Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2016-17

Finance Portfolio
28 February 2017

Department/Agency: AEC
Outcome/Program:
Topic: Scrutineering and the Count

Senator: Rhiannon
Question reference number: F69
Type of question: Hansard Proof, F&PA Committee, Page 121, 28 February 2017
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Number of pages: 1

Question:

Mr Pirani: Again, my comments are that the act is very clear as to what a scrutineer is able to examine and what information from the computer system we are required to provide. That is the information that is provided in those reports that come out of EasyCount.
Senator RHIANNON: Thank you. Mr Rogers, would you be able to take on notice if the act— and I have not been querying that—that is being followed is keeping up to date with the change in technology?
Mr Rogers: I am happy to consider that and to provide a response on that.
Senator RHIANNON: Basically, I am just trying to work out if every effort is being made by the commission to develop a form of cryptographic hash that will be publicly available to scrutineers.
Mr Rogers: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Section 273(a) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* outlines provisions for the computerised scrutiny of votes in a Senate election. The AEC's current electronic system and processes for the scrutiny and determination of election results comply with these provisions.

The AEC is using SHA-256, an industry standard cryptographic hashing algorithm, to verify that preference data has not been tampered with during the scrutiny process.