

This report covers the main activities undertaken by the group/business unit for the period. It excludes the GE23 Programme or by-elections, which are reported on through separate channels.

Progress against the strategic priorities

Our advisory team (Ngā Maihi) continue to strengthen the capability and resilience of colleagues and business units to integrate Te Ao Māori successfully in their respective environments. The MEO, and GE2023 preparations retain much of our efforts in translation work, engagement opportunities, planning and relationship building. We have supported our colleagues this past month in activities and in the work streams below.

Building our capability

The team has participated and led in preparations for the GE2023. Work that requires building understandings and the capability of staff via:

- Whakatau/Democracy Matters Inductions – National Office
- Continued Imbedding of tikanga Māori across the commission.
- Whakatau/pōhiri of Rostering & Recruitment Managers & Community Engagement Staff – Ōtautahi
- Review of external media & communications.
- Matāriki kōrero at all staff hui
- Working with Communications Learning and Development to develop and improve cultural capability – Te Arawhiti programmes.
- Translation work (HQ/Te Ātiawa and regional dialects)

Preparing for an election

- Support for Voting Services with all voting places and collateral
- Kaupapa Māori Voting planning, connection, placement and support
- Regional site Visits with the Board
- Support for the recruitment of Trainers and Voting Place staff
- Support in the development of the Advertisement production for the GE campaign
- Tangata Whenua Contracted groups procurement – Panel Participation
- Continued translation work (HQ/Te Ātiawa and regional dialects)
- Radio and Television interviews

Preparing for the future

Ngā Maihi pursue external learning opportunities for staff to supplement in house training. We have attended two workshops this month delivered by external providers.

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Te Atakura Educators
- The Wall Walk – Dr Simone Bull

We share these learning opportunities with staff through the correct channels and promote staff participation.

We continue to develop tikanga that is appropriate to us in house and appropriate to our different communities. Our translation work for the GE is better positioning ourselves to have powerful conversations with Iwi.

Building relationships and understanding

- Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei – Recruitment pathway
- Te Ātiawa – Visit to Waiwhetū Marae
- Te Pae Herenga discussions
- Iwi chairs collaboration

Other progress

n/a

Issues under management

n/a

Other news

n/a

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Progress against the strategic priorities

Building our capability

IT deployed software enhancements for eRoll UI updates and Mike support for bulk 'Gone No Address (GNA)' and Mike form assignment processes. The July releases for EMS included support for Readiness Testing, Voting Place Management and EMS Finance Management.

Finance continues to refine the EMS Finance Module and provide ongoing financial management support to Electorate Managers.

P&C's Business Partnering Team and Recruitment and Talent Lead were upskilled on using SnapHire General Election in preparation of delivering the Recruitment and Rostering Manager (RRM) Induction Training.

The HSW Incident Reporting has been digitised, and a Reporting Hub work commenced with Communications and Education developing a prototype.

Preparing for an election

Procurement assisted the Community Engagement team's three Registration of Interest's (ROI's) for General Election 2023 – Community Organisations: These three procurement events relate to the purchase of Pacific, Ethnic and Tangata Whenua focused organisations with national reach to augment community engagement activities for GE2023 alongside the Commission's community engagement teams. Pacific (\$50k), Ethnic (\$50k), Tangata Whenua (\$100k) communities. We received 28 responses as at the close off date July 11. We have been busy shortlisting three Respondents from each stream, interviewing, reference checking and drafting the contracts. The contracts start on 31 July and the end date is 31 October 2023.

Enterprise Services continues to support assurance and preparedness activities currently underway, including Deloitte's Cyber, Privacy and Resilience review and KMPG's audit of the Data Platform MEO data issue, and PWC's Internal Audit on EMS finance.

In response to the PwC Audit preliminary findings, Voting Services and Finance are exploring options to mitigate risk in the EMS Finance due to lack of segregation of duties in the process. Finance also supported Strategy Engagement & Partnerships to ensure the community teams are able to access funds for Koha and reduce the burden of out-of-pocket expenses where possible.

Some of the team assisted the Enquires team with their Zendesk implementation and issue management.

GE2023 HSW Guardrails were defined and during August will be with ELT and the Board for approval. Communications and Education are engaged to develop a comms plan around these.

