



Electoral Commissioner

Our Ref: 16/469

Mr David Monk
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2614


Dear Mr Monk

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters – Australian Electoral Commission responses to questions on notice

Thank you for the opportunity for AEC representatives to appear before the Committee at public hearings on 16 and 17 November 2016. At the hearings, members of the Committee requested additional information on a number of topics.

The Committee requested responses by 2 December 2016. The AEC response to these requests is provided in Attachment A: Sydney 16 November and Attachment B: Adelaide 17 November.

Responses from the hearing in Perth on 18 November 2016, also requested by the Committee by 2 December 2016, will be submitted at a later date due to the late publication of the transcript.

Yours sincerely

Tom Rogers

2 December 2016

Attachment A

**Responses to questions from the public hearing in
 Sydney on 16 November 2016**

1. Senator Reynolds requested that the AEC provide a national breakdown of the reasons declaration votes were fully rejected. [Proof Hansard page 3]

AEC response

The AEC provided terminology definitions and information about rejected declaration votes in Attachment C2 of its 25 November 2016 submission.

The following table supplements the information in Attachment C2 of 25 November 2016, with a breakdown by state and territory in line with the three categories of rejected declaration votes.

Table 1. Rejected declaration votes by state and territory 2016 federal election

State	Declaration vote issue	Enrolment issue	Other issue	Total
NSW	10 204	65 019	641	75 864
Vic	10 526	45 415	776	56 717
Qld	7 683	19 284	517	27 484
WA	3 204	14 511	234	17 949
SA	2 720	11 022	232	13 974
Tas	755	4 076	43	4 874
ACT	412	2 690	27	3 129
NT	205	2 495	28	2 728
Total	35 709	164 512	2 498	202 719

2. Senator Reynolds sought details on incidents where incorrect ballot papers were issued in New South Wales.

Senator Macdonald sought details of the margin of the winning candidate for those affected electorates [Proof Hansard page 5]

AEC response

In the AEC's 25 November 2016 submission, a table was provided of known instances where the wrong ballot paper was provided by AEC staff to an elector, and these ballot papers were subsequently classified as informal.

Further details of incidents where incorrect ballot papers were issued in New South Wales and the two candidate preferred margins are outlined in Attachment A1 to this document.

3. Senator Reynolds asked the AEC for a breakdown of informal Senate ballot papers, including those which were incorrectly issued and were identified through the scanning process. [Proof Hansard pages 5 and 6]

AEC response

Attachment A2 to this document provides a breakdown by category of informal Senate ballot papers and outlines how incorrect ballot papers may be identified through the scanning process.

4. Mr Dick requested that the AEC provide details of which divisions in New South Wales recorded queues over one hour long. [Proof Hansard page 8]

AEC response

The recording of queue times is a manual process. The AEC gathered recorded queue times from the Officer-in-Charge returns as part of its evaluation of voting services. The New South Wales divisions recording a queue time greater than 60 minutes are provided in the table below along with the longest recorded queue time in that division..

Table 2. Longest queue times in New South Wales

Division	Polling Place	Longest recorded queue time
Barton	Bexley East	87 minutes at 8am
Bradfield	Hornsby Central	72 minutes at 10am
McMahon	Merrylands North	90 minutes at 3pm
Parramatta	Merrylands Central	65 minutes at 12pm
Wentworth	Darlinghurst East	69 minutes at 11am
Macarthur	Minto North	62 mins at 3pm

The AEC does not calculate an average queue time as there is considerable variation in queue times across polling places and at different times during election day. Thirty other New South Wales divisions recorded queue times between 45 and 60 minutes, with most occurring between the hours of 10am and 1pm.

5. Senator Rhiannon requested that the AEC provide details on polling place accessibility for both pre-poll and static polling places in New South Wales. [Proof Hansard page 10]

AEC response

An overview of the national data on the number of premises by each accessibility rating is provided in the AEC's main submission on pages 34-35.

For New South Wales the breakdown by rating for 2016 polling places is provided in the table below.

