GE2020 VOTING SERVICES FIELD REVIEW

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Recruitment

Strategy

General feedback:

- For many electorates, COVID-19 delivered a high calibre of applicants across the board compared with previous elections.
- The national recruitment strategy needs to accompany a local recruitment strategy including access to tools to implement e.g. local advertising and ability to engage with MSD
- Some electorates suffered from insufficient applicants and low calibre of applicants. This was primarily attributed to the reliance on national recruitment strategy and how the recruitment system managed the allocation of applicants to electorates.
- Need streamlined bulk recruitment instructions in the Operational Manual e.g. managing emails to applicants
- Communities responded positively when electorates recruited from diverse communities. However, some voting place which failed to represent their community received complaints.
- Recruiting from diverse communities needs to be better integrated with the recruitment plan

For consideration:

- Review the scope and scale of the recruitment strategy, including:
  - National recruitment strategy versus local recruitment strategy
  - Recruitment from diverse communities
- Develop tools and processes to deliver bulk recruitment
- Reassess how recruiting from diverse communities could be better operationalised

Process

General feedback:

- RRM's compared working for EC to working for an organisation 20 years ago.
- Induction of staff went smoothly as new employees came onboard
- Better convey to new RO's the scope and extent of the role
- Recruitment process doesn't upscale well
- Recruitment processes and resources were not timely or fit for purpose. For example, the time taken to update variation letter with the change of election date. These processes need to be robust to keep staff informed and committed. The delay from National Office caused enquiries and potential loss of staff as people looked for a formal commitment from us.
- Resources and tools need to be up to date and ready to go from the start
- HR processes and procedures need to alleviate stress, not add to it
- MOJ checks - process was not clear and needed better communication
- RRMs need more guidance on:
    - Resources to help understand each role to be recruited e.g. descriptive, organisational chart
    - When to start recruiting and for what roles
    - How to interview a high volume of staff in a concentrated period
    - How many people should be interviewed and when
    - How to communicate with applicants and when to do that
    - What to tell returnees
    - What types of skill sets/experiences are needed in an electorate HQ
    - How to communicate with those that are successful and what happens next
- Applications:
    - Unclear on website over which roles were for electorate offices and which were for ROE offices
    - Close off dates for applications were too late and electorates need a mechanism to close off applications themselves
- M20 Matrix:
    - The matrix was useful for specific HQ roles but not for mass recruitment
    - Easier to rank people after interviewing than rating from application only
    - Outdated, cumbersome, time consuming and creates bias
    - The recruitment process is not linear, data is inaccurate and RRM feel this form implies a mistrust in the recruitment staff in the regions
    - Did not align to information in EMS. Need to make a rating system within application
- Applicant assessments:
    - Testing was a good benchmark, especially for voting place staff
    - Assessment days/centres worked well
    - Tests for Excel and Word were more complicated than necessary for admin staff
    - Sometimes tests were not a good reflection of the applicant. There should be more questions around personal history and development.
    - Existing interview process for some roles (e.g. VA) were not fit for purpose and led some electorates to develop their own processes
    - Referee checks – revision of terminology and questions is needed to reflect common applicants e.g. retirees, and referees are not always employment focused e.g. friends.
    - CVs are not required for those applying to be an administrative assistant. This caused electorates to walk blindly in the recruitment process for a role that would support them throughout most of the election process.
- Interview:
    - LSM recruitment interview was easy despite COVID-19 limitations

- Interview questions for Election Day staff would be improved if interviewees were provided with information about Election Day expectations, including training, payment, and set-up, as well as factoring in the second weekend of advance voting. This could be provided to them at the completion of the interview.
- Interview questions and referee checks not appropriate for the temporary nature of the roles
- Phone screening was a great tool that needs further enhancements and scope
- Staff appointment process with STAR interview format was helpful
- Interview sheets needs to be adapted to meet the differing expectations of roles

For consideration:
- Full review of processes and resources to ensure they are fit for purpose and relevant
- Develop new guidance and resources to better support the field in their role

Support

General feedback:
- HR support from National Office was ill-equipped and nonresponsive for what the field needed. When additional support came onboard, they were very responsive but too late in the piece.

For consideration:
- Consider standing up a dedicated team to support the field

System

General feedback:

- The recruitment system needs a complete overhaul. There are available "off the shelf" recruitment systems that would be adaptable to election recruitment which would remedy many of problems recruitment staff faced during the election.
- Issues electorates faced with the current recruitment system:
    - More mandatory fields e.g. capture previous experience, availability, role preference
    - Applicants applied for multiple roles which meant they were unable to be managed effectively in EMS e.g. an applicant could receive multiple unsuccessful letters and one successful letter based on each role applied for, rather than having their application treated in a unified way
    - Mobile number field allowed staff to enter invalid information
    - How applicants were allocated to electorates, leaving some electorates with a shortfall
    - Application questions about eligibility to work in NZ wasn't fit for purpose e.g. visitor visa
- EMS:
    1. The applicant detail report wasn't effective at managing the scale of applicants
    2. Process to transfer staff between electorates wasn't efficient and difficult to manage
    3. Need mechanism to flag applicants with previous election experience and connects to past reviews.
    4. Candidates often did not appear on reports or appeared late
- The recruitment process should be managed digitally enabling applicant to accept positions online and access training information.
- Shared HQs need a shared recruitment process. Existing process resulted in one electorate being allocated bulk of applicants.
- Need easier methods to manipulate data when putting a volume of applicants through assessments.