Property has been busy monitoring completion of site security for Electorate Headquarters. Reviewing and commenting on voting place licences and hire agreements and securing new community engagement premises in Hamilton, which are now operational. The rent review for Community Engagement premises in Ellerslie is now in progress.

A digital tool for reporting Health Safety and Wellness accidents and incidents has been made available for the field (without requiring Ops Manual changes)

The People and Culture Advisory Team attended RRM Induction training as subject matter experts to upskill RRM's and Electorate Managers on SnapHire GE and employment relations matters expected during the delivery of the event.

Activities and enquiries around HR, ER, HSW and Payroll activities have increased exponentially to support the larger workforce appointed to deliver the election.

The team finalised Payroll and Recruitment Chapters in the Operations Manuals and templates. The recruitment team worked with other parts of the business to prepare talking points for the CE for his meeting with the Public Sector CEs to promote the Commission's recruitment plan and set up a contingency workforce across the public sector. EC staff also attended the Public Sector Heads of HR meetings to support this work.

Preparing for the future

During July we continued work on our FY24 business plan for presentation to the full Enterprise Services team in the second week of August.

An initial Health and Safety Management System assessment indicates robust development is required. The People and Culture Team commenced with data collection tally every week of mailboxes queries, ER cases, MOJ cases, conflicts of interest, and serious misconduct checks completed by region and topic. This data will inform numbers and types of queries, where extra support may be reallocated within the team, and resources for GE2026.

The recruitment team started meeting weekly from Tuesday 18 July 2023 and the outcomes of these meetings feed into ELT meetings to ensure the best possible approaches for sourcing the required volume and calibre of applicants.

Updating Tupu with the many, resignations and new starters continues to be a big piece of work. The contract with Learning Works was renegotiated, and the signing, and finance approval is almost complete.

Building relationships and understanding

Feedback on the draft Travel Policy has been received from Kaimahi who responded. The comments will be analysed with the view to having a new Travel Policy in August/September.

Other progress

Enterprise Services Security uplift and awareness continues with ongoing phishing simulations. A cyber dashboard format has been agreed by the Board and will be presented frequently until after the election period.

The Financial results for FY23 are completed in draft, and work is commencing on the Annual report. KPMG will be returning to National Office in September to complete the audit with signing of the audit report due by 31 October 2023.

Issues under management

- At the time of writing, Enterprise Services are investigating an issue with incorrect messaging in Enrol Online during the MEO restriction period and supporting the Incident Management Team response to the issue.
- As GE2023 approaches, supporting those delivering will likely be an increasingly resource-intensive priority. As a team of one in the HSW space, work on procedures templates etc., will be reduced. Unknown to what degree at this stage

Other news

This month Enterprise Services farewelled [9(2)(a)] and [9(2)(a)] from the Admin team.

We welcomed:

- [9(2)(a)] (Solutions Architect) to the IT Team
- [9(2)(a)] (temporary Admin Team leader) to the Administration team
- [9(2)(a)] (Senior Finance Business partner) and [9(2)(a)] (Operations Business partner) into the Finance Team.

P&C also celebrated the promotion of [9(2)(a)] into the role of Business Partner.



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Progress against the strategic priorities

Building our capability

Preparing for an election

- Provided support to the Board for consideration of a variation of the broadcasting allocation following the unsuccessful judicial review application filed by the NZ Outdoors & Freedom Party, Vision NZ, Freedoms NZ and ALCP
- Continuing to work with MOJ and DIA on a Voting Age Bill – the draft bill is scheduled to be introduced in August
- Participated in the delivery of the briefing for Publishers and Broadcasters
- Briefed the centralised enquiries team and enrolment processing team on our team's functions
- Continuing to respond to queries and complaints on the election advertising rules
- Continuing to process and publish party donation returns over \$20,000
- Continuing to work with IT on the EMS nominations module and umbrella and component parties
- Published the Gazette notice for the start of the regulated period
- Reviewed the protocols for the general election
- Continuing to assist Mark with advice on election disruption/adjournment provisions
- Planning for training for party secretaries on candidate nominations
- Preparing the party folders and checklists for nominations
- Finalised the judicial recount pack for the Office of the Chief District Court Judge