Table 3. New South Wales polling place accessibility ratings

NSW polling place accessibility ratings		2016	
		No.	percentage
Static Polling Place	Full	60	2.6
	Partial	2007	86.5
	None	252	10.9
Pre-poll Voting Centre	Full	42	17.4
	Partial	187	77.6
	None	12	5
Combined	Full	102	4
	Partial	2194	85.7
	None	264	10.3

Following an examination of correspondence, the AEC has identified that there were four complaints regarding accessibility of static polling places and one complaint regarding accessibility of a pre-poll voting centre in New South Wales.

6. Senator Rhiannon and Senator Reynolds sought details on how many absentee voters were unable to vote, or referred to a different polling place, as a result of declaration envelope shortages in the Division of Lyne. [Proof Hansard page 10]

AEC response

The Lyne polling places that ran out of declaration vote envelopes on polling day did so generally for only short periods of time (15 – 30 minutes). Restocking took place where possible through transfers from adjacent polling places, or by delivery from the Polling Place Liaison Officer. In some instances photocopies of the declaration vote envelope were produced to affix to other envelopes to allow voting to continue. Some electors were directed to adjacent polling places or advised to return later

when stock was available. Because of the variability in circumstances the AEC is unable to advise how many electors ultimately were unable to cast their vote.

7. Senator Reynolds requested that the AEC provide further information on why some areas in New South Wales were particularly affected by long queues. [Proof Hansard page 11]

AEC response

In New South Wales, some long queues or voter frustration would have been due to confusion created by the redistribution. Electors may have joined the ordinary voting line at a nearby polling place and were subsequently told that they were at a polling place outside of their enrolled division. In this situation the elector would need to complete a declaration vote.

Additionally, eight out of the top 10 divisions in New South Wales where long queue times were experienced were dual polling places. Dual polling places are typically created in polling places located adjacent to divisional boundaries where the one polling place can issue ordinary votes for two or more divisions. Additional time is required to direct electors to the correct ordinary issuing point for the enrolled division.

Further advice on queue times is provided in the response to Question 4 (above).

8. Senator Macdonald and Senator Reynolds sought details on whether the AEC had any reports of difficulties providing votes to patients at hospitals across all state and territories, and what provisions in the Electoral Act govern AEC responsibilities for hospital voting. [Proof Hansard pages 11 and 12]

AEC response

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Electoral Act) does not require the AEC to conduct polling at all or any hospitals, or for all or any patients. The primary purpose of the AEC conducting hospital polling is to provide a service to electors who are unable to attend, or who have difficulties in attending, a polling place to vote on election day.

Sections 222, 224 and 226 of the Electoral Act contain provisions that outline how mobile polling shall be conducted. Section 226 provides:

(7) The Divisional Returning Officer shall, not later than 4pm on the day before polling day, display prominently in his or her office a notice specifying the hospitals in the Division that are polling places and indicating the periods during which votes will be taken under section 224 at each hospital.

(8) As far as is reasonably practicable, votes taken under section 224 shall be taken on the day or days and at the time or times specified in the relevant notice under subsection (7), but any failure to take those votes in that manner does not invalidate the result of the election.

A range of factors are considered in identifying which hospitals the AEC will deliver mobile polling services to, including the estimated number of votes to be taken and the proximity to other polling places.

Any difficulties the AEC experienced in providing polling services to hospitals are generally identified through the Mobile Team Leader Return. Each state and territory conducts a review of their Mobile Team Leader Returns and provides a summary which forms part of the AEC's voting service evaluation.

The table below provides a summary of the issues experienced by the AEC in conducting hospital polling.

Table 4. Reported issues with hospital polling

State	Details
NSW	Some special hospital teams were unable to service demand in the allotted time and had to extend the time scheduled for voting at that location. There were also complaints from aged care facilities that were not being visited. Gilmore – AEC polling staff alleged inappropriate behaviour by scrutineers at a nursing home.
VIC	Some special hospital teams were unable to service demand in the allotted time and either had to extend the voting period or take names to record an excuse for not having voted.
QLD	In most divisions, special hospital teams reported needing more time in some of the establishments they visited. Some teams increased the time spent at the establishment while others were unable to take votes from all patients due to time restrictions. This was largely reported as being due to the amount of time voters took to complete their Senate ballot papers.

