

Out of scope

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29. We are investing significant staff time and resources to design and implement improvements to quality assurance controls following the Auditor-General's review of counting errors in the 2023 General Election. [REDACTED]

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Overview of the quarter

Our priority this quarter was to deliver a successful by-election for Tāmaki Makaurau. Staff and resources were reallocated as necessary to prepare for and deliver the by-election. The timing of the by-election had an impact on progress in other areas, in particular this has delayed work and testing of technology systems that need to be completed before our operational simulations for the 2026 General Election can begin. We also continued to provide enrolment support for local elections and supported the release of the Representation Commission's final report.

Highlights



Delivery

2500 voting hours provided for Tāmaki Makaurau by-election.



Preparation

Test of headquarters processes completed in July.



Organisation

Advisors recruited to expand the Board's governance capability.

Key organisational risks

Risk	Explanation and planned mitigation
Scale of change impacts Commission's ability to deliver effectively	Concerns remain due to the volume of work, the time remaining, capacity of key people, the readiness of technology systems and the resources required to complete development and simulate the improvements and enhancements that were identified for the 2026 General Election. The Programme Board is focused on confirming the completion and readiness status of key projects and deliverables, as well as identifying any critical risk areas needing reprioritising or resourcing.
Failing to deliver on a critical legislative and / or regulatory change	Final decisions and dates from the Electoral Amendment Bill are still pending, and there is limited time for the Commission to operationalise and implement the legislative changes required for the 2026 General Election. However, the Commission has a good understanding of potential legislative changes and preparations are proceeding, including work on an implementation 'blueprint' and determining mitigations.

Upcoming milestones

Late November	Operational simulations for 2026 General Election begin
1 Dec 2025	Select committee report on Electoral Amendment Bill due.

Non-financial performance

Progress on strategic priorities

Priority 1: Strengthening our foundations

- We recruited three external advisors, David O'Connor, Murray Jack and Susan Elliott ONZM, to help support the Board and provide additional expertise in risk and assurance, innovation and change, and strategic communications in support of change.
- Work continues to grow the Commission's risk and assurance maturity. Workshops have been held with the executive leadership team to ensure they understand their role in risk management and to review strategic and entity level risks. The enrolment workstream of the 2026 General Election programme has reviewed and updated the controls and mitigations for their key risks.
- By-election risks were reviewed in advance of the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election. The by-election also provided an opportunity to test some changes to our manual vote count and results recording processes that had been designed to provide greater assurance during preliminary and official results processing. Changes to manual processes and our Election Management System (EMS) were also tested during the headquarters test in June, see the '2026 General Election Preparations' section below.

Priority 2: Modernising electoral services

- In late September, we released a request for quotation (RFQ) to supply email and SMS campaign capabilities for the 2026 General Election and delivered a market briefing, which was attended by representatives from 20 suppliers. This contract will be for one year to enable us to trial a digital first approach for some 2026 General Election communications, including supporting the provision of EasyVote cards and enrolment prompts.
- We are progressing the establishment of the modernisation programme and in late September we engaged a consultancy firm to provide advice and assistance with the establishment of the programme. The key steps to support a business case include developing the problem statement, intervention logic and high-level draft future state; engaging with Treasury on the type of business case needed; and developing an implementation plan, including recruiting a team to undertake the business case development.
- We have engaged with the Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and NZ Transport Agency to start scoping the work required to reestablish data sharing processes and to extend the arrangements to include sharing of email addresses and mobile numbers if relevant proposals in the Electoral Amendment Bill are passed.

Priority 3: Building knowledge and trust

- During the quarter, our community engagement staff conducted 506 information or education related activities across the country (77% in person), including attending 124 events. As well as sharing key messages, staff collected 2,784 enrolment forms, provided information to 387 people who expressed interest in election work and established almost 200 new community connections.
- Our planned public communications included the release of the final Representation Commission report and information about the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election and local elections, including enrolment and roll change deadlines.
- We responded to concerns raised on social media at the end of July that people were not on the electoral roll as they could not find their record when searching our Enrol Online application. There were also concerns raised that Māori were being removed from the electoral roll or shifted between rolls without consent. We made a media release and shared

information through our social media channels to confirm we do not make unauthorised changes to enrolment records, provided advice on how to search for enrolment records and explained reasons why some electors cannot view their records through enrol online. We encouraged people with concerns to contact the Commission. We are looking at how we can change the messaging in Enrol Online to improve the user experience when people check their enrolment details online.

- We received our results from the April 2025 Public Sector Reputation Index survey run by research agency Verian. The survey asks New Zealanders to rate their perceptions of public sector organisations based on a series of attributes related to trust, social responsibility, leadership and fairness. This was the second year the Commission has been included in the survey. While it is too early to establish any performance trends, insights from the survey will help inform our approach to maintaining public trust and confidence and our reputation.
- Our overall reputation score was 65, which was above the average reputation score of 64. We ranked 29th out of the 57 public sector organisations included in the survey. In 2024, our overall reputation score was 67 and the average reputation score was 64.
- Compared to 2024, the Commission's results had improved most in the area of trust, although there was a decline in agreement with the statement 'can be relied upon to protect individuals' personal information.' This decline may be related to the release of a report into allegations that census and Covid-19 vaccination data was used by for electioneering purposes.

Our main activities

2026 General Election preparations

- We are currently in Tranche 2 of the General Election 2026 programme.



- The second stage of our readiness programme, a test of processes that will be undertaken at electorate headquarters, was conducted over two days in July. This included testing technical changes that had been made to the Election Management System (EMS) to improve quality assurance functionality and progress monitoring at critical steps in the post-election processes. We also tested changes to manual count and results recording procedures that were subsequently incorporated into processes for the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election.
- Procurement of a supplier to deliver the Commission's IT Security Operations Centre was completed and a preferred supplier has been selected for the delivery of temporary IT hardware devices for the general election and any electoral events occurring before then. Our request for proposal (RFP) for storage and domestic freight services closed in September and responses are being assessed.
- Securing of electorate headquarters is well underway. Many properties used for the 2023 General Election have been vacant since then and are available at competitive rents. As at 30 September 2025, we had secured leases for 44 of the 64 electorate headquarters we will require from next February. Leases for enrolment processing hubs in Wellington and Christchurch had also been signed.

- Regional advisors, who assist electorate managers, commenced their employment with the Commission in July with two weeks of training. They contributed to the headquarters test and are now assisting with securing premises for electorate headquarters. The recruitment of 64 electorate managers is currently underway.
- The Board approved revised controls and an implementation workplan for managing the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, including during election events. The focus of the revised controls is on managing risk associated with fatigue.

Tāmaki Makaurau by-election

- Preparations for the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election included:
 - securing a temporary electorate headquarters and 115 voting place locations, including 14 bilingual kaupapa Māori voting places
 - recruiting temporary staff to 421 election delivery roles and providing training, including bilingual delivery of training to kaupapa Māori voting place staff
 - comprehensive security preparations, using a scaled version of the interagency support model we have developed for general elections
 - a public information programme that included media releases, advertising, distribution of information through a range of channels and to stakeholders, and community-based information activities.
- Overseas voting began 20 August and advance voting started 25 August. Election day was 6 September. We provided over 2500 voting hours in total.
- Official results were released on schedule on 17 September and the Writ returned on 23 September.
- As well as allowing us to test planned changes to manual vote count and results recording processes, the by-election provided an opportunity to test our revised approach to identifying and managing political neutrality and potential conflicts of interest when selecting voting places.

27.2% of enrolled electors cast a vote

12,071 votes cast

9379 ordinary votes (77.7%)

2692 special votes (22.3%), including 156 overseas votes (1.3%)

1,383 disallowed votes

6,516 ordinary and special votes cast in advance (61.0%)

2025 local elections support

- Advertising for the Māori electoral option ended 9 July, ahead of the exemption period for the local elections. Advertising encouraging voters to enrol or update their details for the local elections ended on 31 July. The focus of our communications then shifted to helping electors find information provided by local authorities.
- During the nomination period, we confirmed the enrolment status of over 700 candidates and nominees.
- Enrolment data extracts and printed rolls were supplied on schedule.

2025 electorate boundary review

- The Representation Commission delivered the final report on the 2025 electorate boundary review to Parliament and the Governor-General on 8 August. The report and interactive maps were published on our elections.nz website and the release was accompanied by media activity and information for stakeholders.

- Updates to our IT systems, processes and materials to reflect electorate boundary and name changes will be managed as part of the 2026 General Election programme.

Other activities

- We have continued to work with the Ministry of Justice on the Electoral Amendment Bill, potential referendum, and Census modernisation implications for electoral boundaries.
- The Board was asked to appear before the Justice Select Committee on the Electoral Amendment Bill. This prompted media attention and enquiries on the time it takes to produce the official results, and the expected effects of an earlier enrolment cut-off.
- In September, we referred five matters to the Police related to social media posts made on election day and one matter relating to a billboard on display on election day for the Tamaki Makaurau by-election.

Out of scope

Overview of the quarter

Election preparations continued, including readiness and assurance activities and the delivery of systems changes and information following the passing of the Electoral Amendment Act in December. Our enrolment activities included checking elector eligibility for local elections special vote declarations. We completed post-election activities for the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election, including processing candidate returns and a review to identify potential improvements.

Highlights



Delivery

Checked 24,000 special vote declarations for local elections.



Preparation

Completed first phase of election readiness simulations.



Organisation

Assurance plan covering all election processes developed.

Key organisational risks

Risk	Explanation and planned mitigation
Scale of change impacts Commission's ability to deliver effectively	Careful management is required of the volume of work, the time remaining, capacity of key people, the readiness of technology systems and the resources required to complete development and simulate the improvements and enhancements that were identified for the 2026 General Election. The Programme Board is focused on confirming the completion and readiness status of key projects and deliverables, as well as identifying any critical risk areas needing reprioritising or resourcing.
Failing to deliver on a critical legislative and / or regulatory change	We now have confirmation of the scope and timing of legislative changes, with the passing of the Electoral Amendment Bill on 16 December 2025. With the election date also announced, the Commission is now adjusting delivery plans and budgets for election delivery requirements, implementing legislative change and required operational improvements.

Upcoming milestones

February 2026	Fit out and establishment of electorate headquarters
March 2026	Electorate managers receive training
March 2026	Second phase of operational simulations for the 2026 General Election
Late March 2026	Māori Electoral Option packs distributed

Non-financial performance

Progress on strategic priorities

Priority 1: Strengthening our foundations

Strengthening election quality assurance

- We have finished reviewing our vote count and quality assurance checks and closed the related recommendations from the Auditor-General's report into vote counting errors in 2023 and the PwC report on our enrolment and post-election quality assurance processes.
- An assurance plan has been finalised to ensure we have robust and documented assurance and oversight activities across election processes each electoral cycle.

Improving our core systems

- Improvements to our enrolment and election IT systems have been built and were tested as part of the first phase of simulations for the 2026 General Election, as discussed further below. These improvements include changes to our recruitment system to make it easier to onboard and recruit temporary staff and improvements that partially automate and bring greater efficiency to the qualification process for overseas, remote, and dictation service voters.
- A new intranet was implemented in November, replacing the aging technology platform. This includes the intranet used by field staff during the election and will improve access to online instructions and training materials.

Priority 2: Modernising electoral services

Digital communications and data matching

- As well as delivering services for the current election, the use of digital communications and data matching in the upcoming general election will provide critical information to inform the design of automatic enrolment updates and the next phase of digital communications.
- We have signed a contract with a provider to deliver direct digital communications (SMS and email) for the upcoming Māori Election Option and enrolment update campaigns and digital delivery of EasyVote packs. Preparations are progressing so that electors who have provided email and mobile phone details will receive digital communications instead of print communications via post.
- We are working with the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, Department of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Social Development to update our data sharing agreements as part of work to reestablish data matching processes before the 2026 General Election.

Priority 3: Building knowledge and trust

Transparency of progress

- In October, we provided a public update on our progress implementing recommendations from the Auditor-General's report into vote counting errors in 2023. This included the release of the PwC report into our post-election and enrolment quality assurance processes and a progress update on recommendations from that report.

Information for political parties

- The Board has met with the leaders of some political parties and will continue to do this in the coming quarter. The meetings cover our approach to election delivery and political neutrality.
- Feedback was sought from party secretaries on our updated guidance for voting place selection. The Board will confirm the final guidance and approach next quarter.

Building community knowledge and awareness

- We held a series of workshops in November with representatives from communities with lower levels of participation to understand their barriers, motivators, and perspectives on enrolment and voting. These sessions helped inform development of our public information and education strategy for the 2026 General Election, which was finalised in December.
- The suite of languages that we provide core information in on enrolling and voting was updated following advice from the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and Ministry for Pacific Peoples.

Our main activities

2026 General Election preparations

- We are currently in Tranche 2 of the 2026 General Election programme.



Preparations

- We have nearly completed the first phase of temporary accommodation procurement. As at 31 December 2025, we had secured three enrolment processing sites, a location for the central processing team (who provide overseas, remote, and dictation voting services), and 63 of 64 electorate headquarters.
- We recruited 64 electorate managers to start in February 2026; 1,100 applications were received for these positions. Recruitment for a number of other temporary roles was also completed or is underway, including regional training managers, the Logistics and Supplies Manager and the Recruitment and Rostering Manager for overseas operations. Recruitment activity will increase as election delivery preparations progress.
- Procurement for an 0800 information contact centre provider and international courier services was completed.
- Paper for ballots has been received.
- Nominations were received from support agencies for the Senior Officials Committee (SOC), which enables senior level oversight of progress. SOC is expected to start by March 2026.
- The inter-agency Risk and Security Working Group was established and met for the first time in November. The purpose of the group is to help mitigate operational risk and respond to issues that may arise during the election event. The group has started to develop a shared understanding of the risk environment.
- We continued to work with the Ministry of Justice on the Electoral Amendment Bill and related regulation amendments.
- Priority IT system changes required to implement the proposals of the Election Amendment Bill were completed.

Readiness testing and assurance

- The first phase of simulations of our core systems and processes was completed in December. No major issues were found. The simulation included:
 - recruitment and training systems and processes and interoperability with the Election Management System (EMS)
 - nominations and ballot paper production
 - headquarters' processes.
- We commenced detailed planning for the simulation of post-election activities in headquarters that will take place in March. This will include testing a number of new manual and automated quality controls.
- We are implementing partial automation of the qualification process for overseas voting to improve efficiency and reduce a bottleneck in post-election vote processing. Qualification establishes whether a voter is eligible to vote by verifying their presence on the electoral roll. Partial automation is a first step toward potential full automation in future cycles. The first stage testing occurred in December. Overall, the test was successful and indicated the new process should bring the expected efficiency benefits.

Local elections support

- Our provision of enrolment information and services for the local elections concluded.
- We delivered 3.6m mailout packs to enrolled New Zealanders, 52,000 SMS texts to people on the dormant roll and 28,000 letters to electors on the unpublished roll. In addition, we ran a public awareness and education advertising campaign and held 1,082 community education activities.
- There was a significant increase in enrolment activity by electors, compared to the 2022 local elections.

2025 local elections	2022 local elections
Over 710,000 enrolment updates processed (79% online)	Over 330,000 enrolment updates processed (60% online)
Over 700 enrolment checks completed on candidates and their nominators	Almost 900 enrolment checks completed on candidates and their nominators
Eligibility of 24,000 special vote declarations checked	Eligibility of over 25,500 special vote declarations checked

Tāmaki Makaurau by-election

- Debrief sessions were held after the by-election. Relevant suggested improvements are being incorporated into our approach to the 2026 General Election.
- Candidate returns for the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election were due on 15 December and were received on time, reviewed and published.

Other activities

- The Commission's Rotorua and Lower Hutt offices were decommissioned. For cost-efficiency purposes, Rotorua-based staff are now working from home and Lower Hutt staff have been temporarily relocated to the temporary enrolment processing site in Wellington CBD.
- We continued to work with other agencies to progress work related to our functions, including with Police on late candidate returns for the 2023 General Election and by-election campaigning and dual vote referrals, and with Statistics NZ on the implications of Census modernisation on electoral boundaries.

- We hosted the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators' Network (PIANZEA) Senior Officials' meeting in Auckland, with 15 Pacific Countries attending to discuss election delivery. Topics of discussion for this meeting included voter turnout, youth engagement, artificial intelligence (AI) and out-of-constituency voting.
- We received an unqualified audit opinion for the FY25 audit. The annual report was published online and tabled in the House in early November.

Out of scope

Item #: 25.08-01b

Item: Quarterly Strategic Profile Review

To: Electoral Commission

For: Board meeting, 14 August 2025

Prepared by: Kristin Leslie, Manager Strategy Risk and Assurance

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. **note** the draft quarterly strategic profile (**Appendix A**)

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Discussion

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How does it tie to risk management in the Commission?

4. Ideally, the strategic profile should tie to the operational risk registers, performance monitoring and underpinning controls that exist in an organisation. The Commission adopted a new risk policy and framework in February 2025 and has started a new approach to implementing operational risk management. The mapping to the strategic profile is anticipated to come once the operational risk register is operating more broadly.

Out of scope

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Appendices

A: Draft Table of Strategic Profile Risk and Trend Ratings

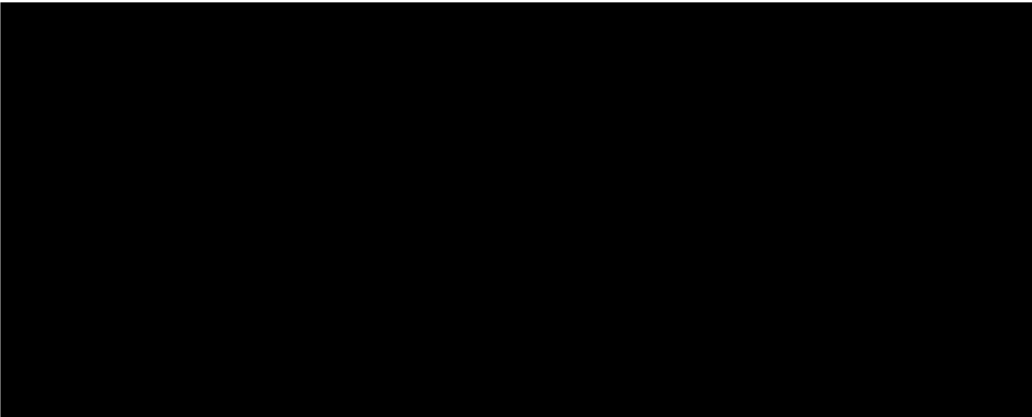
Strategic system threat – failure to achieve strategic outcomes for the system

ID	Risk area (impact)	Summary of current risk context and pressures / Commission response and / or action underway	Rating	Trend	Last modified ¹	Strategic Trend Advisor
		Out of scope				
15	Commission fails to ensure the public have confidence in its role as system administrator – strategic risk	The Commission is presently drawing together activities completed so far and a plan on how the OAG findings will be addressed for GE2026, which will then enable them to be transparently reported on. Whilst the direction of travel has been positive, the activities completed so far don't completely address the causes of the OAG recommendations and further required investment has been identified and sought. Close results and differences through recounts are areas of increased scrutiny and triggers of lower trust for the public.		➡		
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Operational threat – risks that the Commission will struggle to meet its deliverables, or to deliver optimally

ID	Risk area (impact)	Summary of current risk level / action underway	Rating	Trend	Last modified	Operational Trend Advisor
		Out of scope				
14	Being unable to demonstrate our processes manage risk well, and the efficacy of our controls	The OAG report indicated we could not demonstrate this for key processes. The Commission recognises the need to design, assure our design, and run our processes and build appropriate assurance and monitoring of assurance into our processes, for all key processes. Risk is still high until we can demonstrate then design and implement appropriate assurance and performance monitoring. An assurance plan is being developed, and post-election control gap analysis and process documentation work is progressing. Many improvements are progressing, and co-ordinated reporting is being collated. The Headquarters (HQ) Test was run in July, where enhancement to the recording and reporting of the manual count and the EMS software counting programme were explained and demonstrated. The Board attended and received an overview of the underlying improvements work from the Voting Services staff. Finance risk and controls – there has been significant work done to move election finance processes from the EMS system into the Commission’s FMIS. Electorate expense claims can now be processed as soon as they are submitted, ensuring that controls can be proactive and timely, and not reactive as previously. Recruitment processes for the temporary workforce will now be via the Commission’s SnapHire software. This will ensure that all recruitment steps and MoJ check requirements will be visible and monitored for consistency and completeness. There are current delays and rescheduling of programme work, partially due to the operational response required for the Tāmaki Makaurau By-Election timelines, which has diverted key personnel and functions to the preparation and delivery planning for the by-election.	Likelihood: Likely/v. likely Impact: Major		31/07/2025	TBC



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9. Tāmaki Makaurau by-election update

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The Board discussed the new controls in operation in the by-election. Two new checklists will be shared with the Board after the meeting. Anusha also noted that spot-checks by the electorate manager were introduced. At GE26 'stage gates' in the post-election period will help National Office monitor electorate progress and assign help if required. Anusha noted that on by-election night additional manual controls implemented in National Office to verify results. Greater visibility of the complete GE timeline, including post-election will focus all on overall election delivery goal.

