

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Australian Electoral Commission

February Estimates Hearings 2003-04 – 17 February 2004

Question: F37

Outcome: Aggregated up across all Outcomes and Outputs

Topic: Australian Electoral Commission

Hansard page: N/A

Written Question on Notice: February 2004

Senator Stephen Conroy asked:

1. Could you provide a list of all administered programmes in the Australian Electoral Commission, including:
 - a description of the programme;
 - number of people directly receiving funds/assistance under the programme;
 - a breakdown on those receiving funds/assistance under the programme by electorate;
 - the policy objective of the programme;
 - whether the programme is ongoing;
 - the funding in each financial year of the forward estimates for the programme (with a breakdown of administered and departmental expenses), including:
 - how much funding was allocated for the programme;
 - how much is committed to the programme; and
 - how much is unspent.
 - indication of whether an evaluation of the programme effectiveness has been conducted:
 - if so, when that evaluation occurred; and
 - if so, the conclusion of that evaluation.
2. How many Senior Executive Officers (or equivalent) were employed in the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04.
3. What was the base and top (including performance pay) wages of APS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (or equivalent), Executive Level 1 and 2 (or equivalent), and SES band 1, band 2 and band 3 (or equivalent) in the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04.
4. What was the average salary for an SES (or equivalent) in the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04.

5. How many staff had mobile phones issued by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date;

6. What was the total mobile phone bill for the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.

7. How many SES (or equivalent) were issued with cars in the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04;

8. Could you please list all 'management retreats/training' conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission which were attended by employees during 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date. For such meetings held off-site (from the Australian Electoral Commission) could you please indicate:

- where (location and hotel) and when they were held;
- how much was spent in total;
- how much was spent on accommodation;
- how much was spent on food;
- how much was spent alcohol/drinks; and
- how much was spent on transport.

9. How many overseas trips were taken by employees in the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.

10. What were the destinations of each of these overseas trips.

11. What was the total cost of overseas trips of staff for by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.

- With a breakdown on the cost of accommodation allowances, food allowances and airflights.

12. What was the total cost of domestic trips of staff for by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.

- With a breakdown on the cost of accommodation allowances, food allowances and airflights.

13. How many overseas trips of Ministerial Staff were paid for by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.

14. What was the total cost of overseas trips of Ministerial Staff paid for by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.

15. How much was spent on advertising by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.
16. Did the Australian Electoral Commission produce publications that provided electorate breakdowns on spending on government programmes in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.
17. How much was spent on advertising which provided electorate breakdowns of spending by the government on programmes within the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.
18. How much was spent on consultancies by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.
19. Did the Australian Electoral Commission conduct any surveys of attitudes towards programmes run by their department in 1997, 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 to date.
20. On what programmes administered by the Australian Electoral Commission were surveys conducted.
21. What were the findings of these surveys.

Answer:

The answer provided to me by the Australian Electoral Commission is as follows;

1. There are no specifically identified administered programmes in the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). Every three years, grant funding is provided to the AEC for distribution to Political Parties.

2.

As at 30 June 1997	As at 30 June 1998	As at 30 June 1999	As at 30 June 2000	As at 30 June 2001	As at 30 June 2002	As at 30 June 2003	As at 1 March 2004
15	13	15	14	13	17	17	17

Senior executive staff in the AEC are engaged under section 35(1)(b) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 or are Statutory Appointees. They are not Senior Executive Service (or equivalent).

3.

Level	As at 30 June 1997		As at 30 June 1998		As at 30 June 1999		As at 30 June 2000	
	Base	Top	Base	Top	Base	Top	Base	Top
APS1	14,363	26,570	14,363	26,570	14,938	27,515	15,326	28,065
APS2	27,091	30,042	27,091	30,042	28,175	31,244	28,738	31,869
APS3	30,857	33,304	30,857	33,304	32,091	34,636	32,733	35,329
APS4	34,391	37,341	34,391	37,341	35,767	38,835	36,482	39,611
APS5	38,359	40,675	38,359	40,675	39,893	42,302	40,691	43,148
APS6	41,430	47,591	41,430	47,591	43,087	49,495	43,949	50,485
EL1	50,931	55,170	50,931	55,170	55,149	59,558	56,252	60,749
EL2	57,983	68,497	57,983	68,497	63,576	72,096	64,848	73,538
⁽¹⁾ Senior Executive	62,597	132,600	63,836	134,589	68,000	144,100	70,200	134,100