In addition, the AEC noted at page 38 of its main submission that inquiries had been made into the conduct of polling at the Townsville Hospital (Sub-Acute Care Facility).

9. Mr Buchholz and Senator Macdonald requested that the AEC provide modelling of the effect on redistribution of moving to four or eight year election terms. [Proof Hansard page 12]

AEC response

In the absence of altering components of the redistributions framework contained in Part IV of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, changing the length of the parliamentary term from three to four years would not remove the possibility of a redistribution being determined in close proximity to an electoral event or overlapping an electoral event.

A four year parliamentary term would mean that the determination of the number of members to which each state and territory is entitled would occur less

frequently. The Electoral Commissioner is required to ascertain the population of the states and various territories once the House of Representatives has met for 12 months after its first meeting day. Where there is a change in the number of members for a state or territory because of this determination, a redistribution is triggered. Lengthening the parliamentary term would decrease the frequency with which this process would occur, which would mean that review of whether each state and territory is represented in the House in accordance with their population would occur less frequently.

One outcome of less frequent reviews may be to increase the likelihood of a redistribution being triggered because of malapportionment. A redistribution has never been triggered for this reason, but would be if one-third of electoral divisions in a state (or one in the ACT or NT) varied from the average divisional enrolment for that state by more than plus or minus 10 per cent for more than two months. This occurs where there is an uneven distribution of electors in a state. The frequency of review of the number of members of the House of Representatives may be the reason why the malapportionment trigger has not been used. Irrespective of potential four or eight year terms, it would be the AEC's preference that a redistribution would best conclude no more than 24 months from the return of the previous writs (i.e. 12 months out from the next anticipated event).

**Attachment A1
Sydney 16 November 2016**

Incorrectly issued ballot papers for the 2016 federal election in New South Wales

Polling Place	Impacted Division/s	When	No. of ballot papers	Issue	How Identified	Result Margin
Fairfield PPVC ¹ – Multi PPVC utilising ECLs ² issuing ordinary votes for Blaxland, Fowler, McMahon and Werriwa	Fowler McMahon	Tuesday 14 – Thursday 16 June 2016	18	7 Fowler electors issued with Blaxland ballot papers 3 McMahon electors issued with Blaxland ballot papers 8 Fowler electors issued with McMahon ballot papers	Identified by the EVLO ³ (1 instance) and ordinary issuing officer (2 instances) when referring to ECL close off screen at end of day which indicated electors from divisions other than Blaxland or McMahon had been marked.	Fowler: ALP ⁴ TCP ⁵ margin 29 648 McMahon: ALP TCP margin 20 846
Chifley Special Hospital Team Establishment: St Hedwigs Village Blacktown	Chifley	Tuesday 28 June 2016 Polling hours: 10:00am to 12:30pm	49	Mobile team issued 49 Greenway ballot papers to Chifley electors – 35 ordinary and 14 declaration.	EVLO was present when OIC ⁶ was issuing a vote and asked why the elector was being issued from a new pad of ballot papers when the EVLO had observed there was one remaining in the pad previously used for issuing. The OIC stated that they had issued the incorrect ballot papers.	Chifley: ALP TCP margin 32 835
Greenway Special Hospital Team Establishment: Pendle Hill Nursing Home	Greenway	Tuesday 28 June 2016 Polling hours: 2:00pm to 4:00pm	1	Mobile team issued one Parramatta ballot paper to a Greenway elector who was the first elector.	Issuing officer informed the OIC prior to issuing another ballot paper.	Greenway: ALP TCP margin 11 243

- ¹PPVC – Pre-Poll Voting Centre
- ²ECLs – Electronic Certified Lists
- ³EVLO – Early Voting Liaison Officer
- ⁴ALP – Australian Labor Party
- ⁵TCP – Two Candidate Preferred
- ⁶OIC – Officer-in-Charge

Attachment A2
Sydney 16 November 2016

Senate informality

The number of informal votes by category at the 2016 federal election is provided in table 1. This categorisation is not a detailed examination of Senate informality as this is not available at this time. The information provided below is derived from an administrative process used to determine formality. During this process, once an officer is satisfied that a ballot paper is informal, it is assigned to an appropriate informality category. A detailed categorisation is not undertaken.