The OAG recommendations for improvements create conditions and structures for successful quality assurance processes. As the Commission builds towards electorate manager training in February 2026, Voting Services will consider how a key focus on quality assurance requirements to deliver an accurate election result are incorporated into the broad suite of objectives.

10. Improvement to controls & risk updates

Leigh Deuchars, Gayle s9(2)(a) & Janine s9(2)(a) joined the meeting for this item

The Board:

1. **discussed** and provided feedback on the draft management update on the PwC report

Leigh Deuchars and the Strategy, Risk & Assurance (SRA) team gave an overview of recent progress implementing the recommendations of the OAG and PwC reports, and preparations for releasing the PwC report and the Commission's associated management response. Progress has been somewhat affected by the by-election, but the event also presented an opportunity to test systems and processes for GE26. Gayle and Janine visited Tāmaki Makaurau to observe processes in action, which enabled them to observe new controls in operation, identify some new controls and some areas for improvement. While not a formal audit, they will produce a report and are working with delivery teams to share lessons learned, and scope opportunities.

The Board discussed the management report response to the PwC report, which will set out the Commission's priorities and progress to date. Establishing a clear understanding of the Commission's response to the recommendations will be a priority, given the likely public attention that will result once the report is released. This will help to explain the Commission's roadmap to an improved GE26 and future elections.

Leigh noted that the Commission's public statements will cover the OAG recommendations which highlight the support required to build an organisation in which improved controls

flourish. PwC's recommendations address certain aspects of the OAG recommendations in a high level of detail.

The timeline for completing the Commission's tasks will be determined by available resourcing and GE26 delivery requirements. Testing and simulation plans will need to be determined before the Commission can commit to implementing by a particular date. The Commission will state that credible and viable controls have been designed, and will be tested and implemented in due course to deliver for GE26.

The report will accompany the PwC report to reflect the Commission's technical response in detail. Actions for 2026 and actions for later election cycles will be identified. In areas in which the Commission is not implementing recommendations because they are unfeasible, the report will make clear the Commission's rationale.

An updated version of the report will be shared with the Board shortly.

Gayle and Janine also gave an overview of their experience observing controls in action in Tāmaki Makaurau. They were impressed by the electorate team including the electorate manager, Gee **s9(2)(a)**. More support from outside the electorate was available than will be the case in GE26. Controls were observed in operation that hadn't been documented previously.

The team identified opportunities to strengthen reconciliation of ballot papers through each stage, and priorities for SRA team advisory work to add value to GE26 work. Potentially this work could also support greater visibility of the control activities and assurance operating, which will help build the levels of confidence as the electoral period progresses.

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Item: 04. Managing enrolment processing after roll deadline for the General Election

To: GE2026 Programme Board

For: Board meeting 25 September 2025

Prepared by: Justin s9(2)(a) Strategic Lead - Channels
Rachel s9(2)(a) Senior Project Manager

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Programme Board:

1. **Note** the demand forecasts and high-level workforce plans for the three roll close scenarios.
2. **Discuss** the impacts the scenarios have on enrolment processing, the voting period and post-election period.
3. **Note** that scenario 3 is the preferred option in relation to an earlier enrolment deadline roll close.
4. **Approve** the recommendation that scenario 3 is the preferred option and will be used as a key assumption in further planning.
5. **Note** there is work still needed to finalise the Enrolment Temporary Workforce Plan and Delivery Plan.

■ Out of scope

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Purpose

7. The purpose of the paper is to provide key information to enable the Programme Board to agree:
 - the level of resourcing for Enrolment processing teams in the pre- and post-election periods, and

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9. This paper outlines three different enrolment close scenarios based on modelling completed by Data and Insights, with input from Enrolment. It covers current and temporary workforce requirements for each scenario.

Background

10. In 2023 our planning assumption was for all enrolment applications received by the enrolment deadline to be processed by the Wednesday, four days after election day, however the volume of enrolments received in the run up to election day meant it took ten days to complete enrolment processing. This placed significant pressure on the timeframes for the processing of special votes and the official count, where some errors occurred.
11. Following 2023 General Election, and the Office of the Auditor-General's review and an audit of enrolment processes, the Commission is looking to implement improvements to enrolment data integrity and assurance processes, and remove pressure on the post-election period from enrolment activity. A proposed change to the enrolment deadline, in the Electoral Amendment Bill introduced in July 2025, will enable enrolment processing to be completed earlier in readiness for the post-election period.

Out of scope

Discussion

Enrolment Roll Close Scenarios

13. As a key input to the Enrolment Delivery Plan, we have developed modelling showing the demand forecast and workforce profile for the following roll close (i.e. all forms are processed, and quality/data integrity checks are completed) scenarios:
 - a. **Scenario 1 - Current state:** Enrolment deadline is midnight on Election Day. Close of enrolment processing received up to Election Day will be close of play Wednesday following Election Day.
 - b. **Scenario 2** - Enrolment deadline changes to E-13: Close of enrolment processing received up to deadline will be by close of play Thursday after the start of the Voting Period.
 - c. **Scenario 3** - Enrolment Deadline changes to E-13: Close of enrolment processing received up to the deadline will be close of play the day before Election Day.
14. The reason we selected the Thursday deadline for scenario 2 is it provides the same number of days to clear the workload as scenario one.
15. We considered a fourth scenario where the enrolment deadline is the day before Election Day, however modelling has not been developed for this scenario on the basis the Enrolment workforce profile would be similar to scenario 1.

Enrolment GE26 Demand Forecast

16. The key assumptions used to build the demand forecast are:
 - a. 2026 Election Day held on 19 September 2026.
 - b. The enrolment rate will be similar to 2023, at 94.7%. The turnout will be similar to 2020 at 82%.

- c. In scenario 1, the assumptions are that all settings are similar to 2023, including legislative settings and processes. Patterns of voter behaviour towards increasingly last-minute enrolment updates and volumes of special votes are assumed to continue.
 - d. Scenarios 2 and 3 assume the enrolment deadline is 13 days, as proposed in the Electoral Amendment Act.
 - e. We have assumed that the planned process and technological changes, such as automatic processing of straightforward Enrol Online updates, changes to TSR processes, and digital elector communications are in place prior to the 2026 enrolment update campaign.
 - f. Scenarios 2 and 3 assume some voters will not have enrolled or updated their enrolment record by the earlier deadline and if they vote their vote may be disallowed.
17. The number of transactions (excluding GNAs and TSRs) predicted are as follows:
- | Scenarios | Start of EUC to Writ Day | Writ Day to start of VP | Voting Period | Post Election (SVD Checks) |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 410,696 | 162,871 | 563,435 | 279,644 |
| 2 | 444,246 | 508,597 | | 199,084 |
| 3 | 444,246 | 508,597 | | 199,084 |
18. There could be additional factors that may influence the volume of enrolment transactions in the run up to the election, including the public information and education campaign messaging and potential use of enrolment hubs to support electors to enrol and/or update their details.
19. If we receive a significant volume of unplanned demand close to either the Writ Day or enrolment deadline, we will utilise the responses outlined in the Enrolment Delivery Plan (which may include TOIL, movement of lower priority tasks to post election, etc.).

Enrolment GE26 Temporary Workforce Profile

20. We have used a range of variables, including work volumes across processing, support and assurance work, average handling times for each task, productive time for each role and attrition rates to build the workforce plan across the three scenarios (see Appendix A). The key assumptions used are:
- a. Working window of 8am – 5pm, 5 days a week.
 - b. A productivity rate of 75% to cater for other activity like team meetings, additional training, breaks, etc.
 - c. A level of absence due to sick/other leave.
 - d. 15% attrition.
 - e. 20% contingency.
 - f. Placeholder resourcing for Enrolment Support and Assurance activity (Quality Assurance Review and Roll Cleanses).
21. Please note this workforce profile does not include:
- a. Time required for training (that will be reflected in the Enrolment Temporary Workforce Plan).
 - b. Capacity and capability required to deliver MEO and/or Data Matching campaigns.
 - c. The operational response to the periods that require short term additional hours (surge capacity). There are operational decisions to be made whether this is achieved through recruitment or TOIL or a hybrid of both.
22. For comparison, we had approximately 140 Enrolment staff for the 2023 General Election (mid-June 2023 – late October 2023).

23. The current baseline for the Enrolment Temporary Workforce is \$5,111,867 (this includes improvement funding that is yet to be confirmed as at the date of this paper).
24. An indicative view is that the personnel costs of scenarios 2 and 3 would be within the baseline, however this will be validated once the final Enrolment Temporary Workforce Plan is confirmed.
25. Both scenarios 2 and 3 will likely be within the original IT requirements and property allocation which is 240 seats across three sites. This will be validated once the final Enrolment Temporary Workforce Plan is confirmed.

Legal Framework

26. Applications received by the enrolment deadline need to be processed in a timely manner to enable the scrutiny of the rolls, the processing of special votes and for the official counts to be completed, and the writ to be returned within the overall election timeframe¹. The legislation requires the writ to be returned (subject to any recounts) no later than 60 days after writ day (section 139 of the Electoral Act).
27. The legal framework currently provides:
 - a. Enrolment applications received after the issue of the writ and up to and including election day must be processed, and eligible persons must be registered to vote for the election (section 88).
 - b. If a person is overseas the deadline to make an application to enrol for the election is the day before election day (section 60).
 - c. Within fourteen days of a registration or an enrolment update the Commission must send written confirmation to the elector by post or hand delivery (sections 89A and 94A).
 - d. The Commission cannot process enrolment applications received after election day until the writ is returned for the election (section 98(6)).
28. The Electoral Amendment Bill proposes that the enrolment deadline will be thirteen days before election day, before the start of advance voting. Under the Bill, any application received after writ day but before the enrolment deadline will need to be processed, and eligible persons must be registered to vote for the election. Voters who turn 18 after the deadline and by election day or who meet the requirement of living at their new address in a different electorate for one month during this period need to apply by the deadline. These applications can be processed immediately after the enrolment deadline.
29. The Bill does not prescribe a legislative timeframe by which applications received by the deadline must be processed. However, the Bill amends regulation 12, requiring the Commission to send Returning Officers a list of late enrolments (people added to the rolls after writ day) as soon as is practicable after the enrolment deadline.
30. The Bill will also allow the Commission to notify electors of their registration or enrolment update digitally e.g. by email. We will still need to provide this written confirmation within 14 days of the registration or update.

Impact of an earlier Roll Close

31. We have done a high-level assessment on the impact of an earlier roll close on enrolment processing, the voting period and post-election (See Appendix B).

¹ Regulation 12 of the Electoral Regulations 1996 requires the Commission, as soon as practicable after polling day to send the Returning Officer the list of people who have been added to the roll for the district after writ day and by the end of polling day to enable post-election processes to get underway.

32. In summary this assessment shows:

- a. From an enrolment processing perspective both scenarios 2 and 3 are workable.
- b. Scenario 3 is the preferred option as it will mean:
 - i. Less likelihood of having to move to shift working during the peak period, removing the complexity of managing longer operating hours and mitigating the risk that our leadership and specialist support (Enrolment SMEs and IT, etc) will be stretched.
 - ii. Easier to recruit staff for the period.
 - iii. Less training effort.
 - iv. Additional time to complete quality assurance/data integrity activities meaning data integrity issues that are likely to impact post-election activities for both Enrolment and Voting Services.
 - v. Better overall operational efficiency.
- c. During the voting period both Scenarios 2 and 3 (but in particular Scenario 2) have a benefit for the voting place by having eRoll information progressively more up to date should it be needed, although this may not have a significant impact depending on voter behaviour, e.g. the majority of votes are cast in the final four days and if voters bring their EasyVote Card, or virtual EasyVote Card.
- d. Scenarios 2 and 3 are unlikely to speed up the vote issuing process as voters who enrol after writ day will still be required to complete a special vote if the voter's name is not on the printed roll in the voting place.

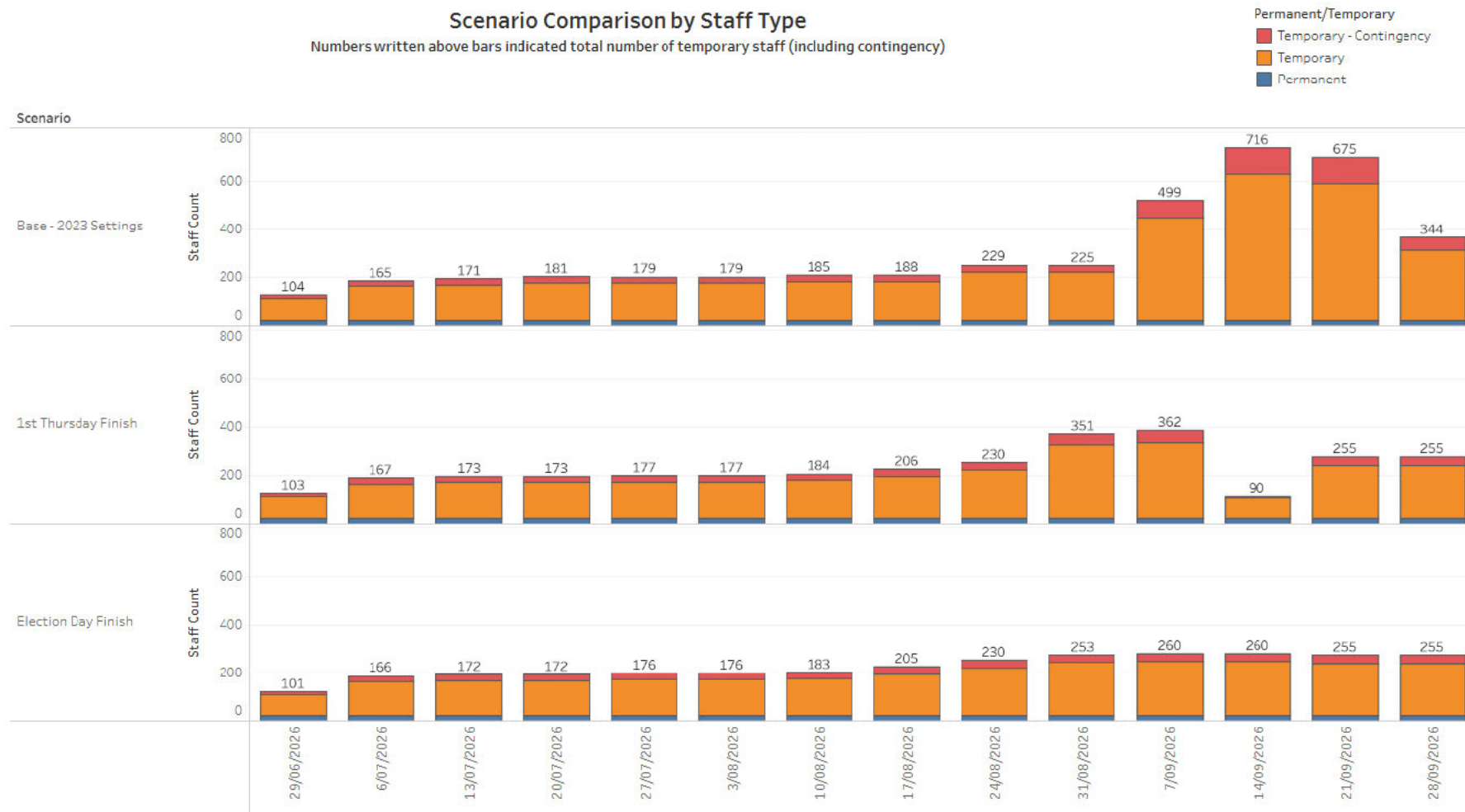
Out of scope

Next steps

- 34. The GE2026 Enrolment temporary workforce plan will be finalised using the approved scenario and provided to the Election Delivery Temporary Workforce workstream and brought to Programme Board for approval as part of the Workforce and Recruitment Plan in late 2025.
- 35. The GE2026 Enrolment Delivery Plan will be finalised using the agreed GE2026 Enrolment temporary workforce plan, including validating any impacts on IT, property and finances, and brought to Programme Board in early November 2025.

Out of scope

Appendix A – Workforce Profile for each Scenario



Appendix B – Impacts for Scenarios 2 and 3

	Scenario two	Scenario three
	Enrolment deadline roll close will be by close of play Thursday after the start of the Voting Period.	Enrolment Deadline roll close will be close of play the day before Election Day.
Enrolment Processing • Data Integrity • Timeliness of completion • Efficiency • Operational simplicity	Shorter processing period but contingency of additional time to clear backlog if there is late unplanned demand before election day. Increased risks of processing errors if there is insufficient time to monitor quality and complete assurance steps. Variable workforce numbers will be harder to recruit for. This scenario also requires the recruitment of surge capacity, which reduces average efficiency and increase risk profile in terms of data integrity.	Longer processing period, we have the full voting period to clear backlog of applications received up to the enrolment deadline. Allows more time for the monitoring of quality (TSR) and assurance steps to minimise the risk of processing errors. Consistent workforce numbers will be easier to recruit for and will mean more targeted recruitment and training. Unlikely to require surge capacity even if there is late unplanned demand.
Voting Period	Unlikely to save time for voters enrolling or updating after writ day who have to cast a special vote if their name can't be marked off the roll. Simplified use of eRoll - just used to look up voter records. Most voters' enrolment records will be up to date by the time they cast their vote to make it easier to use eRoll to direct the voter to the right issuing point and to issue them the correct ballot paper. Increased reliance on eRoll (where people don't bring their EasyVote card or virtual EasyVote card) could	Unlikely to save time for voters enrolling or updating after writ day who have to cast a special vote if their name can't be marked off the roll. Simplified use of eRoll - just used to look up voter records. Slightly fewer voters' enrolment records will be up to date than scenario two by the time they cast their vote. But easier than scenario one to use eRoll to direct the voter to the right issuing point and to issue them the correct ballot paper. Increased reliance on eRoll (where people don't bring their EasyVote card or virtual EasyVote card) could

	Scenario two	Scenario three
	mean longer queues or require an increased number of Voter Assistants	mean longer queues or require an increased number of Voter Assistants
Out of scope	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Item # [Reference number assigned by Board Secretary]

Item: **Security Assurance C&A schedule and PIA process integration**

To: General Election 2026 Programme Board

For: Programme Board meeting 09 December 2025

Prepared by: Emma [s9(2)(a)], Manager Information and Security
Campbell [s9(2)(a)], Senior Advisor - Privacy

Recommendations / Ko ngā Whakataunga

It is recommended that the Programme Board:

1. **note** the plan for Certification and Accreditation (C&A) of Commission systems for the 2026 General Election

Purpose / Ko Te Taki

2. This paper provides the programme board updates and schedules for the Certification and Accreditation (C&A) workplan, including re-accreditation of election management and enrolment systems, and how this works alongside the Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) workplan.

