



Our Ref: mp0401~08/251

Mr Daryl Melham MP  
Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Melham

**Re Inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM)  
into the 2007 Federal Election.**

Please find enclosed the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) responses to a number of requests for information taken on notice at the public hearings held in Melbourne on 11 August and in Canberra on 17 October 2008.

The AEC is yet to respond to a further two requests for enrolment and roll review related statistics, one by Senator Bob Brown at the hearing on 11 August and one by Mr Sullivan on 17 October. We are currently considering data extraction issues relating to these requests, and will provide a response as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Paul Dacey  
Acting Electoral Commissioner

21 November 2008

# **AEC RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Breakdown by state and division of provisional votes where ID was not provided on the day and not provided in the timeframe (Mr Morrison, EM 13, Hansard 11 August 2008)**

**RESPONSE:**

See attached table.

**More information in relation to the New Zealand fax voting system (Mr Melham and Mr Scott, EM 25-26, Hansard 17 October 2008)**

**RESPONSE:**

AEC officers attended the recent New Zealand elections, and followed up on the JSCEM's interest in this area. In summary:

1. The New Zealand Elections Office has for the past three national elections allowed voters who are overseas to be able to download ballot papers and a declaration form from the internet and fax their completed ballot papers and a signed declaration back to the elections office.
2. The process involves the voter accessing the NZ elections office website, entering their name, address and date of birth.
3. A voter can only use this system if they are enrolled and must supply grounds for casting a special vote.
4. Once the voter is located on the roll they are presented with their ballot paper for printing.
5. When the voter prints the ballot paper a declaration and instructions on how to return the voting papers are also printed.
6. The system also advises the voter the fax number of the Chief Electoral Office where the ballot papers should be returned. The voter then completes the ballot papers and the declaration, and faxes them to the Chief Electoral Office.
7. The Chief Electoral Office has procedures in place to capture any duplicates of faxed votes.
8. Approximately 17,000 electors faxed back votes for the recent 2008 election.
9. In 2005 27,482 valid overseas votes were received of which 13,780 (50.14%) were faxed back.

10. A key issue is that the voter's preferences can be observed by an election official during the initial processing immediately following receipt of the faxed material.
11. A further enhancement that has been suggested by the NZ voting public is to allow the scanning and emailing of the ballot paper and declaration in lieu of faxing.

**How many additional BVI Sites might be advisable should the JSCEM wish to expand the BVI voting trial. (Mr Melham, EM28, Hansard 17 October 2008)**

**RESPONSE:**

If the Electronic Voting Machines remain for the exclusive use of voters who are blind or have low vision then the AEC would recommend no more than 40 sites in total. This would allow for the consolidation and rationalisation of the existing sites as well as adding in some regional centres that expressed concern at being left out of the 2007 trial.

Should the JSCEM determine that there should be a wider audience of voters, such as print handicapped or other languages, then the AEC would consider up to 60 sites in locations yet to be determined depending on the demographics of the target audience.

**Are AEC offices capable (accessible) for deployment of electronic magnifiers or CTV magnifying screens. (Mr Melham, EM30, Hansard 17 October 2008)**

**RESPONSE:**

During the conduct of the election, AEC Divisional Offices are not the primary physical point of contact for the voting public. Most office foyers are far too small to cater for the number of voters requiring pre poll voting, given the need to provide voting screens for electors, without consideration of a table and seating space for the magnifying unit. Electronic Magnifiers for the print handicapped would be more accessible if they were deployed to the major Pre Poll Centre in each Division, as these locations may well have better physical access than AEC offices. Note that the unit demonstrated for JSCEM members was worth approximately \$5,000.

**What would be required to have a tick box on the postal vote application form that mentions vision impairment? Would it require a change in Legislation? (Mr Sullivan, EM30, Hansard 17 October 2008)**

**RESPONSE:**

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (CEA) requires that the postal vote application be on an approved form. The CEA does specify certain items that must

be on the postal vote application but is silent on the administrative items that the AEC may choose to include. However the collection of personal information is restricted by Privacy legislation to those matters that the AEC legislatively requires, or needs to fulfil its responsibilities, and these issues would need to be considered before such a change would be made.

If it was desired that the newly captured information was to be passed onto third parties, then issues associated with the distribution of this information would need to be explored. It is expected that the handling of the collected information and its distribution would need to be included in the CEA in a similar fashion to the current legislation that governs the distribution of other voter information.

