



## The multiple voting myth (chapter 2)

### KEY POINTS:

- The years leading up to the 2007 election saw the creation and perpetuation of the myth that electoral fraud in Australia is commonplace.
  - The Australian Electoral Commission told the committee that 'It can be clearly stated, in relation to false identities, that there has never been any evidence of widespread or organised enrolment fraud in Australia'. (**see submission 169, p 16**)
- Detailed examination by the Australian Electoral Commission reveals that relatively few cases of apparent multiple voting are found to be deliberate attempts to vote on multiple occasions and are referred to the Australian Federal Police. Figures provided by the Commission show that 64 cases of apparent multiple voting were referred to the Australian Federal Police arising from the 2004 election and only 10 cases following the 2007 election. (**see page 18**)

Table Multiple voting statistics, 1998 to 2007 elections

	2004	2007
Number of apparent multiple voters letters sent	14,402	20,633
Number of responses indicating no further action required (% of letters sent)	12,082 (84%)	18,037 (87%)
Number of admissions of multiple voting	1,046	1,167
Of admissions: number due to confusion, poor comprehension, aged (% of total admissions)	835 (80%)	955 (82%)
Number referred to AFP	64	10
Number of prosecutions	0	0

See page 18

## BACKGROUND:

- Investigation by the Australian Electoral Commission of apparent multiple voting is a multi-stage process that can take up to two years to complete following an election (**see page 19**).
- Following the 2007 election, the Australian Electoral Commission sent 20,633 letters to electors who it appeared may have voted more than once. Of these, the Commission indicated that no further action was required in 18,037 cases and 1,167 responses were admissions of multiple voting.
- Of those electors who had admitted to multiple voting, 82 per cent cited confusion, poor comprehension or were aged — of those in the aged category 98 per cent were aged 70 or over.
- Common examples of where a person may have voted more than once but no action was taken by the Australian Electoral Commission include:
  - elector casts a pre-poll vote and an ordinary vote but stated that they had only cast an ordinary vote on polling day (frequently aged/culturally and linguistically diverse electors)
  - elector applies for and completes a postal vote and then thinks it has been misplaced so votes again but then discovers another family member had posted it
  - elector from culturally and linguistically diverse background casts a declaration vote in a division outside their home division and then due to confusion or concern that their vote may be misplaced or they have not complied with requirements properly, votes again in their home division
- Of the 10 cases of apparent multiple voting referred to the Australian Federal Police, eight cases were from NSW and two were from Victoria. The Australian Electoral Commission was advised by the Australian Federal Police that it did not have the resources to investigate these, therefore no further action was taken.

**For media comment:** please contact the Committee Chair, Daryl Melham, on (02) 6277 2054 (Parliament House Office).

**Further information:** contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 2374, email [jscem@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscem@aph.gov.au) or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/em>