Table 1. Informal votes by category, 2016 Senate elections

State/Territory	No Preferences %	Informal Preferences %	Paper Alteration %	Voter Identified %	Authenticity Questioned %	Total Informal %
NSW	66.03	33.85	0.09	0.01	0.01	100
Vic	60.89	38.98	0.11	0.01	0.00	100
Qld	64.97	34.82	0.17	0.04	0.00	100
WA	65.50	34.27	0.20	0.04	0.00	100
SA	63.55	36.24	0.11	0.08	0.02	100
Tas	60.14	39.79	0.07	0.00	0.00	100
ACT	65.36	34.15	0.31	0.16	0.02	100
NT	60.25	39.55	0.00	0.20	0.00	100
Total	64.09	35.76	0.12	0.03	0.01	100

Notes:

- The "Authenticity Questioned" category includes ballot papers which have been deemed informal and were not assigned to another category. Ballot papers that had been disfigured before being cast, for example, were included in this category. The "Authenticity Questioned" category had previously been labelled as "Unauthorised" in material presented to the Committee.
- The "No preferences" category has previously been labelled as "Blank". However due to the possible presence of other (non-preference) marks on these ballot papers, the category has been renamed to avoid confusion.

Table 2. Descriptions of Senate informality categories

Category	Description
No preferences	No preferences recorded although other marks may be present.
Informal Preferences	Preferences did not meet formality criteria.
Ballot Paper Alteration	Alterations to ballot paper rendered the electors intent unclear (e.g. renaming candidates or parties).
Voter Identified	Voter identified themselves on the ballot paper.
Authenticity Questioned	Ballot paper was not confirmed as authentic because, for example, it did not contain the issuing officer's initials or bear the official mark, it did not match a required template, was disfigured before being cast or for other reasons.

Out-of-state ballot papers and Senate informality

There are two ways an elector can be issued an incorrect ballot paper.

Voter error at polling place

A voter error may occur during the casting of a declaration vote at polling places and pre-poll voting centres even when the appropriate House of Representatives and Senate ballot papers have been issued. The voters are directed to the voting screens to complete their vote, and instructed to bring the ballot papers back to the declaration vote issuing officer to be placed in the declaration vote envelope. In some instances, voters do not return the ballot papers for inclusion in the declaration envelope, and place them in the ballot box for ordinary issued ballot papers.

Where ballot papers for a different division (House of Representatives) or state or territory (Senate) are found during scrutiny, they are considered informal and recorded as such. It is not possible to forward or redirect these ballot papers to the correct state to be included in the count as the elector's entitlement to vote has not been determined at this point. Their entitlement to vote is only determined when the declaration envelope has been processed through preliminary scrutiny.

AEC error

It is also possible that AEC polling officials provided the voter with the incorrect ballot paper by mistake. In the AEC's 25 November 2016 submission Attachment A response to question on notice 3, a table was provided of known instances where the wrong ballot paper was provided by AEC staff to an elector, and these ballot papers were subsequently classified as informal.

Senate informality and the CSS process

Senate ballot papers for the wrong state or territory are usually identified as informal at polling places before they arrive at the CSS centre. If an operator identifies a Senate ballot paper for a different state or territory at the CSS centre that was missed at the polling place or out-posted centre, it is classified as informal and assigned to one of the categories in table 2, depending on how the ballot was marked.

The scanning process also identifies an incorrect Senate ballot paper in a batch as it is scanned. The scanning process compares scanned ballot papers to the particular ballot paper template for that state. Where the ballot paper image does not match the template, it is forwarded to a system 'queue' for determination by AEC staff. This template system was implemented to detect ballot papers that:

- had skewed while being scanned
- had had corners folded during scanning
- had some other issue preventing them from matching the template (e.g. had been substantially defaced)
- were out of state ballot papers.

AEC staff then process the ballot paper based on the image presented. The informality categories in table 1 do not explicitly account for 'out of state' ballot papers. Accordingly these ballot papers are assigned to an informality category based on other criteria.

