

News update – increasing efficiency and decreasing costs

NEW: Model Rules for elections released

The Commission is excited and proud to announce that stage two of the Model Rules project is now complete. In collaboration with the Australian Electoral Commission and our stakeholders, we have published election rules in Appendix B of the [annotated Model Rules](#) that were released as part of stage one in March.

There is a set for:

- [organisations with branches \(federated organisations\)](#) and
- [organisations without branches \(unitary organisations\)](#).

The Model Rules will increase efficiency, decrease costs to organisations and:

- provide best practice examples of individual rules
- explain the importance of particular rules and the law around them
- help organisations better understand their existing rules and how they meet the legal requirements
- give organisations a place to start their research when they want to introduce a new rule or change an existing one.

In addition, every rule has notes explaining the regulatory requirements, case law, practical impacts, and how a rule can be changed to suit your rule book.

We will be releasing a companion resource for the Model Rules soon, as well as a survey to obtain feedback on the Model Rules from any parties who engage with our Rules Team.



NEW: Financial Reporting Card 2024

In addition to our Model Rules and extensive suite of education and guidance materials, there are other ways in which we continue to increase efficiency and reduce costs for registered organisations. We've assessed 265 financial reports that were lodged by reporting units of registered organisations with a financial year ending in 2024. To help registered organisations with compliance, we've produced a report card that identifies the most common mistakes made by reporting units, while providing practical steps to achieve voluntary compliance for future lodgements.

We encourage you to consider these areas of focus to avoid errors. Non-compliance could mean corrections are required, leading to additional costs and inefficiency associated with an updated financial report having to be provided both to members of your organisation, and the Commission.

[View the report card for 2024 financial reporting.](#)

We strongly recommend reporting units take advantage of our [compliance calculator](#) because we know that it will help you comply with financial reporting timeframes. The timeframes continue to be a challenge for some reporting units, and the compliance calculator is a free and effective tool that is guaranteed to assist organisations to achieve voluntary compliance.



General Manager's final statement on the Registered Organisations Governance and Compliance External Review

The General Manager has released his final statement in response to the Registered Organisations Governance and Compliance External Review conducted by independent reviewers Anna Booth and Jonathan Hamberger.

The review was commissioned following the transfer of the functions of the Registered Organisations Commissioner to the General Manager in March 2023. The reviewers consulted with registered organisations, their peak bodies and Commission staff to identify opportunities to improve service delivery and identify barriers to promoting best practice governance and the democratic functioning of registered organisations.

The reviewers delivered their final report on 21 August 2023, and on 28 September 2023 the General Manager published the review report and committed to closely examining the feasibility of implementing each of the recommendations.

These documents can be accessed here:

- [Registered Organisations Governance and Compliance External Review Report](#)
- [General Manager's response to the review findings and recommendations](#)

The vast majority of the recommendations not requiring legislative reform have now been implemented in full. The General Manager has provided detailed information to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations on the recommendations that require legislative change for consideration.

The General Manager specifically wishes to thank registered organisations and their peak bodies for their time spent providing their insights and feedback, as well as the reviewers for their expertise and experience during this period of significant transformation.

Read the full statement below:

[General Manager's statement: Implementation of recommendations from the Registered Organisations Governance and Compliance External Review](#)



2025 Education Survey

We spend a lot of our time and energy developing tools, products and services that we think will reduce the regulatory burden while at the same time help you reduce costs and increase efficiencies, but we will only be able to measure their effectiveness with your feedback. In particular, we value your opinion about our education program, and how we can help you and your registered organisation comply with the legislative requirements of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* (the RO Act). If you have accessed any of our education materials, we would like to hear from you.

Our Annual Education Survey is now open until 31 October 2025.

Your responses will help influence and inform our education program over the next 12 months.

We want to hear about your experiences with the Commission's education materials, events and website content for registered organisations as well as any changes you would like to see or suggestions on the types of resources you need.

The survey will take you no longer than 10 minutes to complete and all responses will remain completely anonymous.

[Click here to access the survey.](#)



Updated financial training resources

All officers with financial management duties must complete approved financial training to ensure they understand their duties under the RO Act.

We have recently updated our financial training resources, including an [exemption application form](#) that now has a section where applicants who have previously applied for an exemption may rely on information previously provided, and a space to include any new information since the last application.

In addition, there is a new section in our [officer financial training fact sheet](#) highlighting the additional requirements applicable to officers who completed financial training before 2 May 2017.

Updates have also been made to our [duties of officers guidance note](#), which has a new case summary table containing key takeaways from important Federal Court cases. There have also been minor changes made to our [requirements for approved financial training packages checklist](#).



The Commission enters into its third enforceable undertaking

The General Manager has accepted the Commission's third enforceable undertaking with a registered organisation under the RO Act. Prior to 2023, we didn't have access to enforceable undertakings as a compliance tool, and we are now seeing very positive outcomes from their use.

The [enforceable undertaking](#) was entered into with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation as a result of non-compliance by its Western Australian Branch relating to their financial reporting obligations. This voluntary but binding agreement aims to address non-compliance that has occurred as well as preventing future non-compliance.

To learn more about the General Manager's expanded powers, see our guidance notes on [enforceable undertakings](#) and [infringement notices](#).



Relaunch of our Officer Induction Kit

We have re-launched our Officer Induction Kit for officers of registered organisations. The kit has been comprehensively redeveloped and is designed to help new and existing

officers of registered organisations learn about their obligations under the RO Act.

Along with providing tools and activities for officers, the kit covers the following topics:

- An officer's statutory obligations and duties
- The registered organisation's compliance obligations
- Examples of good governance

We recommend you provide this kit to your existing officers as a reference, and to new officers as part of the onboarding process in your organisation. This kit does not replace the requirement for officers with financial responsibilities to undertake approved financial training within six months of taking office.

This kit was developed in consultation with the Compliance Practitioners Reference Group (CPRG). We take this opportunity to thank them for their assistance to ensure our resources are timely and relevant.

This kit is a 'living' document. We will continue to update it with new resources and in response to feedback from our stakeholders.

[Click here to view the updated Officer Induction Kit](#)



Whistleblower website updates

We have updated the whistleblower content on our website to clarify what the Commission can and cannot investigate. Only certain concerns related to registered organisations can be investigated (i.e. suspected breaches of the law) and potentially be a protected disclosure that falls within our jurisdiction.

Our website also gives registered organisations resources and helpful tips on how they can internally investigate any concerns they receive, and includes an [investigation plan template](#).

[Click here to view our updated whistleblower content](#)



Turnaround times for permit applications continue to improve

The Commission has listened to feedback from registered organisations about the importance of timeliness in dealing with entry permit applications, while continuing to properly apply the fit and proper person test to each application.

We are very pleased to report that turnaround times for processing entry permit applications continue to improve.

For the 2024–25 financial year, the 1,200 permit applications received were finalised by the Commission in a median time of 13 days. This represents a significant improvement in performance (having reduced from a median time of 28 days for the 2022–23 financial year) and we are committed to improving timeliness and quality.

Related links

[Registered organisations](#) [Tools and templates](#) [Regulatory education](#)

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