

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** Ballot Papers

**Senator:** Ryan

**Question reference number:** F69

**Type of question:** Hansard, F&PA Committee, Page 74, 30 May 2013

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 12 July 2013

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

Senator Ryan asked: "That will be interesting for some. Do you then literally have more assistants or magnifying glasses to lend people?"

**Answer:**

The current design of the Senate ballot paper is specified in section 209 and Schedule 1 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act). Senate ballot papers must be laid out in landscape design, with candidates organised in groups across the paper.

The number of groups contesting an election will generally determine the width of the ballot paper. However, advice from the AEC's ballot paper production contractors is that currently available printing processes that can meet the AEC's volume requirements and time constraints cannot accommodate a ballot paper wider than 1020 mm. If a large number of groups contest an election, as happened in NSW for the 2010 election, column widths and font sizes must be reduced to fit all groups evenly across the ballot paper.

If a larger number of groups contest the 2013 election, the column widths and font sizes on the ballot paper must be further reduced and readability will be affected. The AEC has ordered magnifying sheets as a contingency and will make them available to electors in voting screens across NSW and in all pre-poll voting centres.

The AEC is continuing to review new print technologies so as to take account of opportunities available through future developments in printing processes.