Background / Ko Te Tāhuhu

3. In May 2025, an update was provided to the Programme Board on the progress of PIA work and suggested discussion on the preferred approach to the backlog of system-wide PIAs. From the discussion, it was determined that it would be beneficial to consolidate, where possible, any work mutual to PIAs, C&As and other data- and information-driven assessments.
4. Interim Approval to Operate (ATO) and extensions to Accreditation for a large number of the commissions systems which are critical to the delivery of the General Election was granted in June 2025, recognising the significant amount of work required to re-accredit existing systems and systems yet to be accredited.
5. In July 2025 we appointed a Senior Advisor Cyber Risk on a fixed term basis to commence this work to undertake C&A on these systems. In consultation with the Senior Advisor and the CISO a plan has been created to complete this work, including the assistance of external consultants where appropriate.
6. The Business and System owner paper was approved by the Programme Board in September 2025, outlining the responsibilities for information security of the Commissions systems for these roles.

Discussion / Ko ngā Mahi

7. The C&A Schedule has been developed to ensure high priority or high risk systems are undertaken first, and where previously certified, completed prior to the existing expiry. Re-accreditation before expiry will not always be possible due to the number of systems requiring action and availability of resources across the commission
8. The Senior Advisor Cyber Security will undertake risk and controls assessments. The audit component of the C&A will be completed by external suppliers as is recommended by NZISM. Procurement is underway to select the appropriate supplier or suppliers for this audit work.
9. We will engage external suppliers to undertake C&A for previously uncertified systems, and new systems being onboarded due to the number of C&A's required to be completed before GE26.
10. The C&A schedule has been shared with the Senior Advisor Privacy and to identify where overlap exists between C&A and PIA activities. Risk assessment and audit activities will be extended to incorporate both areas where appropriate. Consolidation of C&A and privacy work will begin with Zendesk (Customer Services) in early 2026.
11. The timelines and milestones for privacy assessment work needed for GE26 are set by the respective workstreams.
12. There are no requirements for the outstanding, full-system PIAs to be completed by any fixed date, and the approach at present is to complete these as and where capacity exists, within the current workplans

C&A Schedule Summary

13. By May 2026 we will have completed the recertification of the critical GE26 systems, including Enrolment, Voting, Snapshire and Data Platform.
14. We will also have completed initial C&A on Zendesk (Customer Services), Ballot paper process and our Standard Operating Environment.
15. The GCDO is currently undertaking All of Government recertification of the Microsoft product suite and expects to release this December 2025. We will then assess the Commission specific C&A needs at this time.
16. The C&A Schedule is attached at **Appendix A**.

Risk considerations

Risk	Rating	Mitigation action	Responsible
If required supporting resources (System Owners, Business Owners, SME's and IT infrastructure) are unavailable then we will not be able to deliver the C&A's as per schedule in time which may lead to having no ATO for GE26 systems.	Medium	Highest priority and higher risk C&A's are being scheduled first. Risk advisor will commence work on multiple systems to be able to pivot as required if resources do become unavailable	Emma s9(2)(a) , Manager Information and Security

Risk	Rating	Mitigation action	Responsible
If there are time constraints for kaimahi that input to, review or approve privacy assessments, then assessments may not occur on time, which may lead to non-compliant handling of personal information.	Medium	Work that involves higher impact to personal information will be prioritised, and 'just in time' assessments can substituted over more planned and structured privacy assessments (eg, PIAs).	Campbell s9(2)(a) Senior Advisor Privacy

Appendices / Ko ngā Whakapiringa

A: C&A Schedule v2

Application, System or Certificate	Size	Priority	Expiry	Expected completion	October		November		December		January		February		March		April		May		June		July		Notes
					SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	SRA	Audit	
Enrolment Systems Certificate	L	s6(c), s9(2)(k)																							
Voting Systems Certificate	L																								
Upload Voting Papers Certificate	S																								
Zendesk (Customer services)	M																								
Ballot Paper Process	S																								
FMIS	S																								
Snaphire	M																								
Enterprise Service Bus (ESB)	S																								
Temporary Workforce Payroll (Chris21)	M																								
Tupu	S																								
Websites (Vote.NZ & Elections.NZ)	S																								
Intranet	S																								
Election Results Phone System (IVR)	S																								
Visitor Kiosk	S																								
AskYourTeam	S																								
SurveyMonkey	S																								
Data Platform	S																								
Business Support Tools (Adobe & Macro)	S																								
Standard Operating Environment	L																								
Microsoft 365 (core productivity)	M																								
Microsoft EntraID	S																								
Microsoft Azure Application Proxy	S																								
Microsoft Azure	M																								
Amazon Web Services, Catalyst Cloud and Revera IaaS Datacentre	S																								
Network	M																								
Microsoft Security Suite and Security Tools	S																								
Software Development Tools, Printing, IT Support Tools and Backup solutions	S																								

Cell: J1

Note: Emma **S9(2)(a)** :
50% reduction in hours avaiatble

Cell: L1

Note: Emma **S9(2)(a)** :
50% reduction in hours avaiatble

Cell: A6

Note: Emma **S9(2)(a)** :
Privacy assessment combined

Item # 6

Item: Post Election HQ Test Plan

To: Electoral Commission

For: 17 June 2025

Prepared by: Adele s9(2)(a)

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. **Note** the objectives and scope of the HQ Test scheduled for 16 and 17 July 2025.

Purpose

2. This paper outlines the high-level plan for preparing for and undertaking the HQ Test, scheduled for 16 and 17 July 2025.

Background

3. Work undertaken within the Logistics & Supplies and Post-election workstreams to update systems and processes has been completed and needs to be tested to ensure that solutions are feasible, fit-for-purpose and ready to be taken forward into a simulation environment.
4. A testing environment differs significantly from a simulation. Discussions often occur alongside systems testing to capture feedback as it goes. Process testing may also be stopped and started, with refinements being made in-flow. It is also expected that issues will be found, including bugs and remediations that will be required for technology solutions. In comparison, a simulation runs in real-world conditions where the technology is expected to be as close to final state as possible.
5. The focus of the HQ Test, as provided in the relevant detailed design documents is:
 - a. [REDACTED] Out of scope [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - b. Proposed new manual controls relating to the preliminary and official counts and new functionality related to improving how HQs complete and manage the quality checks on their results (Post-election Workstream).

Discussion

Objectives

6. The specific objectives of the test are to test system and process changes relating to the following two areas:

Out of scope

Part 2 – Results controls and management

10. Test the new functionality built into EMS to improve its controls and management of the entry of official results. The test will focus on identifying any bugs or changes needed to ensure the functionality operates as expected and determining if it is fit-for-purpose.
11. Test the effectiveness of new controls in the manual count processes (for both the preliminary and official counts), particularly focused on when data is captured, transposed, transcribed or entered in EMS.
12. The test will also provide a means for considering how new instructions and training can be built to support the implementation of the new developments and changes.

In Scope

13. The following specific processes and functions are in scope of the test:

Out of scope

Part 2 – Results controls and management

16. Preliminary Count: Completing a preliminary count with new manual controls (relating to capturing and tabulating data)
17. Preliminary Count: Testing new controls relating to calling in results from a voting place and capturing them at the HQ
18. Official Count: Completing an official count with new controls (relating to capturing data both manually and electronically at the table)
19. Official Count: Testing the following new functionality in EMS:
 - a. Increased data warnings at the point of entering official count data
 - b. Improved visibility over identified and resolved issues, via an issues management screen
 - c. Improved controls around ability to change results, via:
 - i. A new extraction screen
 - ii. A Results History Report
 - iii. Results locking functionality
 - d. Improved views of Māori, Overseas and special vote results sets, for the completion of quality checking and sign-off of final certificates
 - e. New systems-based checks and constraints around the process for finalising the final results certificates.

Out of Scope

20. The following activity is out of scope for the HQ Test:

Out of scope

Part 2 – Results controls and management

- 25. Fully updated count, data entry and results checking instructions and training
- 26. Completing the reconciliation process
- 27. Completing Election Night reasonableness checking
- 28. Providing training on how to undertake the preliminary and official count processes
- 29. Entering a full electorate's preliminary and official results (this information will be pre-populated, except for the count being completed during the test)
- 30. Completing authorisation checklists surrounding results processes
- 31. Controls and count processes relating to referendum results

Test resources and timing

- 32. The test will be conducted using Commission workers. Regional Advisors (RA) will perform the majority of field roles.
- 33. The test is scheduled for half a day on 16 July and a full day on 17 July, following the RA Induction that starts on 15 July.
- 34. The Totara meeting room on Level 3 has been booked for the test. To assist with the movement of additional workers for the test, 10 visitor swipe cards to access toilets are requested and a simplified sign in process for these workers.
- 35. The Regional Advisors will use their laptops to complete the work, but IT is required to provide:
 - a. Monitors for 10 people
 - b. Voting place phones, for the calling in of results using the 0800 line.
- 36. IT will also provide a version of EMS that includes the new code, which has been fully regression tested.

Reporting

- 37. Key findings and recommendations from the test will be provided in an exit report, focused on detailing any identified system bugs and remediations or process changes required prior to the release of the functionality to the Operational Delivery Simulation.

Next steps

- 38. Key stakeholders will be invited to the HQ Test and the final schedule sent out.

Services to Voters

Voting Place Test Exit Report

V1.0

Document history

Version	Issue date	Changes
V0.01	13 June 2025	Issued for review and feedback by team involved in planning and delivery
V0.02	19 June 2025	Issued to Martin Rodgers for review and feedback
V1.0	10 July 2025	Issued to Anusha and Emily for review
V1.0	17 July 2025	Submitted to Programme Board

Document review

Name	Position	Version
Martin Rodgers	Director Voting Services	V0.02
Adele s9(2)(a)	Principal Advisor Voting Services	V0.02
Rob s9(2)(a)	Senior Project Leader	V0.02

Document sign-off

Name / Position	Signature	Date	Version
Anusha Guler / Project Owner			
Emily Redmond / Programme Director			
Programme Board	17 July 2025		

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1. Programme Board Recommendations

It is recommended that the GE2026 Programme Board:

1. **note** the results found in the voting place test,
2. **note** that recommendations in the report with financial impacts will be quantified and brought back to the Programme Board to be endorsed,
3. **endorse** the areas of work to continue, being:
 - assurance - that appropriate levels of staffing are provided for in voting places to match demand, and that effective controls are in place for critical processes,
 - guardrails – that operational tasks are assigned to the appropriate worker to ensure their role is achievable, and that mitigations are in place for changes to processes that might increase personal risk, and
 - enablers – that supporting technology such as voting place applications, physical resources such as instruction manuals, and training materials including eLearning, are fit for purpose,
4. **endorse planning** to an operational readiness simulation, including voting place processes that were out of scope for the voting place test and the filming of processes for training packages.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this test exit report is to document the results, findings and recommendations of the testing undertaken by Electoral Commission during the voting place test.

3. Introduction

The voting place test is the first of a series of testing and simulations in the readiness programme for GE2026. A voting place test differs from a simulation, in that processes can be started, stopped, refined and retested. Technology solutions in a test are usually at minimum viable product stage.

Test implementation started with training during the week starting 5 May, which was followed by three days of testing during the week starting 11 May.

The test utilised a combination of Commission and casual workers to take the role of voting place workers and voters.

The overall purpose of this test is to:

- collect transaction data for vote issuing and voter assistant flows,
- provide proof of concept for new and improved processes in the voting place, and
- understand the outcomes of processes if there are legislative changes to enrolment settings or the addition of a referendum for GE26.

4. Reference documents

Document Name	Document Source
Test Plan	Final VP Test Plan 2025 v1.0.docx
Programme Board Paper	Voting place test paper final.docx
Voting Place Processes	Voting Place Processes WIP.xlsx
Test Input Planning Sheet	VP Test inputs.xlsx
Test Run Sheet	Voting scenarios and runsheet.xlsx
Test Results Data	Timer Data Voting place Test.xlsx
Training review	VS Voting Place Test Training Review - notes.docx
IT Review	Feedback Session - IT - Voting Place Test.docx
Packing review	L&P advice on packing of key voting materials.docx
Print process review	VPT -Print Process Review v2.0.docx

5. Test Scope

The test objectives described below have been classified into three categories:

- A – assurance: to provide the Commission with confidence that the objectives of key processes in the voting place are being achieved, and that risks are being managed effectively
- G – guardrail: to support the election delivery workforce by implementing measures that will prevent unwanted events, or reduce their consequences if they occur
- E – enabler: either a tangible item such as a manual, or intangible such as skills or knowledge, that support processes in the voting place to happen efficiently, effectively, and sustainably.

	Category	Test	Objective
1	A	Time taken to issue a vote	Record timings to issue ordinary, special and takeaway votes under different scenarios. To validate cost models and the EMS algorithm, to plan for appropriate resources in voting places to efficiently match demand.
2	A	Time taken to triage a voter	Record timings for common scenarios with and without eRoll. To validate cost models and EMS algorithm, to match demand as above.
3	E	Training accuracy & adoption	Confirm that changes to training are complete, accurate and well understood by users, particularly improved assurance for Voting Place Managers.

4	E	PIM accuracy & useability	Confirm that voting place manuals (PIM) are complete, accurate and easy for users to find and use information.
5	A	Master Forms accuracy & useability	Confirm that voting place master forms are complete and easy for users to follow, to give assurance and quality control of processes.
6	A	Referendum	Understand and quantify the implications of changes to processes.
7	G	No enrolment during the voting period	Understand implications of changes to processes.
8a	E	Set up process	Confirm improvements to the effectiveness of set up processes, and allocation of tasks during these times.
8b	E	Shut down process	Confirm improvements to the effectiveness of shut down processes, and allocation of tasks during these times.
9	E	Technology: eRoll	Validate that the eRoll application, including improvement to wildcard searching, works as expected, including accurate output. Out of scope – changes to the application due to changes to enrolment settings.
10	A	Reconciliation process	Understand pain points in the reconciliation process, noting that no changes to the app were made before the test.
11	A	Peer to peer review	Understand whether peer-to-peer review provides assurance in the accuracy of processes for issuing officers and voter assistants.
12	G	Takeaway votes issued by issuing officer	Understand if responsibility of issuing takeaway votes can be moved from the voting place manager to special votes issuing officers
13	G	VPMA in small voting places	Confirm the voting place role that voting place managers (VPMA) should be in attached to in small voting places.
14	G	Two VPMU model	Confirm that a two-voting place manager (VPMU) model works in big and busy voting places.
15	A	Chain of custody	Confirm improvements to the chain of custody of ballot boxes and key voting materials.
16	E	Virtual voting card	Understand the useability of a digital EasyVote card in the voting place

Test Results

The results for each test objective are given below.

The impact of each recommendation is summarised in Appendix 1.

6.1	Time taken to issue a vote	Assurance
Result	See the detailed results in section 8. Ordinary vote: • <i>Current model: average 103 seconds per vote</i> • With a voting card: average 119 seconds per vote. • Without a voting card: average 207 seconds per vote. Special vote: • <i>Current model: average 510 seconds per vote</i> • With a voting card: average 331 seconds per vote • Without a voting card: 448 seconds Across the full issuing time, it takes 1.7 times longer to process a voter in the absence of a card. Testing showed that providing eRoll to issuing officers at their desk did not improve the issuing rate. It was more effective for a voter assistant to use eRoll and complete a purple card. Feedback from issuing officers who issued both ordinary and special votes was that they needed to issue only one type for a time; switching between issuing processes between each voter when there was not a gap between voters was too difficult. Issuing rates with referendum did not show an increase in the time taken to issue votes. This may have been affected by issuing officers already being comfortable in the issuing processing when these materials were added to their process. Qualitative feedback found that the colour of voting cards, orange versus grey for general versus Māori electorates was important for issuing officers. The use of digital EasyVote cards was positively received by voters and voting place workers. It was suggested that for Special Vote slips, it would be useful to have information about why the voter was completing a special vote, as is given on the purple voting cards created by the voter assistant. Feedback was also that switching between ordinary and special votes is difficult for issuing officers to manage, so retaining queues with either ordinary or special votes should be continued. The issuing officers found having a constant queue of voters hard to manage, particularly when resetting their desk. Putting a masking tape mark for the queue to wait at, was well received and effective to manage this.	
Impact	The results from the test suggest that the current model/algorithm for issuing ordinary votes underestimates the time required to do this task. Some of this time is likely from the legislative requirement for voters to state their name, and recording votes on the scrutineer's sheet, which has not been accounted for since the algorithm was last quantified. Another change since issuing time was last quantified, is the ability for issuing officers to issue for more than two electorates. The impact of this was approximately 5-7 seconds were added to the issuing time. For special votes, the test suggests that the issuing officers can comfortably issue at least 8 special votes per hour, which is in line with current models. The biggest impact on time to issue a vote is the proportion of voters who get to the issuing desk with a voting card. Fewer voters with voting cards result in longer queues. If the number of voters arriving to the voting place without an EasyVote card or enrolment	

	confirmation continues to increase, then issuing rates are likely to be negatively affected.
Recommendations	- Consider reducing the issuing rate for ordinary votes and continuing the same issuing rate for special votes. - Determine the ratio of how many voters will bring an EasyVote card or Special Vote slip to the voting place, and its effect on the voting place algorithm, as this has the largest impact on issuing rate and queueing. - Introduce voter assistant staffing calculations into the voting place algorithm to improve efficiencies and accuracy at the issuing desk. - Continue to supply low-tack masking tape as part of voting place supplies to assist with queueing.

6.2	Time taken to triage a voter	Assurance
Result	Voter flows during the test showed that allowing voters that knew their electorate, but did not have a voting card, to pass directly through issuing officers, moved the bottleneck from the voter assistant station to the issuing queues. Quantitative analysis of the voter's journey in the voting place showed that there is a net benefit of the voter assistant using eRoll, if the voter does not have an EasyVote card. On average, it took a voter assistant 18 seconds to process a voter where eRoll was not used, to welcome the voter and get them into the correct queue. It took an average of 75 seconds to process a voter where eRoll was used, so the difference of 54 seconds can be attributed to looking up the voter's details in eRoll and producing them a voting card. A voter without a voting card arriving at the issuing desk takes on average 77 seconds longer to be processed than one with a card. This also assumes the best scenario that the voter knows their electorate, so only one electoral roll is checked. When eRoll was removed from the voting place, there were more enrolment forms and special votes issued and as issuing officers took longer to issue votes, the queueing time increased. Feedback from voters was that if they arrived with an EasyVote card, they would have preferred an 'express' queue, to not be behind voters who did not have a card. Where there were two or more voter assistants, it worked best for one worker to triage voters into the queues and to pass voters who needed their details to be looked up to a second voter assistant to use eRoll. Or the voting place manager could manage the first triage. It was noted that some of the voter assistants found it difficult to balance having a natural conversation with voters and to keep to the required script. Some were unaware that they were not following the script.	
Impact	The first election after the Representation Commission can be confusing for voters, to know their electorate, particularly if borders have changed and/or electorate names have been changed. The use of eRoll removes this confusion as the voter can be searched for on the nationwide digital roll and accurate information given to them. If eRoll is not available in voting places and the number of voters arriving to vote without an EasyVote card continues to decrease, then more issuing officers will be required to manage the longer issuing process. The focus of voter assistants, or the voting place manager if they are assisting, is to get voters who have an EasyVote card efficiently into a queue.	
Recommendation	As per 6.1, introduce a voter assistant staffing calculation into the voting place algorithm.	

	• Update the eRoll application to have more on-screen guidance, so that voter assistants can provide the right information to voters without needing to refer to their paper instruction sheet. • Provide better guidance through film or animation to show how triage should work in the voting place, and the role of the voter assistant to prevent bottlenecks while still providing efficiencies.
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6.3	Training accuracy and adoption	Enabler
Result	Face-to-face training was well received by workers. The core processes of issuing votes and using eRoll were understood and applied accurately in the voting place. Changes to the Voting Place Manager training, particularly in a second revised version retested after the voting place test, appeared to work well. It was identified that hands-on practice in setting up and end of day processes in the voting place are necessary for all roles, and a better understanding of the cadence across the day in a voting place. If enrolment finishes before the voting period, then this time in training could be reassigned to these tasks. There was also a request to practice less 'happy path' situations and supporting voting place managers to correct workers who are not working to required processes. There is a need to update eLearning and have this available for those participating in voting tests.	
Impact	• The impact of some processes being undertrained during face-to-face training, such as setting up the voting place, flowed into other processes such as workers not being calm and ready to issue votes at the opening time. • Providing Voting Place Managers with their own bespoke training package worked well but may have implications on the number of trainers required for rural or regional electorates.	
Recommendation	• eLearning must be available to train workers for voting place tests, particularly if they have not done the role before. This needs to be a priority to update before the training test later in 2025. • Face-to-face training time is required to better prepare workers for set up and end of day processes, including the set up for reconciliation. There will be financial impact if this cannot be done within the current allowed training time. • Voting Place Managers should have bespoke training for their role and not attend issuing officer training. They should continue to complete the full eLearning package for all roles at the voting place.	

