

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014-15

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Electoral Commission
Outcome/Program: General
Topic: Electoral Integrity Unit

Senator: Jacinta Collins

Question reference number: F167

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Wednesday, 31 December 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Can you provide an overview of the role of the Electoral Integrity Unit?
2. Was it a decision of the Government or the AEC for this Unit to be established?
3. Does it focus only on electoral roll integrity or does it also look at issues such as the conduct of elections and funding disclosure?
4. How does the Unit decide which matters to investigate? Would the Unit choose to investigate certain issues based on advice from the Government or from current or former members of Parliament?
5. What staffing and resources are attached to this Unit?
6. To whom does this unit report?
7. Apart from the investigation into supporters of the Member for Indi what other matters has the Unit been looking into?
8. At the 2013 election, how many people were estimated to be unenrolled? How many allegations of electoral fraud were made following the 2013 election?

Answer:

1. The aim of the Electoral Integrity Unit is to assess and enhance the integrity of the AEC's electoral processes. It will do so by:
 - Building on the existing framework which operationalises the AEC's approach to electoral integrity;
 - Continuing to focus efforts on the key dimensions of electoral integrity the AEC can influence;
 - Evaluating risks to integrity and identifying integrity strengthening and integrity risk mitigation measures, particularly in light of recent events;
 - Supporting the implementation of new measures to enhance electoral integrity; and
 - Communicating the aims and achievements of the program to all stakeholders.

2. The AEC.

3. The initial focus of the Electoral Integrity Unit will be enrolment and elections. The Electoral Integrity Unit will not initially focus on other areas of the AEC's operation e.g. Funding and Disclosure or Corporate areas, however subsequent areas of focus may be identified and prioritised in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team from time to time.

4. The Electoral Integrity Unit has an established work program approved by the Acting Electoral Commissioner however it may choose to evaluate integrity issues referred to the Unit where appropriate irrespective of source.

5. Three full-time staff.

6. Assistant Commissioner, Roll Management.

7. To date, the work of the EIU has included:

- Analysis of other allegations of enrolment fraud which have been referred to the AEC by the general public.
- Formalisation of the AEC's Electoral Integrity Framework to inform our agency-wide integrity efforts.
- An examination of the integrity of the AEC's Federal Direct Enrolment and Update program and online enrolment system.
- Analysis of divergence between the federal electoral roll and electoral rolls maintained by state and territory electoral commissions.

8. a) 1,212,616 Australia wide.

8. b) 28 matters have been reported to the AEC Fraud Unit for the period 8 September 2013 to 25 November 2014 concerning the conduct of the 2013 federal election.