For consideration:

- Reassess whether the recruiting system should remain integrated with EMS, or an "off the shelf" solution is more fit for purpose based on the needs of the field and challenges they faced

Timeframes

General feedback:

- No recruitment specified timelines provided to the field
- In large rural electorates, advertise LSM and 2IC at the same time.

For consideration:

- Develop specified timelines for RRMs to plan and deliver to

HR

Job descriptions

General feedback:

- JDs need to be ready to go and fit for purpose. They need to be written with input from the field.
- JDs were vague leading to some electorates adapt roles in a way that was most appropriate for their electorate.
- The expectations and demands of each role including the time, work streams and after hours needs to be upfront and transparent
- JDs were too high level and did not accurately reflect roles, especially process leaders, administrative support and count staff.

For consideration:

- Reassess all voting services field staffs job descriptions to ensure they are fit for purpose

Contracts

General feedback:

- Contracts and letters of offer were not ready to go. In the three months it took National Office to distribute letters of offer to Returning Officers, some found other employment.
- Evident updating contracts relied on legacy and haven't kept up with law changes. For example, HQM contracts were not in keeping with current legislation
- Contract process created angst and frustration, with some RRMs resigning as a result.
- Contract process was convoluted. Staff didn't have a printer at home, many had to travel long distances to their HQs to sign their contract.
- The sheer volume of paperwork integrated into the contract process was a massive burden. For example, one electorate reportedly signed 4,500 sheets of paper.
- Short term contracts make it difficult to find people with the necessary skills and experiences e.g. RRM
- Contracts need to be standardised. Commonly experienced issues:
  - Individuals had up to five separate contracts over the election period.
  - Confusion over fixed term and casual contracts
  - Different contracts for AV and ED created a bureaucratic nightmare and applicants didn't understand they had separate contracts.
  - Need for a checklist so applicants can check off everything needing to be sent back
  - Physical contracts meant they needed to be returned, creating strife for geographically challenged electorates
  - Letters of offer were often unclear and prompted questions
  - Different contracts for CLs and VAs

For consideration:

- Review and update all contracts and letters of offer to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet current legal requirements
- Review process for issuing contracts, including a mechanism to digitise the process
- Consider how contracts could be standardised to lessen the burden of field staff
- The contract process needs to be digitized to allow staff to sign contracts electronically and embed the RO's signature

Process

General feedback:
- Need for timely and efficient comms from HQ staff to applicants. Experiences of VP staff:
  - Perception of complete disorganisation from interview to a role being offered
  - Lengthy periods of time elapsed between submitting an application and hearing back from HQ's - not even an email acknowledgement of receipt of an application.
  - Need for regular communication about application progress, interview type (e.g. group interview), training details, timesheets, expected work hours including participating in pack up and count, location of voting place work, training fees and payment type.
  - Mismatch in expected hours of work and number of hours offered.
  - Confusion for staff between the advance voting casual contract and election day fixed contract
  - Need for better upfront information about each role e.g. the time commitment is for each role, and what the pay offered for each role is.
- The appraisal process is outdated and no longer fit for purpose
- More clarity over secondment process
- MOJ checks approach constantly changed

For consideration:
- Consider developing better templates and guidance on how field staff should keep applicants updated throughout the recruitment process
- Review existing process and assess whether better resources could be adapted to assist staff

Support

General feedback:

National Office support:
- National Office was helpful and responsive with technical questions around payroll and Kiwi Saver
- Support by and large was inadequate. NO provided inconsistent advice on how to deal with difficult HR issues. While NO HR contractors provided good support, they arrived too late.
- NO needs to be aligned to VS requirements e.g. timing of contracts.
- IRD gave conflicting information regarding EDW tax code
- NO HR need to understand the legalities of contracts, privacy, payrates and paying staff on public holidays

Communication
- Electorates were unaware of ███████████████████' team
- No clear communication process to how applicants, HQ's and National Office should interact. This resulted in NO staff providing updates directly back to candidates about their progress without notifying electorates.
- Variation letter was too late, electorates had moved on
- Existing templates need updating, electorates made edits to soften the language
- New templates need to be developed to assist electorates to do their job e.g. welcome to the team, recruiting emails. Otherwise this is left to electorates to develop.