It would be an extremely resource intensive exercise to review the images of all Senate ballot papers to determine how many ballot papers were for the wrong state. An exercise of this kind would be prohibitively expensive and the AEC would under no circumstances be in

a position to undertake this work. Even if the AEC could identify the number of ballot papers which were for another state, the AEC would not be able to determine whether this was due to AEC official error or voter error as described above.

Attachment B

**Responses to questions from the public hearing in
Adelaide on 17 November 2016**

1. Mr Giles and Senator Reynolds requested that the AEC provide information on the reduction of roll divergence between the South Australia state roll and the Commonwealth roll for South Australia, and what activities the AEC undertook to achieve this reduction. [Proof Hansard page 2 and 3]

AEC response

In January 2014, the *Electoral (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2013 (SA)* substantially harmonised the state and federal rolls in South Australia by deeming people who have enrolled federally as complying with South Australian legislation and thus eligible to be added to the state roll. The legislation also operated retrospectively in this aspect. This means that other than a few small categories, for most enrolments the federal and state rolls are the same.

Detailed information on roll divergence was provided in AEC responses to JSCEM questions taken on notice submitted on 25 November 2016 in [Attachment C3](#).

2. Senator Reynolds requested the AEC provide the total number of declaration votes received in South Australia and how many were rejected. [Proof Hansard page 3]

AEC response

A detailed analysis of declaration vote rejections was provided in AEC responses to JSCEM questions taken on notice submitted on 25 November 2016 in [Attachment C2](#). Please also see the response to question 1 in Attachment A to this submission.

3. Mr Morton asked the AEC to provide information on how many Fuji Xerox staff were employed in each state and territory. [Proof Hansard page 5]

AEC response

The table below details the number of Fuji Xerox data entry staff employed in each state and territory, as well as the maximum number of shifts per day and the number of staff per shift.

Table 1. Fuji Xerox staff employed by state and territory

State	Total data entry staff	Average staff per shift	Shifts per day (max)
NSW	548	160	2
Vic	461	110	2
Qld	502	104	3
WA	170	35	3
SA	113	40	2

Tas	44	19	2
ACT	22	11	2
NT	17	6	2
TOTAL	1877		

4. Mr Morton asked the AEC how many laptops with look up capacity would be needed to provide every declaration vote issuing officer in each state and territory with an Electronic Certified List (ECL), and how a program of this size could be implemented [Proof Hansard page 7]

AEC response

Table 2 below provides an estimate of the number of declaration issuing points for the next federal election. This estimate is based on current declaration vote estimates and parameters for issuing rates. Vote estimates and parameters will be subject to review prior to the next election.

A total of 1 544 ECLs were deployed for the 2016 federal election. Approximately 13 446 ECLs would be required if one device was provided at every declaration issuing point. The AEC would anticipate that with more ECLs in use for an election, there would be greater efficiency and accuracy in issuing declaration vote ballot papers; however no modelling on this has been undertaken. A program of this size could only be implemented with a very significant increase to the AEC's operating budget.

Table 2. Declaration vote issuing point estimates by state and territory

State	Static	Mobile	PPVCs	DO (Pre-poll)	Total
NSW	3 795	137	310	19	4 261
Vic	2 914	119	276	27	3 336
Qld	2 028	106	320	10	2 464
WA	1 378	67	137	7	1 589
SA	992	66	116	0	1 174
Tas	322	22	42	4	390
ACT	88	9	17	1	115
NT	46	20	49	2	117
Total	11 563	546	1 267	70	13 446

5. Mr Dick requested the average wait time to be issued with a vote in South Australia and the top 10 locations which recorded the longest wait times. [Proof Hansard page 8]

AEC response

The recording of queue times is a manual process. The AEC gathered recorded queue times from the Officer-in-Charge returns as part of its evaluation of voting services. Nearly 73 per cent (426) of the 584 static polling places were able to

provide some data for the 2016 federal election. This is an increase on 2013 where only 49 per cent (312) of the 637 static polling places provided data. The top 10 recorded queue times in South Australia cover 11 polling places and are shown below, with the time of day that queue time occurred.

