

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

Finance Portfolio
27-28 May 2015

Department/Agency: Australian Electoral Commission

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Dates of Senate voting reforms

Senator: Dastyari

Question reference number: F70

Type of question: Hansard, F&PA Committee, Pages 84-85, 28 May 2015

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 10 July 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator DASTYARI: It is a point I am very happy with. Mr Rogers, when was the last time the commission had to implement any Senate voting reforms? Are we talking the mid-1980s?

...

Senator DASTYARI: Are you able to take on notice—because I assume it is not information you would have readily available—for the 1983 changes, what the period was between the legislation passing and the actual election in which those changes were implemented?

...

Mr Rogers: We can provide those dates. It is going to be difficult to provide anything more than that given the effluxion of time.

...

CHAIR: I do think Senator Dastyari has asked for a historical time frame for the 1983 change, from when it passed through the parliament to when it was actually implemented.

Senator DASTYARI: And they are taking it on notice, which I think is acceptable for them.

Answer:

The legislation that amended the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Electoral Act) to insert above the line voting for the Senate was contained in the *Commonwealth Electoral Legislation Amendment Act 1983* (Act No. 144 of 1983). The Act No. 144 of 1983 received Royal Assent on 22 December 1983. Section 2 of Act No. 144 of 1983 provided that the amendments were to commence on a date to be proclaimed. The proclamation for the commencement of this amending Act occurred on 21 February 1984 (see Gazette 1984, No. S62).

The polling day of the first Senate election that took place in accordance with the new above the line voting system for the Senate was on 1 December 1984.