

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

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Question:

Senator RHIANNON: ... Can you supply a full breakdown of what ballots were in which queues for the Central Senate Scrutiny for the last election?

Mr Rogers: I will take on notice what information I can provide you.

Answer:

Table 1:

Queue	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
DataEntry1	2,740,554	2,289,383	1,658,556	817,081	655,731	205,695	119,546	53,425
DataEntry2	4,628,353	3,606,651	2,788,111	1,394,486	1,084,132	347,220	258,487	104,551
Supervisor	739,909	462,769	334,267	155,253	143,190	54,633	28,355	12,271
Informal	382,184	296,341	203,344	84,675	67,538	24,203	9,225	8,935
AEC	11,672	6,068	8,052	4,044	12,392	1,398	780	769
Retrievals	4,002	3,034	3,070	744	190	302	336	10
Scrutineer	305	76	748	1,098	173	1	35	0
AEO	74	0	152	85	596	17	85	1
Export	4,705,270	3,653,736	2,818,997	1,413,553	1,097,710	351,380	260,521	105,539

Notes to Table 1:

- Ballot papers presented at each queue where they met the criteria. Therefore many ballot papers presented at more than one queue.
- Ballot papers went to export without entering a queue only where they were confirmed as blank.
- Many questions during scrutiny were resolved between scrutineers and AEC staff at the time without being formally escalated through the scrutineer queue.
- The figures for DataEntry1 comprise two components given their dual function of (a) confirming particular preferences that could not be identified confidently by the software and (b) visual checks of ballot papers that appeared to have unusual markings

elsewhere on the paper, or a potential cross out of a candidate or party name. The numbers relating to these other checks are set out in Table 2.

- An explanation of queues is provided in Table 3.

Table 2:

DataEntry1 Check	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
Unusual marking/cross out detected	1,220,023	1,321,505	915,486	175,199	213,874	38,526	23,144	11,770

Table 3:

Queue Name	Queue Function
DataEntry1	Ballot paper images are sent to the DataEntry1 queue when an unusual mark or cross out is detected, or if a preference cannot be confidently read during capture. The DataEntry1 enters the preferences which cannot be read correctly, and records whether a voter may be identified or if the form has been altered. All ballot images which are processed from DataEntry1 will go to the DataEntry2 queue.
DataEntry2	All ballot paper images will go to the DataEntry2 queue except for a blank ballot in an informal batch. Ballot papers that have all preferences read confidently and have no unusual marks are routed to DataEntry2 by default. The DataEntry2 records a preference against every preference box where a mark was detected. This queue is a full blind data entry queue; however it is supported by the software which takes the operator directly to the required fields.
Supervisor	Ballot paper images are sent to the Supervisor queue when there is a data mismatch between the preference recorded in DataEntry1/software and DataEntry2, or when a data entry officer escalates a question. The Supervisor records their interpretation of the preference or escalates it further.
Informal	A ballot paper image is sent to the informal queue from the DataEntry2 or Supervisor queues if it is identified as having informal preferences above or below the line, or having a sequence breakdown. The data entry officer rechecks every marked field.
AEC	Ballot paper images are sent to the AEC queue when an issue is escalated or for any ballot paper with a voter identified, party/candidate cross outs or authenticity questions.
Retrievals	Ballot paper images are sent to the Retrievals queue if a request has been made to view the physical ballot paper, there is a blank ballot paper in a formal batch, or a placeholder ballot paper was required for an unscannable paper.
Scrutineer	All ballot papers which have been challenged by a Scrutineer but are unable to be resolved on the spot are flagged and sent to the Scrutineer challenge queue for the AEC to resolve the issue.
AEO	If a ballot paper is further challenged and other escalation points have been exhausted, the ballot paper image is sent to the AEO queue for the AEO to make the final determination.