Table 3. Longest queue times in South Australia

Division	Polling Place	Longest recorded queue time
Wakefield	Salisbury	74 minutes at 8:00am
Boothby	Mitchell Park	69 minutes at 12 noon
Adelaide	Kilburn	60 minutes at 11:00am
Hindmarsh	Kidman Park	60 minutes at 4:00pm
Hindmarsh	Fulham Gardens	60 minutes at 12 noon
Sturt	Trinity Gardens	60 minutes at 5:00pm
Grey	Whyalla Norrie South	57 minutes at 2:00pm
Hindmarsh	Seaton	55 minutes at 11:00am
Kingston	Morphett Vale North	55 minutes at 12 noon
Makin	Wynn Vale West	55 minutes at 3:00pm
Sturt	Northgate (Sturt)	55 minutes at 2:00pm

The AEC does not calculate an average queue time as there is considerable variation in queue times across polling places and at different times during election day. As an indicator, for the 2013 federal election, in South Australia the longest recorded wait time was at a polling place in the Division of Port Adelaide of 60 minutes duration at 8:00am.

For the 2016 federal election, 137 polling places in South Australia (23 per cent of polling places) recorded queue times of less than 10 minutes, whereas only 87 South Australia polling places in 2013 (13 per cent of polling places) recorded queue times less than 10 minutes. However, 88 polling places (15 per cent) in 2016 recorded queue times at or greater than 30 minutes, whereas only 28 polling places (four per cent) recorded queue times at or greater than 30 minutes in 2013.

This data supports the view that queue wait times were longer in 2016 than they were in 2013, but it also indicates that queue times were not an issue across the entire state, and a greater percentage of South Australia polling places in 2016 when compared with 2013 had either no queues or extremely small queues.

6. Mr Dick asked whether the fresh scrutiny for Hindmarsh was longer than normal. [Proof Hansard page 8]

AEC response

It should be noted that while the Division of Hindmarsh was prioritised for action over other divisions in South Australia, this does not mean that all activity for those divisions ceased. As was noted in the 17 November 2016 public hearing, some resources from co-located divisions were redirected to Hindmarsh scrutiny processes to provide certainty as to the likely outcome of the election in this division, in a timely manner.

Preliminary scrutiny of postal votes for Hindmarsh was prioritised over other divisions to ensure sufficient postal votes were ready to be opened and counted as soon as possible. This meant that 7 285 postal votes could be counted in week one post-election day which exceeded the volume of postal votes counted in most other SA divisions.

Hindmarsh conducted counts on Saturday 9 July and Sunday 10 July, while other South Australia divisions were operational on one day of this weekend. While Hindmarsh finalised declaration vote counts two days later than the national timetable, this is consistent with all divisions in South Australia.

All House of Representatives fresh scrutines of polling places in Hindmarsh were completed by 15 July. Counting was progressed to such an extent that by Wednesday 13 July, two days before the deadline for receipt of declaration votes (for example, from overseas voters), the candidate for the Australian Labor Party claimed victory.

The focused effort on the division of Hindmarsh was reflected in it being the second of South Australia's 11 divisions to conduct its declaration of the poll on 27 July (the first being Mayo which was declared on 26 July). In 2013, the declaration of the poll for the Division of Hindmarsh was the ninth in the State, and occurred on 27 September, some seven days following the declaration of the first division in South Australia at that election.

7. Senator Reynolds requested that the AEC provide a national breakdown of informal votes in the Senate. [Proof Hansard page 9]

AEC response

Detailed information on Senate informality was provided in AEC responses to JSCEM questions taken on notice on 16 November 2016 in Attachment A2.

8. Senator Reynolds and Mr Morton requested information on ballot paper handling procedures, including photographs of packaged ballot papers. [Proof Hansard page 10]

AEC response

Staff working at polling locations are provided with extensive training and instructions in regard to ballot paper issuing procedures. In addition, senior polling officials such as Officers in Charge (OICs), Seconds in Charge (2ICs), Polling Place Liaison Officers (PPLOs) and Early Voting Liaison Officers (EVLOs) have additional

responsibilities to ensure the correct ballot paper issuing processes are being followed by all issuing officers at each polling location.

