

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014**

Finance Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** Direct Enrolment Numbers

**Senator:** Collins

**Question reference number:** F44

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 17 January 2014

**Number of pages:** 4

**Question:**

1. Can you advise the Committee on the results of the direct enrolment process?
2. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers?
3. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in New South Wales?
4. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in South Australia?
5. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in Queensland?
6. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in Victoria?
7. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in Tasmania?
8. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in the Australian Capital Territory?
9. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in the Northern Territory?
10. What gains in reach did we make in enrolment in total numbers in Western Australia?
11. Can you specify gains in respect to new enrolments, re-enrolments and those updating details of enrolments?
12. What was the impact on the electoral roll of extending the time for enrolment compared with previous elections where the roll had closed on the day that the writs were issued?
13. What were the implications for total enrolment?
14. Has the AEC concluded any views on the effectiveness on the enrolment processes?

**Answer:**

1. As a result of the direct enrolment and update process, more than 880,000 electors were added to the roll or had their enrolment details updated during the period 20 November 2012 to 8 December 2013.

2 – 10. Additions to the electoral roll as a result of direct enrolment, by jurisdiction, as at 8 December 2013

Question	Jurisdiction	New enrolments and reenrolments as a result of Direct Enrolment and Update*	Updated enrolments as a result of Direct Enrolment and Update*
2	<b>NATIONAL</b>	157,437	723,006
3	NSW	73,837	318,327
4	SA	34,226	151,492
5	QLD	26,504	146,541
6	VIC	10,296	37,277
7	TAS	8,339	37,014
8	ACT	1,852	17,701
9	NT	921	8,386
10	WA	1,462	6,268

11. Results of direct enrolment processes as at 8 December 2013

Enrolment transaction type	New enrolments, reenrolments and updated enrolments as a result of Direct Enrolment and Update*
New enrolments	78,609
Re-enrolments	78,828
Updated enrolment details	723,006
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>880,443</b>

12. Prior to June 2006, the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Electoral Act) provided for a close of rolls seven days after the issue of the writs.

The *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) Act 2006* amended the Electoral Act to provide for two close of rolls deadlines. The first deadline was 8pm on the day the writ was issued for:

- new enrolments; and
- re-enrolments.

The second deadline and the close of rolls was 8pm on the third ‘working day’ after the writ was issued for:

- electors who were currently enrolled but needed to update enrolment details;
- eligible persons who were not enrolled but who would turn 18 years old between the issue of the writs and the end of polling day; and
- eligible persons who were not enrolled but who would be granted Australian citizenship between the issue of the writs and polling day.

The Electoral Act specified that ‘working day’ meant any day except:

- (a) a Saturday or a Sunday; or
- (b) a day that is a public holiday in any State or Territory.

As a public holiday (Show Day on Flinders Island in Tasmania) fell on Friday 19 October 2007, which was one of the three non-weekend days following the issue of the writs on Wednesday 17 October 2007, the close of rolls deadline for the second class of electors listed above was Tuesday 23 October 2007 rather than Monday 22 October 2007.

A High Court decision (*Rowe v Electoral Commissioner* [2010] HCA 46) was handed down on 6 August 2010 meaning eligible people, who had submitted a correctly completed

enrolment form after 8pm on Monday 19 July but before 8pm on Monday 26 July, were entitled to vote in the 2010 federal election.

The *Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Enrolment and Prisoner Voting) Act 2011* amended the Electoral Act to align the text of the Electoral Act with the law following the High Court's decision. This meant that, at the 2013 election, all electors were able to enrol up until 8pm on the final day of the close of rolls on Monday 12 August 2013, which was seven days after the writ was issued on Monday 5 August 2013.

The table at Attachment A shows the number of additions and updates made to the electoral roll in the period from the issue of the writ to the close of the rolls for the 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013 federal elections.

13. Based on Attachment A, it is clear that for elections where a seven day roll close was effectively in place (2004, 2010 and 2013), a significantly larger number of electors were added to the roll compared with elections where the roll closed for additions to the roll on the day of the issue of the writ (2007).
  
14. As noted in Answer 1, more than 880,000 electors were added to the roll or had their enrolment details updated as a result of Direct Enrolment and Update. As a proportion, 25.9 per cent of all enrolment transactions between 20 November 2012 (commencement of the first cycle of direct enrolment and update) and 8 December 2013 were processed as a result of Direct Enrolment and Update.

**Attachment A**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>
Date of issue of writ	Tuesday 31 August 2004	Wednesday 17 October 2007	Monday 19 July 2010	Monday 5 August 2013
Date of close of rolls for new enrolments and reenrolments	8pm Tuesday 7 September 2004	8pm Wednesday 17 October 2007	8pm Monday 19 July 2010	8pm Monday 12 August 2013
Additions to the roll	153,452	47,141	141,977	138,831
Date of close of rolls for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people already on the roll whose details needed to be updated;</li> <li>• eligible persons who are not enrolled but who will turn 18 years old between the issue of the writs and the end of polling day; and</li> <li>• eligible persons who are not enrolled but who will be granted Australian citizenship between the issue of the writs and polling day.</li> </ul>	8pm Tuesday 7 September 2004	8pm Tuesday 23 October 2007	8pm Thursday 22 July 2010	8pm Monday 12 August 2013
Updated enrolment details	247,571	148,986	411,130	488,027
Electors who turned 18 before polling day	13,803	15,646	10,051	11,088
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>414,826</b>	<b>211,773</b>	<b>563,158</b>	<b>637,946</b>

- Note:
1. These figures include enrolment applications processed throughout the day on which the writ was issued.
  2. Additions to the roll include those enrolling for the first time and those who are re-enrolling after previously being removed from the roll.
  3. The 2010 figures include enrolments processed for state only entitlement which were subsequently processed for federal entitlement as a result of the timing of the High Court decision on the law which was in place at the time the writ was issued..