

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 1

**Topic:** Informal Voting Procedures

**Senator:** Ryan

**Question reference number:** F54

**Type of question:** Hansard F&PA Committee, page 88, 18 October 2011

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 2 December 2011

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:** “Will you consider ...[providing breakdowns of informal votes where a 1, a tick or a cross was used by candidate]... at future elections? I say this given that informal voting has been and will probably continue to be an issue that provokes some debate in this place in the coming years. Could you consider doing that for future elections?”

**Answer:**

At the 2010 House of Representatives election, the AEC collected counts by candidate of informal votes with a number ‘1’ only. These were the only informal ballots where counts by candidate were collected.

Consistent with informal ballot paper surveys conducted in respect of the 2001, 2004 and 2007 House of Representatives elections, the 2010 survey used a single category (Category C) to collect counts of ballot papers where the voter had used a tick or cross instead of the number ‘1’. Information relating to the candidate against whom the tick or cross was shown was not collected. In addition, Category C counts could include some ballot papers where voters had used both ticks and crosses, such that the first preference was not apparent.

The AEC plans to collect counts of number ‘1’ only ballots by candidate at future general elections for the House of Representatives. The addition of subcategories to provide counts of ticks and crosses by candidate position on the ballot paper will also be considered, but a final decision to include this level of analysis of ticks and crosses will be subject to budget consideration at the time.