6.4	PIM accuracy and useability	Enabler
Result	Overall feedback about PIMs was positive with suggestions provided to improve their useability. Improvements related to content can be completed now, while the Sysdoc review will address structural layout and use.	
Impact	PIMs are the critical resource that voting place workers use to provide assurance to, and confidence in, processes in the voting place.	
Recommendation	Content changes: • Combine troubleshooting and common situations sections in the issuing officer and voter assistant PIMs • Separate end of day instructions for advance voting and election day to simplify processes. Changes that will be addressed with Sysdoc:	

	Overview of end-to-end flow and resources for each step, so that Managers can understand where they are up to in the process and how long tasks should take to complete, and other workers better understand their tasks.
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6.5	Master Forms accuracy & useability	Assurance
Result	Master forms used in the voting place test were overall found as being fit for purpose. Feedback suggested to improve on the naming conventions to make them more consistent. All master forms have a <i>MAX</i> number, which assists electorate headquarters workers to prepare forms across all processes for the election. Most forms used in the voting place have a second <i>Form X name</i>, as these names are easier to refer to in the PIMs and in training. It was requested to have a Master forms index in the PIM which would provide the form name, its use and where it is located; for example, the voting place folder or P4 envelope.	
Impact	It is critical for assurance that forms can be located and are completed correctly.	
Recommendation	- Make all voting place master form names consistent - Create a master forms index in the PIMs	

6.6	Referendum	Assurance
Result	The addition of referendum materials as per the GE2020 processes worked smoothly in the preparation of materials and their allocation in the voting place. There were no operational issues observed on the use of a lighter shade of purple on the backs of the ballot papers compared to the darker shade used in GE2020 that did have issues with handling and destruction. The issuing process went smoothly. Voters appeared to find the ballot box without any issues.	
Impact	The test showed a decrease in time taken to issue a vote with referendum. This was likely due to issuing officers having become comfortable with the issuing process.	
Recommendation	- Consider whether the currently reduced issuing rates for referendum need to be decreased as much as has been done in the past. - Use a lighter shade of purple on the backs of the ordinary vote referendum ballot paper. Consider adjusting the purple colour printed on ballot boxes to match this. - Reuse training / processes as for the GE2020 election for referendum, noting that new FAQs and brochures will be required to support the questions asked. - Include referendum reconciliation in the redevelopment of the reconciliation app (untested for the voting place test), with the ability for this functionality to be turned on or off as required for each electoral event. - Incorporate referendum materials in the set up and pack down process development. - Test whether the M46 consignment note process in EMS is accurate for referendum materials (untested in the VP test), including phasing of referendum materials in busy voting places during advance voting.	

6.7	No enrolment during the voting period	Guardrail
Result	Process changes to remove the enrolment function during the voting period were successful at the voter assistant position, but as noted in 6.2, this required the voter assistant to use their script. It did not work if the person had progressed to the issuing desk before being given the enrolment information, particularly if they had been waiting in a queue. The use of a brochure to explain the changes to enrolment settings was an effective tool for voting place workers.	
Impact	There is the possibility of conflict by voters who are not enrolled but still wish to vote, but having the voting place manager or voter assistant to deal with this at the entrance of the voting place should deescalate the situation.	
Recommendation	If there is no enrolment during the voting period then: • Produce an enrolment brochure for voting place workers to provide to people who have not enrolled. • Continue with the script as written for the test. • Incorporate this script into the eRoll application, as noted in 6.2.	

6.8a	Set up process	Enabler
Result	Previous voting place tests have not looked at the set-up of the voting place, while simulations have used experienced workers to do these tasks. It was found in the test that inexperienced workers, particularly the voting place manager, experienced challenges to effectively set up the voting place in the time allocated and to efficiently delegate tasks to the other workers. The voting place managers juggled a range of resources and to find the information required for each step in the set-up, without a good understanding of how long each step would take. Some changes that were trialled in the test, in particular to pack materials by role and to provide a detailed plan on what materials are laid out for each issuing desk for each day were well received.	
Impact	As mentioned in 6.3, if the set-up process is not smooth, then following processes once voting begins can be negatively affected. The financial implications of providing sufficient time to workers for the set-up voting places should be considered. The implications of packing by role to whether this results in additional supplies, in particular supplies boxes, needs to be quantified.	
Recommendation	• Provide task lists and timing in PIMs or other resources so that workers have a run sheet of what is required to be set up, by who and by when. Work with SysDoc on the best format to provide this and how it should look, such as use of more photos, • Implement packing materials per role and provide training material for this. • Provide a voting place plan per day to what and how much of each electorate voting material goes onto an issuing desk, and into the drop files. • Consider where key information such as rosters are packed, for ease of access by the appropriate worker.	

	- Review advice in the Operations Manual that in complex voting places, additional Electorate headquarters support is required for set up and that workers are rostered with sufficient time before each day of advance voting to complete daily set up. - Consider what could be provided in face-to-face training, such as seeing an issuing desk set up with a drop file, and practising setting up the cardboard items. - Consider only having one set of materials on an issuing officer's desk, to minimise confusion. This would be particularly beneficial if a referendum is being held alongside the general election.
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6.8b	Shut down processes	Enabler
Result	Packing down processes were straight forward if the materials had been well organised during reconciliation. The introduction of lists on the inside of the supply boxes were well received and feedback from the workers is that they assisted in the pack up. There were challenges in how materials were labelled for each electorate.	
Impact	The introduction of packing labels on supplies boxes will have a cost but should be nett positive if this reduces the amount of worker time to set up and pack up, as well as supplies being better organised, especially key voting materials.	
Recommendation	- As per the set-up instructions in 6.8a, provide clear guidance of tasks by role and timing of each, and a way for the voting place manager to delegate tasks and ensure that all is on track. - Have separate instructions for pack up depending on whether working in advance voting or Election Day. For advance voting, have the same pack up each day as at the last day of voting, for consistency and simplicity. - Consider a simpler way to pack up, with the use of plastic bags rather than paper envelopes. - Consider simplifying the labels placed on materials, through the modernisation work being done with the Labelmaker macro.	

6.9	eRoll	Enabler
Result	As mentioned in previous sections, in particular 6.2, the eRoll application worked well as a tool with voter assistants. The change made to simplify the wildcarding function was found to have no issues in use or the time taken to complete a look-up of voters' information. The main challenge for the use of eRoll is that the inputs and advice given to voters need to be accurate, to provide good information.	
Impact	If eRoll is not available in a voting place, there is a higher proportion of special votes (and enrolment forms) issued.	
Recommendation	- Implement the new functionality for wildcarding. - Implement more onscreen scripting in eRoll to better guide voter assistants. - Remove the 'initials' block from future production of purple card pads.	

6.10	Reconciliation process	Assurance
Result	Shared electorate voting has many benefits, to minimise the number of special votes issued and to provide a better service to voters. At reconciliation time, having multiple shared electorates becomes challenging for voting place workers, to effectively prepare materials for the reconciliation process. Instructions in the PIM were neither referred to nor used effectively, which likely resulted in the confusion seen with workers of where to put items. Similar to set up, the instructions were spread across different PIMs and it was difficult for the voting place manager to see an order of operation. Once the materials were organised, the use of the reconciliation app was straight forward and accurate.	
Impact	If the reconciliation materials are not clearly organised and complete, the reconciliations will not be accurate.	
Recommendation	• Provide clearer, simpler labelling on materials used in reconciliation, both labels and master forms, ensuring that all materials have marker cards. • Continue the colour coding of electorate supplies (orange – general electorates, grey – Māori electorates, purple – referendum) onto reconciliation materials and envelopes. • Simplify the materials with fewer envelopes and consider using clear envelopes (plastic bags) to provide more assurance that all materials have been accounted for in the reconciliation process. • Update instructions, filming and training on reconciliation to be clear on allocation of roles and the step-by-step process.	

6.11	Peer to Peer Review	Assurance
Result	The peer-to-peer check as used in the test did not work effectively to give assurance on process. It caused queueing of voters for issuing officers, which added to their feelings of being under stress. Subsequently after the test, a simpler peer-to-peer check process has been considered, which would manage the key risk of a voter being issued the wrong ballot paper, with minimum impact on queueing. It was noted that the Voting Place Manager would continue to complete a full process check within the first half hour of the voting place being open.	
Impact	The introduction of a peer-to-peer check while continuing with the full process check by the Voting Place Manager will increase assurance that voters are issued with the correct ballot paper.	
Recommendation	• Introduce a simple peer-to-peer review process and implement this in training materials through video/animation and practice at face-to-face training.	

6.12	SVIO issuing takeaway votes	Guardrail
Result	Feedback from issuing officers was that the takeaway vote issuing process was easy for them to follow and made sense. The timing of the issuing of takeaway votes, while much longer than an in-person special vote, seemed more efficient and effective for an issuing officer to complete, rather than to have the Voting Place Manager complete this.	

Impact	There may be additional eLearning and/or training time required to be added to special vote training, although this will be balance against the removal of training time around enrolment processes, if this service is no longer delivered in a voting place.
Recommendation	Include takeaway votes into special vote issuing officer tasks, including an overview of the process in eLearning and at face-to-face training.

6.13	VPMA in small voting place	<i>Guardrail</i>
Result	Voting place managers in the test had many and varied tasks to complete. Removing them from the issuing role gave them more ability to focus on management. Being available at the front of the voting place was also beneficial to address voter concerns at their arrival, rather than at the issuing desk.	
Impact	Changes will be required to EMS staff structures to allocate VPMA's to the VA position rather than to an issuing position.	
Recommendation	'Attached' voting place managers take the voter assistant position rather than an issuing position.	

6.14	Two VPMU Model	
Result	The feedback of having two voting place managers in the voting place was that they felt more supported. However, it did not result in an effective division of tasks, at any time during setup, the voting period, or during end of day tasks. It was difficult for the manager to know what each was doing at any one time, and the managers still required assistance from Mobile Support.	
Impact	Doubling of voting place manager costs by having two managers fulltime in voting places.	
Recommendation	- Suggest retaining one voting place manager in voting places, but to bolster mobile support at big and busy voting places at key times of the day, such as at morning set up and assurance checks and to cover lunch breaks. - Look at providing mobile support or HQ logistics support for end of day tasks, such as during reconciliation and the preliminary count.	

6.15	Chain of custody	
Result	The improvements to chain of custody processes, such as allocating issuing officers to complete integrity checks during the first day of voting, were understood and undertaken well by workers. These checks were less clear on the second day of advance voting. There was a need to improve pack down processes as described above in section 6.8b.	
Impact	The small increase in costs of suggested recommendations will be outweighed by the assurance that voting place supplies are being better managed and controlled, especially for key voting materials.	
Recommendation	Incorporate a seal log onto the E206 box labels, and the ability to put a ballot box seal onto the packing boxes.	

	- Consider what an integrity check of key voting materials looks like during the advance voting period. - Introduce a pack up exercise into training for voting place managers, and better film or animation for all workers in their eLearning.
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6.16	Virtual voting card	
Result	The use of virtual voting cards was well received in the voting place by both voters and voting place workers. There were a small number of improvements identified that would make the process smoother, which would not impact on the issuing rate.	
Impact	If fewer voters arrive to a voting place with a voting card, then they will take longer to process and more workers will be required to manage queues. There are risks in changing from paper to virtual voting cards, which have been considered, documented and provided to the EasyVote workstream. For example, voters using their phone in a voting place where no photography is permitted, or a perceived risk of someone being able to vote more than once as their voting card is not 'stamped' as with a paper version.	
Recommendation	- Continue to plan to replace paper EasyVote cards with virtual voting cards. - Reorder the steps in the issuing process to first record the electorate / page / line number from the voting card, onto the scrutineer record sheet, so that the voter does not need to hand over their phone to the issuing officer or keep the phone screen active during the issuing process.	

6. Summary of Test Data

The test ran over 3 days, under the following sessions/settings:

- Session 1 (Tuesday): GE23 settings
- 2A (Wednesday morning): no enrolment at the voting place
- 2B (Wednesday afternoon): no enrolment + referendum voting
- 3 (Thursday): no enrolment + increased proportion of special votes issued + use of eRoll at the issuing desk.

Timing for issuing officers included two splits and a total time.

- Split 1 began when the issuing officer greeted the voter, and ended when the voter's name was marked off the roll, or a special vote declaration was given.
- Split 2 started from the end point of Split 1, and ended when the voter left the desk.

The time for issuing officers to reset their desk between voters is a separate data set.

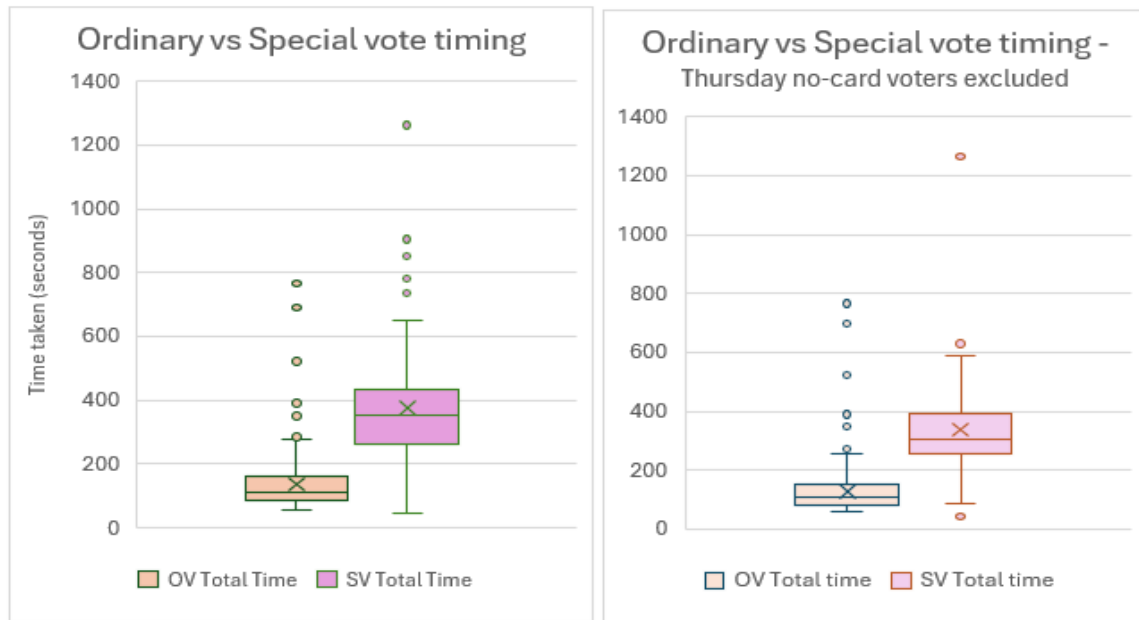
Timing for voter assistants was the transaction time either with or without eRoll being used.

Notes were made by those undertaking timing, to understand behaviours, for example outlier data points.

Overview of ordinary and special votes:

- Median times were considered rather than means, due to large outliers.
- From all votes taken during the test, an ordinary vote took 113 seconds to process, while a special vote took 351 seconds, being around three times longer.
- There was far less variation in the processing times of ordinary votes, with the middle 50% of the data lying between 84 and 162 seconds. The spread for special votes was far larger with the middle 50% lying between 262 and 432 seconds.

- It may be more appropriate to remove those voters in Thursday's session who came to the voting place with no voting card as the process for these voters was to use eRoll at the issuing desk. This reduces the processing time for ordinary vote from 113 to 107 seconds, and for special votes from 351 to 307 seconds.
- The time variability without Thursday's session decreases for both types of votes; for ordinary votes the middle 50% of the data now falls between 83 and 153 seconds and for special votes the middle 50% of the data now falls between 259 and 395 seconds.



Effect of voting cards

It is expected that a voter with an EasyVote card or Special Vote slip takes less time to process than one without, be it for ordinary or special votes.

There were four voting card scenarios tested:

- Paper EasyVote cards and Special vote slips
- Digital EasyVote cards
- Purple voting cards created by the voter assistant
- No cards when the voter reached the issuing desk.

It was found that the use of any type of voting card greatly reduces processing times for ordinary and special votes, as it allows for quicker identification of the voter and the electorate they are qualified to vote in.

For ordinary votes:

- Having a voting card averaged 55 seconds for split 1 (119 seconds total).
- Not having a voting card averaged 132 seconds to process to split 1 (207 seconds total).
- Across the full issuing time, it takes 1.7 times longer to process a voter in the absence of a card.
- Paper EasyVote or Special Vote slips resulted in the fastest issuing rate, with purple cards and digital EasyVote about 15% slower on average. It appears that digital Easy Vote cards took longer than paper EasyVote cards due to voters trying to find them on their phones, or the phone screen going 'dark' during the issuing process rather than always having them accessible.
- Average processing times are shown below:

Card type	Split 1	Total time
Paper EasyVote/SVS	51 secs	114 secs

Purple voting card	60	126
Digital EasyVote/SVS	62	127

For special votes:

- Not having a card took on average 247 seconds for the first split (448 seconds total).
- Having a card of any type averaged 130 seconds for split 1 (331 seconds total).
- A paper EasyVote card or Special Vote slip proved quicker than a purple card, at split 1 this was 110 vs 138 seconds, and 324 vs 335 seconds total time to issue.
- Note there were no digital cards used for special votes in the test.

Effect of a referendum

The referendum session generally had quicker processing times for both ordinary and special votes than any other session. This seems counterintuitive, however can be explained for the following reasons:

- The referendum session started after issuing officers and voters had already been doing their respective roles for 90 minutes, so they started the session with being comfortable with the issuing and voting process.
- There was a particularly fast ordinary votes issuing officer who accounted for around 40% of the votes issued.
- Note that splits were not recorded for around one third of the voters for this session, so using total timing rather than splits probably gives a more statistically significant result.

Given the above, based on this test,

- the median time to process an ordinary vote in a session without a referendum was 135 seconds, while it took only 92 seconds in the session with a referendum
- for special votes, this was 361 seconds without a referendum, and 300 seconds with referendum.

Effect of using eRoll at the issuing desk

Thursday's voting session had eRoll available at the issuing desk to determine the usefulness of the tool at this part of the process. eRoll could be used by an issuing officer for any voter who did not have a voting card, and had a large effect on issuing times, noting that the number of votes in this data set was low.

The effects were, as expected, in the time taken to determine the voter's electorate in split 1. Split 2 was practically unchanged:

- For ordinary votes, split 1 took around 100 seconds more for voters that didn't have a card (172 vs 71 seconds)
- For special votes, split 1 took around 80 seconds more for voters that didn't have a card (264 vs 179 seconds)
- Therefore having eRoll at the issuing desks slows down the process significantly.

Takeaway votes

There were three takeaway votes, one each voting day, each issued by a different issuing officer. These took 467, 744 and 860 seconds respectively, for an average of 690 seconds (around 11.5 minutes).

Voter Assistants

- It is noted that Thursday's session had long queues of people standing at the voter assistant station due to very long queues at the issuing desks and physically no room for people to move past this point. The major outliers on Thursday have been removed from the data set.