Preparing for the future

- Registered the party name change of Māori Party to Te Pāti Māori
- We are currently processing five applications for new party registrations
 - Democratic Alliance
 - Leighton Baker Party
 - Women's Rights Party
 - Animal Justice Party
 - NZ Loyal
- Processing a name and logo change for ONE Party who have applied to be registered as NewZeal – this is currently out for public consultation

Building relationships and understanding

- The next two MOJ secondees are joining the team for a 6 week secondment at the end of July and beginning of August to assist with compliance, advisory opinions and nominations
- Continued to meet with social media platforms to establish relationships and escalation routes for non-compliance
- Party secretary update sent out in July
- Liaison with Parliamentary Service re MP publicity

- Liaison with Waka Kotahi re signage rules

Other progress

Advisory opinions

We issued 247 advisory requests in July. All were responded to within the 5 working day timeframe. Requests from MPs peaked around the start of the regulated period on 14 July.

Official Information Act requests responded to in July

We responded to three OIA requests in July. All were within the 20 working day timeframe.

Requestor	Topic	Response Time
9(2)(a)	<p>1. Please send me your detailed process of ensuring chain of custody of ballots once cast.</p> <p>2. Please advise what your ballot printing and handling (un filled in) policy is, and how you account for all legally printed ballots</p> <p>3. Has the Commission taken any steps to ensure that ballots cannot be legally printed or duplicated? Please advise what these steps are. Examples include electronic watermarking, unique identifiers, special paper/characteristics</p> <p>4. Please advise what processes you have to ensure that fake ballots are not included in electoral boxes</p> <p>5. What is your process for recruiting election staff at voting centres. Advise who can apply for such jobs and what criteria or pre-selection requirements are in place</p> <p>6. How do you handle special and out-of-area votes are secure?</p> <p>7. At the 2020 election we had a person at an election centre talking to us about our political preferences and leanings. Is this legal? What steps are taken to ensure that such talk does not affect where our ballots are placed or how they are handled?</p> <p>8. Why is the Commission not advocating for photo id (e.g. Drivers licence) ? We all know now that people voted in multiple locations, and we do not know (including the Commission) how many fake votes were cast in multiple locations and/or at multiple times.</p>	17WD
9(2)(a)	<p>I understand someone in the Manawatu district has made a complaint about the Stop Co-Governance pamphlet that has been provided by the organisation for the past three months or more. It is my understanding the pamphlet has been widely circulated as information to help people understand the issues related to what the Government is proposing to do to change the democratic business of our law making.</p> <p>In accordance with the OIA could you please provide to me and 9(2)(a) the following information.</p>	5WD

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A copy of the complaint, that provides both the name of the complaint and the date of the complaint. 2. The copy of the pamphlet that you have checked at your office. 3. The date on which you received the pamphlet. 4. Your stated reasons why you suggest this pamphlet is an "election advertisement". 5. Who do you suggest has authorised this "advertisement", when clearly it has never been an advertisement. Please provide your statement that confirms your decision. 6. Please quote the specific wording in the pamphlet that has been complained about.. 7. If the pamphlet was an "election advertisement" then why was it not made available until after the 14 July? Please provide your statement as to the timing of the complaint. 8. The statements made by your office that suggests the pamphlet was not authorised as a "election advertisement"? 	
9(2)(a)	Please provide me with a copy of the said complaint/ under the Official Information Act within the prescribed time limit (against the 'Stop Co-Governance' pamphlet.	2WD

Parliamentary questions responded to in July

We responded to 27 parliamentary questions in July.

