

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Additional Budget Estimates Hearing – February 2009

Australian Electoral Commission

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 2, Output 2.1.4

Topic: Commonwealth/Trade Union Contribution to Cost of Ballot

Question reference number: F52

Type of Question: F&PA 95 on 24 February 2009

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2009

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Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—...Mr Pirani, you have had discussions with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in relation to this policy change. That is because the government, to your knowledge, has made the decision that that will come into being?

Mr Pirani—I would need to confirm that with DEWR.

Senator ABETZ—Minister, are you able to assist us? I understand it is a government decision. I have certain views about that, but they are not to be canvassed here.

Senator Faulkner—Senator, I am actually not able to assist you.

Senator ABETZ—Fine.

Senator Faulkner—But if you wish, I could take it on notice for you. It would be another minister's decision.

Answer:

The Fair Work Bill (the FW Bill), as passed by Parliament, provides that the Commonwealth will be liable for the costs incurred by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in relation to a protected action ballot, whether or not the ballot is completed (subclause 464(2)).

The FW Bill also enables protected action ballots to be conducted by ballot agents other than the AEC. In these cases, the applicant for the protected action ballot will be liable for all costs of conducting the protected action ballot, whether or not the ballot is completed (subclause 465(2)).