



New Western Australian Senate Election

Today's decision by the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed returns, to void the 2013 Western Australian Senate Election ends 5 months of electoral uncertainty for Western Australian voters after a cavalcade of careless failures by the AEC, said Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, Tony Smith MP.

'The Committee has been investigating the series of failures within the AEC during the 2013 WA Senate Election in order to ensure that all necessary changes are implemented to prevent a repeat of this, or any other, extraordinary electoral debacle, Mr Smith added, 'the Committee will continue its investigation in a manner which does not interfere with the campaign period of the new election within the state of Western Australia.'

The Committee will conduct a public hearing in Canberra in early March with Mr Mick Keelty AO APM, who conducted an inquiry into the circumstances of the missing ballot papers.

On 6 February 2014, the Committee received evidence from the Australian National Audit Office and the Acting Electoral Commissioner Tom Rogers.

'In early March, we will also proceed with a public hearing with the Electoral Commissioner Ed Killesteyn,' Mr Smith continued.

'This will be a valuable and timely opportunity for Committee members, on behalf of Western Australian voters, to receive a public assurance that all necessary enhancements and improved arrangements have been put in place by the AEC for the conduct of the new election.'

'Whilst the Committee will not conduct a public hearing in Western Australia during the campaign period of the new election so as not to distract AEC officials from their critical duties, it will conduct a public hearing after election day, and also take the opportunity to see first-hand the enhanced integrity and security measures deployed by the AEC with respect to ballot papers.'

Anyone seeking to make a submission on this or any other matter relating to the 2013 federal election can do so via email to em@aph.gov.au by 7 March 2014.

Media inquiries: Andrew Hallam - 0404 043 764 (*Office of Tony Smith MP*)

For information on the inquiry: contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 2374 email em@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/em>