

AEC campaign certification - mandatory checklist

Campaign: 2022 federal election participation campaign (*Your vote will help shape Australia*)

Duration: 10 April 2022 – 21 May 2022

Key components:

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is required to inform eligible voters about electoral events, including federal elections.

The overarching aim of the campaign is to help maximise enrolment and successful participation in the 2022 federal election, and to support the delivery of a high-integrity election. The campaign starts on election announcement and includes three phases:

- Close of rolls (10 – 18 April)
- Voter services (3 – 20 May)
- Formality (4 – 21 May).

Disinformation messaging runs throughout the election period. It is designed to raise awareness of possible disinformation that may be circulating and encourages voters to check the source of electoral communication. Campaign materials also reference COVID-19 safety measures that will be in place.

The Electoral Commissioner has certified the federal election campaign complies with the *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities*, as outlined below.

Principle 1: Relevant to government responsibilities

The subject matter of the campaign directly relates to responsibilities of the Australian Electoral Commission.

The policy or program is underpinned by:

- legislative authority; or**
- **appropriation of the Parliament; or**
 - **a Cabinet Decision which is intended to be implemented during the current Parliament.**

The campaign relates directly to the AEC's functions and powers to inform electors as set out in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* Section 7:

1(c) to promote public awareness of election and ballot matters, and Parliamentary matters, by means of the conduct of education and information programs and by other means.

1 (f) to publish material on matters that relate to its functions.

Examples of suitable uses for government campaigns include to:

- **inform the public of new, existing or proposed government policies, or policy revisions;**
- provide information on government programs or services or revisions to programs or services to which the public are entitled;**
- **inform consideration of issues;**
- **disseminate scientific, medical or health and safety information; or**
- **provide information on the performance of government to facilitate accountability to the public.**

Australian citizens aged 18 years and over are required by law to enrol and vote in federal elections.

The AEC implements an election time campaign to support the successful delivery of the federal election, and to inform and educate voters about successful participation, including:

- how to enrol to vote or update their details on the electoral roll, and to do this before the close of rolls deadline
- driving turnout by knowing when, where and how to vote either on or before election day (including information on available voter services)
- how to correctly complete the House of Representatives and Senator ballot papers to cast a formal vote, so it is counted.

Principle 2: Presented in an objective, fair and accessible manner

- The recipients of the information can distinguish between facts, comment, opinion and analysis.**
- Information presented as a fact, is accurate and verifiable.**
- The basis of factual comparisons is clear and does not mislead the recipient about the situation.**
- Pre-existing policies, products, services and activities are not presented as new.**

The information provided in the campaign is factual, informative, accurate and verifiable. There is no opinion or analysis included.

Policies are not discussed as part of the campaign.

The availability of information products and channels to support voter participation in the electoral process is promoted.

Information about voter services on election day or early voting options for eligible voters is referenced in campaign materials.

- Special attention is paid to communicating with any information-disadvantaged individuals or groups identified as being within the target audience. Particular attention is paid to meeting the information needs of Indigenous Australians, the rural community and those for whom English is not a convenient language in which to receive information.**

The campaign target audience is all eligible voters (Australian citizens aged 18 years and over). However specific attention has been given to communicating with a range of audience groups including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, and people with disability.

Voters from CALD backgrounds

Culturally appropriate materials were developed in partnership with a specialist multicultural/translation supplier.

Advertising and key information products (including *Your official guide to the 2022 federal election*) will be available in up to 33 languages other than English. Information and resources are available on a dedicated page of the AEC website, through stakeholder/community organisations, and as part of media outreach.

Campaign materials also raise awareness of the AEC's telephone interpreter service, which includes 19 dedicated language lines and a general number to call to for interpreter services in other languages.

Indigenous voters

Indigenous materials were developed in partnership with a specialist Indigenous communication supplier.

A suite of bespoke and adapted advertising materials was developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.

Information is also provided via radio advertisements in 20 Indigenous languages plus English. A partnership with National Indigenous Television (NITV) provides tailored, in-depth information about enrolling and voting.

Voters with disability

Campaign materials include tailored messaging to support those with disability to enrol and vote. Messaging promotes the AEC's telephone voting service for those who are blind or have low vision, as well as assistance at polling places.

Contact points for more information are provided in all campaign phases, such as the AEC website and relevant phone numbers.

Key campaign activities include:

- advertising via print handicapped radio to reach those who are visually impaired or have a lower literacy level
- braille, audio and large print versions of flagship resource *Your official guide to the 2022 federal election*, as well as lists of candidates running in the election

Imagery used in campaigns appropriately reflects the diverse range of Australians. Where it is consistent with the campaign objectives, this includes the realistic portrayal of the full participation of women, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The 'Your vote will help shape Australia' campaign concept is in a 'claymation' style and does not feature real people. However, it includes imagery reflecting the diversity of eligible voters taking into consideration age, gender, Indigenous Australians, people from CALD backgrounds and people with disability.

Campaign materials promoting remote area mobile polling feature imagery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians to reflect voters living in remote areas.