Requestor	Question	Date of Response
Paul Goldsmith	What is the exhaustive summary of engagements and communications, if any, the Electoral Commission has had with gang members or associates in the past three months, listed by the date of the communication, what the communication said and the mode of the communication?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What is the exhaustive list of companies, organisation and individuals who have received funding to promote voter enrolment or voting in the 2023 general election to date, listed by the amount of funding they have received and the specific work they have undertaken with or on behalf of the Electoral Commission?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What is the exhaustive summary of communications, if any, the Electoral Commission and Ministry of Justice has had with "H2R" (Mobilising Hard to Reach Maori Communities) in 2023, listed by date of the communication and what it was about?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What is the exhaustive summary of communications, if any, the Electoral Commission has had with Harry Tam in 2023?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Was the Electoral Commission present at or made aware of the meeting in Dunedin Harry Tam was present at that has been publicly reported as being mistaken for an Electoral Commission meeting; if so, when was the Electoral Commission first made aware of this meeting	07/07/23

	and how was it made aware of this meeting; what was the response, if anything, by the Electoral Commission to being made aware of this meeting and on what date was any such response provided; if the Electoral Commission was present at this meeting, why was it present and how many people from the Electoral Commission were present; if the meeting was endorsed by the Electoral Commission, why was it endorsed and how was that endorsement made?	
Paul Goldsmith	Has the Minister received any explanations, information or advice as to why confusion exists, or may have existed, as to whether meetings are being organised by the Electoral Commission or the Mongrel Mob in Dunedin; if so, on what date did she receive any such explanations, information or advice and what did any such explanations, information or advice say?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Does the Electoral Commission have any self-imposed prohibition from using gangs or gang members to promote voter enrolment or voting; if not, why not?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Has Harry Tam been engaged by any entity or person the Minister is responsible for in relation to voter enrolment or voting in the 2023 general election; if so, what is the purpose of this engagement, what are the terms of the engagement, what is the time period of this engagement and what is the total expenditure, if anything, associated with this engagement?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What payments, if any, from any entity or organisation the Minister is responsible for have been made to "H2R" (Mobilising Hard to Reach Maori Communities) since November 2017, listed by the total amount of the payment and the reason for the payment?	7/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Has the company "H2R" (Mobilising Hard to Reach Maori Communities) been engaged or worked with the Electoral Commission in any way in 2023; if so, how, why and what specifically for; what are the total payments, if anything, "H2R" has received due to any such engagement or work?	7/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Has the Electoral Commission held any events in Dunedin during the past month; if so, what were those events, listed by the date they occurred, their purpose, who ran the events and how, if at all, they were promoted and the total expenditure, if any, on each event?	07/07/23
David Seymour	What strategies, if any, will be employed to promote Election 2023 in hard to reach communities, if any?	07/07/23
David Seymour	How much money in total is budgeted to be spent on promoting Election 2023, if any, listed by month if possible?	07/07/23
David Seymour	Which agencies, if any, have been contracted to produce advertising materials for Election 2023; if any have been, when were contracts signed?	07/07/23
David Seymour	How much was initially budgeted to have been spent to date advertising Election 2023, if any?	07/07/23
David Seymour	How much has been spent to date on advertising and promoting Election 2023, if any, listed by month and advertising medium?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What other events are the Electoral Commission planning to attend, if any, that are organised or run by Harry Tam before the 2023 general election?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Is it standard practice for the Electoral Commission to attend events where the organiser has publicly expressed political preferences; if so, why; if not, why not?	07/07/23

Paul Goldsmith	Has the Electoral Commission seen the reported comments about Harry Tam's political preferences; if so, will the Electoral Commission continue to attend or provide any support to events or meetings Harry Tam organises?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Did the Electoral Commission raise any concern with Harry Tam about statements he made before, at or after the Mongrel Mob meeting Electoral Commission staff attended in the week-end in Dunedin as reported by the New Zealand Herald on 4 July 2023; if so, what specific concerns did they raise and what response, if any, did Harry Tam provide?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	Why did the Electoral Commission decide to attend the Mongrel Mob meeting in Dunedin at the week-end as reported by the New Zealand Herald on 4 July 2023?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What information, if any, did the Electoral Commission provide Harry Tam in relation to the Mongrel Mob meeting they attended in Dunedin at the week-end?	07/07/23
Paul Goldsmith	What information, if any, did the Electoral Commission provide attendees at the Mongrel Mob they attended in Dunedin at the week-end?	07/07/23
Simeon Brown	As at 11 July 2023, for each of the departments, departmental agencies, or Crown entities that the Minister is responsible for, if any, how many job vacancies are there for each individual department, departmental agency, or Crown entity?	17/07/23
Simeon Brown	As at 11 July 2023, for each of the departments, departmental agencies, or Crown entities that the Minister is responsible for, if any, what was the average call centre wait time at each department, departmental agency, or Crown entity, for every month for the past five years?	17/07/23
Simeon Brown	As at 24 July 2023, for each of the departments, departmental agencies, or Crown entities that the Minister is responsible for, have any additions to salaries or bonus payments been made to employees that enrol in any language-based educational programmes or courses, and if so, how many staff have benefited from this, each year for the past six years, and what is the average addition to salary/bonus payment that has been made, each year for the past six years?	27/07/23
Simeon Brown	How many employees within the departments, agencies, and entities for which the Minister is responsible, if any, have been payed a monetary bonus on top of their usual salary or wage, if any, in recognition of their Māori language skills, with statistics displayed as annual figures since 2017?	27/07/23

