



Australian Electoral Commission administration under scrutiny

Federal Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee will examine aspects of the administration of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

The Special Minister of State requested that the committee inquire into and report on the following terms of reference on or before 17 September 2007:

- the adequacy of AEC co-location of divisional offices, including both financial and social consequences of co-locations;
- the number of staff and the employment structure of staff in divisional offices;
- whether the current arrangements meet career expectations for AEC officers;
- whether the current arrangements meet community expectations about the appropriate use of staffing resources;
- what any change to these arrangements would mean for the previous two points;
- what level of staffing would be required to meet ongoing habitation reviews;
- whether the current APS staffing levels are appropriate for the actual work of divisional offices; and
- any other issues relating to the staffing of divisional and central offices which may be raised in submission or by the committee.

"The inquiry will provide a valuable opportunity to review the adequacy and effectiveness of certain aspects of AEC administration," committee chair Sophie Mirabella said today.

"In particular, the committee will scrutinise the adequacy of co-location of divisional offices. In the committee's 2001 Federal Election report the committee questioned the effectiveness of co-locating of divisional offices."

In 2003 the committee was not convinced that the AEC had addressed longstanding concerns about co-location of divisional offices including:

- a potential loss of local electoral knowledge, with possible effects on the accuracy of the rolls;
- a reduced service to electors, MPs and candidates;
- a diminished capacity to conduct electoral education and other such functions; and
- a reduced number of permanent staff conducting elections.

Members of the public will be able to make submissions in writing to the Committee until Friday, 5 May 2007. Details of the inquiry will be advertised nationally on Wednesday, 11 April 2007.

For media comment: Please contact the Committee Chair, Sophie Mirabella MP on (03) 5721 5377 (Wangaratta).

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 4564, email jscem@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/>