

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2008

**Australian Electoral Commission
Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**



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Topic: Enrol to Vote Week

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Senator Boyce asked:

Senator BOYCE—How many special schools did participate then? That is probably the next question I should ask.

Ms Urbanski—I do not know. I would have to see whether I can find out.

Senator BOYCE—Is there any way you can ascertain that for me?

Ms Urbanski—We could try.

Senator BOYCE—Were there some?

Ms Urbanski—I would have to find out for you.

Mr Dacey—It might be difficult, in that the special schools might not readily identify themselves as such through the title of the school, but we can have a look and see what we can find.

Answer:

The AEC's Enrol to Vote Week schools' database consists of 2 467 schools that have students in years 11 and 12. Of these, the AEC has identified 151 schools as 'special schools' on the basis of the name of the school or information from education authorities or from the schools themselves. This group predominantly comprises schools for students with a disability, but includes some other non-mainstream schools such as schools for young mothers.

The AEC invited and encouraged all schools on the database to participate in Enrol to Vote Week 2008 by writing to the school principals and through direct telemarketing. Other promotion, including through peak educational bodies and websites and the general media, was undertaken to ensure that any schools not on the AEC's database were also encouraged to participate.

A total of 1 701 schools participated in Enrol to Vote Week in 2008, including 93 'special schools'. The participation rate of schools the AEC has identified as 'special schools' was comparable to that of all other schools (62 per cent compared with 69 per cent for other schools).

Some "special schools" have advised the AEC that Enrol to Vote Week is not appropriate or suitable for their school or students and accordingly they have been

removed from the database. It is the AEC's understanding that students with a disability may also attend mainstream schools which participated in Enrol to Vote Week, although participation by these students is not recorded in the database.