Issues under management

- The hearing into the police prosecution of Billy Te Kahika for alleged non-disclosure of candidate donations has been rescheduled from 10-14 July to 4 September. Benjamin **9(2)(a)** is required to appear as a witness.
- Two apparent breaches of the Broadcasting Act are currently being managed.
- Managing compliance regarding a Stop Co-Governance pamphlet.

Other news

- [REDACTED] 9(2)(a) and [REDACTED] 9(2)(a) started during July on 12 month fixed term advisor roles in the team.

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Progress against the strategic priorities

Building our capability

Training of the new Enrolment Support staff in Wellington continues. The training has been affected by winter illness in the team, but progress is being made on having all Enrolment Support staff trained in all tasks.

Organisational communications

The team are working across the organisation and externally to provide support, advice and guidance for our people.

This month, this has included continued work to develop and support the organisation's culture and Senior Leadership Group. We continue to work on communicating the work being done across the organisation through a number of channels. The Communications team have also been involved in training for our Customer Services team and Strategic Engagement and Partnerships.

Organisational communications are critical for ensuring trust and confidence with our people. The Communications team have supported information around the unpublished roll, security awareness, recruitment advertising, and Matariki. We continue to work to embed our values across the organisation and provide valuable information for new starters.

We have created further content for the GE2023 hub on ECHO, updating information and resources as they are available. Most recently that has included the campaign kit which the team have been involved in developing.

We have developed content for staff regarding consultation on the travel policy, enhanced security processes and health and safety reporting.

Our regular communications channels continue to build. Readership of our fortnightly newsletter continues to increase (a high of over 350 opens for the last issue) and attendance at the Fortnightly All Staff Meeting also increasing. The team continue to work to ensure the right information is shared at the right time to the right audience across all levels of the organisation.

Work to ensure teams have the tools they need to do their jobs continues and there has been a lot of work continuing on the development of posters, brochures, talking points, presentations and more.

Preparing for an election

Māori Electoral Option

Advertising for the Māori Electoral Option ended at midnight on 13 July to align with the beginning of the exclusion period to change rolls. Telnet contract for MEO also concluded on the 13th July.

After the Option closed, content was updated at vote.nz, a media release about the close of the Option and final roll changes was published, FAQs were updated, and all licensed material was removed from our public channels.

Fieldwork for the post-campaign survey of 600 Māori started on 14 July. The survey methodology includes both an online survey and Kanohi ki te Kanohi street intercept interviews. By the end of July, almost two-thirds of surveys had been completed including the quota of street intercept surveys in Auckland and Tauranga. Fieldwork is on track to complete by 10 August and a draft report is expected on 4 September.

Enrolment

The focus Enrolment has been on preparations for the start of the GE23 Enrolment Update Campaign, which begins on 31 March 2023, and closing off the Māori Electoral Option on 13 July. To that end:

- Recruitment for the enrolment processing teams in Auckland, Upper Hutt and Christchurch was completed in July.
- Training for the Christchurch team commenced on 17 July, 24 July in Auckland, and will commence on 31 July in Upper Hutt.
- The Christchurch and Auckland processing teams are operational for the start of the GE23 Enrolment Update Campaign.
- All three mailrooms are fully operational for GE23.

All roll integrity processes for July have been completed in time for the start of the Campaign – Roll Cleanses, Post Address File (PAF) updates, and LINZ address point updates.

