

**Australian Electoral Commission**

**SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

**AEC RESPONSES TO JSCEM HEARINGS OF 23 SEPTEMBER 1996**

**Canberra**

**24 October 1996**

## **1. PREAMBLE**

1.1 This supplementary submission by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) in response to its "Inquiry into the 1996 Federal Election", as advertised on Saturday, 22 June 1996 in all major national newspapers. The submission is supplementary to the major AEC submission, "The Conduct of the 1996 Federal Election" presented to the JSCEM on 29 July 1996 (submission No. 30).

1.2 As part of the JSCEM inquiry, public hearings are in progress. During the course of the hearings in Sydney on 23 September 1996, members of the JSCEM raised a number of specific queries relating to the conduct of the 1996 federal election, and this submission provides the AEC responses to those queries, which were taken on notice.

## **2. RESPONSES**

### **2.1 Detected Multiple Voting**

*On page EM 81 of the proof transcript, Senator Minchin asked for figures on detected potential multiple voting (as distinct from admitted multiple voting).*

2.1.1 Statistics for the number of apparent multiple voter cases for each State and Territory at the 1996 federal election are at Table 1 in the Appendix.

### **2.2 Postal Votes**

*On page EM 96 of the proof transcript, Mr McDougall asked for figures on postal votes issued by and returned to the AEC.*

2.2.1 Table 2 in the Appendix contains statistics for the numbers of postal votes issued by and returned to the AEC for the 1996 federal election. The difference between the number issued and the number received may be attributed to electors not returning a completed postal vote certificate once an application had been processed.

## **2.3 Return-to-Sender Mail**

*On page EM 132 of the proof transcript, Mr Laurie Ferguson has requested figures on return-to-sender mail.*

2.3.1 In September 1994 the AEC adopted a national policy of investigating Return To Sender mail from Members of Parliament. Investigations are undertaken by AEC staff and where an elector is correctly enrolled any further action is terminated. The reason for the termination is noted on the envelope and returned to the Member of Parliament.

2.3.2 In those cases where preliminary investigations indicate that an elector may have left their enrolled address, the AEC undertakes follow-up action either by phone or by posting an enquiry letter. Further action is dependent on the response received and if an elector has permanently left their enrolled address, official objection action under Part 9 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 is commenced. Members of Parliament are also advised of the outcome of all such investigations.

2.3.3 Provided at Table 3 in the Appendix are figures for electoral notices returned to the AEC as undelivered for the 1996 federal election. Figures are provided for both non-voter and multiple-voter notices.

## APPENDIX

**Table 1: 1996 Federal Election - Apparent Multiple Voters**

State/Territory	
NSW	5946
VIC	4080
QLD	2335
SA	986
WA	1408
TAS	657
NT	336
ACT	227
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15975</b>

**Table 2: 1996 Federal Election - Postal Votes Issued by and Returned to the AEC [see later submission No 108 for amended table]**

State/Territory	Issued	Received
NSW	116855	111757
VIC	107885	103313
QLD	89355	84819
SA	32735	31616
WA	31121	28410
TAS	15456	14517
NT	3737	2991
ACT	5706	5841
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>402850</b>	<b>383264</b>

**Table 3: 1996 Federal Election - Returned Undelivered Notices**

**Non-Voter Notices**

<b>State/ Territory</b>	<b>Total Sent</b>	<b>1st and 2nd Notices R/U</b>	<b>Penalty Notices R/U</b>	<b>Total R/U</b>	<b>Percentage R/U</b>
<b>NSW</b>	<b>142864</b>	<b>23878</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23892</b>	<b>16.7</b>
<b>VIC</b>	<b>116383</b>	<b>22909</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22932</b>	<b>19.7</b>
<b>QLD</b>	<b>110882</b>	<b>27031</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27044</b>	<b>24.3</b>
<b>WA</b>	<b>58687</b>	<b>12058</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12070</b>	<b>20.5</b>
<b>SA</b>	<b>36730</b>	<b>8083</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8090</b>	<b>22.0</b>
<b>TAS</b>	<b>11789</b>	<b>2494</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2499</b>	<b>21.2</b>
<b>ACT</b>	<b>5741</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>NT</b>	<b>7115</b>	<b>1658</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1659</b>	<b>23.3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>490191</b>	<b>99173</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>99248</b>	<b>20.0</b>

**Multiple-Voter Notices**

<b>State/ Territory</b>	<b>MV2/MV3s sent</b>	<b>Notices R/U</b>	<b>Percentage R/U</b>
<b>NSW</b>	<b>6881</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>VIC</b>	<b>5038</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>QLD</b>	<b>2728</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>WA</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>SA</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>TAS</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>ACT</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>NT</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18476</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1.4</b>