



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mr Braddock MLA: To ask the Electoral Commissioner

ACT Electoral Commission

Hearing Date: 25 July 2023

In relation to: Audits of electronic vote records against paper ballots

The Commission has previously expressed a position of not wishing to conduct of audits of electronic vote records against the paper ballots from which they are digitized.

The Australian Electoral Commission conducted an audit after recent legislative changes at a Commonwealth level, and measured error rates in the range of 0.2% to 0.8% for the Senate vote digitisation process.

Has the Commission conducted any equivalent measurement for ballots cast on paper and then digitized, as an audit or otherwise? If so, what error rates did you observe?

Damian Cantwell AM CSC : The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

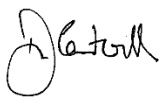
The MLA's statement of the ACT Electoral Commission's position is not accurate. Elections ACT has undertaken an audit of the digitally captured vote preferences of electronically scanned handwritten ballot papers after every election since the introduction of ballot paper scanning at the 2008 ACT election.

After each electoral event, Election ACT's Election Management System randomly selects 3,000 ballot papers from across the ACT's electorates. Elections ACT staff examine each of the digitally recorded preferences against the associated ballot paper.

To date, the Commission has not identified a single occurrence of an inaccurate digital recording of preferences against the voter's written record. This is a zero error rate.

For the 2024 ACT election, Elections ACT will further improve transparency and integrity by engaging an independent third party to conduct the ballot paper scanning assurance process during the live scrutiny of votes in the week following election day. This will allow for party scrutineers to view the process prior to the conclusion of the count. Work is currently underway to finalise this ballot paper scanning assurance process.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature: 

Date: 7 August 2023

By the ACT Electoral Commissioner, Damian Cantwell AM CSC