Quality Assurance checks were undertaken at NZ Post sites in Auckland and Christchurch on the GE23 Enrolment Update packs. In total approximately 3,420 update packs were physically checked against a QA form designed for the purpose.

The Māori Electoral Option campaign finished on 14 July 2023, with all “qualifying” forms keyed by 20 July. Final statistics have been provided to ELT and the media.

The Enrolment Support team has provided support for seven local body by-elections in July, primarily in the form of elector data extracts and QA.

Thirty-five of the 40 temporary GE engagement roles have been filled and the recruitment for the remaining five is on track. Further to this the recruitment of casual Community Liaison (CL) staff continues and is expected to be a rolling process. All staff have completed two weeks induction and GE specific training and have begun developing their localised approaches to community. CLs are trained at a site level, and this will occur as they come onboard.

Contracted providers that will support community engagement activity in the lead up to GE23 have been secured. The providers will work as an extension of the SEP engagement team and will increase our reach with Tangata Whenua, Pacific and Ethnic communities; each of the providers have also provided specific consideration of working with youth and disability cohorts. The three providers all have identified national reach and demonstrated strong connections to their respective communities. The providers are Elika Consulting (Pacific), Beyond Aotearoa (Ethnic) and

Whānau Ora Community Clinics (Tangata Whenua). Training is scheduled for the first week of August.

The Customer Service team was recruited and trained in July to respond to public requests for GE2023. Two staff members resigned in the past week, and these are under recruitment. A significant number of activities have also been undertaken in July to finalise the Zendesk improvements, associated processes and operations reporting leading to the go-live on 31 July, some of the transition work will continue in August. Close collaboration with subject matter experts across the Commission will continue over the next three months during the GE delivery.

We have concluded the Statement of Work with Telnet (the Commission's external call centre provider) for MEO, and almost completed the specifications for GE2023. A significant amount of work was completed with Telnet to set up and complete training for delivery. The testing with ConnectingNow for interpretation Service was completed. A contract performance review with Telnet was held in July, and a review meeting with BlueStar Printing will take place in early August.

Preparing for the future

Further work has been completed on scoping potential work on the Voting Age Bill currently before Parliament. This will be presented to the Operations Leadership team for discussion in August and will help to inform how needs to be included in the Operations group Work programme for 23/24 and 24/25.

We have met with the Ministry of Youth Development's 10-year youth strategy working group and signalled our interest in involvement in the civic participation workstream. The plan will be announced by the Minister in mid-August and then smaller working groups will be established.

The OLT team had a Business Planning workshop to map out all the deliverables and initiatives from Q3 (Jan – March24) to Q2 (Oct-Dec 24) to provide OLT a planning horizon post-election. OLT then mapped these initiatives/deliverables on a priority matrix (difficulty and cost against urgency and importance) to understand clearly what work are strategic, high value, nice-to-have and distraction. This exercise allowed OLT to prioritise key pieces of work that we need to focus on for FY24/25.

Building relationships and understanding

Media

The 13 July deadline for voters of Māori descent to change rolls before the election was reported widely in the media. Reminders were run across several news outlets and the final figures were reported in the Herald, Spinoff, Stuff, Māori TV, Te Karere on TVNZ, by RNZ, Radio Waatea and Radio Ngāti Porou. Hone Matthews provided radio and television interviews in te reo Māori.

The NZ Herald and Newstalk ZB reported on a gang hui in Dunedin attended by the Electoral Commission. The ODT and Herald both ran opinion pieces that said the Commission should not be criticised for being there to deliver enrolment and voting information.

Stuff and the NZ Herald both reported on the High Court decision finding in favour of the Electoral Commission over the broadcasting allocation. The Judge dismissed the application for a judicial

review by a group of smaller parties, saying the Commission had not erred in the way it distributed the funding.

We issued a media release on 18 July about recruitment for the election. Anusha Guler was interviewed by Newstalk ZB for bulletin stories about jobs available at the election. Anusha also pitched the jobs to students and other Aucklanders in an interview with Radio BFM.

The resignation of the former Justice Minister Kiri Allan from her ministerial portfolios dominated news coverage in the last week of July. Amid the resulting commentary, the Prime Minister Chris Hipkins rejected suggestions there should be a snap election and confirmed the election would be on 14 October.