For consideration:
- Consider standing up a dedicated team to support the field
- Develop specified timelines for RRMs to plan and deliver to
- Develop better tool and resources to support the field

Renumeration

General feedback:

- Renumeration of all roles under the VS field structure need to be reviewed in how they are paid and at what rate.
- Better guidance over what can or cannot be claimed e.g. set up times
- Mechanism to pay staff more money for recognition of hard work
- There wasn't a consistent approach with how training fees were set and applied

For consideration:

- Reassess all voting services field staff's remuneration including a mechanism to reward additional work

Payroll

General feedback:

HQ perspective:

- Straightforward process, payroll summary was useful
- How the pay period is structured needs review:
  - Payroll on different dates 'Friday be', 'eDay' confused staff
  - Pay period for voting place staff was Sunday – Saturday lacked practicality.
- Timesheet process needs to be standardised. Noted issues include:
  - Process was labour and time intensive
  - Individual staff members with multiple roles had multiple timesheets
  - Staff weren't clear on how to fill out an ADV timesheet, or the differing process for ED
  - Paper timesheets were difficult in geographically challenged electorates with limited technology options
- Payslips:
  - Payslips did not contain enough detail for staff to understand what they were being paid for
  - RRM should have access to payslips so when employees enquire, they can assist.

National Office perspective:

- Payroll project on relied manual process adaptations and work arounds that were dependent on individuals and specific knowledge. Need for a detailed standard operating procedure that is kept under version control to avoid crowd sourced solutioning and reduce key person risk.
- Data veracity was an ongoing issue due to the bespoke nature of EMS and information disparity.
- Rectification of invalid staff details were a significant cause of effort for the payroll team.
- Issues arose when CLs worked for VS, causing unnecessary work and risked EDW pay run.
- Need for better pay related information, communication to staff on what the pay policies are, how they are applied and what pay should be expected at what point.
- Due to the nature of the election process there are a large volume of process steps which need to be executed accurately and in a timely manner. These processes need to be clearly, accurately, and comprehensively conveyed to all staff.
- EMS is a comprehensive monolithic bespoke system that does not necessarily integrate easily with other systems. This can preclude business opportunity, process simplification and information interoperability.

For consideration:

- Review how payments are structured to field staff and how the process is managed
- Full review of the payroll system to ensure it is capable of delivery without significant business risk

VS field structure

Structure of regions

General feedback:
- The distribution of electorates to each region should be based on cultural and operational strategy
- Initiative to align ECE and VS regions made no material operational impact
- Northland and Whangārei have a stronger affiliation with the Auckland region than the Eastern region.

For consideration:
- Review the number of regions and each regions allocation of electorates to validate it is operationally fit for purpose

Electorate typing

General feedback:
- Electorates held competing views over the accuracy and validity of electorates typing fairly represented the necessary resources for their electorate
- Strong view that Taranaki King Country and West Coast-Tasman should be classed as a 'type 5' and be provided specialist support and resourcing appropriately
- Demands on electorates service delivery are not created equal and should be resourced based on expectations despite the same electorate typing e.g. malls create heavy recruitment and rostering demands

For consideration:
- Review the current criteria for electorate typing and validate it is fit for purpose

Regional leadership

General feedback:

Leadership team
- Each region created their own culture of support
- Electorates responded to the leadership of each region and National Office
- Need mechanism for regional collaboration to support each other and problem solve
- Need for a more regimented structure to support electorates e.g. regular meetings

Role of Regional Manager
- Each regional leadership team was under resourced to provide the supported needed by electorates
- Capacity to support each region is driven by geography
- There is an opportunity to utilize previous staff who have worked in key roles as mentors
- Initial workload and direction of work was light

Role of Regional Advisor
- Electorates found role to be incredibly helpful, particularly for new staff
- Workload of some RA's was intense and enduring
- To build future RA capability, you realistically need an experienced one and one previous RO
- Job description didn't accurately reflect the role
- The need for support came from ROs, as well as LSMs and RRMs
- In some regions, demand for support outstripped supply. Hard to correlate number of RAs to number of electorates/number of new RO's

For consideration:
- Review the regional leadership team structure and identify additional required support
- Review the number of regional managers and regional advisors
- Review how regional advisor workflow is managed e.g. allocated to a specific number of electorates, or LSM expertise specific
- Review the start date and length of each role
- Review renumeration and structure of payment
- Review job description

Backups for RO's and HQM's

General feedback:

- Lesson learnt in GE2020 – should be an assumption for GE2023
- Need a better scoped job description
- During intervening time, they need better direction in how to utilize their time. There is always something to do.
- Consideration needs to be given whether we need RM and RA back ups

For consideration:

- Consider how the role of backup's could be trained and utilized throughout the election period

Maintaining relationships with Māori

General feedback:

- Consideration needs to be given to how we have an enduring relationship with Māori between elections. While Peter's relationships did stretch far, he couldn't cover the whole country and didn't have the networks in certain regions e.g. Auckland, parts of the South Island.
- There was a general acknowledgement of a need to have a relationship manager of sorts between elections – potentially more than just one person given how complex the relationships are.