- On average overall, it took a voter assistant 18 seconds to process a voter where eRoll was not used, versus an average of 75 seconds where eRoll was used, noting that outliers have been removed.
- If broken down by session, it takes around four times longer for a voter assistant to deal with a voter who needs to be looked up in eRoll (times in seconds):

	Number of voters	Average times where eRoll was NOT used	Average times where eRoll was used
1 - Tuesday	80	17 sec	82 sec
2A - Wednesday	101	20	85
2B - Wednesday	89	14	67
3 - Thursday	80	20	N/A
TOTAL	350	18	75

Desk reset

In the test (and excluding outliers), it took issuing officers an average of 17 seconds to reset their desk after an ordinary vote (165 times recorded). It took an average of 26 seconds for issuing officers to reset their desk following a special vote (27 times recorded).

7. Commentary on Test Inputs

7.1 Recruitment of casual staff: voters

What did we do	What did we learn
Requirements were provided from Voting Services to People & Culture, with a recommendation to engage with a recruitment agency to simplify the task and get resources that would meet requirements An internal decision was made to recruit via SnapHire.	The process was resource heavy to recruit, onboard and pay voters as casual workers. The requirements for voters were not met in many instances: there was low literacy and understanding of instructions of many of those recruited, which was a prerequisite. Some voters were removed from the test during the voting period as they could not understand what was asked of them. The feedback received from the casual workers about the voting experience was of low quality. If this process is to be repeated for future tests, then a literacy test should be considered as part of recruitment.

7.2 EC workforce

What did we do	What did we learn
Recruitment was made via Commission-wide communication and personal approaches via Managers. Volunteers were asked if they had a preferred role, and if not, put into a role that seemed a good fit for them.	The experience of working in a voting place was beneficial to those taking part, to give an appreciation of what the Commission delivers each election and how this affects their work programme.

	It also showed the value of returning workers to voting places, as working in a voting place for the first time can be overwhelming.
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7.3 Election materials: Rolls & ballot papers

What did we do	What did we learn
New print providers produced some of the voting place test materials	Useability was not consistent: it was noted that it was difficult to remove special vote ordinary ballot papers from the pads and that it was easy to remove more than one referendum ballot paper. The proofing and production process was not smooth, there are learnings to take forward to a production environment as described in the Print process review document in Section 4.

7.4 Voting place supplies: cardboard voting screens and tables

What did we do	What did we learn
Australian Electoral Commission versions of the cardboard voting screens and a wheelchair accessible table were tested against current items used in New Zealand voting places.	The increased height of the Australian voting screen was considered a positive, but some voters did not like to be shoulder to shoulder with another voter when marking their ballot paper. There may be a possibility to alternate the screens to give more privacy. There would also need to be a modification so that the marker pens can be attached to each side of the screen. The accessible table was too high for seated voting and too bulky. The current 'half screen' and trestle table is preferred, with the bottom half of the screen used for the voter assistant's station.

7.5 Mobile phones

What did we do	What did we learn
Mobile phones for the test were requested to be built with the GE2023 specification for shared voting place devices. The IT team were supplied with a set of instructions that were provided to end users, to assist in building the devices as required.	The phone build needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure that software updates are considered and the build is fit for purpose. The phones were built in a state suitable for use in the test, but this is unsuitable for future use.

7.6 Voting Place Applications - Environments

What did we do	What did we learn
UAT environments were used for eRoll training and production, where usually separate instances would be used. The UAT environment did not match the	It would be preferable to have an anonymised data set that can be used for testing.

printed rolls, which may have affected some of the timing data.	
300 test and training voter scenarios were created by Voting Services and uploaded into a MIKE instance by the IT team.	Having a set of testing data ready to be updated would reduce the amount of work required compared to creating scenarios from scratch for each test.
Training and Production environments were used for the Reconciliation app. Voting Services and IT resources spent time to gain access to the Reconciliation app configuration site, gaining correct permission levels in order to update and amend the configuration tables, so that Voting Services could edit the tables and meet requirements of the Training and Production environments.	Preparation for the test highlighted the requirement for IT resource who is knowledgeable in the technical aspects of the Reconciliation app as there is currently a gap.

7.7 Training

What did we do	What did we learn
A Regional Training Manager was employed to help prepare the face-to-face training and exercise packs, and to deliver the face-to-face training. A Project Support Officer was recruited to help collate and pack materials, and to act as the training assistant.	It is recommended to use this model in the future, as to reduce burden on Voting Services SMEs and to deliver high quality face-to-face training and materials for the test.
PIMs and training videos were provided to voting place workers ahead of their face-to-face training.	It is necessary to have eLearning available ahead of face-to-face training for tests and simulations.

7.8 Instructions/PIMS/Voting Place folder

What did we do	What did we learn
Feedback from previous elections suggested that voting place managers need to have easy ways to find the information that they need to do their role successfully.	It would be helpful to have a copy of all master forms in the PIM. It would be helpful to have a numbered index to each document in the voting place folder, along with named tabs such as 'workers', 'voting place' and 'scrutineers' Responses were variable to whether adding tabs to pages of the PIMs was helpful.

8. Next steps towards Operational Readiness

Objective:

To confirm readiness by executing uninterrupted, real-world scenarios covering key voting place and mobile support processes.

Scope:

This phase will encompass end-to-end testing of key voting place processes and applications under realistic operational conditions, focused on key tasks and changes resulting from recommendations in this report.

Processes that were not in scope for the voting place test, such as mobile support and the preliminary count with new assurance controls, will also be tested.

This will include a timed test of eLearning, face-to-face training and filming of processes to support workers' learning.

Materials required:

- All voting place Personal Instruction Manuals (PIMs), including Mobile Support, updated to new Sysdoc standards
- All voting place training packages, including eLearning and face-to-face training, and the 'train the trainer' sessions
- eRoll and reconciliation applications updated to GE26 requirements.

9. Appendix 1 – Impact of recommendations

					Impact to:							
Obj.	Cat.	Test	Ref.	Recommendation	EMS	eRoll	Recon app	Workers	Process	Instructions	Training	Equip. supplies
1	A	Time taken to issue a vote	1.1	Consider reducing the issuing rate for ordinary votes and continuing the same issuing rate for special votes.	Y			Y				
			1.2	Consider the impact on the voting place algorithm of how many voters will bring an EasyVote card or Special Vote slip to the voting place	Y			Y				
			1.3 (& 2.1)	Introduce voter assistant staffing calculations into the voting place algorithm.	Y			Y				
			1.4	Continue to supply low-tack masking tape as part of voting place supplies to assist with queueing.						Y		Y
2	A	Time taken to triage a voter	2.1 (& 1.3)	Introduce a voter assistant staffing calculation into the voting place algorithm.	Y			Y				
			2.2	Update the eRoll application to have more on-screen guidance.		Y				Y	Y	
			2.3	Provide better guidance through film or animation to show how triage should work in the voting place.					Y		Y	
3	E	Training accuracy & adoption	3.1	eLearning available for voting place tests							Y	
			3.2	Increase in face-to-face training time for set up and end of day processes, including reconciliation.							Y	
			3.3	Voting Place Managers to have bespoke training and complete eLearning package for all voting place roles.							Y	
4	E	PIM accuracy & useability	4.1	Combine troubleshooting and common situations sections in the issuing officer and voter assistant PIMs.						Y		
			4.2	Separate end of day instructions for advance voting and election day.						Y		
			4.3 (& 8.1)	Provide Managers with overview of end-to-end flow, timing and resources for each step in the process.						Y		
5	A	Master Forms accuracy & useability	5.1	Make all voting place master form names consistent.						Y		
			5.2	Create a master forms index in the PIMs.						Y		
6	A	Referendum	6.1	Consider whether the currently reduced issuing rates for referendum voting are necessary.	Y			Y				
			6.2	Use a lighter shade of purple on the backs of the ordinary vote referendum ballot papers and ballot boxes.						Y	Y	Y
			6.3	Reuse training / processes as for the GE2020 election for referendum..						Y	Y	
			6.4	Include referendum reconciliation in the redevelopment of the reconciliation app.			Y		Y	Y	Y	
			6.5	Incorporate referendum materials in the set up and pack down process development.					Y	Y	Y	
			6.6	Test whether the M46 consignment note process in EMS is accurate for referendum materials.	Y							
7	G	No enrolment during the voting period	7.1	Produce an enrolment brochure for voting place workers to provide to people who have not enrolled.								Y
			7.2	Continue with the enrolment script as written for the test.						Y		
			7.3	Incorporate this script into the eRoll application, as noted in 6.2.		Y				Y		
8a	E	Set up process	8.1 (& 4.3)	Provide task lists and timing in PIMs.						Y		
			8.2	Implement packing materials per role and provide training material for this.						Y	Y	Y

			8.3	Provide a voting place plan per day for allocation of supplies.					Y	Y		
			8.4	Consider where key information such as rosters are packed, for ease of access by the appropriate worker.					Y	Y		Y
			Ref.	Recommendation	EMS	eRoll	Recon app	Workers	Process	Instructions	Training	Equip. supplies
			8.5	Review advice to provide additional Electorate headquarters support for set up and to roster workers with sufficient time to complete daily set up.				Y	Y			
			8.6	Consider what set up activities could be provided in face-to-face training.							Y	
			8.7	Consider only having one set of materials on an issuing officer's desk, to minimise confusion					Y			
8b	E	Shut down process	8.8	Have separate instructions for pack up depending on advance voting or Election Day. For advance voting, have the same pack up each day, including the last day.						Y		
			8.9	Consider a simpler way to pack up, with the use of plastic bags rather than paper envelopes.					Y	Y		Y
			8.10 (& 10.1)	Consider simplifying the labels placed on materials, with the replacement of the Labelmaker macro.								Y
9	E	Technology: eRoll	9.1	Implement the new functionality for wildcarding.		Y						
			9.2	Implement more onscreen scripting in eRoll.		Y				Y		
			9.3	Remove the 'initials' block from purple cards.						Y		Y
10	A	Reconciliation process	10.1 (& 8.10)	Provide clearer, simpler labelling on materials used in reconciliation, both labels and master forms.								Y
			10.2	Continue the colour coding of electorate supplies onto reconciliation materials and envelopes.								Y
			10.3	Simplify the materials with fewer envelopes and consider using clear envelopes (plastic bags).								Y
			10.4	Update instructions, filming and training on reconciliation to be clear on allocation of tasks.						Y	Y	
11	A	Peer to peer review	11.1	Introduce a simple peer-to-peer review process and implement this in training.					Y	Y	Y	
12	G	Takeaway votes issued by SVIO	12.1	Include takeaway votes into special vote issuing officer tasks, including an overview of the process in eLearning and at face-to-face training.				Y		Y	Y	
13	G	VPMA in small voting places	13.1	'Attached' voting place managers take the voter assistant position rather than an issuing position.				Y				
14	G	Two VPMU model	14.1	Retain one voting place manager in voting places and bolster mobile support at big and busy voting places.				Y				
			14.2	Provide mobile support or HQ logistics support for end of day tasks.				Y	Y			
15	A	Chain of custody	15.1	Incorporate a seal log onto the E206 box labels, and the ability to put a ballot box seal onto the packing boxes.								Y
			15.2	Consider what an integrity check of key voting materials looks like during the advance voting period.					Y	Y		Y
			15.3	Introduce a pack up exercise into training for voting place managers, and better film or animation for all workers in their eLearning.							Y	
16	E	Virtual voting card	16.1	Continue to plan to replace paper EasyVote cards with virtual voting cards.								Y
			16.2	Reorder the steps in the issuing process to first record the electorate / page / line number from the voting card, onto the scrutineer record sheet.					Y	Y	Y	

Item # 4

Item: Headquarters Test Exit Report

To: Electoral Commission

For: Board meeting 14 August 2025

Prepared by: Adele s9(2)(a), Principal Advisor Voting Services

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. **Note** the Headquarters (HQ) Test was run on 16 and 17 July 2025 to test:
 - [REDACTED] Out of scope
 - [REDACTED]
 - New automated controls and functionality in EMS to improve the management and auditability of the official results
 - New manual controls related to the count of votes and capture, transcription and data entry of results.
2. **Note** that the VS field participated in the test and provided a lot of valuable feedback.
3. **Agree** that issues identified during the test are included in the list of priorities for Catalyst development, noting that these will contribute to making it as easy as possible for the Voting Services field and National Office to complete processes and get them right. This is comprised of stories to fix and improve:
 - [REDACTED] Out of scope
 - Results controls and auditability (estimated 27 points of effort)
4. **Note** that the manual count-related controls tested are being trialled in the Tāmaki Makaurau By-election. If these are successful, further information will be provided on the following, prior to the processes being agreed for the 2026 General Election:
 - The additional staffing costs associated with bolstering results support
 - The cost of providing headset splitters to all electorate HQs.

Purpose

5. The purpose of this exit report is to document the results, findings and recommendations coming out of the HQ Test held on 16 and 17 July 2025.

Background

6. The HQ Test is part of the series of tests and simulations in the readiness programme for the 2026 General Election (GE26). The Test differs from a simulation in that processes can be started, stopped, refined and retested. Technology solutions in a test are usually at a minimum viable product stage.
7. The test was held over the afternoon of Wednesday 16 July and all-day Thursday 17 July, coinciding with the induction of the Regional Advisors (RAs). The RAs provided the field

expertise required to test whether the proposed systems and process changes are fit-for-purpose.

8. The overall purpose was to test the new functionality and processes developed within the following workstreams:

Out of scope

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Post-election Workstream

- Proposed new manual controls relating to the preliminary and official counts.
- New functionality developed to improve how HQs undertake and manage quality checks on their official counts
- Improved auditability of changes made to results and the resolution of identified issues.

9. It is noted that the tested components listed under the Post-election Workstream have all been designed in response to the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and PwC's recommendations to review and improve its preventative and detective controls in relation to the count of votes and the capture, data entry and checking of results.

Discussion

Out of scope

Out of scope

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

Area	Type of fix	Description	Estimated points
Out of scope	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	■
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	■
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	

[illegible]

- Add splitter requirements to the scope of the General Election Technology and Infrastructure Project (GETII).
22. A range of new automated controls in EMS were also tested focused on improving foundational functions and auditability in EMS by:
- Making it possible to identify differences between the preliminary and official counts earlier, during the data entry activity
 - Making it easier to identify and manage issues using a new Issues Management Screen, which also raises overall visibility of the number of errors to be resolved and how this is progressing
 - Making it easier to extract dual votes and post-Writ changes (PWCs) through a new Extraction Screen
 - Increasing controls on who can change results data by having a 'lock' on the results
 - Increasing the system's auditability on results changes via a new Results History Report
 - Improving the quality of voting place and overall electorate results certificates by not allowing them to be printed for signing if there are outstanding issues to resolve
 - Improving the oversight of Māori, Overseas and special votes results sets, making it easier for accountable electorates to check these results, particularly if this is where there are issues still to be resolved.
23. The following table provides a list of the bugs, remediations and minor enhancements recommended for Catalyst development. These were identified by the field experts as changes that could be made to improve the ease of using the built functionality. To this end, they are contributing to the Commission addressing both the OAG and PwC's recommendations with their dual focus on improving the new controls further and the usability of the system. These stories have an estimated Catalyst effort of 27 points.

Issues Management Screen

Area	Type of fix	Description	Estimated points
Roll-up of errors per voting place	Enhancement	The screen is currently designed to show a line per data error – resulting in a high number of error lines where there is a significant data entry issue. The proposal is to group the errors into candidate and party errors, so that only two error lines show up if there is a count issue. This will prevent the list from being too overwhelming, make it easier to resolve errors and reduce duplication of effort.	5
Duplicate threshold	Enhancement	Enables the automatic resolution of duplicate counts where the 'total issued ballot papers' is a small number. This is so that staff do not waste a lot of time checking counts that are likely to be legitimately the same (e.g. counts less than six votes). The issue will still be recorded on the Issues Management Screen and in the Results History Report – showing that it was resolved automatically by the system.	2
Canned comments	Enhancement	Provides a list of issue resolution comments that can be chosen from a drop-down list. This will ensure that comments are mostly consistent, providing better information for reporting. This will also reduce the amount of typing required. An 'other' option will be available, in case resolution is an edge case.	3

Area	Type of fix	Description	Estimated points
Navigation	Remediation	Ensures the issue links to the correct count (e.g. voting place and phase). Currently it only links to the voting place, creating a risk that the wrong count could be selected/edited.	1
Party Vote Only (PVO)	Remediation	PVO counts are currently identified as issues because the party and candidate totals do not match. The proposed approach is for this to be changed so that the system automatically understands that PVO counts are not issues and should be automatically locked.	2
Error colours	Enhancement	The colours used for errors in the results entry screen currently differs from the colours used in the Issues Management Screen. These will be made consistent.	1
System resolution	Remediation	This will include the date and time when an issue is 'resolved' by the system (e.g. when data is fixed in the results entry screen which removes the issue).	1

Extraction Screen

Area	Type of fix	Description	Estimated points
Removal of dual votes	Bug	Ensuring disallowed votes can be removed from special vote counts.	1
Ballot paper validation	Remediation	- Extend the number range so that all ballot paper and special vote declaration numbers can be recorded. - Include a warning when the ballot paper number entered is not unique within the electorate	3

Other

Area	Type of fix	Description	Estimated points
Fast feedback	Enhancement	Build in the ability to receive 'fast feedback' once results are entered for the party vote, rather than wait until the candidate (by party) information is entered. This enables issues identified early (e.g. results being entered into the wrong voting place and/or phase) are caught as soon as possible.	3
Relocking balanced counts	Remediation	Enable a count that has been unlocked to be relocked without having to make a change. This will ensure errors are not accidentally introduced as the current workaround requires a field to be changed.	1
Nationwide Issues Report	Remediation	- More clearly label the report so that it is clear whether it is generated using the 'By electorate' or the 'By location' parameter. Current format creates confusion as the report looks like it is the same, with two separate results sets. - Add date/time the report is created.	1
Party sort order	Bug	Ensure Party data entry fields appear in alphabetical order, disregarding macrons. This issue impacts the results entry screen, Party List extract and Candidates by Party Report.	3

Next steps

24. Subject to approval, the above work will be prioritised as part of the Commission's standard planning processes against other work sitting in the Catalyst python team development backlog. This includes development work related to:
- Completing the targeted automation of the Overseas Application (~ 32 pts)
 - Fixing bugs and enhancing the Electronic Roll Scrutiny Application (ERSA) for auditability and visibility (~ 29 pts, as described in the Programme Board paper of 16 July 2025)
 - Updating the voting place algorithm (to be defined and sized)
 - Refining the EMS/SnapHire integration (to be defined and sized)
 - Providing new controls for managing the data entry of referendum results in EMS (to be defined and sized)
25. It is noted that the Post-election work recommended in this paper will need to be completed, alongside the work described in the top two bullet points listed above and some work in MIKE, before an integrated, end-to-end simulation of the post-election period can be undertaken.

Appendices

(None)

Item: Modelling the impacts of change

To: ELT

For: ELT meeting 26 August 2025

Prepared by: Beth Kreitzer, Manager Data and Insights

Recommendations

It is recommended that ELT:

1. **note** the results of modelling done to predict the impact of legislative change and key GE Programme initiatives
2. **agree** to communicate any significant changes in timing, scope or design of key initiatives to the Data and Insights team so the models and/or assumptions may be updated.

Purpose

1. This paper provides modelling of the impacts of legislative change and GE programme initiatives, and invites workstreams to keep Data & Insights informed of any significant updates that would influence the modelling.

Background

2. Since the 2023 General Election, the Commission has been working towards a more methodical and data-driven approach to understand legislative and process changes.
3. Having a better understanding of how changes may impact elector and voter behaviour, and thus, the work the Commission does, allows us to select initiatives that will have the best impact on our mission, better understand costs and benefits of changes, and give data-driven advice to the Minister and other stakeholders.
4. The purpose of these models is to gain a common understanding of the likely impacts of changes and the key assumptions around the general elections. These models will adhere to the Data Output Standards approved by ELT in July 2025 once the full documentation process is complete.
5. The assumptions used in these models should be used in all forecasting models created in the Commission to ensure consistency.
6. Beginning in mid-2024, the Data and Insights team developed an options assessment tool to assist ELT and the Board in analysing packages of change initiatives (see **Appendix A**). This tool allows packages to be compared based on criteria such as efficiency, timeliness, impact to integrity, and accessibility, leading to data-driven decisions in what initiatives and policy options the Commission recommended in policy advice and the budget bid.