Enrolment

The Enrolment team has completed the development of a streamlined Unpublished Roll application process for local body (council) employees appointed or employed in elections related roles. That process has been approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, and we are working with Taituara on its implementation.

The Central region continue to progress our relationship with Victoria University and Associate Professor Hon Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban. A plan is underway to undertake a series of engagements with Pacific youth/students and Pacific kaimahi from across the motu will support these.

A recent recruitment hui was co-hosted between SEP, Voting Services, and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities in Christchurch. Seventy ethnic community participants learned about working for the Commission with a number expressing an interest in applying. We also received a number of first time and updated enrolments from the evening.

Election integrity communications

As part of the Commission's work on election integrity, the Communications and Education team with support from voting services, have produced a series of voting place videos. The short videos show voters walk through a voting place, with a narrator explaining the process. Electoral Commission staff played the roles of staff and voters. These videos are now complete and are live on our YouTube channel. Versions have also been produced in multiple languages including te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language.

The videos will be shared across the Commission's social media networks and on vote.nz at key times leading up to and across the voting period. They have been uploaded to a new page on ECHO, named Election Integrity with guidance on how to use them.

On vote.nz we have published our page 'Facts about NZ elections.' This is a key piece of content to help counter inaccurate or misleading information about the electoral process. We plan to use this content as a basis for our own social media content to proactively promote correct information.

Websites

With the Māori Electoral Option closed for the 2023 General Election, we have revised the content on the website to reflect that voters can no longer change rolls.

We continue to work with Pikelin on refinements to the website, including updates to the mapping tool used to display electorate and voting place information. In addition, Pikelin have provided a statement of work to conduct an accessibility review of vote.nz, including the new Upload Voting Papers application.

We've also had initial discussions about joining the zero.govt.nz project, which enables people to access government websites from their mobile devices without incurring data charges.

Social media

With the Māori Electoral Option ending on 13 July, social media activity slowed momentarily before picking up with recruitment, Kids Voting, The Election Access Fund and other content.

The last couple of weeks of MEO content involving social influencers reached huge numbers of people and were very successful – with one video reaching 2.3 million, and another reaching 1.3 million.

Work on the content calendar has intensified, with planning going into election integrity content that is now available on the website.

A lot of ad hoc activity requiring social media support has been coming through from the community engagement team, which has mainly been supported with Facebook and Instagram stories, occasional Facebook event pages, and some graphic design work.

Our Digital Advisors met again with the Ministry for Women team to discuss Suffrage Day and receive updates on their planned activity in the lead up to it.

The social media team attended de-escalation training, which focused more on kanohi ki te kanohi situations, but had some useful techniques that could be pulled across into a digital and online sphere.

Social media statistics

Our Facebook reach was up 29.2% over July compared with June, and our Instagram reach was up 76.4%. (Reach is the number of accounts that saw any content from our Page, or about our Page, including posts, stories, ads, social information, and more.)

Overall, we currently have 46,741 Facebook followers, and 2,829 Instagram followers.

Overall, our impressions were up 60.5% in July compared with June, with 11,557,980 impressions. (Impressions are the number of times our content was displayed to users, including those who don't follow us (e.g. through paid or sponsored posts).

Other progress

- End of year PDP discussions with staff are complete in Enrolment Processing, with leaders now focussing on write ups. Focus is also moving to PDPs and development Plans for 23/24.

Issues under management

- There has been significant illness in the Enrolment Support team July, which in turn has impacted on the training of the permanent staff in that team (the staff in that team are mostly relatively new). The training has been re-scheduled, and the priority of training tweaked as a result. All staff are now at work.
- There was a significant increase in the number of Unpublished Roll applications being received by the Enrolment Support team, with 150 being received in the last two weeks. The team is working their way through the applications and are managing the workload well.
- An issue arose on 21 July, relating to confirmation emails associated with Enrol Online. The matter is being managed as an incident, with daily incident status reports being provided to ELT.