For consideration:

- Consider how Māori relationship should be maintained between elections

Future planning

General feedback:

- Consideration needs to be given to how the Electoral Commission builds up intellectual property between elections and establish a permanent field staff
- Mechanism to capture information/tools created by the field so we don't reinvent the wheel between elections
- As business improvement changes are implemented, experienced field staff need to be brought in to validate changes are fit for purpose
- More thought needs to be to succession planning. There needs to be a pipeline of talent to fill RM, RA and key National Office roles

For consideration:

- Reassess how intellectual property can be captured and retained between elections
- Consider how concerted effort can be put towards succession planning

HQ structure

General feedback:

Overview:

- Review which responsibilities fall under which role and ensure they are adequately resourced to deliver effectively
- RRM and LSM had clearly defined boundaries of their role
- Review start times of roles, HQM's, AVM, PEM
- Each HQM needs to have a dedicated 2IC
- Greater tiering of administrative staff
- Need to review how type 3 and 4 electorates are resourced
- While we need to backfill, pushing them into another role if they are capable isn't always the answer
- Review of what resources are needed and when so they can be built into structure and therefore give staff greater certainty of work longer term

Role of Returning Officer:

- Review RO role renumeration - set fee at the right level
- Voting place assessment should be done by HQM's, not ROs

Role of Logistics and Supplies Manager:

- Role almost reads as an Assistant Returning Officer

Role of Recruitment and Rostering Manager

- Full understanding of the size and complexities of the job was missing
- Essential to have recruitment experience
- Suggestion RRM title should instead be 'Recruitment and Payroll Manager', or 'Human Resources Manager'. There was more of a focus on payroll and finance.
- Rostering was more of an AVM role than RRM

Role of Advance Voting Manager

- There was often discussion with RRM's and LSM's to determine who owned what
- Required role to continue through ED as these roles had connection with MM
- Role was varied on how it worked across electorates, need to review skill set
- Level of interaction with AVM from RRM was minimal, more involved in operations
- The timing of appointment needs adjusted. Suggested employ before voting place assessment and include them in the recruitment process of voting staff
- The new AVM and PEM roles did not fit well together to ensure clarity on ED

Role of Post-election Manager

- Staff with limited election experience found the role challenging
- Role needs to be better defined with a detailed JD needed.
- Some electorates found there was no requirement for PEM as there were sufficient staff and experience to co-ordinate tasks and processes

For consideration:

- Review HQ structure and identify additional required support
- Review the responsibility of each role
- Review the start date and length of each role
- Review renumeration and structure of payment
- Review job description

IT

Cell phones (eRoll, reduced and standard)

General feedback:

HQ perspective

- The process to setup and allocate eRoll phones to voting place staff was a burden, e.g. attaching two barcodes to each phone, manual 1080 updates.
- Flawed process meant staff needed LSM and RRM EMS permissions to manage allocation to VPs.
- MFA added unnecessary complexity to the process.
- IT struggled to transfer phone profiles to new staff after staff resigned.
- Security restrictions on phones meant staff couldn't do their job and had to use their own.

VP perspective

- The eRoll application was user friendly and easy to manage
- eRoll didn't cope when VA's moved voting places
- Helpdesk wasn't helpful or timely
- eRoll's search capability for electors with hyphens or dashes – couldn't find them
- It would helpful to be provided with a pad pen with each eRoll phone
- Staff had issues with logging in on the first time, MFA code being sent to wrong phone or being repeatedly kicked out
- Larger screen would be helpful
- VPMs need their own phone
- Phones should be setup and functional before leaving the HQ
- Staff given phones in voting place locations where the phone didn't work – not communicated to staff
- Small VPs - too much time between each use and quicker to deal directly with the voter

For consideration:

- Review process to setup and manage eRoll phones for operational delivery including the MFA requirement
- Enable a mechanism to transfer staff profiles to new users
- Review the security restrictions of the different profile phones
- Review the size of phone utilized and volume of phones provided to the field

Email

General feedback:

- Too many email inboxes to effectively manage
- Need more generic email inboxes, particularly for HQMs

For consideration:

- Review setup of email inboxes for HQ staff

Equipment

General feedback:

- IT equipment was overall good but needs further refinements
- Handheld scanners were a great addition but couldn't handle the required volumes
- Need more laptops
- Laptop profiles weren't fit for purpose
- Need tablets for VP assessments to simplify process and reduce time
- Need low investment tech solution for timesheets, reconciliation, supplies
- Need additional phone for VPM at busy A/VPs.
- Improve roll scanners and software. Some scanners were beyond their used by date.

