

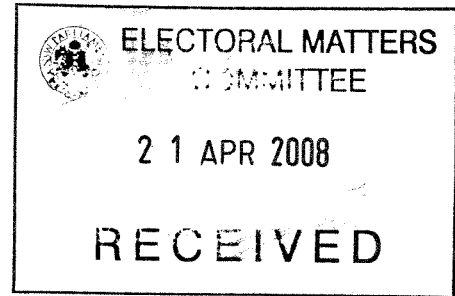


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C08/219



Electoral Commissioner

Our Ref: 07/783 -2



Ms Cherie Burton MP
Chair
Parliament of New South Wales
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Burton

Response to Questions to the Australian Electoral Commission

Thank you for your letter of 19 March 2008 regarding the AEC's recently conducted trials for electronic voting.

The AEC is currently evaluating these two trials. When these evaluations are completed our reports will be made publicly available.

In regard to the question of future electronic voting it is important to note that the use of electronic voting at any future federal elections is ultimately a decision for the Australian Parliament and will require further amendments to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

The following table indicates how many people who are blind or have low vision voted in the federal election for NSW.

Location	Completed Votes
Albury	12
Chatswood	18
Coffs Harbour	16
Dubbo	20
Enfield	60
Parramatta	15
Wollongong	28
Total	169

In providing the cost per vote it should be noted that this cost is the average national cost and includes the salaries of a dedicated team, comprehensive communication with voters and stakeholders, acquisition by tender, software development, hardware, public awareness and communications, election delivery and evaluation costs. This brought the unit cost to \$2,597 per vote.

Nationally 850 people who are blind or have low vision cast an independent and secret vote. In Victoria where the Victorian Electoral Commission implemented a similar project in the 2006 state election, there was an increase in voter turnout of 41%, where the same polling places were used, to bring the total of voters in Victoria to 319.

The E-voting project with Defence saw 2,012 Defence personnel in four gazetted countries register to vote electronically. Of those, 1,511 cast their vote successfully on Defence computers via the secure Defence Restricted Network (DRN) back to a dedicated database at the AEC's data centre in Tuggeranong.


The cost per vote is still being determined in this innovative cross department project with the AEC and Defence. The complexities of working across two networks and within the strong security requirements of the DRN and the joint project management that was required needs further analysis before costs can be provided. However, we believe them to be considerably less than that of the project for people who are blind or have low vision.

With respect to feedback received from voters and stakeholders we are still assessing the information that we have received but can report that generally feedback has been quite positive for both trials.

I trust that this response assists your inquiries into the 2007 NSW election.

The AEC agrees to making our response public in its entirety.

Yours sincerely



Ian Campbell
Electoral Commissioner

14 April 2008