut", no additions and or terminations/deletions were notified. Accordingly, there were 1,742 employees finally listed as eligible to vote in the ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015 Employee Ballot.

Materials and Processes

The Ballot was conducted utilising Internet Voting and Telephone IVR technology. Each eligible voter, who was listed in the original Database and subsequently added, was sent an Instruction Sheet/Password Advice by email and/or by post. The Instruction Sheet/Password Advice notices detailed the times for voting, the step by step process for casting an Internet or Telephone Vote, each eligible voter's individual Password and how to access Help Desk facilities. At no stage would Password information be provided generally to the Attorney-General's Department or to any other organization.



On 22 June, 2015, a batch of 321 hard copy Instructions/Password Advices was prepared and posted to “on leave” employees and those part time employees who would not be at work on the opening day of the Ballot to receive their email. No hard copy Voting Instruction/Password Advice notices were returned unclaimed by Australia Post.

At approximately 8:55am AEST on 26 June, 2015, 2,055 Voting Instruction/Password Advice emails were sent to “at work” employees and those on leave who had requested instructions via email. From this email “blast”, five (5) emails directed to private email addresses were returned (bounced) as undeliverable. The Department was not able to provide corrected addresses for any of these so no further action could be taken. Three (3) of the intended recipients of the bounced emails would have received hard copy versions in the post.

Help Desk/Enquiry Facilities

Australian Election Company established a Help Desk facility that was accessible to employees either by email (help@austelect.com) or by a freecall 1800 number. A list of “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ), together with a formal set of “Authentication Protocols” for use by Call Centre /Help Desk personnel in dealing with enquiries from employees, was applied. The FAQ and protocols were applied in the interests of standardisation and equity. The protocols were employed to effectively and professionally deal with any employees apparently having technical difficulties in accessing the Internet Voting system. The protocols also incorporated contingencies to deal with employees who claimed to have not received, or perhaps might have inadvertently destroyed, their Instruction Sheet/Password Advice. They further included some general material relative to the voting period and to the Ballot. The Help Desk operated from 8:00am to 5:30pm (AEST) during the currency of the Ballot.

As a further Ballot integrity measure, when specifically dealing with any lost or replacement Password queries, the Help Desk staff applied a standard set of “authentication challenge” protocols to each caller, to validate their claims and entitlement to Password information. The Help Desk staff were informed and indeed instructed by the Returning Officer, that there was to be no deviation from the protocols, in order to protect the security and sanctity of Password information and to maintain Ballot integrity.

In the event that an already “authenticated” employee subsequently sought details of the information contained in the Instruction Sheet and pertaining to the casting of a vote, the Help Desk personnel were alerted and instructed to only read the relevant text and to ensure that voice pitch and intonation was regularised, in order to avoid any allegations of bias as to the Ballot outcome.



The Help Desk operation, dealt with 12 calls and two (2) emails. Relevant statistical details are listed below:-

Password Lost/ Deleted/ Ostensibly Not Received/Left at Home	12
Technical Issues with Internet/User Error	Nil
AGS Number Problems	1
Comment on Ballot Process (Referred to Returning Officer)	Nil
Clarification on the Agreement (Referred to AGD)	Nil
Not on Roll (Referred to AGD)	Nil
Other	1
TOTAL	<u>14</u>

In terms of any eligible employees not listed on the database, the Attorney-General's Department would have needed to verify employee voting entitlement and advise Australian Election Company accordingly. There were no such instances brought to attention.

Telephone Voting

To vote by Telephone, an eligible voter would dial the relevant 1800 number, on a prompt enter their AGS number on the telephone keypad, be given another prompt and then key their unique Password on the telephone keypad. After validation of their details, a further prompt would be received to either key a "1" to record a "YES" vote (for acceptance of the proposed Agreement) or key "2" to record a "NO" vote (for rejection of the proposed Agreement). Voters were then asked to confirm their vote by pressing "1" on their keypad, or to press "2" if they wished to revise their originally keyed vote selection. In the event a voter varied their original vote selection, then the system would "loop" and request the voter to again confirm their revised vote selection. However, once a vote selection had been confirmed, the vote was cast and recorded and the Password consumed.

Internet Voting

To vote using the Internet, eligible voters were simply required to go to the website <https://evote.electionz.com/e/AGD>, key in their AGS Number, then key in their random Password, before being presented with the screen which enabled them to cast their vote. In order to record a "YES" vote (for acceptance of the proposed Agreement), the voter "clicked" in the "YES" box; if they desired to vote "NO" (for rejection of the proposed Agreement), then the voter "clicked" in the "NO" box. The Internet Voting system then prompted, (and checked with the voter), if they desired to confirm their vote. At this point the voter could either opt to submit and finally cast their vote or they could opt to vary their selection before confirming their vote. Once their vote had finally been submitted, their Password was "consumed" and they could not vote again in the Ballot.