For consideration:

- Review IT equipment requirements for HQ and VP staff

Logins

General feedback:

- Process to activate new accounts took too long and needs to be simplified
- Requirement for an individual login for every staff member was too onerous
- Too many logins with different variations between TUPU, EMS, ERSA, ECHO
- Need to balance security protocols with usability
- Initial login for trainers needs to be set up in advance – too hard once dispatched

For consideration:

- Review process to streamline account activation

Materials tracking:

General feedback:

- Good concept but too clunky and onerous which need improvements
- Areas of focus to improve functionality:
  - Mechanism to track materials to and from hubs
  - Return of materials process including how the Election Night return report is generated
  - Close of Election Night returns report at 4.30pm
  - Technical browser issues

For consideration:

- Full end-to-end review of materials tracking module to improve and simplify process

Setup of HQ's

General feedback:
- Repeated issues and long timeframes with the setup of IT in HQs e.g. printer setup, unstable WIFI
- Tools for HQ setup took too long

For consideration:
- Review process of roll out and installation of IT in HQ's

Support

General feedback:
- Revera was a great IT support service but there was a constant battle to resolve IT issues e.g. computer password issues, printer setup, formatting issues
- Need better communication well in advance from IT before updates are deployed
- Electorate folder structure didn't work for field to utilize effectively
- Need VPN access from the beginning, particularly for RO's in type 3 and 4 who live far from their HQ
- On the ground IT support would have gone a long way to resolving issues and bridge the gap in some electorate's IT skillset

For consideration:
- Review and assess how the field can be better supported in a timely manner including on the ground support
- Review how communication from National Office to the field is managed
- Review the tools available to electorates from the outset and ensure they work as intended

Microsoft TEAMS

General feedback:
- Great collaboration tool for staff
- Consideration needs to be given to how applications within TEAMS could be utilized e.g. use TEAMS forms instead of master forms where possible
- Channels for Q&A were great but there is a need for moderation and oversight

For consideration:
- Review the use of Microsoft TEAMS and how its available tools could be better utilized

EMS

General feedback:

- EMS fundamentally lacked functionality and wasn't fit for purpose to deliver GE2020. While the tried and proven processes for Election Day worked well, Advanced Voting was a mixed. Need to a single approach to AV and ED.
- EMS needs to have a full end-to-end simulation to test data quality and processes are fit for purpose
- The system performance of EMS was an issue at the number of times
- Reports needs improvements across the board:
    - Consistent functionality and process across both AV and ED
    - Ability to export reports into excel
    - Available and ready to go from day one
    - Ability to manipulate data
- Text function was great but needs enhancements:
    - Generation for advance voting place
    - Quality data that is formatted correctly to enable text messaging
- Rostering wasn't intuitive and needs a formal rostering tool:
    - Need to align AV and ED
    - Greater functionality e.g. data entry, print, show staff availability
    - Need a mechanism to easily disseminate information to VP staff
    - Ability to handle large VPs
    - Fit for purpose report capability
- Review each role's level of access to information

For consideration:

- Full review to identify what functionality and reports require further development to reach a 'minimum viable product'
- Assess the scope of work required to consolidate AV and ED into a single approach

Headquarters

Security

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Shared HQ

General feedback:
- Ability to share knowledge and solve problems was great.
- Real challenge with space and balancing between shared and own space.

For consideration:
- Consider how shared HQ's space could be planned to meet the needs of both

Additional requirements

General feedback:
- Larger HQ's are needed to deliver the service the Electoral Commission expects.
- HQ's with split floors created unnecessary challenges.
- Greater consideration needs to be given to private space for interviews, training and recruitment.
- Shared HQ's with a single goods entrances didn't work in practice.
- Small zone four spaces in combination with un-stackable ballot boxes was difficult.

For consideration:
- Review the requirements for HQ's to better meet their needs

Delivering Voting Services

AV & ED

General feedback:
- Separate AV and ED processes need to be consolidated into a single approach.
- The distinction between AV and ED creates a lot of unnecessary work e.g. additional handing of materials

For consideration:
- Review how processes can be consolidated in a single approach

Budget

General feedback:
- Removing budget as a consideration meant Returning Officers were able to put in place the resources electorates needed

EasyVote

General feedback:
- Removing voting place information from the EasyVote pack meant voters were less informed
- Some voters hadn't received EasyVote pack by the beginning of advance voting period

For consideration:
- Reassess how voting place information can be disseminated to the public

Enrolment

General feedback:
- Great to see enrolment on Election Day implemented.
- Some ROE's were a good source of information
- There needs to be greater organisational coordination between enrolment and voting services to deliver a single service.
- Initiatives between ECE and VS didn't materialise because ECE staff on the ground weren't empowered to make decisions.
- Unenrolled voters in rest homes caused significant challenges
- Communication between RO's and ROE's wasn't a two-way street
- A lack of understanding over each other's roles endures
- Perception that permanent ECE staff are more valued than temporary VS staff
- Public enrolment education remains a challenge e.g. voters being dropped from the roll and the inability for Māori voters to switch between electoral rolls
- Question over the role ECE can play to bridge the gap between elections

For consideration:
- Consider how VS and ECE can cohesively work together as one organisation