In polling locations, OICs are responsible for the allocation of ballot papers to declaration and ordinary vote issuing points. Prior to polling commencing, the OIC is allocated a supply of each type of ballot paper required for their particular polling location. OICs must confirm the number of ballot papers received of each type and record the allocation in their OIC return.

Static polling places receive a supply of House of Representatives (HoR) ballot papers for their own division for ordinary issuing points. These are in pads of 100. Senate ballot papers for their state or territory are banded in bundles of 100. For declaration vote issuing, static polling places receive a declaration vote pack for their state or territory, which consists of a small number of HoR ballot papers for all other divisions within the same state or territory.

Pre-poll voting centres (PPVCs) also receive HoR ballot papers for their own division in pads of 50 or 100 and Senate ballot papers banded in bundles of 100 for their state or territory, for ordinary issuing points. For interstate and declaration vote issuing points, PPVCs receive HoR ballot papers for all divisions in Australia, and Senate ballot papers for every state and territory.

The OIC allocates an initial supply of ballot papers to the issuing points at the start of polling. Additional ballot papers are allocated throughout the polling period as required. The OIC counts the ballot papers and records the number and type allocated to each issuing point in the OIC return. The Issuing Officer counts the ballot papers to confirm the number and type allocated and records this on the ballot paper tracking form.

At declaration vote issuing points, the declaration pack is opened and the HoR ballot papers are stored in a ballot paper container and divided, by division, using ballot paper dividers. There is a ballot paper container for each state and territory. Senate ballot papers remain in state or territory specific bundles.

Before a declaration vote can be issued, the issuing officer must determine the division the elector will cast their vote for. Using the voter's enrolled address (as the voter has provided on the declaration vote envelope), the issuing officer uses a division finder (booklet) to determine the division. The division is written on the declaration envelope along with the division finder reference. The issuing officer then selects the correct HoR ballot paper and a Senate ballot paper for the appropriate state or territory and issues them to the elector.

It should be noted that where electronic certified lists (ECLs) are in use, the division finder is not used as the ECL is used to search for the elector, identify the division they are enrolled in and print the correct HoR ballot paper.

Training undertaken by polling officials explains the responsibilities and processes to be undertaken by staff in their various roles. This covers the steps for issuing votes and makes specific mention to check that ballot papers allocated to their issuing point are for the correct division and state or territory.

For declaration vote issuing staff, emphasis is placed on ensuring these staff understand how to use the division finder so that they identify and select the correct ballot paper for the voter and ensure the ballot paper selected for the voter matches the division and state or territory they have written on the declaration envelope.

One of the 'golden rules' messaged throughout declaration vote training is the requirement to use the division finder every time a declaration vote is being issued as failure to do so could result in the voter completing the wrong ballot paper and their vote not being counted.

Senior polling officials (OIC's, 2IC's, PPLOs and EVLOs) have additional responsibilities in regard to ensuring vote issuing procedures are being correctly applied.

Mr Morton was seeking photographs of ballot papers as they arrive and are issued at polling places. The AEC has not been able to locate images to assist with this request.

9. Mr Giles asked whether any concerns had been raised by voters with disabilities about access to polling places or other voting methods. [Proof Hansard page 12]

AEC response

The AEC has identified the following recorded complaints regarding the accessibility of South Australian polling places. These are provided in table 4 below. Other comments from electors may be received from time to time and not recorded and/or escalated to a complaint.

Table 4. Accessibility complaints at polling places South Australia

Division	Polling Place	Issue raised
Division of Adelaide	North Adelaide	No wheelchair access. There was also an issue with the disabled voting screen and while polling staff made space available the elector reported insufficient privacy.
Division of Mayo	Victor Harbor PPVC	Usual location is fully accessible but was unavailable. New location was assessed as assisted access only. Some local media interest and comments from a party worker.
Division of Port Adelaide	Paralowie	Feedback from a state MP's office that an elector advised a polling place was advertised as fully accessible but when they arrived there was no visible ramp. The AEC responded that the venue was assessed and advertised as accessible with assistance. However the feedback was noted for future events.