Senate Select Committee on Adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI)

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Australian Electoral Commission

Subject: PC24-04 | Question on Notice - Contact with DISR regarding AI
Question date: 20 May 2024
Question type: Hearing Proof Hansard, page 25-26
Response date: 11 June 2024

Question

Senator DAVID POCOCK: Thank you for your time here today. Mr Rogers, has the government contacted the AEC for advice on concerns about the impact of artificial intelligence on elections?

Mr Rogers: There was the Department of Industry, Science and Resources discussion paper, 'Safe and responsible AI in Australia', and that department's had the lead on this particular thing. They did visit us a couple of weeks ago, and I think we even might have had contact before that as well. So they have contacted us to talk about this issue. At the same time, to be fair, we're also reaching out in various forums as well to talk to government about some of these issues, as we do on a range of policy issues. Yes, they have contacted us, and they're aware of our concerns.

Senator DAVID POCOCK: When was that first contact?

Mr Rogers: Can I take that on record?

Senator DAVID POCOCK: Sure.

Mr Rogers: They visited us—

Mr Pope: I think it was about two or three weeks ago.

Mr Rogers: And I think we had contact during the development of that paper. I'd have to go back and check that for you, and I'll provide some extra information.

Response

On 7 May 2024 the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) gave a briefing on AI to AEC senior executives. The AEC was then provided the opportunity to submit input to DISR's proposal paper 'Safe and responsible AI in Australia'.

DISR was in contact with the AEC earlier in 2024 after the Government's interim response to safe and responsible AI consultation was released on 17 January.

The AEC also attended an AI briefing from DISR on 31 August 2023.

The AEC is aware DISR has been in contact with the Department of Finance as the relevant department for electoral policy.