Voter Validation

Voter validation during the voting process was achieved through entering the correct AGS Number and Password information. Provided the details keyed matched the relevant voter's record, the voter could progress to make either their "YES" or "NO" selection. However, as noted above, voters



could not vote twice, because their Password was “consumed” immediately upon making, confirming and submitting a vote selection. A voter could, however, key their AGS Number and their Password, but then quit the Internet Voting system without consuming their Password; and re-enter the system at a later time prior to the Ballot closure, provided they did not confirm /submit any vote selection.

The Ballot process applied a Ballot opening time of 09:00am AEST Friday 26 June, 2015 and a Ballot closure time of 5:00pm AEST Tuesday 30 June, 2015. Any already authenticated employee voting on the system at 5:00pm AEST Tuesday 30 June, 2015, would have been able to continue to process their vote selection to finality, however, any employee entering the system at or after 5:00pm AEST Tuesday 30 June, 2015 would have been “locked out”. Again, this approach had been designed against the background and parallel of parliamentary election polling booth processes. In such circumstances, electors still waiting to vote but inside the polling booth at the relevant closure time are permitted to vote, whilst those who attempt to enter the booth precisely the moment of, or after closing time, are not permitted to vote.

Voting Assistance

In the event any physically or hearing impaired employee sought assistance in the voting, the Help Desk staff provided such assistance. In such circumstances, the voter could appoint a person chosen by the voter, to help in casting the Internet vote. Such an assistant perhaps might be another employee, or if the voter was at a location other than their workplace, perhaps a family member or trusted friend. Our approach to this process is modelled around defined and proven polling booth procedures in parliamentary elections, for persons requiring assistance with voting.

The general processes applied in the conduct of the Ballot were extremely robust and the secrecy of each voter’s intention was safeguarded. Indeed, once a person confirmed their vote selection (and consumed their Password), they could not multiple vote and their manner of casting a vote was separated from their identification details; thus the Ballot was entirely secret.

The Count

The formal count process for Internet Voting was electronic, with the Ballot Result being available virtually immediately following Ballot closing time. However, prior to reporting any Result to the client contact, the Returning Officer awaited receipt of and reviewed relevant system reporting and reconciliation data. The Ballot Result was advised at approximately 5:15pm AEST on Tuesday 30 June, 2015. The formal “Declaration of Result” appears in Appendix “A” of this Report.

Statistical Details

Statistical information pertaining to the conduct of the Ballot appears in Appendix “B” of this Report.



The Result

The formal Result of the Ballot is shown below.

YES (for acceptance of the proposed ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015)	367
NO (for rejection of the proposed ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015)	815
Total Ballots Counted	1,182
Total Eligible Voters	1,742
Total % "YES" Vote to number of Voters	31.05%
Total % "NO" Vote to number of Voters	68.95%
Total % "YES" Vote to number of Eligible Employees	21.07%
Total % "NO" Vote to number of Eligible Employees	46.79%
Total % Voters to number of Eligible Employees	67.85%

Conclusion

The Returning Officer is of the opinion that the Internet/Telephone Employee Ballot for the proposed ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015 was conducted accurately and with integrity.

Australian Election Company takes this opportunity to thank the Attorney-General's Department for again choosing our services on this occasion. We trust we may be of further professional assistance in the future.

Yours sincerely

(s 47F)

Returning Officer
1 July, 2015



APPENDIX "A" –

DECLARATION OF RESULT

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015 Employee Ballot

The final Result of Count conducted in respect of the proposed
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2015.

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NO (for rejection of the proposed Agreement)	815
Total Ballots Counted	1,182
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Total % Voters to number of Eligible Employees	67.85%

(s 47F)

Returning Officer
1 July, 2015.



APPENDIX "B" - Statistical Details

Total Number of Eligible Employees on Original Database List	1,742
Number of "Authorised Additions" to Eligible Voter Database	NIL
Less Number of "Authorised Deletions" to Eligible Voter Database	NIL
Number of Replacement Passwords issued	NIL
NETT TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS	1,742
Number of Instruction Sheets /Password Advices Returned As Unclaimed Mail (to 30 June, 2015)	NIL
Number of Passwords redirected from Unclaimed Mail	NIL
TOTAL NUMBER OF PASSWORDS CONSUMED	1,182
PASSWORD RECONCILIATION	
Number of Passwords - Eligible Employee Database Entries	1,742
Less Number of Passwords Consumed by Telephone Voters	9
Less Number of Passwords Consumed by Internet Voters	1,173
Number of Passwords Un-Consumed	560
Number of Employees Who Did Not Vote	560
Plus NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO DID VOTE	1,182
Total Number of Eligible Voters	1,742