Campaigns are tested with target audiences to indicate they are engaging and perform well against their objectives.

The campaign was market tested at key stages with participants from a range of audience segments including the general public, new/younger voters, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and voters from CALD backgrounds. This included rounds of concept, message, product, and refinement testing.

Principle 3: Objective and not directed at promoting party political interests

Language used in the campaign is objective language and is free of political argument.

The AEC is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and an independent statutory authority, established under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act).

The AEC's purpose is to maintain an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters through active electoral roll management, efficient delivery of polling services, and targeted education and public awareness programs.

AEC campaign materials are therefore objective, informative, and free of political argument.

Campaigns must not try to foster a positive impression of a particular political party or promote party political interests.

The campaign materials are apolitical and do not promote political parties or their interests.

Campaigns must not:

- a. mention the party in Government by name;
- b. directly attack or scorn the views, policies or actions of others such as the policies and opinions of opposition parties or groups;
- c. include party political slogans or images;
- d. be designed to influence public support for a political party, a candidate for election, a Minister or a Member of Parliament; or
- e. refer or link to the web sites of politicians or political parties.

Campaign materials do not mention or promote any political party or candidates, their views or slogans.

Campaign materials include the AEC logo and authorisation from the Electoral Commissioner.

All website links in campaign materials direct voters to the AEC website.

Principle 4: Justified and undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner

Campaigns are only be instigated where a need is demonstrated, target recipients are clearly identified, and the campaign is informed by appropriate research or evidence.

As it is compulsory for all eligible Australians to enrol and vote in federal elections, the AEC campaign helps voters exercise their right and fulfil their obligation to vote under federal electoral law.

The campaign target audience is all eligible voters – Australian citizens aged 18 years and over, including consideration of the information needs of sub-groups as identified above.

As at 31 December 2021 there were 17,032,907 Australians enrolled to vote. This represents 96.3% of the estimated proportion of eligible people enrolled (with an estimated 657,839 eligible Australians who are not enrolled).

The campaign was informed by robust evidence base including developmental research, electoral participation data and past evaluations.

Campaign information should clearly and directly affect the interests of recipients.

Enrolling and voting in federal elections is compulsory in Australia.

The campaign provides information to eligible Australians on how to enrol, how to vote on or before election day, and how to vote correctly.

The medium and volume of the advertising activities is cost effective and justifiable within the budget allocated to the campaign.

The campaign is based on a multichannel, integrated approach involving advertising, public relations, community outreach, social media outreach, website content and product development and distribution, including delivery of the official guide to all households.

Advice on the most cost-effective mix of advertising channels and activities to reach target audiences throughout the campaign was provided by the Australian Government’s master media buying agency, Universal McCann (UM). Advice was sought from specialist communication suppliers on how to engage with specific audience groups and the appropriate channels and language selection.

Distribution of unsolicited material should be carefully controlled.

The AEC has a responsibility to inform eligible Australians of their obligation to enrol and vote in federal elections and referendums. The election time campaign uses multiple channels to reach and provide voters information to help them successfully participate.

The AEC prints and distributes *Your official guide to the 2022 federal election*. It will be delivered by Australia Post with regular mail (unaddressed) to all private addresses including:

- household letterboxes
- individual boxes/bags at Australia Post outlets
- roadside letterboxes
- counters at Australia Post outlets, where people pick up their mail.

The AEC's contracted multicultural communication specialist, on behalf of the AEC, will email over 800 CALD stakeholders and community organisations information including details of translated resources available to assist voters from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Vision Australia on behalf of the AEC will help distribute information to blind and low vision clients, using its channels and network of Vision Australia offices.

Campaigns are evaluated to determine effectiveness.

AEC campaigns should be clearly measured against campaign objectives and details provided on how the campaign was effective.

The campaign will be evaluated through a comprehensive quantitative research program by an independent, qualified supplier. This includes a pre-election benchmark survey and tracking surveys throughout the campaign period to measure effectiveness against communication objectives.

UM will provide a report on the performance of the different media (advertising) channels.

Other performance measures include website statistics, social and traditional media monitoring, and call centre data.

Principle 5: Compliant with legal requirements and procurement policies and procedures

The manner of presentation and the delivery of campaigns must comply with all relevant laws including:

- a. laws with respect to broadcasting and media;
- b. privacy laws;
- c. intellectual property laws;
- d. electoral laws;
- e. trade practices and consumer protection laws; and
- f. workplace relations laws.

The AEC's Legal Services Section reviewed campaign materials before implementation. All materials were deemed compliant with relevant laws.

Procurement policies and procedures for the tendering and commissioning of services and the employment of suppliers are to be followed, and there must be a clear audit trail regarding decision making.

AEC procurement policies and procedures were adhered to and there is a clear audit trail on campaign decisions.

Procurement of campaign suppliers was undertaken in line with relevant Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs). Procurement of goods and services related to government advertising (including information and advertising services for the development and implementation of information and advertising campaigns) are exempt from the rules of Division 2 of the CPRs, and from paragraphs 4.7, 4.8 and 7.26 of Division 1.