Level	As at 30 June 2001		As at 30 June 2002		As at 30 June 2003		As at 1 March 2004	
	Base	Top	Base	Top	Base	Top	Base	Top
APS1	16,455	30,310	16,455	30,310	17,442	32,129	17,442	33,093
APS2	31,037	34,419	31,037	34,419	32,899	36,484	32,899	37,579
APS3	35,352	38,742	35,352	38,742	37,473	41,066	37,473	42,298
APS4	39,401	43,178	39,401	43,178	41,765	45,769	41,765	47,142
APS5	43,946	48,162	43,946	48,162	46,583	51,051	46,583	52,583
APS6	48,646	54,524	48,646	54,524	51,565	57,795	51,565	59,592
EL1	60,752	67,577	60,752	67,577	64,397	80,000	64,397	82,000
EL2	70,036	79,421	70,036	79,421	74,238	84,186	74,238	86,712
⁽¹⁾ Senior Executive	80,115	138,700	80,115	143,300	89,254	159,988	94,274	167,132

(1) Senior executive staff in the AEC are engaged under section 35(1)(b) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 or Statutory Appointees. They are not Senior Executive Service (or equivalents).

4. Average salary for SES as at:

As at 30 June 1997 (\$)	As at 30 June 1998 (\$)	As at 30 June 1999 (\$)	As at 30 June 2000 (\$)	As at 30 June 2001 (\$)	As at 30 June 2002 (\$)	As at 30 June 2003 (\$)	As at 1 March 2004 (\$)
82,574	84,607	88,845	92,134	98,704	101,695	104,626	110,387

Senior executive staff in the AEC are engaged under section 35(1)(b) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 or are Statutory Appointees. They are not Senior Executive Service (or equivalents).

5.

Financial Year	Quantity
1996-97	188
1997-98	173
1998-99	333
1999-00	283
2000-01	307
2001-02	326
2002-03	296
2003-04	286

6.

Financial Year	Total Spend (\$)
1996-97	84,669.82
1997-98	76,155.53
1998-99	91,704.09
1999-00	100,166.62
2000-01	74,502.68
2001-02	86,615.25
2002-03	81,253.96
2003-04 (Jan)	52,153.20

7.

Year	Number of SES issued with cars
1996-97	14
1997-98	14
1998-99	12
1999-00	13
2000-01	13
2001-02	17
2002-03	14
2003-04	14

8. In May 2003, the AEC conducted a leadership training program for senior executive officers at the Kurrajong Hotel, Barton, ACT. The total cost was \$41,491 (including training materials and facilitators). Of that total, the cost of the conference package (venue, accommodation and meals) was \$4,649, and travel costs were approximately \$8,000.

9. The AEC undertakes numerous overseas trips, which are funded externally from organisations such as AusAID, UN, IFES, and IIDEA. The numbers of trips listed are only those trips which were AEC funded. To obtain the details on trips taken prior to 2001/02 would require significant resources.

2001/02: 7 trips

2002/03: 9 trips, plus 2 trips funded equally between AEC and AusAID

2003/04: 8 trips, plus 2 trips funded equally between AEC and UN

10. The destinations of the overseas trips funded by the AEC were:

- 2001/02: 3 trips to Great Britain, Ireland and Thailand
 1 trip to Bangkok, Stockholm and London
 2 trips to Mauritius and Great Britain
 1 trip to Thailand and UK
- 2002/03: 1 trip to London
 2 trips to Fiji
 3 trips to Bangkok, Sweden and UK
 1 trip to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur
 1 trip to Hong Kong and Delhi
 1 trip to New Zealand
 1 trip to East Timor (funded between AEC and AusAID)
 1 trip to Jakarta, Bali, Dili (funded between AEC and AusAID)
- 2003/04: 1 trip to Hong Kong and Delhi
 1 trip to Thailand
 1 trip to Jakarta, Bali and Dili
 3 trips to Chiang Mai
 2 trips to USA (funded between AEC and UN)
 1 trip to Texas, London and Chiang Mai
 1 trip to London and Stockholm

11. The AEC cannot obtain the costs of overseas trips by AEC staff for 1996-97, 1997-98, 1999-00 and 2000-01 without extensive analysis as the system has changed and details are held on hard-to-identify archive disks. The figures provided are for those trips that are AEC funded. An aggregate amount has been provided as it would significant resources to break down the amount into the categories required.

