Outcome 2, Program 2.1
Topic: Electronic Voting

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Senator Fifield asked:

Senator FIFIELD—Thank you for that. Commissioner, has the AEC done any work to establish what the cost would be if the arrangements at the 2007 election for the 29 sites were expanded to one for each federal electorate, 150 sites? I assume that—
Mr Killesteyn—The answer is no; we have not done any work to estimate it. I can certainly take it on notice, but I would suggest that it is a large cost.

Answer:

The e-voting software for the 2007 federal election trial was purchased and developed on a "one-off" basis. To provide electronically-assisted voting for electors who are blind or have low vision in every division would require a new procurement process. The outcome of an open tender process is speculative, and the costs estimated are broadly indicative. It may involve a new solution which would need to be developed and tested, once again involving useability specialists and establishment of an appropriate reference group. Once established the solution would also need to be able to be provided for by-elections as appropriate. Between elections there would need to be ongoing resource(s) to provide ongoing contract management, equipment management and liaison with appropriate peak bodies and special interest groups. This cost has not been factored in to the calculations below.

There are a number of variables. The estimate below is based on the same costs to implement the trial at 29 sites for the 2007 election, but expanded to include one site in each of the remaining 121 divisions. Assumptions in the calculations are:

1. two dedicated pre poll staff provided at each location to manage e-voting

2. 12 days of pre polling, including polling day

3. two electronic voting machines per site

4. delivery, installation and de-installation to metro and country locations

Estimated cost of additional site selection and consultation	$ 100,000
Estimated cost of Software per unit @ $1650 (2 units per location)	$ 399,300
Hardware (computer, printer, perspex case, peripherals) 242 units	$ 435,600
Storage, delivery, support and retrieval	$ 363,000
Training (TOPS) 4 staff per centre for 4 hours	$ 85,000
Pre Poll Staff – 2 staff rostered at one time x 12 days	$ 523,000
Additional advertising to provide national coverage	$ 200,000
Total	**$2,105,900**
Base cost of 2007 federal election at 29 sites	$2,207,203
Total estimate for 150 sites	**$4,313,103**