**The number of declaration votes rejected in McEwen that would have been accepted in 2004? (Mr Melham, EM19, Hansard 11 August 2008)**

**RESPONSE:**

A total of 193 provisional votes were rejected for McEwen at the 2007 federal election due to new legislation introduced prior to the 2007 federal election.

They were:

- Elector removed by objection in error but vote cannot be admitted to further scrutiny - 1
- POI not provided - 192.

**Note:** POI not provided includes 4 provisional votes where the voter claimed to be a silent elector at the time of voting (which means that POI was not required), but at preliminary scrutiny the elector was found not to be on the current roll as a silent elector. Therefore they were treated as a standard provisional voter which meant the provisional votes were subject to the evidence of identity requirements.

**Provisional Votes excluded where ID not provided on the day and not provided within the timeframe**

The voter claimed to be a silent elector at the time of voting which meant that POI was not required. At preliminary scrutiny the elector was not enrolled as a silent elector so the vote had to be treated as a standard provisional vote, which meant it was subject to the evidence of identity requirement. POI was not provided so the vote was rejected.

Division	POI not provided at time of voting	Rejected - POI not provided	Rejected - POI provided after deadline	Rejected - POI not provided as claimed to be a silent elector **	Total Rejected at Preliminary Scrutiny
<b>ACT</b>					
CANBERRA	168	140	0	6	146
FRASER	130	45	0	5	50
<b>Total ACT</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>NSW</b>					
BANKS	125	113	0	0	113
BARTON	134	102	0	0	102
BENNELONG	121	102	0	1	103
BEROWRA	99	77	0	0	77
BLAXLAND	268	223	0	1	224
BRADFIELD	193	149	0	0	149
CALARE	112	89	0	0	89
CHARLTON	138	56	0	1	57
CHIFLEY	311	264	0	4	268
COOK	128	115	0	2	117
COWPER	183	155	0	0	155
CUNNINGHAM	60	51	0	1	52
DOBELL	142	135	0	0	135
EDEN-MONARO	168	71	0	0	71
FARRER	117	115	0	0	115
FOWLER	199	181	0	0	181
GILMORE	116	28	0	0	28
GRAYNDLER	256	229	0	0	229
GREENWAY	173	152	0	1	153
HUGHES	115	98	0	1	99
HUME	108	90	0	0	90
HUNTER	212	171	0	0	171
KINGSFORD SMITH	249	213	0	0	213
LINDSAY	162	136	0	3	139
LOWE	89	69	0	0	69
LYNE	66	68	0	2	70
MACARTHUR	203	179	0	3	182
MACKELLAR	84	81	0	0	81

MACQUARIE	178	151	0	3	154
MITCHELL	78	59	0	4	63
NEW ENGLAND	162	107	0	0	107
NEWCASTLE	121	123	0	2	125
NORTH SYDNEY	187	147	0	1	148
PAGE	214	134	0	1	135
PARKES	207	176	0	0	176
PARRAMATTA	265	202	0	5	207
PATERSON	138	113	2	6	121
PROSPECT	130	105	0	0	105
REID	133	134	0	0	134
RICHMOND	300	163	2	1	166
RIVERINA	227	25	0	0	25
ROBERTSON	136	95	0	1	96
SHORTLAND	84	77	0	2	79
SYDNEY	480	431	0	0	431
THROSBY	135	156	0	0	156
WARRINGAH	130	139	0	0	139
WATSON	473	372	0	0	372
WENTWORTH	258	231	0	0	231
WERRIWA	54	87	2	0	89
<b>Total NSW</b>	<b>8421</b>	<b>6739</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>6791</b>
<b>NT</b>					
LINGIARI	307	254	0	1	255
SOLOMON	203	144	0	0	144
<b>Total NT</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>QLD</b>					
BLAIR	234	188	0	1	189
BONNER	144	121	0	2	123
BOWMAN	223	188	0	2	190
BRISBANE	274	239	0	0	239
CAPRICORNIA	265	228	0	0	228
DAWSON	326	325	0	2	327
DICKSON	172	146	0	2	148
FADDEN	195	141	0	0	141
FAIRFAX	343	189	1	0	190
FISHER	234	192	0	2	194
FLYNN	263	215	0	0	215
FORDE	134	122	0	2	124
GRIFFITH	284	210	0	0	210
GROOM	185	157	0	1	158
HERBERT	379	315	0	2	317

