



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Dr Shona Batge
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Education,
Employment and Workplace relations
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Batge

Following the recent Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing held in October 2010, it has come to my attention the need to correct a response to a previous Question on Notice ([EW0020 11](#)) provided to the committee after the Budget Estimates hearing on 1 June 2010.

In Question on Notice EW0020_11, relating to the Protected Action Ballots Scheme (PABS), Senator Abetz provided in writing "Has the cost of per ballot increased since 1 July this year?" The response provided stated "Yes. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has advised the Department the average cost per ballot in 2008-09 was \$1,496. The average cost per ballot in 2009-10 (to 31 May 2010) was \$1,835."

Proof Hansard reference – EEW R page 116

When questioned at the Supplementary Budget Estimate hearing in October 2010, I advised the average cost per ballot for 2008-09 was \$1,881 (refer to EEW R 116, 20 October 2010). This figure was calculated by DEEW R by dividing the PABS expenditure in 2008-09 by the number of protected ballots conducted by the AEC in 2008-09. Clarification was sought from the AEC as to how the figure of \$1,496 was derived and they advised their original calculation was incorrect. The AEC now advise the average cost of a protected action ballot in 2008-09 to be \$1,894 which is slightly different to the department's calculation of \$1,881. The small difference between figures is likely to be due to the timing and payment of invoices at the end of the financial year.

Correction - EW0020_11 be amended to read "Yes. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has advised the Department the average cost per ballot in 2008-09 was \$1,894. The average cost per ballot in 2009-10 (to 31 May 2010) was \$1,835."

Yours sincerely

John Kovacic
Deputy Secretary
Workplace Relations

23 December 2010