

Role description

Returning Officer (RO)

Department/Agency	NSW Electoral Commission
Division/Unit	Corporate
Role number	NA
Classification/Grade/Band	Clerk 9, first year of service
ANZSCO code	139999
PCAT code	1337292
Date of approval	September 2021, revised June 2022
Agency website	https://www.elections.nsw.gov.au

Agency overview

The New South Wales Electoral Commission exists to deliver trusted and independent systems, processes, oversight and engagement that support democracy in New South Wales.

Our vision is to maintain confidence in the integrity of the democratic process and make it easy for people to understand and participate.

Our work includes:

- running elections
- communicating with and engaging the public
- providing trusted processes for political participants (including candidates, parties, donors, third-party campaigners, lobbyists and associated entities) to comply with their legal obligations, and regulating their compliance
- supporting transparency by overseeing and publishing disclosures of political donations and expenditure and registers of political parties, candidates, agents, third-party campaigners, political lobbyists and associated entities; advising on and advocating for improvements to legislation
- investigating possible offences and enforcing electoral laws.

Responsibility for these functions is divided under legislation between the 3-member NSW Electoral Commission (an independent statutory body) and the NSW Electoral Commissioner (an independent statutory officer). Our staff are employed in the NSW Public Service under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*. The head of our staff agency is the NSW Electoral Commissioner, who is also an *ex officio* member of the NSW Electoral Commission.

The NSW Electoral Commission and Electoral Commissioner exercise their functions independently and are accountable to the NSW Parliament, through its Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, with respect to the administration of elections and the regulation and enforcement of electoral and lobbying laws.

Our four Divisions - Elections, Funding, Disclosure, Compliance and General Counsel, Information Services and Corporate - collaborate closely, to enable us to deliver end-to-end democratic processes and effective engagement with our stakeholders and audiences. Our strong and positive working culture is reflected in our organisational behaviours - Collaborative, Customer-centred; Solution focused, Transparent and Responsive - and anchored in the NSW Public Service values of Integrity, Trust, Service and Accountability.

Primary purpose of the role

The Returning Officer is responsible for the conduct of the election within a specific electorate district. The Returning Officer co-ordinates and manages a large scale operation, within a short timeframe, delivering election specific activities within set legislated timeframes to meet the needs of stakeholders.

Key accountabilities

- Establish and manage the Returning Officer's office which involves the set-up of processes and amenities, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with Work Health and Safety requirements.
- Manage self and a team in a high pressure and deadline driven environment to achieve business outcomes, including the flexibility to adapt to changing role requirements through the election lifecycle.
- Oversee the process to recruit, lead and motivate a large temporary team across a variety of locations to ensure that election services are consistently delivered.
- Provide a high level of management to a diverse range of stakeholders such as candidates, scrutineers, media and the public, in support of the election event.
- Manage a broad range of office and administrative tasks including the delivery, collection and security of election material, systems and allocation of resources.
- Deliver critical election tasks on time and according to legislative requirements and NSWEC policies.
- Act with integrity, impartiality and transparency in the conduct of the election.

Key challenges

- Managing competing priorities in a high pressured environment and balancing responsibilities to ensure rigorous and transparent service delivery.
- Planning and prioritising ever changing competing demands and managing work flows and deadlines to ensure the election is delivered on time while still meeting required outcomes.
- Ensuring that a large and temporary workforce is available, equipped and motivated to reliably and consistently deliver rigorous, non-negotiable standards, processes and procedures.
- Adapting to, and supporting continual change, including new technology, systems, processes and business requirements.

Key relationships

Internal

Who	Why
Senior Election Talent Lead	Liaise with, update, and receive instructions when issues arise in the conduct of the election to ensure professional and consistent customer service.
Returning Officer Support Officer	Receive direction, support and mentoring to ensure election outcomes are delivered.
Manager Workforce Planning and Development	Escalate issues that may impact upon the election and require management input and direction.
Election Workforce Lead and Training Lead	Escalate issues in relation to staffing during the election period Liaise to ensure completion of training by election officials.

External

Who	Why
Electors	Ensure appropriate service delivery needs are met and assist electors in the voting process.
Scrutineers, Candidates and Party Workers	Provide information and customer service to assist in the nomination process.
Media	Assist media with potential enquiries and requests.

Role dimensions

Decision making

The Returning Officer is responsible for decisions made within their designated electoral district. These are to be consistent with NSWEC standard operating procedures, processes and legislation. Guidance is sought from the Returning Officer Support Officer (ROSO) in relation to complex issues and where risks have been identified.

Reporting line

The Returning Officer is appointed by the NSW Electoral Commissioner. For operational matters they report to the Senior Election Talent Lead through the Returning Officer Support Officer.

Direct reports

Polling Place Managers

Senior Office Assistants

Office Assistants.

Budget/Expenditure

Depends upon the size of the allocated electoral area.