7. Once the recommended package of work was determined, the Data and Insights team set about quantifying impacts of the various legislative changes and internal initiatives on enrolment.
8. All proposed legislation changes and internal initiatives that were likely to significantly impact enrolment forms or efficiency, voting behaviours, or enrolment or field staff time were modelled. Many other initiatives do not impact these quantities but have other benefits such as increased assurance or improved voter experience.
9. A detailed enrolment model was also created, breaking the predicted number of enrolment forms received by format (digital or paper) and week of the campaign. This allows the enrolment team to estimate the number of staff needed with particular settings, such as additional on-screen alerts while processing, or ensuring enrolments are processed by a certain date during the voting period.

Discussion

10. While the algorithms defining the impacts of each change vary depending on the specific initiative or legislation, the process follows roughly the same steps for each change modelled:
 - a. Assumptions were defined for the baseline, with settings the same as in the 2023 general election. This includes assumptions around eligible population, enrolment percentage, special votes, overseas voting, and enrolment transactions.
 - b. Using the above assumptions and historical data, a baseline predictive model of likely enrolment and voting behaviour in future elections was created.
 - c. Data and Insights met with business units to understand the different elements that will impact the change, for example, the percentage of electors responding to a communication or the different sets of actions a voter may take in a voting place.
 - d. Using subject matter expertise, research on similar initiatives in other jurisdictions, current and historical data, and behavioural research, a new set of assumptions and predictive model was created to get a picture of enrolment and voter behaviour given the proposed change.
 - e. Each model is then examined for overlap with other changes and split into impacts of the single change and those that overlap with other changes. For example, a group of electors who would have enrolled in the voting period given 2023 settings, may respond to an email enrolment reminder. This group would be impacted by both the early roll close and digital enrolment campaign changes, so would fall in the overlap model. A group of electors without email addresses who would have enrolled in the voting period given 2023 settings, might only fall in the early roll close model. At times implementing multiple changes might result in a reduction of the benefits of a single change.
 - f. Each model has outputs on:
 - i. Enrolment form impact, change in number of forms or change to a different type of form (e.g. paper to digital)

- ii. Enrolment form keying efficiency impact (e.g. a number of forms is now 10 seconds faster to key on average)
 - iii. Special vote declaration impact, both for Voting Services field staff and Enrolment staff
 - iv. Impact of type of votes (ordinary votes, special votes with enrolment, special votes without enrolment, special votes disallowed)
 - v. Impact on voter participation
 - vi. Using processing time assumptions, each of these measures is then converted into the impact on hours of Voting Services field staff and Enrolment staff spent processing, issuing and counting.
11. The assumptions and models were reviewed by an external provider prior to the budget bid. While they made suggestions on formatting and documentation, they determined the assumptions and modelling methods used are sound. Elector behaviour is difficult to predict, however, our assumptions were deemed reasonable by the team, which included behavioural economists.
12. The models are updated periodically when the package of work changes, or the scope, timing or design of an initiative is refined. New information received is assessed for impact to the models.

Results

13. The baseline settings and proposed legislation change impacts are modelled through the 2032 general election. Internal initiatives in the GE Programme are modelled only for the 2026 general election. It is important to note that the margin of error around assumptions and the forecasted impacts increases the further out the model goes as there is increased likelihood of drastic environmental, system, or behaviour changes.
14. The baseline models show, that with 2023 general election settings, special votes would be likely to top 1 million by 2032. This formed a key part of our case for change in communications to the Minister.
15. Because of required changes to system and processes, some legislation changes do not have large impacts until GE 2029 or GE 2032.
16. With changes, special votes are still likely to be higher than in the 2023 general election but will not grow as significantly as they would have without changes. It is forecast that special votes will reach just over 800,000 in 2032 with the impact of changes accounted for, rather than 1.05 million with GE 2023 settings. See **Appendix B** for the graph on special votes.
17. **Appendix C** shows that much of the impact of legislation change will be seen in the hours spent by Voting Services field staff issuing, processing, and counting votes. Special votes with enrolment take longer to issue and process than special votes without an accompanying enrolment or ordinary votes. While we expect to see an increase in staff time over 2023, this increase will be held relatively steady over the coming elections as more special votes are converted to ordinary votes.

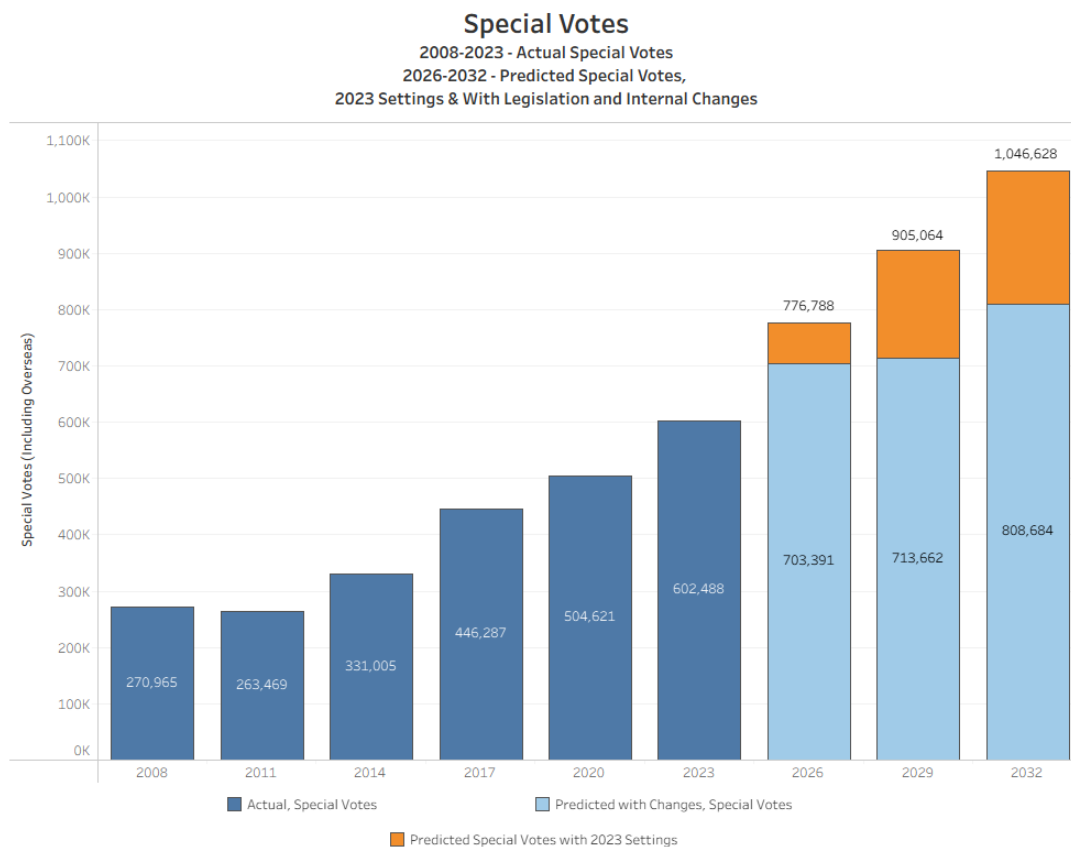
18. The table in **Appendix D** details the impacts of each legislative and internal change on enrolment hours, voting services field staff hours, special votes, and votes counted (e.g. decrease in turnout and increase in disallowed votes would cause less votes to be counted).
19. In the 2026 general election, the early roll close will have the largest impact on staff time, the number of special votes, and the number of votes counted. In future elections, this impact will largely be negated by automatic enrolment, as electors who may have enrolled in the voting period given 2023 settings no longer need to update their enrolment.
20. Digital EasyVote cards are forecast to increase special votes as around 1 million more voters will not bring their EasyVote cards to the voting place, and some will receive special votes in error.
21. With the expected legislative and process changes, the enrolment model estimates temporary staffing needs will be one third to one half of the needs should 2023 settings be used in the 2026 general election. This is because of processing efficiencies, conversion of paper enrolments to digital, and an expanded deadline for enrolment processing due to the earlier roll close.

Next Steps

22. The enrolment model is currently being tested for various scenarios to get an understanding of expected enrolment volume and staffing needs.
23. Models will be reviewed as new information is received and as solutions are designed. Communication to the Data and Insights team of the GE projects, timing, and detailed design are key to ensuring the models are updated with the latest information and fit for purpose.
24. As new information is likely to be available after a budget bid is created, changes to assumptions will be documented so they can be explained.
25. Any changes to planning assumptions deemed necessary once approved by the business and GE Programme Board, will be taken to Programme Board for approval.
26. As additional controls are added for assurance, it may be necessary to gather new data on staff time to process or count votes in the post-election period. These measurements are key in evaluating the expected impact (including if things go off track - as referenced in the OAG/PWC reports) and evaluating the overall impact post-election to ensure staffing and processes are fit for purpose in elections beyond 2026.

Appendices

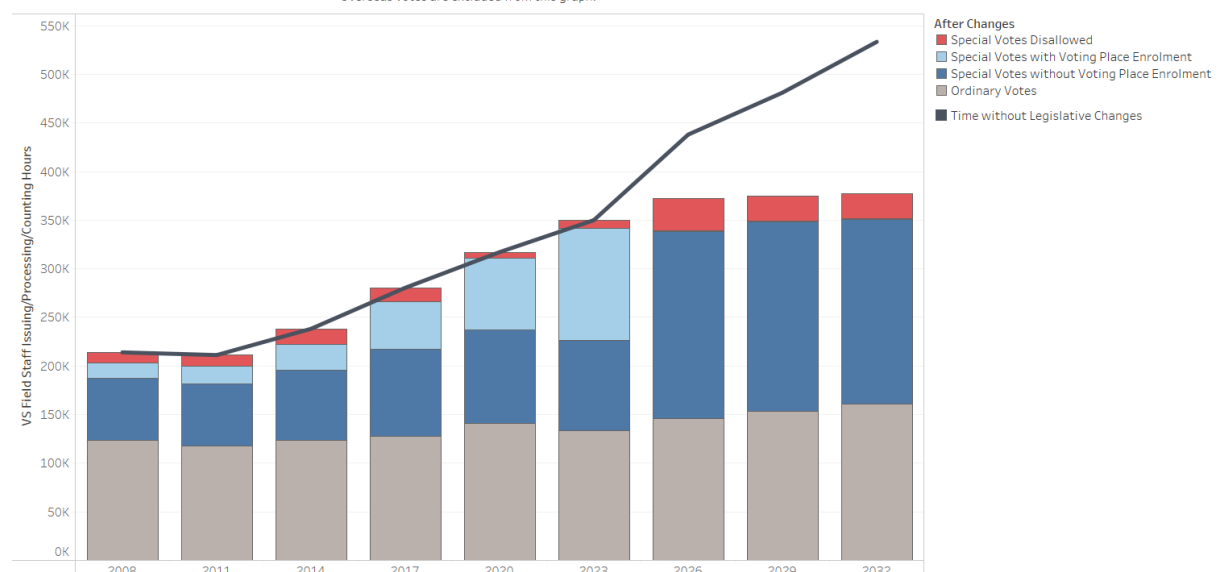
- A. Options Assessment
- B. Impact on Special Votes



C. Impact on Voting Services issuing, processing, and counting time

Voting Services Field Staff Issuing, Processing & Counting Hours by Vote Type with and without Changes

Changes modelled include roll close at E-13, digital enrolment campaign, direct enrolment, honorific & occupation field removal, and process/tech changes. Overseas votes are excluded from this graph.



- D. Key outputs of GE 2026 change impact models. Negative numbers indicate a decrease in the hours required from staff or number of votes, while positive numbers indicate additional hours are required or an increase in votes.

Type	Action	Total impact on enrolment processing hours	Total impact on VS field staff hours	Change in Special Votes	Impact on Counted Votes
Legislation Change	Change the enrolment deadline to midnight 13 days before election day before the start of advance voting (day before)	-13,262	-59,310	-61,099	-72,781
Legislation Change	Change required fields on the enrolment form to remove occupation and honorific	-4,092	0	0	0
Legislation Change	Enable alternative forms of enrolment inquiry to be undertaken by digital methods, such as email	-2	-371	-1,041	-596
Legislation Change	Disqualify sentenced prisoners from voting	-35	-2,036	-4,247	-4,247
Internal Initiative	1.1.1 Remove unnecessary manual duplication of verification for enrol online updates	-3,833	0	0	0
Internal Initiative	1.1.3 Provide a virtual voting card (e.g. a 'voting card') after using Enrol Online	-467	-755	0	0
Internal Initiative	1.2.2 Complete TSR on all appropriate transactions	5,952	0	0	0
Internal Initiative	2.1.1 Making DOB an operationally strongly encouraged field in Special Vote Declaration, reduces challenge of qualification & 3.3.1 Provide Date of Birth on roll information available to electorates (ERSA)	0	-252	0	0
Internal Initiative	Reduction of SVs that should have been OV's (includes work on stabilisation of eRoll, connectivity, VPM in VA roll, increased back-up training, wild card searchability)	-266	-9,292	-32,122	0
Internal Initiative	Easyvote card delivered digitally to electors with email	291	58,711	35,135	0
Overlap	Impacted by more than one change	212	-4,206	-10,023	-1,680
	Total	-15,503	-17,511	-73,397	-79,304

Item # 25.12-04

Item: Planning for the future with forecasting & modelling

To: Electoral Commission

For: Board meeting 10 December 2025

Prepared by: Beth Kreitzer, Data & Insights

Recommendations / Ko ngā Whakataunga

It is recommended that the Board:

1. **note** the results of modelling done to predict the impact of legislative change and key GE Programme initiatives.

Purpose / Ko Te Taki

1. This paper provides background on the Commission's use of data and insights, and the modelling and forecasting that has been built to understand the impacts of legislative changes and Programme initiatives. We will demonstrate some of these tools and the data platform in the meeting.

Background / Ko Te Tāhuhu

2. Prior to 2021, a long-standing Commission staff member with voting services and IT experience had built up the Commission's insight capability, allowing operations staff to make data-driven decisions. However, the tools and processes were built in an ad-hoc method, were not reusable, were very complex, and relied on a single person to create or change.
3. Since the capability review in 2021, the Commission has been investing in its data and insights capability. We have been incrementally introducing capabilities, tools, and processes to align with data and insights best practice.
4. Most visibly, in 2022 we implemented a new data platform to support better staff access to data and analytics and supporting practices to decrease risk of data breaches, increase efficiency and support ongoing improvements in the use of analytics and evidence in decision making.
5. This election cycle has seen the Data and Insights team drawn on to support advice on Ministry of Justice's policy options, internal decision making, strategy formation, and the Commission's budget bid. This is a capacity that is new to the Commission and includes developing an options assessment tool to assist ELT and the Board to compare and assess packages of change initiatives (see **Appendix A**). This tool allows packages to be compared based on criteria such as efficiency, timeliness, impact to integrity, and accessibility, leading to data-driven decisions in what initiatives and policy options the Commission recommended in policy advice and the budget bid.
6. Modelling of future pressures and the impact of options was completed to inform advice for the ministerial briefing on future-proofing the electoral system and the subsequent budget bid in December 2024. Forecasting likely impacts of legislative changes was key to defining the budget scenarios.

7. The models have since been refined to produce forecasts to inform the regulatory impact statement on improving the timeliness of the official vote count dated 27 March 2025, and to inform minister briefings and responses to Select Committee questions.

Discussion / Ko ngā Mahi

8. The data and modelling have subsequently been refined further. We now have a base model to use to predict the impact of changes in the coming election as well as future cycles.
9. Having a better understanding of how changes may impact elector and voter behaviour, and thus, the work the Commission does, allows us to select initiatives that will have the best impact on our objectives, better understand costs and benefits of changes, and give data-driven advice to the Minister and other stakeholders.
10. The purpose of these models is to gain a common understanding of the likely impacts of changes and the key assumptions around the general elections.
11. They also provide the opportunity for more nuanced approach to managing and monitoring the impact of unexpected changes on election delivery.
12. All proposed legislation changes and internal initiatives that were likely to significantly impact enrolment forms or efficiency, voting behaviours, or enrolment or field staff time were modelled. Many other initiatives underway do not impact these quantities but have other benefits such as increased assurance or improved voter experience.
13. A detailed enrolment model has been created, breaking down the predicted number of enrolment forms received by format (digital or paper) and week of the campaign. This allows the enrolment team to estimate the number of staff needed with particular settings, such as additional on-screen alerts while processing, or ensuring enrolments are processed by a certain date during the voting period.

What our model currently indicates

14. The baseline settings and proposed legislation change impacts are modelled through the 2032 general election. Internal initiatives in the GE Programme are modelled only for the 2026 general election. It is important to note that the margin of error around assumptions and the forecasted impacts increases the further out the model goes as there is increased likelihood of drastic environmental, system, or behaviour changes.

Future election modelling

15. Our future state modelling has been used to inform advice to Ministers and select committee and will continue to be refined and inform modernisation.
16. The baseline models show that with 2023 general election settings, special votes would be likely to top 1 million by 2032. This formed a key part of our case for change in communications to the Minister.
17. Because of required changes to system and processes and in the case of Automatic Enrolment, to capture elector details as they move, some legislation changes do not have significant impacts until GE 2029 or GE 2032.
18. With changes, special votes are still likely to be higher in GE26 and beyond than in the 2023 general election, but will not grow as significantly as they would have without changes. It is forecast that special votes will reach just over 800,000 in 2032 with the impact of changes accounted for, rather than 1.05 million with GE 2023 settings. See **Appendix B** for the graph on special votes.
19. **Appendix C** shows that much of the impact of legislation change will be seen in the hours spent by Voting Services field staff issuing, processing, and counting votes. Special votes with enrolment take longer to issue and process than special votes without an accompanying

enrolment or ordinary votes. While we expect to see an increase in staff time in 2026 over 2023, this increase will be held relatively steady over the 2029 and 2032 elections as more special votes are converted to ordinary votes.

General Election 2026 Modelling

20. In the 2026 general election, the early roll close will have the largest impact on staff time, the number of special votes, and the number of votes counted. In future elections, this impact will progressively be negated by automatic enrolment, as electors who may have enrolled in the voting period given 2023 settings no longer need to update their enrolment.
21. Digital EasyVote cards are forecast to increase special votes as around 1 million more voters will not bring their EasyVote cards to the voting place, and some will receive special votes in error.
22. With the expected legislative and process changes, the enrolment staffing model estimates temporary staffing needs will be about one third of the needs should 2023 settings be used in the 2026 general election. This is because of processing efficiencies, conversion of paper enrolments to digital, and an expanded deadline for enrolment processing due to the earlier roll close.
23. The modelling for GE2026 contains a number of uncertainties, the most significant of these being public behaviour in the face of change. It will be important to continue to develop our model and test our assumptions as the Communications campaign and options to respond to the change of enrolment date are firmed up.

Risk considerations

24. While no model can exactly predict the future, there is a risk that the assumptions made in the models do not reflect what will actually happen. A variety of factors can influence key assumptions, such as public engagement around the politicians running for office, viral social media posts, and misinformation. Should key assumptions be far off from actual events, the models may under or over-estimate key measures used for election planning, such as special vote numbers or enrolment staff needed.
25. The assumptions and models used for Budget 25 were reviewed by an external provider. While they made suggestions on formatting and documentation, they determined the assumptions and modelling methods used are sound. Though elector behaviour is difficult to predict, our assumptions were deemed reasonable by the team, which included behavioural economists. They also recommended that where possible the elements that anticipate behaviour change are further tested.
26. The assumptions can be tested by using advanced data science methods. However, current capacity and other priorities mean these additional steps have not been undertaken. We are building more capacity into the team in preparation for the modernisation business case and we will seek to undertake further analysis where possible. We are also bringing in temporary resource to document the base model in more detail to ensure continuity should a key staff member leave the Commission.
27. There is some risk in maintaining the connections between the Commission's planning and the integrity of the forecasting. Should other business units within the Commission use different assumptions or models, there could be a mismatch in expectations and a lack of robustness in data used for key decisions. There are connections between a large number of processes during the election, so an issue in the planning for one aspect can have significant downstream impacts.