2001-02: \$72,153
2002-03: \$45,602
2003-04 to date: \$44,966

12. The AEC cannot obtain the costs of domestic trips by AEC staff for 1996-97 and 1997-98 without extensive analysis as the system has changed and details are held on hard-to-identify archive disks.

1998-99: (*Federal Election held*): \$1.041 million fares; \$2.086 million accommodation and food allowances.
1999-00: (*Referendum and ATSIC election held*): \$1.064 million fares; \$3.181 million accommodation and food allowances.
2000-01: \$728,000 fares; \$1.672 million accommodation and food allowances.
2001-02: (*Federal Election held*): \$1.088 million fares; \$2.537 million accommodation and food allowances.
2002-03: (*ATSIC Election held*): \$981,000 fares; \$2.312 million accommodation and food allowances.
2003-04: to date \$299,000 fares, \$675,000 accommodation and food allowances.

13. None.

14. Nil.

15.

Year	(\$)
1996-97	920,000
1997-98	4,545,000
*1998-99	8,932,000
**###1999-00	7,561,000
2000-01	2,258,000
*2001-02	10,185,000
**2002-03	482,000
2003-04 to date	487,000

*Federal Election held

**ATSIC Election held

##Referendum held

16. No.

17. Nil.

18.

1996-97: \$1.919 million (paid)

1997-98: \$2.677 million (paid)

1998-99: \$5.122 million (let during the year) *(Federal Election held)

1999-00: \$1.299 million (let during the year) *(ATSIC election and Referendum held)

2000-01: \$4.210 million (paid)#

2001-02: \$3.803 million (let during the year) *(Federal Election held)

2002-03: \$1.452 million (let during the year) *(ATSIC election held)

2003-04: to date \$1.214 million (paid)

*The figures for financial years 1998-99, 1999-00, 2001-02 and 2002-03 represent consultancy contracts entered into during the year.

#The AEC was unable to identify actual expenditure due to the AEC's system combining expenditure for both consultancies and contractors.

19. As part of its routine evaluation procedures over the past decade, the AEC has regularly conducted surveys of a sample of electors after polling day during federal elections. A copy of the 2001 *AEC Post-Election Research Report* is available from the AEC. Further, following the 2001 federal election, the AEC conducted a series of customer workshops in every state. Two similar workshops were also held in the Northern Territory following the 2002 ATSIC Election.

In addition, the Client Services Unit (CSU) conducted Client Satisfaction Surveys in 1997, 1999 and 2002. The surveys were undertaken by Wallis Consulting Group. Surveys were sent to clients, returned to Wallis Consulting Group which analysed the results and produced a report for the AEC. Data for surveys conducted prior to 1997 is not readily available.

20. The regular post-polling day surveys measure the level of awareness in the general public of the AEC's advertising campaign and levels of customer satisfaction in dealing with the AEC during the election. The series of customer workshops following the 2001 federal election provided a range of views on client perspectives about the enrolment and voting process.

The Client Satisfaction Surveys were conducted to gauge client satisfaction on the level of service supplied by the Roll Products and Services Unit in the delivery of information and data. The Roll Products and Services Unit (formerly the Client Services Unit) is responsible for the delivery of electoral roll data to Senators, Members of Parliament, political parties, other federal government agencies, State electoral offices and the public.

21. The 2001 post-polling day survey found generally high levels of awareness and customer satisfaction. The customer workshops revealed that, in general, the AEC was found to be held in high regard but people indicated that they would like greater access to electoral education programs. A copy of the consolidated report of the customer workshops is also available from the AEC.

The findings of the Client Satisfaction Surveys are outlined as follows:

- The Roll Products and Services Unit improved its level of customer service each year a survey was conducted;
- Clients that completed the survey were very happy with the level of customer service supplied;
- Data quality was of a high standard; and
- Roll Products and Services should market the information/product availability.