Hubs

General feedback:

- Hubs need to have the same capability as HQ's including IT.
- There is a need for a hub manager role
- There needs to be more resources and support to operationalise hubs

For consideration:

- Consider reviewing existing requirements for hubs and develop additional resources to assist in the operationalisation of hubs

Planning

- Planning tools provided were a great starting point but need building on
- Need for a more cohesive approach to planning for RO's, LSM'S, RRM'S
    - Integrated calendar across all areas of delivery with realistic timeframes that are upfront from day one to allow electorates to plan effectively
    - Mechanism to assist electorates what their focus should be each day/week
    - Better planning tools to enable a nationally consistent approach. Electorates were left create their own spreadsheets for delivery, phone allocation, and ballot paper allocation
    - Need for better integration between the 'big picture' that filters through to the regional plan, electorate plan, logistics plan, security requirements to allow each to feed into each other seamlessly.
    - Need for more realistic estimated votes
    - Voting data and dashboards were very useful, need more refinements
    - Continuity of information of each electorate between elections
    - Consideration to how shared voting materials are moved around
- Consideration needs to be given to how we archive for the future so electorates in GE2023 aren't starting from scratch. Having a decent FAQ knowledge base for electoral matters would be a great starting point.
- More specific planning resources that meet the needs type 3 and 4 electorates
- Greater planning needs to be placed on the distance and time of MM

For consideration:

- Develop better planning tools that are integrated across the roles of RO, RRM, LSM that enable staff to delivered the services the Electoral Commission expects

Postal votes

General feedback:

- Postal votes need to be managed at the electorate level - National Office process too slow
- The different types of postal need separate names – too confusing
- Process kept changing – needed certainty for planning purposes

For consideration:

- Consider how postal votes could be better communicated to field staff and minimise changes to processes where possible

Key processes

- Prescribed processes work well when well understood
- To plan effectively, processes can't change
- Need for a general review of processes to ensure they are robust and fit for purpose e.g. return of materials, readiness tests
- Additional time during post-election period was great
- Referendum briefing document was great
- Post-election
  - Special vote processing wasn't streamlined
  - Need for tighter frames so one process doesn't slow down another
- Better resources to support the field to deliver 'niche' voting to diverse communities

For consideration:
- Review existing processes and assess which tools could be developed to assist electorates

Voting place assessments

General feedback:
- Time to complete forms varied between 20 minutes and 1.5 hours +
- Required time to complete forms was too onerous particularly for electorates with more than 100 voting places
- In some cases, it is unrealistic for the Returning Officer to do all visits and more practical and useful for the LSM to be involved
- Process to collect information should be digitized in some way
- Flow of form didn't make sense
- Voting place layout drawings were labour intensive

For consideration:
- Review the overall layout of the form to balance efficiency of capturing information, including how the process could be digitized

Rostering for voting places

- Need for greater national consistency in how breaks are managed in the voting place
- Better communication with staff in how much work is available
- Better manage how many consecutive days staff should be rostered in a row
- Better tools to disseminate rosters to staff early
- Consider splitting the Election Day shift – too long

For consideration:
- Develop better guidance and tools to roster staff in voting places

Security

[redacted]

Support

- Need for more support/resources to access and promote voting to Māori/Pasifika communities More support to access and promote youth
- National Office sometimes did not understand issues at the coal face, felt patronised at times
- Need for expert advice across all business units to field like Marica provided for property
- Extreme examples of type 4 e.g. Northland, West Coast-Tasman and TKC need specific support given their unique logistical challenges
- National Office needs to support the field more effectively in future elections. There needs to be an acknowledgement GE2020 pushed people to the edge – again

For consideration:
- Develop new resources in targeted areas of need to support the field e.g. demystifying marae voting

Voting place processes

Set up

- Access to videos on cardboard set-up at the VP
- Cable typing ballot boxes great, but need more awareness

End of day reconciliation + pack up

- Lack of confidence and clarity over process. Refinements needed:
  - Streamlining of process
  - Clearer instructions
  - Train other staff to assist Manager
  - Provide training video to show how to carry out process
  - Consider digitizing reconciliation process
  - Consider having the ability to take photo and send through reconciliation results to HQ

Enrolment

- When staff were faced with differing enrolment circumstances, they were unsure of the correct process e.g. change of address within the same electorates, or already enrolled online but needed to re-enrol again
- Too onerous to fill out both special vote form and enrolment form – need one form
- Concern electors appeared to have dropped off the roll
- Change of address and new enrolments should have separate forms

Translation information

- Other languages should be considered e.g. Arabic, Spanish, Kiribati
- Providing a list of translated names of the parties would be helpful
- Voting information, especially referendum information, should be provided in a broader range of languages
- VA's with bilingual capability should be a greater focus in the future
- Instructions on when to use the guide for the VA

Managing a voting place

- Need to better under role and responsibilities
- Build up competencies to carry out tasks and supervise process
- Consider how other staff could support manager
- Need to each role to understand each other role and assist others in their tasks