Financial implications

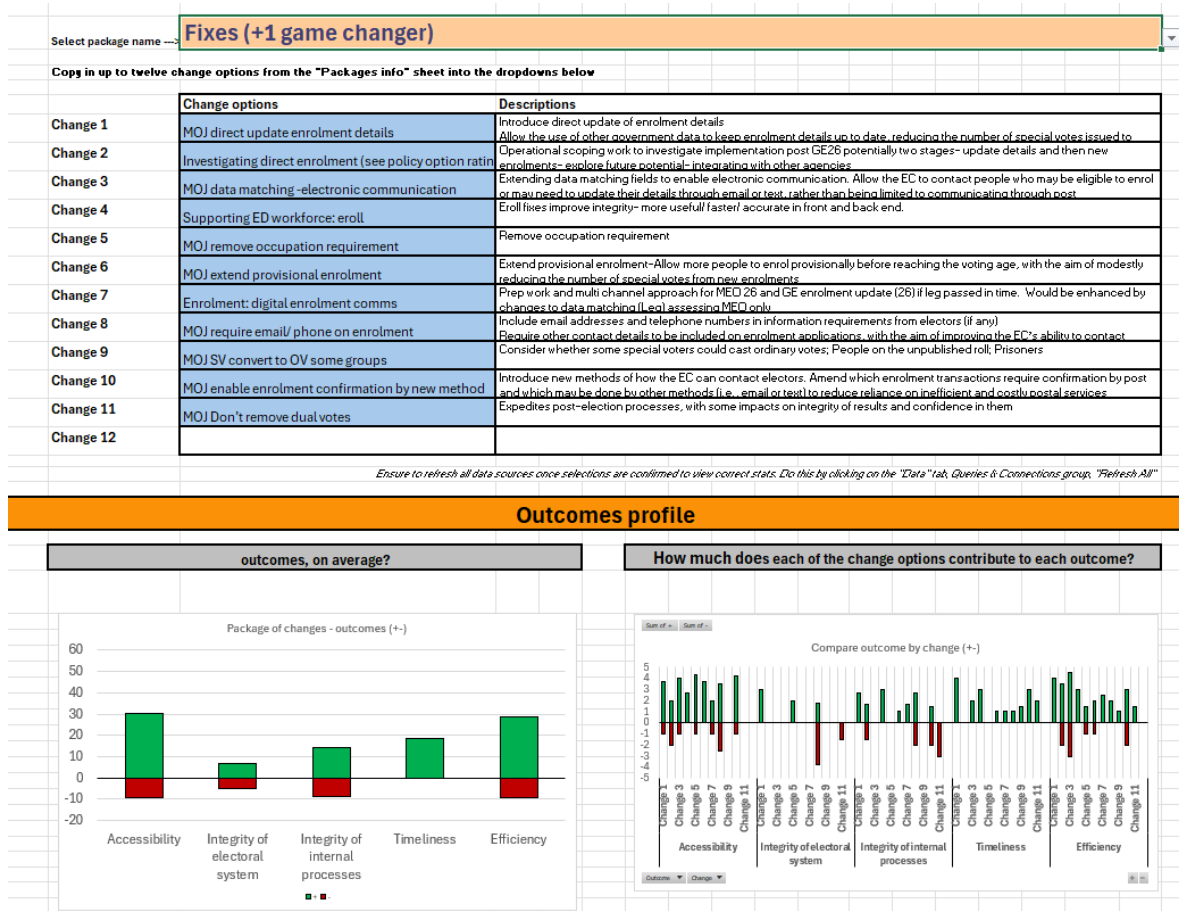
28. Though the models are currently developed in house, there may be the opportunity in the future to gather additional data to inform assumptions and expand the activities that are modelled. This would likely require additional resources.

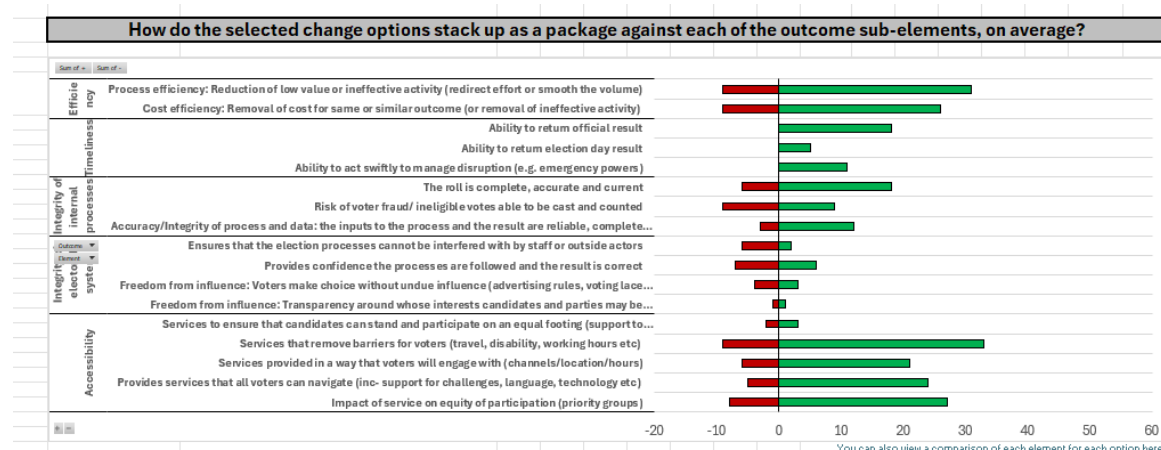
Next steps / Ko te Ara Tiatia

29. The models are updated periodically when the package of work changes, or the scope, timing or design of an initiative is refined. New information received is assessed for impact to the models.
30. We are expecting updated estimated voter population figures from Statistics New Zealand this month. This may change the current forecasts.
31. As changes are made in the Programme workstreams, it may be necessary to gather new data on staff time to process or count votes in the post-election period. These measurements are key in evaluating the expected impact (including managing impacts of unexpected events or changes - as referenced in the OAG/PWC reports) and evaluating the overall impact post-election to ensure staffing and processes are fit for purpose in elections beyond 2026.

Appendices / Ko ngā Whakapiringa

A. Options Assessment Example





Commentary

Impact on trust and confidence

The set of fixes are options are mainly focused on maintaining our ability to deliver and addressing issues that were experienced in GE23. This option is intended to rebuild trust and confidence with voters around the Commission's ability to deliver accurate results in a timely and efficient way. If we can implement these options well, it will strengthen our internal operations and give trust and confidence to New Zealanders. The fixes fall into several categories: 1. the systems and process changes in enrolment and post election to strengthen controls and simplify processes, ensure quality management is in place, 2. management of reputational risk due to insufficient controls in our field operations or failing to meet expectations of the disabled community, 3. Services or platform no longer able to deliver (Easyvote, ECHO) and 4. options to reduce unsustainable pressure on the election but reducing complexity, time or volume. The last category is a subset of other options- some proposed through policy. Negative impacts are largely driven by the potential for additional time to be added due to extra checks, potential trade offs between automation and opportunity for scrutiny, simplification methods reducing visibility or removing controls or the introduction of new methods that increase accessibility creating a barrier for others. Note- these are early assessments and can be addressed in design.

Implementation assessment

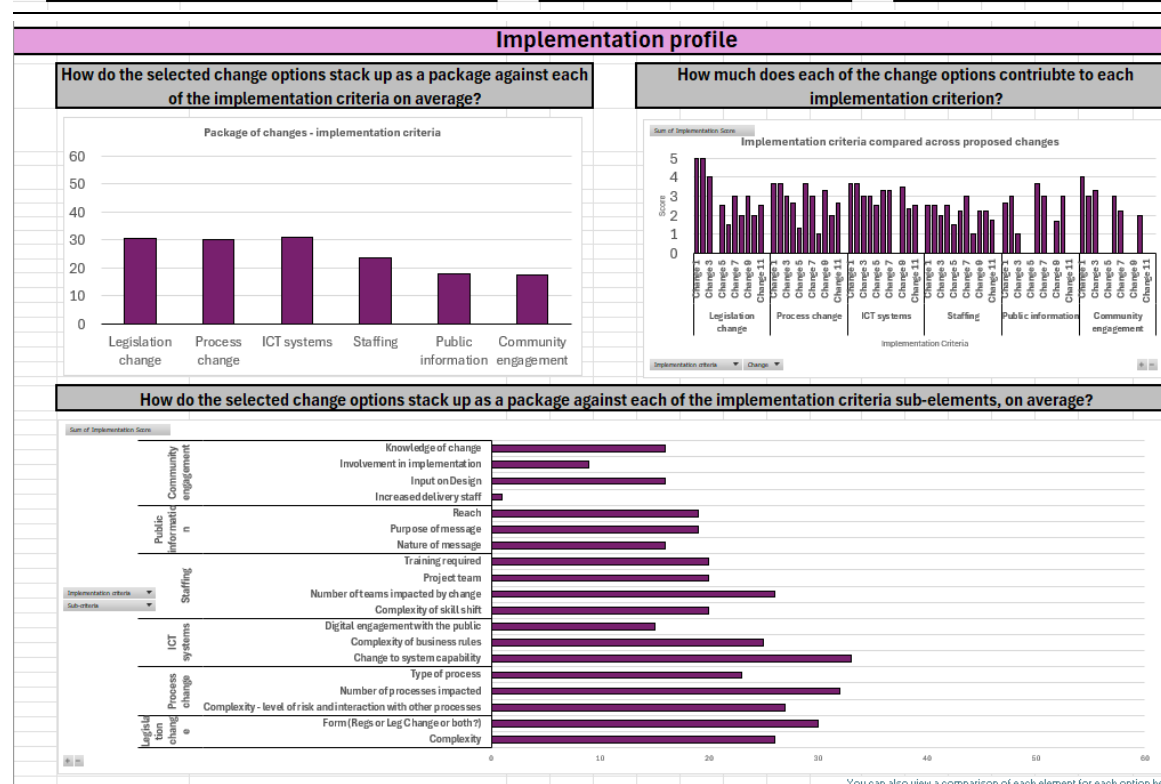
Changes to Overseas app requires regulation changes being defined on time. Should MOJ proceed with policy options we may need to test willingness to progress regulation change on a different timeline. The bulk of the impact falls in process design and IT (9 of 11 requiring changes to bespoke systems) with a number of small to medium sized projects that could be packaged up. Further work to refine the proxy costs is needed however the estimates from the project briefs indicate several high cost changes.

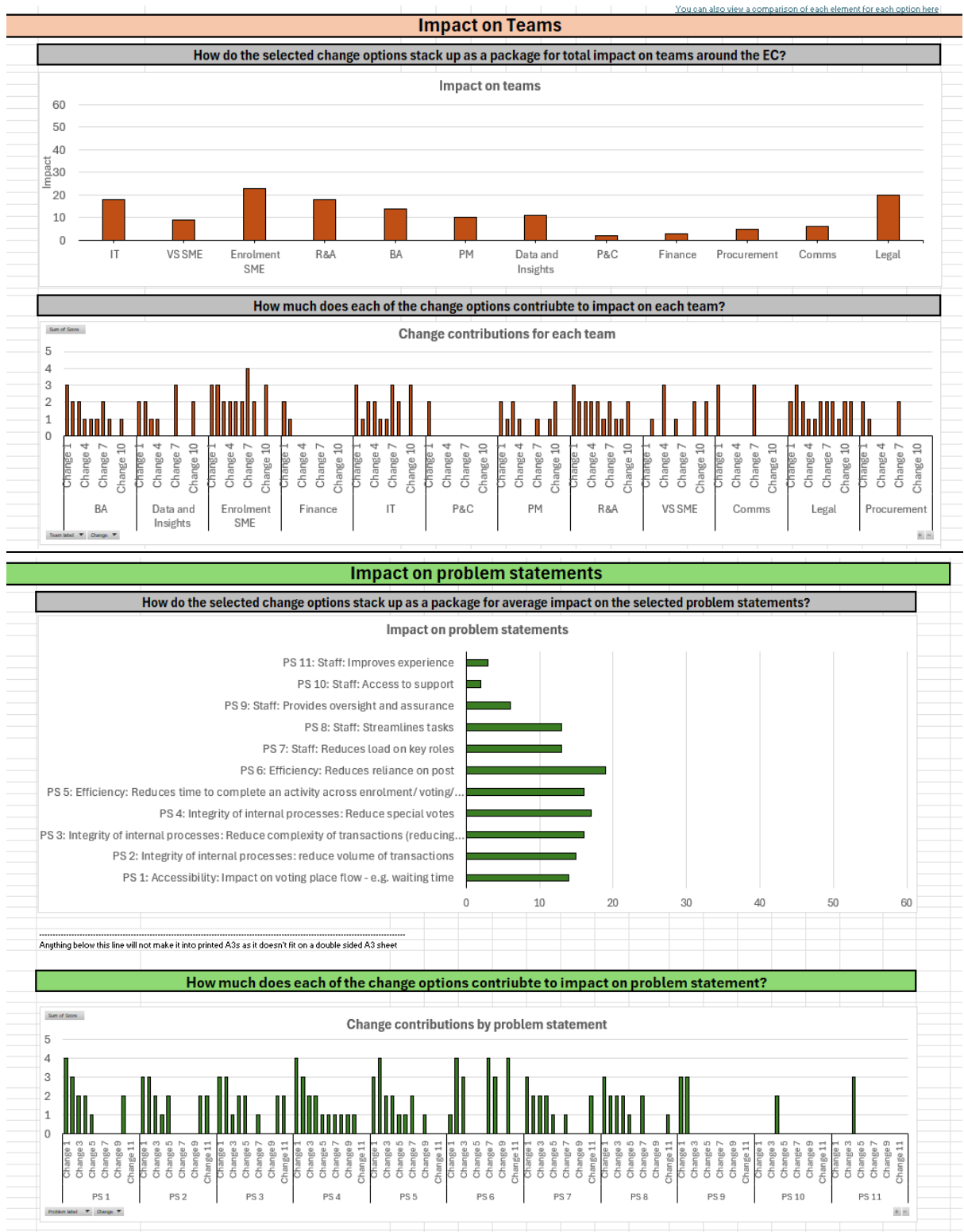
Proxy costs (\$)

Costs for this option will be done in tranches, but all will fall into the high category. EMS and ERSA systems changes will likely fall into the high category (\$200k+) in the 2024/25 financial year. It is expected that this will be funded as a priority out of the hours funded for Catalyst

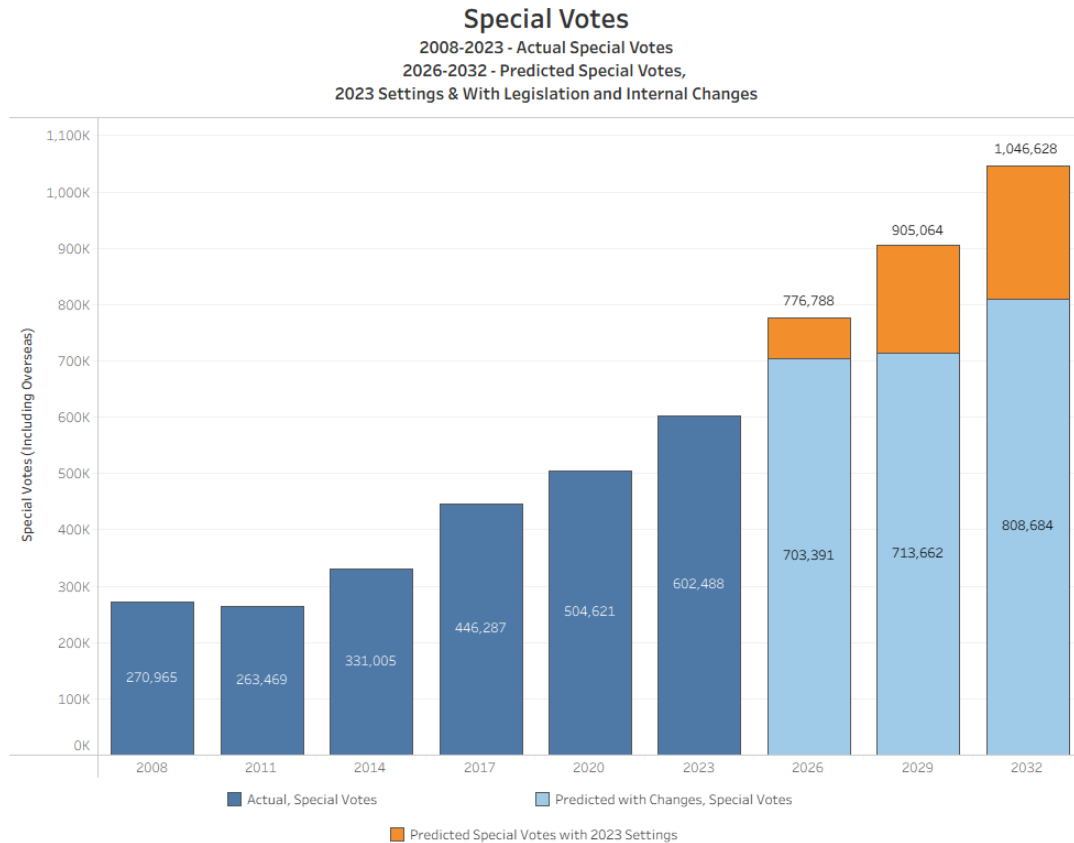
- There will be delivery changes that will impact workforce costs (e.g. bolstering current roles and introducing new ones) that are also likely to fall into the high category (\$200k+) in the 2026/27 financial year
- There will be IT changes (to increase hardware available to the field) that are likely to fall into the 2025/26 financial year

To deliver the partial or full automation





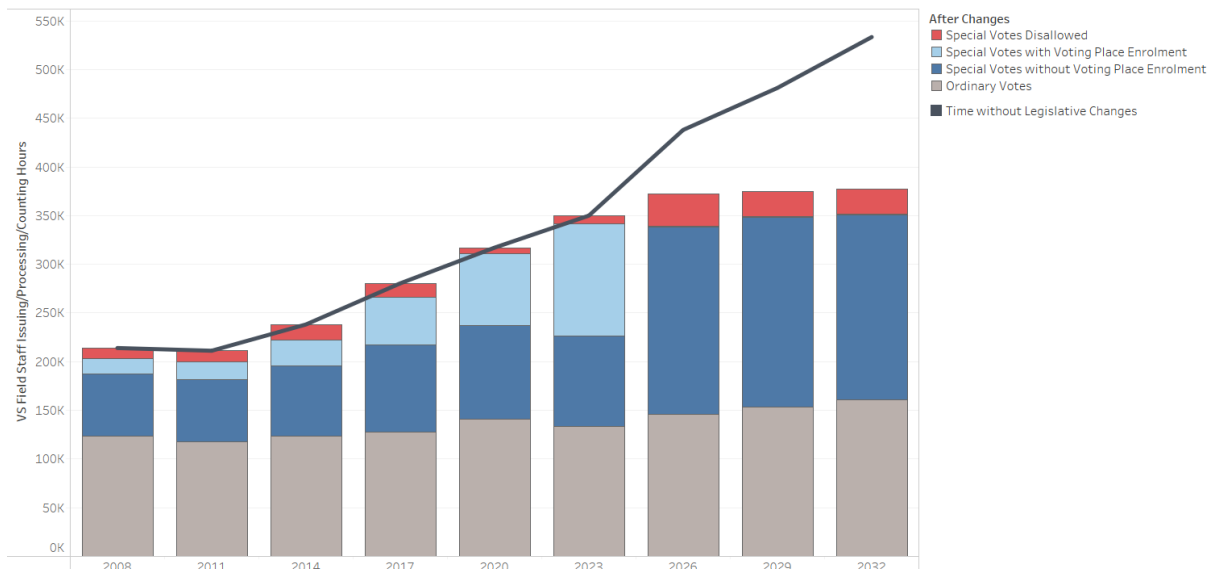
B. Impact on Special Votes



C. Impact on Voting Services issuing, processing, and counting time

Voting Services Field Staff Issuing, Processing & Counting Hours by Vote Type with and without Changes

Changes modelled include roll close at E-13, digital enrolment campaign, direct enrolment, honorific & occupation field removal, and process/tech changes. Overseas votes are excluded from this graph.





