

**Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing –October 2009**

**Australian Electoral Commission**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Outcome 2, Program 2.1**

**Topic: Australian Defence personnel overseas voting arrangements**

**Question reference number: F14**

**Type of Question: Written**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2009**

**Number of Pages: 1**

**Senator Ronaldson asked:**

Following the Government's decision to terminate the electronic voting trial for Australian Defence personnel overseas, what work has been undertaken to ensure that our service men and women are enabled and encouraged to vote at the next election?

**Answer:**

Recommendation 2 of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) Report on the 2007 federal election voting trials (Interim report of the inquiry into the conduct of the 2007 election and matters related thereto) discussed the implementation of a voter service model for selected Australian Defence Force personnel serving overseas, called the ARO Model.

Defence and AEC have met on several occasions to consider the operational arrangements associated with the implementation of this model. A draft implementation plan has been documented and agreed on, and the AEC and Defence will continue to work together to finalise the operational details of the plan.

As noted in the Government response to the JSCEM report, minor legislative changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* will be required to allow the ARO model to be implemented.

Postal votes will also be issued and dispatched to all deployed Defence force personnel registered as general postal voters at the next election.