Staff management

- Management of issuing staff – some had long queues, others had nothing to do
- Some voting places simply just didn't have enough staff to cope
- Need better mechanism to communicate with HQ if struggling with existing number of staff
- How to manage staff rosters/breaks
- VPM's need access to staff rosters and contact lists

Pay

- Better communication from HQ when staff will be paid
- Payrate inadequate for the work required to set up, operation of voting place, count, and pack down
- Ability to provide coffee or lunch goes a long way
- Compensation for kms travelled needs to be considered when staff travel long distances

PIMs

- Some staff found the PIM confusing, needs to be simplified
- Need for better instructions on pack down process
- All PIM's should have reference to the count instructions
- The issuing sheet was clearer to follow than the same instructions in the PIM

Scrutineer sheet

- Staff from previous elections found the new process to be a great improvement
- Some staff found the process to be unnecessary and disruptive to the vote issuing process

Special vote issuing process

- Too complicated, needs simplification. People didn't understand the 'why' and explaining this to a voter.
- Understanding the importance of doing it right – ramifications if not
- Staff didn't understand what a special vote was. They were under the impression there were different 'types' of special votes and understanding the different scenarios.
- Confusion with top right section of SV declaration form e.g. tick SVS
- Using black stickers were time consuming, better if ballots were pre-stickered
- Better FAQ for voters explaining why they were a special vote
- Clear guidelines about what should be a special vote e.g. change of address within an electorate
- Special vote declaration form didn't cover all reasons e.g. change of address
- Need to simplify special vote issuing sheet – too wordy

Managing supplies

- Need for better understanding of:
    - VPM - hands on preparation with materials
    - VPM folder provided upfront so they are better prepared
    - The interaction between electoral rolls and stamps
    - Phasing

Communications

Advertising

General feedback:
- "Vote early" campaign was good but needed a greater focus on the middle weekend
- Limited campaign in local community newspapers

For consideration:
- Tools to enables electorates to advertise in their local communities

Support

General feedback:
- Comms team was nonresponsive when support was needed
- Difficult to acquire EC images for collateral when needed
- Allow RO's to have greater discretion at a local level

For consideration:
- Comms toolkit provided to RO's from the start

Social media

General feedback:
- Useful to have own Facebook page to engage with community and advertise voting services

For consideration:
- Consider what tools social media tools be devolved to electorates

Equipment and Supplies

Collateral

General feedback:
- Diversity of posters and brochures used in voting places were well received
- Collateral used by RM's, RA's, RO's were too late and weren't used

For consideration:
- Review process to the development and production of collateral with comms

Packing

General feedback:
- Need for a structured approach to supplies - information was too piecemeal.
- A centralised depot for generic materials in urban centres needs to be considered
- M46 process needs to be streamlined, timely with better guidance from NO
- Double handed process to enter information both ERSA and EMS for rolls/ballots

For consideration:
- Review how the packing process could be better understood and streamlined to operationalise

Mainfreight

General feedback:
- Service and relationship with Mainfreight inconsistent between electorates
- Delivery of pallets without documentation occurred repeatedly
- Lack of visibility of tracking Mainfreight and Bluestar materials
- Challenges with coordinating the pickup of voting place materials

For consideration:
- Review how the management of the relationship could be better coordinated and consider what elements of the pickup could be devolved to electorates to manage.

Supply items

General feedback:

- Positive response to new items including staff ID's, COVID-19 related materials
- First supply of electoral rolls/ballot papers was insufficient for some electorates
- Existing items that require further refinements:
    - Higher volumes of signage
    - Drop files weren't fit for purpose and difficult to construct
    - Ballot boxes need to flat tops
    - Instructions to construct cardboard should be better located
    - Ballot box stickers for electorate names were insufficient – too small
    - Greater consideration to collapsible and reusable equipment
    - Bring back 'I have voted' stickers
    - Need proper clipboards – clipless didn't work
    - Language guide should include Spanish
    - Larger vote issuing tables, especially for shared voting and SV's
    - Sturdier vote issues tables and voting screens for elderly
    - Referendum purple should be brighter. At a distance, the referendum and Māori ballot boxes looked the same.
    - Digitize the street index. The text is too small and time consuming.

- Initiatives for GE2023:
    - Reduce required equipment for MM
    - How colour coordination could be further enhanced to other supply items e.g. shared voting OVs
    - Digitization of master forms
    - Numbered boards or prompts to help direct voters

For consideration:

- Reassess the scale of the first supply of electoral rolls/ballot papers
- Review what existing supply items require further refinements and any additional items

Timeframes

General feedback:

- Supply timeframes were inconsistent at times
- Disjointed supply lines for equipment
- Voting material supply didn't meet the needs of training periods
- Just in time delivery of supplies to HQs and VPs caused extra stress, particularly for type 3 and 4 electorates

For consideration:

- Review supply timelines to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet electorates needs

Volume rationalisation

General feedback:

- Many electorates having an oversupply of some items and an undersupply of others
- Greater weight needs to be given to environmental consideration and reducing waste

For consideration:

- Consider what efficiencies could be made to reduce wastage where possible

National Office

Team structure

We liked…/What went well

- Clear leader who supported and advocated for VS.
- Clear who to go to (e.g. SMEs)
- Support team worked well together.
- Flat structure: decision makers (mostly) available.
- Flexibility: people supporting others/ field (not rigid in one role).
- People doing development, then implement and support others (understand the 'why').

