

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2015-16**

Finance Portfolio  
9 February 2016

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** Usage of term 'subscription to a political party'

**Senator:** Rhiannon

**Question reference number:** F9

**Type of question:** Hansard Proof, F&PA Committee, Page 35, 9 February 2016

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 1 April 2016

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

**Senator RHIANNON:** We have just had 1 February, our big day of the year, when we learn about donations over the previous financial year. I notice that there was a new term used: 'subscription to a political party'. Has that term been used before?

...

**Mr Pirani:** I am not aware of that. I would have to go back and look through all the returns.

**Mr Rogers:** We will take that on notice because we do not know the answer to that today.

**Senator RHIANNON:** Could you take it on answer and give a full answer. Did you give Labor advice that they could use that term? Once you received their disclosure and you saw the term, did you then question Labor about what it means?

**Mr Rogers:** I am not sure; we will have to take that on notice.

**Answer:**

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) did not provide specific advice to the Australian Labor Party regarding the use of the term 'subscription' in their annual disclosure return.

The term 'subscription' is not new and has been available to all political parties as an option to categorise a party's 'other receipts' on the AEC's eReturns Disclosure portal since the introduction of the system in 2010.

Under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* the definition of gift (donation) specifically excludes payments of election funding and annual subscriptions paid to a political party in regards to membership of a party. Categorisation of 'other receipts' is at the discretion of the body (entity) with the reporting obligation.