

File Reference: ObjectiveIM - Governance

Coronavirus Impact on AEC Services – Industrial Elections

Like many other organisations, coronavirus (COVID-19) is having an impact on the way the AEC conducts its business.

The health and wellbeing of our clients, staff, contract partners and the community remains our number one priority, and in this regard we continue to act on official health and government advice.

Unfortunately, the current evolving situation is likely to impact on the delivery of elections for registered organisations. The AEC has concerns that relevant stakeholders may not have a full opportunity to participate in the elections, either as candidates, nominators, voters or scrutineers.

For this reason, the AEC has determined that from close of business tonight, all industrial elections will be ceased and re-run in three months' time. For elections currently underway, this will require the Returning Officer to invoke s.193 of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations Act) 2009* to reset the election timetable.

Where ballots are underway, the timetable will be adjusted to extend the ballot open period to 22 April 2020.

The Registered Organisations Commission has been advised and Decisions for scheduled and other events will likely be delayed as a result.

I am aware that the rules of many organisations provide for previously elected office-holders to continue in office until a replacement is elected, and therefore a delay will not significantly impact the governance of the organisation.

Where elections are essential to ensure the continuing governance of the organisation, the AEC will work with the organisation and the Registered Organisations Commission to make arrangements for the conduct of the election. This will be for critical positions only and is likely to involve different methods of communicating with relevant stakeholders and extended nomination and ballot periods.

Given the rapidly evolving situation, we also ask that you please check our website at www.aec.gov.au for the latest information on our services before planning your next election.

I thank you in advance for your ongoing understanding and support.

Our thoughts are with those already dealing with the virus, and their families. We hope you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy.

If you have any questions about this matter or would like to discuss the holding of critical elections, please email industrial.elections@aec.gov.au. A senior officer will make contact with you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Gina Dario
Assistant Commissioner
National Program Manager, Industrial Elections and Ballots
24 March 2020