Other news

- Two new contractors joined the Communications and Education team to support the delivery of the General Election. [REDACTED] 9(2)(a) joined the team as Senior Advisor Media and Communications and [REDACTED] 9(2)(a) joined the team as Senior Advisor to support the delivery of the advertising campaign.
- End of year PDP discussions with staff are complete in Enrolment Processing, with leaders now focussing on write ups. Focus is also moving to PDPs and development Plans for 23/24.
- July has been a very hectic month for the Enrolment team, with having to continue to deliver the MEO while also preparing for the start of the Enrolment Update Campaign on 31 March (e.g., recruitment and training of 140+ staff, testing IT for the three processing centres, setting up three mailrooms). The team has met these challenges head on and delivered.
- The resignation of the Senior Advisor in the Rotorua office has meant that we have put an interim support structure in place that will be reviewed after the General Election. The Rotorua office will now come under the Hamilton based Senior and a Senior seconded internally will support the Gisborne and Napier offices.

This report covers the main activities undertaken by the group/business unit for the period. It excludes the GE23 Programme or by-elections, which are reported on through separate channels.

Progress against the strategic priorities

Building our capability

- The Board discussed enterprise deep dives on recruitment, disruptive incidents at voting places, and privacy and data management practices on 12 July 2023. The deep dives were appreciated for providing a collated and holistic snapshot of overall activity for the relevant areas.
- We have been facilitating the delivery of two external assurance reports with our business owner colleagues: one on our internal data platform Te Kauhangaoroa, and another on the Election Management System's financial controls. The reports are building our understanding of risk in these systems, and action on recommendations from these reports will improve the operation of and management of risk in those areas.
- The Election Access Fund Steering Group met to discuss two proposed additions to the policy document. The first provides for administrative support assistance after election day, to complete outstanding pre-election administrative tasks. An extension of two weeks was agreed, with the option to apply for a further extension, reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The second recognises that payrates for support workers/assistants will vary according to the support requirements of the applicant and tasks undertaken. The policy document has now been updated; we will continue to adapt the policy to better suit the disability barriers that applicants face.
- The draft structure of the Election Access Fund post-election evaluation report has been completed and the Election Access Fund team will work on gathering information and sources to support the compiling of the report.

Preparing for an election

- The Election Access Fund team have approved two applicants for funding and are in the process of having those paid out. Further interest has been limited to a few website queries with no further communication to take their interest forward.
- The General Election recruitment dashboard has gone live in Te Kauhangaoroa. This is updated daily and includes progress towards our recruitment targets for the election by position and region.

Preparing for the future

- We have established the approach we will take to develop a business continuity plan for our functions and activities.
- Work developing some environmental scanning pieces is underway.

Building relationships and understanding

- The Sri Lanka Women's Parliamentary Caucus, consisting of 11 out of the 12 female Sri Lanka MPs, has requested a meeting with the Election Access Fund team to learn more about the fund. The meeting has been set for August 4 at 9am. A delegation of five members (including two MPs) will be attending this meeting at the National Office. The aim is to introduce the Electoral Commission and provide an overview of the fund.

- Preparations for the GE23 visitor programme continue. Currently we have 41 participants confirmed from Australia and the Pacific; we are waiting on one final response. The International team are making good progress firming up the programme, which will include a pōwhiri, presentations from Commission subject matter experts, visits to voting places and hopefully the Lower Hutt office, and a farewell dinner.
- Preparations for the General Election knowledge exchange programme are also progressing well. Four election officials will spend two ten-day periods in New Zealand, gaining experience across a range of election activities. The participants will be placed around Auckland in the Te Atatu, Kelston, and New Lynn electorate HQs from 30 August – 9 September and 11 October – 21 October. One participant is from the Office of the Bougainville Commissioner, two from Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission, and one from Fijian Elections Office.

Other progress

- Leigh and the Strategy, Risk and Assurance team are drafting the annual report and collating our performance measures, with the aim to have a first draft of these sections to the Board for the 16 August meeting.

Issues under management

- The Ministry of Justice has advised that we are not required to prepare a Briefing to the Incoming Minister (BIM) for the new Justice Minister Hon Ginny Andersen. However, we have been collating information so we are prepared to respond to any requests from the new Minister.

Other news

- **9(2)(a)** joined the Risk and Assurance team on 17 July as our Senior Accountability Advisor.