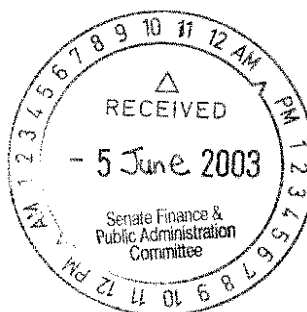




Reference: TBC  
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Mr Alistair Sands  
Committee Secretary  
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sands *Alistair*

**Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee - May 2003  
Hearings**

I refer to *Proof Hansard* F&PA p.460 of Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee – Consideration of Budget Estimates 29 May 2003.

On the question of the cost of the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) Strategic Advisory Meeting in Perth on 16-17 June 2003, Senator Ray asked the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Becker: "[S]o you will take on notice the estimated costs of holding this meeting in Perth?"

I am pleased to provide the Committee with the response from the AEC to this question.

**Attachment A** contains the appropriate *Proof Hansard* pages for ease of reference.

**Attachment B** contains the response to this question on notice.

Should you have any queries regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact either myself on 6215 3009, or Mr John Dalton on 6215 3184.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Kefford  
Director  
Portfolio Coordination Unit  
4 June 2003

**Mr Becker**—It consists of all the AEOs for the states and territory—I say ‘territory’ because there is not one for the ACT between elections—and the senior executive of the central office, which are the branch heads, the two first assistant commissioners, me and the deputy commissioner.

**Senator FAULKNER**—Where do you hold the meetings of the strategic advisory committee?

**Mr Becker**—Every second committee meeting is held in Canberra; otherwise it is held in a state on a rotational basis. It used to be fully on a rotational basis but it cost so much to move Canberra to another place that we do it every second meeting now.

**Senator FAULKNER**—I appreciate that issue—particularly, I imagine, if a meeting is in Perth, for example.

**Mr Becker**—We have a meeting in Perth next month.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—Not on the long weekend?

**Mr Becker**—The week after—on the Wednesday and Thursday.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—What is the total cost of moving everyone over there, in these ‘stringent fiscal times’?

**Mr Becker**—I do not know. We can find out for you, if you wish.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—Accommodation allowances, et cetera. You must have done an estimate before you agreed to go.

**Mr Becker**—You have to remember that they are still part of this country and we have to get around to meet our staff. They have an opportunity to meet with us. That is what we try to do with the staff.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—Everyone gets in Tuesday morning for this meeting, do they?

**Mr Becker**—Probably Tuesday evening.

**Mr Dacey**—As Mr Becker said, one of the objectives of having SAC meetings in states every second time is that we do have sessions with our staff in those states. We do sit down with the staff—we have 20 or 30 staff come in.

**Mr Becker**—We do meet out of session, too.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—How many people do you have to fly to Perth for this meeting.

**Mr Becker**—From here, nine.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—From anywhere other than those who are resident in Perth.

**Mr Dacey**—Fifteen.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—No higher bid? Did you make a cost estimate before you decided to go to Perth?

**Ms Davis**—Yes, we did but I do not think we will be able to provide you with those figures at the moment.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—Why is that?

**Ms Davis**—We do not have them in front of us.

**Mr Becker**—We can take it on notice.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—So you will take on notice the estimated costs of holding this meeting in Perth? How long do you think it will take to get that answer back?

**Mr Becker**—Not long at all.

**Ms Davis**—As soon as possible—tomorrow.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—The Robert Dean case is currently before the courts, so I do not want to go into any details. This matter was taken up by the Victorian police. Was there any thought given to referring it to the Federal Police, seeing that there are potential federal offences involved, or is there an agreement between the two electoral commissions that there be one reference to one law enforcement body?

**Mr Dacey**—We did, and we sought advice from the DPP. That advice was basically to let the matter run as it is currently running with the Victorian police and the Director of Public Prosecutions in Victoria. Until there is an outcome from that we are basically holding and waiting.

**Senator ROBERT RAY**—I am trying to get to the reason. I think I agree with it, but is it to avoid duplication or are there other factors involved in that decision?

## **SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING 29 MAY 2003**

### **Response to Question on Notice**

#### **Senator Ray:**

**So you will take on notice the estimate costs of holding this meeting [*Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting 16-18 June 2003*] in Perth?**

#### **AEC Response:**

The estimated cost of the Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting in Perth on 16-17 June 2003 is \$39,000.

#### **NOTE:**

- This figure covers fares, accommodation and meal allowances, conference room and equipment hire, and travel costs for local staff to travel to and from the meeting.
- Attendance for the full meeting includes 2 WA based staff for the entire meeting plus 20-30 WA based staff for one whole afternoon to discuss with senior management the issues facing the organisation. (This follows feedback from AEC staff surveys that SAC members be more visible).
- Because of the higher cost involved in travelling to Perth, a SAC (then Management Board) meeting has not been held there since June 1999. In the intervening period 15 SAC/Management Board meetings have taken place either in Canberra or in another capital city.