Key knowledge and experience

- Demonstrated operational management experience including delivering end-to-end processes within a short time frame.
- Demonstrated management experience and the ability to lead a team in a customer focussed, high pressure environment.
- Demonstrated computer skills and knowledge of the MS Office suite, particularly MS Word and Excel, and ability to use electronic devices.

Essential requirements

- Political neutrality with no affiliation to political parties or lobbyists/third party campaigners.
- Australian citizen who is enrolled to vote.
- Satisfactory criminal record check result.

Capabilities for the role

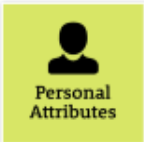
The [NSW public sector capability framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.




The capabilities are separated into focus capabilities and complementary capabilities.




Focus capabilities


Focus capabilities are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
	Display Resilience and Courage Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain composed and calm and act constructively in highly pressured and unpredictable environments • Give frank, honest advice in response to strong contrary views • Accept criticism of own ideas and respond in a thoughtful and considered way • Welcome new challenges and persist in raising and working through novel and difficult issues • Develop effective strategies and show decisiveness in dealing with emotionally charged situations and difficult or controversial issues 	Advanced

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
	<p>Act with Integrity</p> <p>Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and encourage others to do so • Act professionally and support a culture of integrity • Identify and explain ethical issues and set an example for others to follow • Ensure that others are aware of and understand the legislation and policy framework within which they operate • Act to prevent and report misconduct and illegal and inappropriate behaviour 	Adept
	<p>Manage Self</p> <p>Show drive and motivation, an ability to self-reflect and a commitment to learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up to date with relevant contemporary knowledge and practices • Look for and take advantage of opportunities to learn new skills and develop strengths • Show commitment to achieving challenging goals • Examine and reflect on own performance • Seek and respond positively to constructive feedback and guidance • Demonstrate and maintain a high level of personal motivation 	Adept
	<p>Commit to Customer Service</p> <p>Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for delivering high-quality customer-focused services • Design processes and policies based on the customer's point of view and needs • Understand and measure what is important to customers • Use data and information to monitor and improve customer service delivery • Find opportunities to cooperate with internal and external stakeholders to improve outcomes for customers • Maintain relationships with key customers in area of expertise • Connect and collaborate with relevant customers within the community 	Adept






Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
 <p>Relationships</p>	<p>Work Collaboratively</p> <p>Collaborate with others and value their contribution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a culture that recognises the value of collaboration • Build cooperation and overcome barriers to information sharing and communication across teams and units • Share lessons learned across teams and units • Identify opportunities to leverage the strengths of others to solve issues and develop better processes and approaches to work • Actively use collaboration tools, including digital technologies, to engage diverse audiences in solving problems and improving services 	Adept
 <p>Results</p>	<p>Deliver Results</p> <p>Achieve results through the efficient use of resources and a commitment to quality outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and apply the expertise of key individuals to achieve organisational outcomes • Drive a culture of achievement and acknowledge input from others • Determine how outcomes will be measured and guide others on evaluation methods • Investigate and create opportunities to enhance the achievement of organisational objectives • Make sure others understand that on-time and on-budget results are required and how overall success is defined • Control business unit output to ensure government outcomes are achieved within budgets • Progress organisational priorities and ensure that resources are acquired and used effectively 	Advanced
 <p>Business Enablers</p>	<p>Technology</p> <p>Understand and use available technologies to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to use a broad range of technologies to collaborate • Monitor compliance with cyber security and the use of technology policies • Identify ways to maximise the value of available technology to achieve business strategies and outcomes • Monitor compliance with the organisation's records, information and knowledge management requirements 	Adept








Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
	Manage and Develop People Engage and motivate staff, and develop capability and potential in others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and clearly communicate roles, responsibilities and performance standards to achieve team outcomes Adjust performance development processes to meet the diverse abilities and needs of individuals and teams Develop work plans that consider capability, strengths and opportunities for development Be aware of the influences of bias when managing team members Seek feedback on own management capabilities and develop strategies to address any gaps Address and resolve team and individual performance issues, including unsatisfactory performance, in a timely and effective way Monitor and report on team performance in line with established performance development frameworks 	Adept

Complementary capabilities

Complementary capabilities are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identifying performance required for the role and development opportunities.

Note: capabilities listed as 'not essential' for this role are not relevant for recruitment purposes however may be relevant for future career development.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Demonstrate inclusive behaviour and show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	Adept
	Communicate Effectively	Communicate clearly, actively listen to others, and respond with understanding and respect	Adept
	Influence and Negotiate	Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	Intermediate
	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Adept
	Think and Solve Problems	Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	Intermediate

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
	Demonstrate Accountability	Be proactive and responsible for own actions, and adhere to legislation, policy and guidelines	Adept
	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and apply procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Intermediate
	Project Management	Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and control methods	Intermediate
	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements	Intermediate
	Optimise Business Outcomes	Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value	Intermediate
	Manage Reform and Change	Support, promote and champion change, and assist others to engage with change	Intermediate