

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Electoral Commission

Outcome/Program: Outcome 1

Topic: Multiple Voting – Official Error

Senator: Abetz

Question reference number: F70

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Number of pages: 1

Question:

Are you able to assist us then with the 1,660 replies that indicated official error? What does this actually mean? Does the person write back saying, 'I think your office has made a mistake? What does that actually mean?

Answer:

Sampling of responses categorised as official error from the 2010 election include cases where:

- some silent electors (that is, electors whose address is suppressed from printed copies of the certified list) were incorrectly marked off an ordinary certified list at a polling place and then correctly issued a provisional declaration vote. The provisional vote was subsequently marked off a declaration vote certified list which created multiple marks for those voters. On each occasion the elector only voted once;
- some postal vote certificates were handed in at polling places and the electors' names were then incorrectly marked off the polling place certified list. The postal vote was subsequently marked off a declaration vote certified list which created multiple marks for those voters. On each occasion the elector only voted once;
- in some cases an elector with an unfamiliar name presented at a polling place and searches were undertaken by different polling place staff using their own copies of the certified list. More than one polling official marked the name off, which created multiple marks for those voters. On each occasion the elector only voted once;
- some electors surrendered a spoilt ballot paper for replacement and their name was incorrectly marked off another certified list at the polling place, which created multiple marks for those voters. On each occasion the elector only voted once.