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**Returning Officer's Report  
for the  
Attorney-General's Department**

*on the  
proposed*

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT  
ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2016**

**Employee Ballot**

Prepared for:

(s 22)

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## Background

On 5 April, 2016, Australian Election Company was contacted by the Attorney-General's Department in relation to the provision of Electronic Voting services for the conduct of a forthcoming Enterprise Agreement Employee Ballot. A pricing proposal, which was subsequently accepted, was prepared and submitted to the Department on the following day. Arrangements were agreed for Australian Election Company to conduct the Ballot applying Internet and Telephone Voting technologies with Instruction Sheets/Password Advices being emailed to all eligible employees and also physically mailed to "on leave" employees. The Citation for the proposed Agreement was to be the "Attorney-General's Department Enterprise Agreement 2016".

## Significant Ballot Dates

Voting Roll received	26 April, 2016
Despatch of hard-copy Instructions/Password Advices	26 April, 2016
Despatch of email Instructions/Password Advices	7:45am AEST 3 May, 2016
Opening of Ballot	8:00am AEST 3 May, 2016
Close of Ballot	5:00pm AEST 6 May, 2016
Result of Ballot	5:07pm AEST 6 May, 2016
Declaration of Result	9 May, 2016
Submission of Ballot Report	9 May, 2016

## 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 2016" Employee Ballot. The initial database "cut" to develop the Voter Roll was received on 26 April, 2016. It contained 1,834 records. The database comprised AGS number, employee full names, work email address, home postal address, private email address (for some "on leave" employees) and employee date of birth which was to be used to authenticate employees contacting the telephone helpdesk service.

Subsequent to the receipt of the first database "cut", one (1) duplicate entry was identified and authorised to be removed and 59 additions were notified. Accordingly, there were 1,892 employees finally listed as eligible to vote in the "Attorney-General's Department Enterprise Agreement 2016" 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 by post if "on leave". 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.



A batch of 209 hard copy Instructions/Password Advice notices was prepared and posted to “on leave” employees on 26 April, 2016.

Steps were taken to ensure that the folding/insertion of the Instruction Sheets, and their positioning within each window face envelope, did not in any way compromise the secrecy of an individual eligible voter’s Password. At all times, tight internal security controls were/are maintained over the data, and printed Employee Password information. At no stage would Password information be provided generally to the Attorney-General’s Department or to any other organization.

As at 6 May, 2016, three (3) hard copy Voting Instruction/Password Advice notices had been returned unclaimed by Australia Post.

At 7:45am AEST on 3 May, 2016, a batch of 2,127 Voting Instruction/Password Advice emails was sent to all eligible employees. From this email blast, four (4) were returned (bounced) as undelivered for various reasons. It was found that one (1) of these employees had received the email via their work email address so no further action was required. Corrected email addresses were able to be ascertained and provided for the three (3) remaining employees and the emails were redirected. Instructions were emailed individually to all employees authorised to be added to the original eligible employee database.

### **Help Desk/Enquiry Facilities**

Australian Election Company established a Help Desk facility that was accessible to employees either by email ([help@austelect.com](mailto: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 8:30am to 5:00pm 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 11 calls and five (5) emails. Relevant statistical details are listed below:-

Password Lost/ Deleted/ Ostensibly Not Received/ Left at Home	12
Technical Issues with Internet or Phone/User Error	0
Query on Agreement (advised to contact AGD)	0
AGS Number Problems	3
Not on Roll (advised to contact AGD)	1
Other	0
TOTAL	<u>16</u>

In terms of any eligible employees not listed on the database, the Department would have needed to verify employee voting entitlement and then advise Australian Election Company accordingly. There was one (1) such instance 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 key pad, 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 Telephone or 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 8:00am AEST Tuesday 3 May, 2016 and a Ballot closure time of 5:00pm AEST Friday 6 May, 2016. Any already authenticated employee voting on the system at 5:00pm AEST Friday 6 May, 2016, 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 Friday 6 May, 2016 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 and Telephone Voting is 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 to the Departmental contacts at approximately 5:07pm AEST on Friday 6 May, 2016. The formal "Declaration of Result" forms Appendix "A" of this Report.



## Statistical Details

Statistical information pertaining to the conduct of the Ballot appears in Appendix "B" of this Report. Dissection of the vote by State/Territory appears in Appendix "C".

## The Result

The formal overall Result of the Ballot is shown below.

<b>YES (for acceptance of the proposed ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2016)</b>	<b>490</b>
<b>NO (for rejection of the proposed ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2016)</b>	<b>773</b>
<b>Total Ballots Counted</b>	<b>1,263</b>
<b>Total Eligible Voters</b>	<b>1,892</b>
<b>Total % "YES" Vote to number of Voters</b>	<b>38.80%</b>
<b>Total % "NO" Vote to number of Voters</b>	<b>61.20%</b>
<b>Total % "YES" Vote to number of Eligible Employees</b>	<b>25.90%</b>
<b>Total % "NO" Vote to number of Eligible Employees</b>	<b>40.86%</b>
<b>Total % Voters to number of Eligible Employees</b>	<b>66.75%</b>

Individual State/Territory figures are provided in Appendix "C" of this Report.



## **Conclusion**

The Returning Officer is of the opinion that the combined Internet and Telephone Employee Ballot for the proposed "Attorney-General's Department Enterprise Agreement 2016" 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  
9 May, 2016





APPENDIX "A" –

## DECLARATION OF RESULT

# ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2016

### Employee Ballot

The final Result of Count conducted in respect of the proposed  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2016.

<b>YES (for acceptance of the proposed Agreement)</b>	<b>490</b>
<b>NO (for rejection of the proposed Agreement)</b>	<b>773</b>
<b>Total Ballots Counted</b>	<b>1,263</b>
<b>Total Eligible Employees</b>	<b>1,892</b>
<b>Total % "YES" Vote to number of Voters</b>	<b>38.80%</b>
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<b>Total % "NO" Vote to number of Eligible Employees</b>	<b>40.86%</b>
<b>Total % Voters to number of Eligible Employees</b>	<b>66.75%</b>

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Returning Officer  
9 May, 2016.



**APPENDIX "B" - Statistical Details**

Total Number of Eligible Employees on Original Database List	1,834
Number of "Authorised Additions" to Eligible Voter Database	59
<b>Less</b> Number of "Authorised Deletions" from Eligible Voter Database	1
Number of Replacement Passwords issued	NIL
<b>NETT TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS</b>	<b>1,892</b>
Number of Instruction Sheets /Password Advices Returned As Unclaimed Mail (to 6 May, 2016)	3
Number of Passwords redirected from Unclaimed Mail	NIL
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PASSWORDS CONSUMED</b>	<b>1,263</b>
<b>PASSWORD RECONCILIATION</b>	
Number of Passwords - Eligible Employee Database Entries	1,892
<b>Less</b> Number of Passwords Consumed by Telephone Voters	15
<b>Less</b> Number of Passwords Consumed by Internet Voters	1,248
Number of Passwords Un-Consumed	629
Number of Employees Who Did Not Vote	629
<b>Plus NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO DID VOTE</b>	<b>1,263</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS</b>	<b>1,892</b>



APPENDIX "C" - Result by State/Territory

**Attorney-General's Department**  
**Enterprise Agreement 2016**  
**EMPLOYEE BALLOT RESULT BY STATE/TERRITORY**

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**Note:** NT figures have been amalgamated with QLD and TAS with VIC to preserve voter anonymity.

