

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: Health Services Union East Branch 2009/10 return

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F56

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

On 21 September 2011, the AEC faced the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters and promised to pursue a return from the Health Services Union East Branch.

HSU East Branch's declarations for 2009/2010 where expenditure and payments have increased significantly. The first return dated 19 October 2010 disclosed \$0 in receipts and \$22,255 in payments, then the three amending returns filed on 30 & 31 August 2011 and 1 September 2011 showed receipts jumping from \$0 to \$17,935,800 and then to \$24,989,315 and payments rising from \$22,255 to \$16,284,546 and then to \$24,894,014.

- a) What has the AEC done to follow up this matter since 21 September?
- b) What explanations have the HSU East branch given?
- c) Will the AEC promise to conduct a thorough investigation using its coercive powers?
- d) What further documents has the AEC demanded from the HSU East about this matter?

Answer:

- a) The AEC has commenced a compliance review of the 2009/10 disclosure return lodged for the Health Services Union.
- b) The circumstances leading to the lodgement of the original disclosure return have yet to be verified with the Health Services Union. The first amendment initiated by the union to correct this return was prepared from the profit and loss statements of the union. These statements were subsequently recognised as inadequate for disclosure purposes because they include net figures and so a further amendment was lodged by the union prepared from gross figures for receipts and payments.

- c) The compliance review currently being conducted is being performed under the authority of subsection 316(2A) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, as are all compliance reviews.
- d) The AEC has received the full cooperation of officers from the Health Services East Branch and has not been required to use the coercive powers to demand any further documents.