Simulation 1 Test Exit Report

Version 0.1

1/12/25

Document history

Version	Issue date	Changes
V0.1	5/12/25	Sent to key project team members for updates

Document review

Name	Position	Version
Adele s9(2)(a)	Principal Advisor Voting Services	V0.1
Allison	Senior Project Leader	V0.1
Rob	Senior Project Leader II	V0.1
Becs	Senior Systems Analyst	V0.1
Robert	Test & Release Manager	V0.1
Ashika	Senior Systems Analyst	V0.1
Grace	Principal Business Analyst	V0.1
Janelle	Project Manager	V0.1
Steve	Recruitment and Talent Lead	V0.1
Tim	Coordinator	V0.1
Janine	Principal Advisor Risk and Assurance	V0.1
Gayle	Principal Advisor Risk and Assurance	V0.1

Document sign-off

Endorsement

Name / Position	Signature	Date	Version
Martin Rodgers, Workstream Lead			
Emily Redmond, Workstream Owner			

Approval

Name / Position	Signature	Date	Version
Programme Board			

Key file links

File name	Link
Simulation Test Plan	02a. Election Readiness November Sim Test Plan V1.0.docx
Nominations Test Plan	EMS-Nominations Test Plan for 2026 GE.docx
Onboarding Scenarios	Onboarding Scenarios.xlsx
Instructions for participants and process maps	Onboarding - Key Docs
Issues logged	Issues Log - November 2025 Simulation.xlsx
Voting Places	Voting Place Scenarios - WIP - 2025-11-14.xlsx

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1 Overview

This simulation has built on prior component and integration testing completed at the workstream and project level and has focused on confirming end-to-end readiness across systems, people, and processes.

The simulation testing:

- Assessed readiness of operational processes including quality assurance checks, instructions, and systems under simulated election conditions.
- Identified any gaps in process and systems that could be remedied prior to the election.
- Provided an opportunity for National Office and regional staff to 'practice' prior to the field using the processes, instructions, and system changes.

Overall, the Nov/Dec simulation tests of nominations, ballot paper and QA, recruitment & rostering, and HQ processes were a success with no major issues identified with the systems, processes or forms. However, several elements originally intended to be in scope were descope due to not being ready, notably onboarding, finance and payroll processes.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Test Exit Report is to document the high-level results and findings for consideration by business and IT areas for remediation prior to GE2026.

This document will be distributed to all relevant project and business stakeholders for review and will be approved by the signatories.

2 Scope of Testing

2.1 In Scope

The scope for the simulation testing at a high level was:

1. System setup including provision for boundary changes:
 - a. New electorate names and numbers in EMS, SnapHire and Tupu
 - b. Implementation of updated functionality in the Enterprise Service Bus (ESB)
 - c. Transfer of voting places between electorates as required in EMS.
2. Nominations (Noms):
 - a. This tested both the experience of a Party Secretary & also internal LRP Team members
 - b. Systems – Party Portal, secure access through MFA Multi Factor Authentication & EMS Nominations where a Party Secretary representative inputs candidates & bulk nominations schedules.
3. Ballot paper production:
 - a. This tested the ballot paper PDF file creation (IT Apps) & the QA of resulting ballot paper file (VS)
 - b. Creation of ballot papers for selected Electorates, candidates as input into EMS as part of the Noms sim test
 - c. Systems: EMS and the Adobe Pro ballot paper creation macro
 - d. Printing (internally, rather than by contract printers) and QA of proof.
 - e. It is intended that these nominees and ballot papers will be used for the VP test (next year).
4. Recruitment and Rostering:
 - a. The system set up, configuration, and integrations tests are prerequisites for the scenario testing and form part of the overall scope.
 - b. To test the experience for the applicant (including unsuccessful), recruiter, and candidates that are successful in their application as the participants follow the process required to complete their activities.
 - c. The test required the process to align with the instructions and communications to be consistent for the roles that require involvement: HQ – RRM, P&C.
 - d. Paper applications were included as part of the test.
 - e. That the Enterprise Service Bus operated as it should: That the correct information is sent to MoJ, EMS, Snaphire.
 - f. TUPU: Testing that all roles get access to the right training, and when someone changes roles, the right training access is provided. That TUPU is being fed the right information from EMS. (Limited testing).
5. VP Equipment set up in EMS, from the perspective of national office supplies admins:

- a. Recording of equipment types
 - b. Parameters to calculate the minimum amount of each equipment type in each voting place.
6. HQ processes from the perspective of field staff, including systems, processes, forms and instructions:
 - a. Entering and amending voting places
 - b. Entering and amending estimated votes
 - c. Generating and amending staff structures
 - d. Generating voting place-related reports
 - e. Task confirmations.
7. Detailed scope and out of scope is available to view [02a. Election Readiness November Sim Test Plan V1.0.docx](#)

2.1 Not In Scope

Prior to submitting the Business Test Plan for this simulation, the following parts of the test were descoped due to readiness:

- Onboarding – the end-to-end test for the wider scenario was not completed. Changes to the way users are provided with credentials and new builds for phones and laptops were not ready.
- Finance and payroll changes were also descoped because changes were still in progress.

These two scenarios will be assessed for readiness prior to confirming the scope for 2026 as part of the wider Election Readiness workstream management.

3 Summary of testing and timeframes

The preparation phase was a big effort in approximately six weeks.

The testing was planned to occur during the week of 24 November through to 5 December. This did not include the preparation work so this required a longer duration prior to execution.

IT Applications needed to manage remaining development by vendors, set up each system in test environment, configure them e.g. new Electorates, integrate several test systems together ie Party Portal, Integration Platform, EMS, Snaphire>EMS, EMS>TUPU, Chris21 (before descoped).

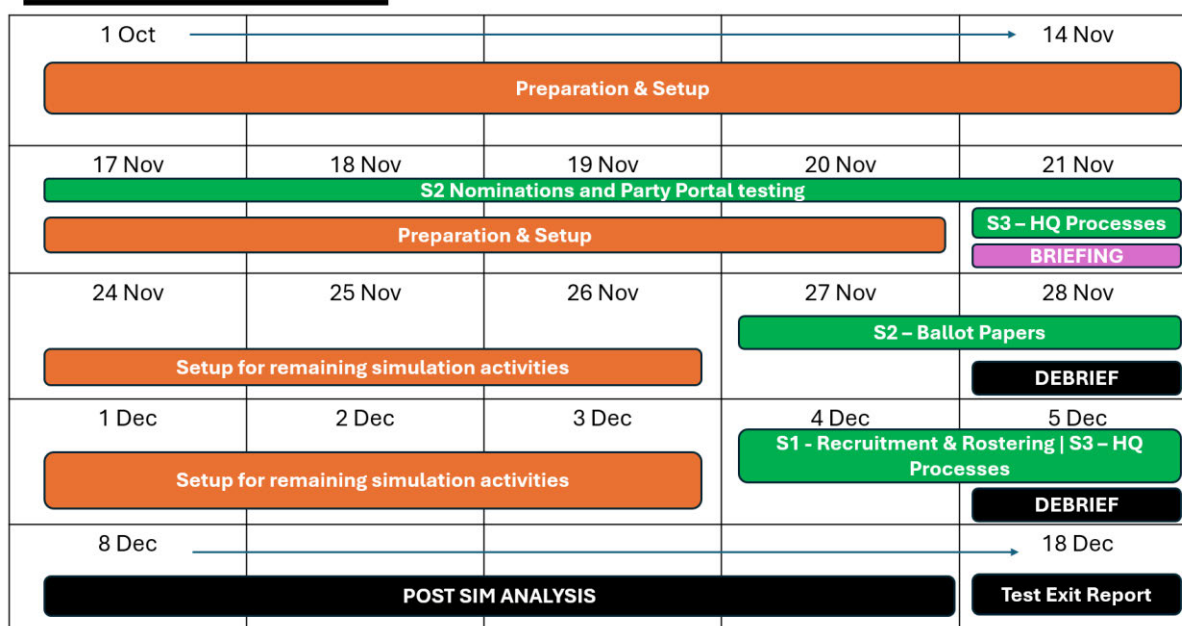
Projects and business teams needed to prepare test scenarios, data, materials and instructions. Integrations between testing requirements for different workstreams was at times challenging and not all elements that would ideally have been integrated were achieved due to a combination of deadline challenges and conflicting priorities.

While a concerted effort has been made to test what could be tested as thoroughly as was practicable, it is almost inevitable that some things that ideally should have been included were missed.

The Nominations and Party portal changes were tested in the week prior to the 24th and so fed into the ballot paper preparation.

The voting place preparation was also completed in the week ending the 21st of November.

TIMELINE



3.1 Approach and findings - high-level summary of simulation

Approach to recording findings

Logs of observations were kept during all three simulations. This included issues, feedback & other valuable information in relation to:

- System related functionality and or bugs
- Instructions for the field – clarity and improvements
- Quality assurance – ballot papers and suggestions to improve the sheets used from the lens of people who were not familiar.
- Forms – M41VPASSESS in terms of the order of the document and wording.
- Permissions in EMS – opportunity to test access and collate information to inform a review.

Note: The log contains issues, observations, and suggestions. There were no very high issues found, and teams will be working through all the feedback to assess and prioritise them. This review and progress on it will be monitored by the Election Readiness workstream.

High-level overview of test scenarios and summarised results

System Setup including Boundary Changes

SnapHire, Enterprise Service Bus (ESB), EMS and Tupu test environments were stood up & configured for the simulation. Each system was configured as close-to as possible for GE26 settings. These included an update on Electorate names/numbers due to the electorate's boundary changes, and the new role structure within Snaphire (grouping by pay grade) and EMS. Other standard system set up tasks included the import of estimated votes into EMS, all of which is a practice run for how the systems will be stood up for future simulations & also the live production system.

Overall result

EMS setup went smoothly overall.

A bug in the import of finance data for voting places was noted.

Limitations in the import function for estimated votes and the proper order of operations were identified. The function works largely as designed, but it was noted that a careful QA process needs to be developed for estimated votes data, and the system needs to be backed up before and after this process during implementation in production to prevent significant rework.

EMS-Nominations – EMS candidate nomination test

Seven Legal, Regulation and Policy (LRP) team members & six IT Applications team members worked together in 2x 4-hour sessions. Seven party secretary or party assistant test user accounts and three LRP EMS administration accounts were set up, testing ≈40 lifecycle/processes. During the test, data entered into EMS-Nominations included 17 parties (10 registered and 7 unregistered), and 2 umbrella/component party structures.

210 electorate and/or list candidates were entered over 17 electorates (13 general and 4 Māori), and of those 3 electorates with name changes for 2026 GE. 1 party list totalling 120 list candidates was created.

Systems used & tested were: Silverstripe, Party Portal, Microsoft authenticator, EMS-Nominations.

Overall result

The test confirmed that the EMS-Nominations system and access through the portal is functioning well and enables party secretaries to prepare electorate and list candidate information and produce their bulk nomination and party list schedules as expected. The system could be used in its current state if an election were called today.

A small number of issues were identified and logged, largely relating to minor usability and Commission permission improvements rather than functional impediments. These will be addressed with the aim of resolving them by the end of March 2026.

Ballot papers and QA

Two IT Apps team, three VS-Logistics & Supplies, two Risk & Assurance and two LRP team members worked together in 2x 3-hour sessions over two days. The nominations data from the previous week was used to produce ballot papers with coverage of party/candidate variables. The ballot paper file included intentionally created errors to test whether the QA participants identified them. A new QA checklist was used by participants from the business to complete this test. The feedback will inform updates and improvements.

<i>Ballot paper production and QA</i>	Systems	Processes	Instructions	Impact	Assigned to
System: Umbrella/Component parties did not correctly show on BP	BP Adobe Pro+macro			High (Public)	IT Apps
System: How a long Party Name should look on ballot paper was confirmed	BP Adobe Pro+macro	Party registration & BP generation	BP generation	High (Public)	
System: Vision does not have a logo next to their candidate or party but are not independent. Are they not a registered party hence no logo?	BP Adobe Pro+macro	Enter Party logo filename	Enter Party details	High (Public)	IT Apps
System issue: Electorate file numbering after goes through java code not as expected eg adding 1 or 2 to the electorate #	BP Adobe Pro+macro	Generate BP File	BP generation	Medium (Internal)	IT Apps
Suggestion: Copy of javascript code is held in secure sharepoint but given its importance, it may need more robust version control management	BP Adobe Pro+macro			Medium (Internal)	IT Apps
Feedback: improve the wording on the QA sheet as it's very confusing to follow the steps if you are not familiar with what you should be looking for.			BP checking	Medium (Internal)	VS
Feedback: #5 Interchangeable terminology re candidate/electorate - for QA people not familiar with Electoral terms (takes time to interpret). Simplify and use consistent Checklist instruction terminology to streamline the checking task/reduce time			BP checking	Medium (Internal)	VS
Feedback: If a ballot paper doesn't "pass" a check question, need to be able to indicate with a (X). There is only a positive statement (QA has passed) indicated above sign-off. How can you indicate on the QA sheet that the ballot paper failed the QA check?			BP checking	Medium (Internal)	VS

Ballot paper production and QA	Systems	Processes	Instructions	Impact	Assigned to
Suggestion: Grouping Check questions by type of checking task: For example, some checks are focused on layout aspects (alignment/ dots / spaces / logos). Others are focused on text format (capital, bold, Titled, large and small character). This helps to focus the Checker's brain and eye. and make the checking more efficient.			BP checking	Medium (Internal)	VS
Risk & Assurance observations regarding the checking of every single ballot paper file in a time critical period (ie all 3 x 71 = 213 ballot paper files). This is a 100% physical print check of an electronic file generated via Adobe. But what checks are made within the system to confirm accurate, complete and stable E-File creation? Also, are the 100% physical ballot paper checks for format, bold, and alignment aspects expected to find errors that the Ballot Paper Design processes hadn't identified? How would such errors not be picked up and addressed earlier? How could changes be made to any BP element between Design sign-off and E-File Creation?			BP checking	Medium (Internal)	VS

Other HQ Processes

The ten voting services Regional Advisors entered and amended voting places and staff structures over the course of an afternoon. This included recording of VP assessments for new and updated voting places, entering and amending opening hours and estimated votes, generating and amending staff structures, generating voting place-related reports and using the EMS Task Confirmation module. Voting Place payments were out of scope for the simulation but were included in the recording of voting places. A bug was noted in the initial setup of voting place finance records, outside the scope of the simulation.

Feedback on new functionality was generally positive. However, issues were noted with permissions, the M41-VPASSESS form and the related instructions, including the structure of the online manual (Te Epa) itself.

Other HQ Processes	Systems	Processes	Instructions	Impact	Assigned to
Form: M41-VPASSESS Form not aligned with EMS - (notably Equipment, order of fields, flags/tags)		M41-VPASSESS		High	Voting Services
System: VP Payments tab includes mandatory fields which can't be completed when the tab is initially expected to be populated	EMS			High	Finance
Instructions: Instructions unclear as to what gets entered into EMS where and when.		M41-VPASSESS	HQ-S03-06	High	SEDW
Instructions: unclear on meaning of several points			HQ-S03-06	High	SEDW
Structure of 'Te Epa' instructions does not meet expectations (several issues documented in issues log)			Te Epa	High	SEDW
System permissions: Need to refine LSM Assist permissions (too permissive in some areas, too restrictive in others). Confirm delegations which can then be configured in permissions.	EMS (permissions)			High	IT Apps
System: Users getting 'another user has made a change' message when no other change has been made.	EMS			High	IT Apps
System: 'VP Flags' causes confusion with physical flags (banners). Suggest renaming to 'VP Tags'.	EMS			Low	IT Apps
VP Equipment preparation – small screen alignment issue in Supplies > Supply Items > Quantities (Equipment)	EMS			Low (VS admins only)	IT Apps

Recruitment and Rostering

This test included applying for a role through to being allocated to training and rostering in EMS, and rehiring of people (moving from one role to another). We had approximately 10 volunteers who applied for a role. Then we used the Regional Advisors (10) to take the applications through the remaining end-to-end test scope.

Overall, the feedback from the applicants and the RA's who completed much of the testing was positive. Of note was their appreciation & support of the improvements in SnapHire > EMS, and some good feedback about the instructions. Great discussions occurred during the debrief about permissions in EMS and the security issues this can drive and how rostering is done and the limitations that are faced because the Commission does not have an adequate rostering tool.

There was also a good discussion that needs to continue regarding the numbers in SnapHire not being a good measure of the number of people needed to hire and causing confusion for the electorate recruiters. This is due to the fluid relationship between applicant → role → rostered shifts – It could be 1 to 1 to 1 or 1 to many to many. This simulation focused on individual cases, rather than bulk workflow.

<i>Recruitment and Rostering</i>	Systems	Processes	Instructions	Impact	Assigned to
If someone has submitted a paper application which means that they don't have an email address. How would a TUPU login credential be created?		Yes		High	EDTW
Detailed updates to the instruction's manual were identified for chapter 9.			Yes	Med	Larissa/Steve
Suggestions based on Māori advisory participant applications: Where did you hear about us – needs to be fleshed out and/or provide an info section around already allocated VP or preferred VP Do you have any connection or are you involved with any candidate, political party or political issues? – can we provide an example/guidance of this, specifically around 'political issues' Entitlement to work in NZ – no instruction/prompt to unselect before re selecting choice	SnapHire			Med	EDTW
Update communications – offer letter, training letter				Med	EDTW

More detail available at [Issues Log - November 2025 Simulation.xlsx](#)

3.2 Team retrospective

A short session was held with the team on 9 December to help inform the next round of preparation and delivering a simulation. We used a Teams whiteboard, and these are the key observations.

What did we learn

- Scope was not stable during the planning timeframes, and this would have helped scheduling of system related activities
- System preparation and testing need more lead time
- Inbox, email set up needs more lead time to get through ticketing system
- Defining the data requirements and set up took a while to confirm and didn't completely land for next time
- Pre-test simulation instructions would have helped people coming in cold
- A pre-Sim run through for key players to iron out any last-minute things and be provided preparation materials e.g. instructions so we can all support test participants.
- Heavy reliance on a couple of key people for planning activities.
- Issues using internal devices for external activities e.g. applications for a role, use a kiosk build in the future to avoid this.

What didn't go well – stop

- Last minute scope changes and not well defined e.g. KMVP pipeline and roles
- Too many parallel tests being planned, often pulling in the same people across various streams
- Issues were not always well documented so difficult to understand and or reproduce
- Planning felt rushed and scope changed frequently
- Compression for the two weeks available for testing down to 4 days in total (Noting that we knew RAs were only going to have two days to support)
- Meetings sometimes did not include crucial people and the estimate of time required was not sufficient.
- Requirements for support people were not clear on the day and made it hard to plan the day.
- Too many scenarios for the number of people and time available for them to participate.
- We did not have pre-booked space to carry out testing (we had booked but it did not work out as it should have).

What went well – continue

- The team felt that co-location was helpful and gave a better perspective for all participants of how the end-to-end process worked
- Willing testers and a good wrap up each day, highly engaged RA's excited about the new process/system changes
- Amazing teamwork by so many involved
- Amazing preparation work by Grace **s9(2)(a)**
- Managing to stand up all our applications in dedicated and integrated test environments Snaiphire > EMS, TUPU etc
- Using people who didn't fully know what they were testing was great as it brought different perspectives to instructions and checking forms.

- Achieved building confidence & awareness in key people.

3.3 Exit criteria

The following conditions have been met before submission for approval:

- All test scenarios were executed and documented by business users.
- All remaining observations/defects have been accepted by the business owners and IT and will feed into prioritisation conversations. As part of this assessment of the ratings applied by the team will be completed.
- Lessons learned have been documented by the project team and participants.
- The test exit report has been completed and reviewed.