

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Australian Electoral Commission

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2007

Question: F48

Outcome 2, Output 2.1.3

Topic: Willmac Enterprises disclosure re \$133,000

Hansard Page: F&PA 38

Senator Brown asked:

Senator BOB BROWN—It says in your answer to a previous question I asked Mr Bodel that, when it comes to Willmac Enterprises spending \$370,461, the total amount spent on seven electoral advertisements and pamphlets was \$92,350.35. Five of the seven items were electoral advertisements. The amount spent on these items was \$57,000. The expenditure disclosed by Willmac Enterprises on advertising was \$190,000. On what was the missing \$133,000 spent?

Mr Bodel—I could not tell you precisely but we know there were a series of other advertisements involved.

Senator BOB BROWN—Can you give the committee that information?

Mr Bodel—I do not think that would jeopardise the AFP inquiry.

Mr Campbell—I would like to take that on notice to make sure we are not compromising the AFP referral.

Answer:

Third party political expenditure returns require the disclosure of total expenditure across a number of categories. One of those categories is electoral advertising.

Third party electoral expenditure returns do not require specific details, such as the recipient of a specific payment or the sum of a specific payment, to be disclosed. Consequently, the information available to the AEC on Willmac Enterprises' electoral advertising expenditure is not comprehensive.

The Willmac Enterprises political expenditure return for the 2004 federal election lists expenditure of \$190,000 on electoral advertising. The items of expenditure for which the AEC has evidence are as follows:

- Cumberland Newspaper Group (\$12,358.36)
- John Fairfax Publications (\$10,424.70)
- Leader Community (\$13,094.40)
- Messenger Press (\$10,198.99)
- Queensland Newspapers (\$31,796.96)

- Quest Newspaper Group (\$10,601.14)
- West Australian Newspapers (\$21,866.32)
- Advertiser Newspapers (\$19,112.32)
- Queanbeyan Chronicle (\$2,104.99)
- Shoalhaven and Nowra Times (\$2,038.19)
- Rural Press (\$987.80)
- The Weekly Times (\$2,035.00)
- Ballarat Courier (\$1,982.72)
- Mountain Press (\$3,317.38)
- Illawara Newspapers (\$3,382.41)
- Mount Barker Courier (\$1,309.00)