

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Australian Electoral Commission

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Supplementary Estimates Hearing – October 2010

Outcome 1, Program 1.2

Topic: Geelong Hospital

Question reference number: F27

Type of Question: Hansard F&PA 151, 19 October 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010

Number of Pages: 1

Senator Cormann asked:

I have some questions in relation to the AEC's activities at Geelong Hospital. I have been advised again that four patients were unable to vote at Geelong Hospital at the last election and that these people had previously been told by the local AEC office that they would not need a postal vote because a polling team would be visiting the hospital on polling day, which did not happen. Are you aware of this incident?

Answer:

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) was unaware of electors at Geelong Hospital who had not voted.

The AEC had a mobile polling team visit the hospital on Wednesday and Thursday (18 and 19 August 2010) and Friday morning (20 August) so that patients could vote. Polling was conducted throughout the hospital, however, the hospital administration advised AEC staff that there were certain areas that were not to be visited. These included the Intensive Care Unit and any rooms with closed doors or beds with curtains pulled around, in order to maintain privacy.

Staff at the Division of Corio were aware of the mobile polling timetables and provided this information to callers. At no time were patients advised that mobile polling would be available on hospital premises on Election Day; nor were people discouraged from applying for a postal vote in favour of voting at a mobile polling facility.

On the afternoon of Friday 20 August, the Division of Corio was contacted by the Geelong Hospital in relation to two electors who hadn't voted. Two AEC staff members returned to the hospital to allow these electors to cast their votes.

In total 45 Ordinary votes and 42 Declaration votes were successfully taken from patients at Geelong Hospital.