HINKLER	152	41	0	1	42
KENNEDY	741	443	0	2	445
LEICHHARDT	673	542	3	0	545
LILLEY	259	252	0	4	256
LONGMAN	311	270	1	5	276
MARANOVA	215	295	0	0	295
MCPHERSON	330	193	1	1	195
MONCRIEFF	278	265	0	1	266
MORETON	167	134	0	3	137
OXLEY	310	241	0	0	241
PETRIE	133	104	0	2	106
RANKIN	219	176	0	6	182
RYAN	168	121	0	0	121
WIDE BAY	260	205	0	1	206
<b>Total QLD</b>	<b>7871</b>	<b>6258</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6306</b>

#### SA

ADELAIDE	286	220	0	8	228
BARKER	310	243	0	0	243
BOOTHBY	220	192	3	3	198
GREY	348	260	0	3	263
HINDMARSH	252	222	0	1	223
KINGSTON	293	234	0	3	237
MAKIN	234	181	0	10	191
MAYO	162	107	0	4	111
PORT ADELAIDE	396	304	0	3	307
STURT	230	183	0	5	188
WAKEFIELD	421	310	0	1	311
<b>Total SA</b>	<b>3152</b>	<b>2456</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2500</b>

#### TAS

BASS	134	110	0	0	110
BRADDON	197	150	0	0	150
DENISON	191	162	0	3	165
FRANKLIN	195	167	0	1	168
LYONS	195	148	0	0	148
<b>Total TAS</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>741</b>

#### VIC

ASTON	54	45	0	0	45
BALLARAT	180	131	0	0	131
BATMAN	138	99	0	0	99
BENDIGO	225	170	1	0	171
BRUCE	73	61	0	1	62

CALWELL	280	213	0	1	214
CASEY	140	110	0	1	111
CHISHOLM	148	148	0	0	148
CORANGAMITE	213	166	0	0	166
CORIO	196	131	0	3	134
DEAKIN	138	117	0	2	119
DUNKLEY	103	90	0	3	93
FLINDERS	139	171	1	0	172
GELLIBRAND	343	285	0	2	287
GIPPSLAND	243	210	0	1	211
GOLDSTEIN	154	136	0	3	139
GORTON	223	209	0	0	209
HIGGINS	211	207	0	0	207
HOLT	586	445	0	1	446
HOTHAM	205	168	0	1	169
INDI	109	95	0	0	95
ISAACS	302	265	0	3	268
JAGAJAGA	99	61	0	0	61
KOOYONG	79	65	0	2	67
LA TROBE	270	184	0	3	187
LALOR	218	197	1	1	199
MALLEE	208	109	0	1	110
MARIBYRNONG	200	247	0	1	248
MCEWEN	128	188	0	4	192
MCMILLAN	265	193	0	1	194
MELBOURNE	591	608	0	3	611
MELBOURNE PORTS	437	381	0	2	383
MENZIES	111	97	0	1	98
MURRAY	207	161	1	0	162
SCULLIN	131	131	2	3	136
WANNON	102	71	0	1	72
WILLS	184	125	0	0	125
<b>Total VIC</b>	<b>7633</b>	<b>6490</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6541</b>
<b>WA</b>					
BRAND	489	419	0	5	424
CANNING	369	311	0	7	318
COWAN	257	215	0	5	220
CURTIN	312	252	3	5	260
FORREST	436	331	2	3	336
FREMANTLE	419	293	0	4	297
HASLUCK	404	298	0	3	301
KALGOORLIE	361	439	0	14	453
MOORE	150	147	0	4	151



O'CONNOR	239	290	0	3	<b>293</b>
PEARCE	501	374	1	6	<b>381</b>
PERTH	162	279	1	4	<b>284</b>
STIRLING	305	242	3	7	<b>252</b>
SWAN	347	260	0	1	<b>261</b>
TANGNEY	176	116	0	3	<b>119</b>
<b>Total WA</b>	<b>4927</b>	<b>4266</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>4350</b>
<b>National Total</b>	<b>33724</b>	<b>27529</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>27824</b>