

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Finance and Administration Portfolio**

**Australian Electoral Commission**

**Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2007**

**Question: F65**

**Outcome 1, Output 1.1.1**

**Topic: Process for testing enrolments**

**Hansard page: N/A**

**Written Question on Notice**

**Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:**

Can the AEC step through their process for testing enrolments if they are challenged. In doing so, can you explain how long each step in the process takes?

**Answer:**

All enrolment forms received are processed in accordance with written procedures contained in AEC procedures manuals. Firstly, enrolment forms are checked to determine if they have been completed in accordance with legislative requirements. Then, as part of standard processing, the veracity of the information on the enrolment form is checked (for example, driver's licence numbers are checked against driver's licence data, residential addresses are checked against the AEC address file and follow-up checks made with local council as required). If the standard checking processes do not highlight any issues with the enrolment form, it is processed and the person is added to the electoral roll. If these processes reveal any issues with the enrolment form, it is referred by divisional office staff to National Office, via their State/Territory Manager, for investigation and possible referral for prosecution. At this point, investigation is undertaken on a case-by-case basis and the exact steps in the investigation will be those appropriate to the particular circumstances. They will generally involve the examination of relevant documents and possibly further contact with the elector. They may also involve referral of the matter to the Australian Federal Police for investigation.

The AEC currently has a performance standard (reported on in its annual report) that 99% of enrolment forms should be processed within 3 business days. However, where any enrolment form requires follow-up that involves communication with external people or organisations (eg the elector, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, local council) it is probable that it will not be processed within that timeframe.