We wonder

- Why it was so difficult to get good resources?
- If how we are structured is the most efficient way to get things done (RASCI).
- Why we have so few permanent roles?
- Why we are expected to reduce numbers to few VS staff in b/n cycles?
- Why we don't have a small permanent field?
- What it would be like to have one operational structure at the EC?

Recommendations

- Split notes of SME and project management. (12)
- More people with diverse skills and backgrounds. (7)
- Bringing in expert resources – embedded in the team, e.g. Comms, HR). (7)
- Smaller teams within the team with delegations. (4)
- Permanent field/ Panel of voters. (4)
- Clearer job descriptions and accountabilities
- Clear and common approach to how we do things.
- Allocate work based on strengths.

Planning

We liked…/What went well

- Stand-ups.
- Run across Commission.

We wonder

- Why the urgency wasn't there earlier?
- Why didn't we scope earlier?
- Why other teams don't understand what VS has to do to deliver a GE? And Why they didn't follow our requests?
- Why management team didn't react?
- Why didn't stick teams stick to deadlines?

Recommendations

- Ensure everybody (VS/EC) understand the critical path (+ critical elements within it).(14)
- Ensure we fully understand the impacts before we commit to change (EC – wide). (10)
- The VS work programme for 2023 starts now. (10)
- Involve the organisation in the planning from the start. (2)
- Look at international experience. (1)
- Ensure we understand our deliverables + dependencies from the beginning. (1)
- Communicate clear dependencies to the organisation.
- Retain regular team meeting throughout.
- The VS work programme for 2026 starts now!
- Ensure we have agile but disciplined planning.

Resourcing + workloads

We liked…/What went well

- Internal comms resource for team.
- HR resource embedded in the team to support arising issues.
- Value institutional knowledge.
- No budget election! Helped get us through.
- Effective short-term staff took pressure off.
- Short-term staff (casuals/contract workers) spread the NST load amazingly.
- Succeeded in designing/ developing + delivering a huge amount of work (including new staff) in a short time frame.
- Resource for local solutions available.

We wonder

- Why we were so short staffed?
- Why the business didn't scope stuff out of the programme?
- If our electorates would have better understood some of our processes if they had the manuals earlier and they were better targeted to them.
- If VS had said 'no' earlier if workloads would have been reduced/better prioritised.

Recommendations

- We need to learn how to better support new staff. We lost several staff in year 2. (6)
- Being able to bring staff on earlier. (6)
- Seniors need to be 'officially' paired with juniors to spread the load, BCP reduce workloads. Succession planning. (5)
- Catch the issue well before people are not in a position of not being able to say 'no'. (4)
- Getting specialised resource when needed (e.g. HR, comms). (2)
- If we want more staff people need to be available to teach. (2)
- Casuals need to become permanent and part-timers. This would improve reporting lines. (2)
- Ways to attract talents (not just financial). (1)
- Delegation opened up. Financial/Personnel. (1)
- Permanent VS field structure.
- Transparency of TOIL across the organisation.
- Clearer path to who does what. Less ambiguity.
- Permanency of resources shouldn't need EC Board approval.
- Or better able to shuffle/ replace staff in wrong role.
- Resource for slack. 80% commitment so crisis ≠ 120%.

Support from the rest of the business

We liked…/What went well

- ECE field staff worked in voting places (VA role).
- Legal team provided consistent and excellent support.
- Admin staff within CS provided good support and attitude.
- Comms worked well to help Te Reo Māori voting place Māori TV.
- The 'do-ers' and frontline staff across the business are generally very good and supportive.

We wonder

- If more elections experience would have helped other teams?
- If inter department project teams would help?
- If everyone in the organisation understands the commission's mission.
- If other teams understand the scope and scale of delivering an election (timing/work programme).
- What the contribution of SMT is to the challenges/issues we face as an organisation.
- If we would be run around if team members understood their role in their teams.
- If we can have wider teams comms i.e. wider EC stand up.
- If we can bring in expertise vs. internal development and timing.

Recommendations

- Understanding VS dependencies and timelines, what their role is and what we need them to do not what they think needs to be done (9)
- All teams in a state of readiness not just VS. (5)
- Changing EC structure, make it fit for purpose. (4)
- Working up from VS/ECE. (2)
- Communication and expectations between team. (1)
- Current system functional and fit for purpose.