

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: General
Topic: 2016 Central Senate Scrutiny of ballots

Senator: Rhiannon
Question reference number: F122
Type of question: Written
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Thursday, 13 April 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

1. Please supply a full break down of what ballots were in which queues for Central Senate Scrutiny 2016 for each state and territory?
2. As outlined in sections 264 (1) and (2) of the Electoral Act candidates may appoint one scrutineer per AEC officer conducting scrutiny. At previous counts, this has not been an issue as the only staff conducting scrutiny activities were AEC staff. However, at this count the engagement of sub-contractors meant that this rule, if strictly applied, could unfairly limit the number of scrutineers who could be appointed, and make a practical scrutiny of the count virtually impossible:
 - a) In light of these changes is the AEC reassessing how scrutineer numbers are determined?
 - b) If so what decisions have been arrived at?
 - c) If not why is this not being reassessed?

Answer:

1. Refer to the response to F70 from Additional Estimates on 28 February 2017.
- 2a. No. Data entry staff are part of the quality assurance process of capturing preferences from the ballot paper only. This process is not part of the count process and data entry staff are not conducting scrutiny activities.
- 2b. Not applicable.
- 2c. Section 264 is clear as to the application to 'officers' being staff of the AEC. The AEC is of the view that the 2016 approach met scrutineer needs while ensuring practical and timely operation of the scanning centres. The AEC received very few complaints regarding the approach and where an issue was raised the AEC worked with those scrutineers to ensure adequate access and transparency.